

Transforming Tourism Destination Management: Response to Natural Disasters and the COVID-19 Pandemic - A Case Study of Sembalun Geosite in Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

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Sembalun is a tourist destination in Rinjani Lombok UNESO Global Geopark which made full with tourists, either local, domestic, or foreign. The 2018 earthquakes, which were followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, became the momentum of transformation of tourism development there. This research aims to investigate the transformation of tourism destination management in Sembalun Geosite following the 2018 earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic. This research uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. In-depth interviews and participatory observation are primary data collection techniques and literature study is a secondary data collection technique in this research. The transformation was applied as an effort to improve the tourism management based on an evaluation from the DMO, as a response to the implementation of tourism principles in the new normal era, and an effort to make the tourism development in Sembalun Geosite fully sustainable. The transformation was implemented by: (1) changing the orientation of tourism development, from quantity to quality; (2) distributing tourist visits as even as possible; (3) encouraging the tourism management to play their roles orderly and thoroughly; (4) developing tourism based on preservation, not alteration; (5) developing strategies for unique tourism developments; and (6) fostering collaborations among tourism destination organizers in Sembalun Geosite.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been recognized as Indonesia's leading sector since 2015. On February 16, 2015, President Joko Widodo in a Plenary Session on Tourism at Bogor Palace stated that, "Hereby I recognize tourism as a leading sector. The recognition of tourism as a leading sector is indeed good news and all other ministries must support it, and I have decided it." This was due to the growth of foreign exchange earnings from year to year: from USD6,297.99 million in 2009 to USD7,603.45 million in 2010 to USD8,554.39 million in 2011 to USD9,120.85 million in 2012 to USD10,054.15 million in 2013. This is why tourism became a leading sector in Indonesia. Not to mention the achievement of Indonesian tourism in 2017, where it finished in 47th place in global tourism rank after being in 100th in the previous year [1].

However, the recognition and the achievement could not prevent nor stop natural disasters from shattering Indonesia's tourism industry. The 2018 disasters in Indonesia, particularly Lombok earthquakes, greatly affected Indonesia's tourism sector. This is in accordance with data from the presentation of the Head of Marketing Area III (Taiwan) of the Ministry of Tourism at the Technical Guidance for Synchronizing Tourism Promotion in the Asia Pacific and American Markets held at the Puteri Gunung Hotel, West Bandung Regency on April 6, 2019 that in 2018 the number of foreign visitors did

not reach the target. The failure was due to the many natural disasters in Indonesia in 2018, particularly the large earthquakes and the long-period aftershocks in Lombok. Even though the data shows that the number of foreign visitors had increased significantly since 2015, it drastically declined in 2018. The targets of 10 million foreign visitors in 2015, 12 million in 2016, and 15 million in 2017 were managed to accomplish. However, the target of 17 million in 2018 was not managed to achieve. Only 15.8 million foreign visitors came to Indonesia in 2018 (NTB in Numbers 2019).

It can be said that 2018 was an extraordinary year for Indonesian tourism sector, particularly in Lombok. The amazing island with great tourism potentials was struck by two powerful earthquakes. The M6.4 earthquake hit Lombok on July 29, 2018 and the M7.0 (the largest earthquake in Lombok) on August 5, 2018 did have a big impact on all sectors of life. Tourism is a significantly-affected sector, because after the two major earthquakes, there were 521 aftershocks. In terms of magnitude, they were indeed smaller than the two, but still they affected the life of the people of the island in the east of Bali.

An impact of the disaster is the decline in economic growth by 1.5% and the increasing number of unemployed in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) by 180,000 in many sectors, including tourism. Lombok tourism is a leading sector that supports the community economy. The earthquakes over a long period

surely paralyze the tourist destinations in NTB, particularly in northern Lombok, from North Lombok to northern Central Lombok to northern East Lombok. This immediately affects the economy and creates mass poverty in the community who are highly dependent on tourism.

Semabalun, located in the northern East Lombok, was directly affected by the earthquakes in 2018. The hiking to Mount Rinjani, which was the main tourism potential of this region, immediately came to a stand still. Data from Mount Rinjani National Park (TNGR) shows that the number of

tourist visits, both foreign and domestic, after the 2018 earthquake decline dramatically. The downward trend is shown in more details in Table 1. Based on the table, in 2017 there are 39,659 foreign visitors and 43,120 domestic visitors with a peak season between April and October and monthly average more than 4,000 foreign visitors. Whereas in 2018, as of July before the earthquakes, there are 19,158 foreign visitors and 26,582 domestic visitors. Based on the calendar, the peak season is between April and July 2018, before the large earthquakes in Lombok [2].

Table 1. The Numbers of Mount Rinjani Foreign and Domestic Visitors 2015 – 2020

No.	Month	Foreign Visitors		Domestic Visitors		Total	
		2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
1	Jan.	56	119	1.217	625	1.273	744
2	Feb.	10	11	601	852	611	863
3	Mar.	23	0	528	0	551	0
4	Apr.	3188	3958	3294	4848	6.482	8806
5	May	4839	5067	5085	4698	9.924	9765
6	Jun.	4031	3825	887	9229	4.918	13054
7	Jul.	6623	5326	13692	6046	20.315	11372
8	Aug.	8852	849	7253	284	16.105	1133
9	Sep.	5069	0	4469	0	9.538	0
10	Oct.	4240	0	2441	0	6.681	0
11	Nov.	1384	0	1327	0	2.711	0
12	Dec.	1344	0	2272	0	3.616	0
		39659	19155	43.066	26582	82.725	45737

Source: Taman Nasional Gunung Rinjani (TNGR), 2021

Based on Table 1, the earthquakes in July 2018 have a huge impact on tourist visits in 2018, particularly after TNGR was closed. Compared to 2017, there is a decline of visitors by 46%. In terms of revenue, in 2017 TNGR managed to contribute to Non-Tax State Revenue (PNBP) by Rp10 billion, while in 2018 only Rp4 billion (Republika.co.id).

Despite the huge impact on the tourism sector, thanks to the government support and the community willingness to revive tourism sector after the disasters, the number of tourist visits started to increase in 2019. Based on data from the Tourism Office of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), no less than 2.3 million tourists visited NTB from January to August 2019. However, the efforts to revive the tourism in West Nusa Tenggara, particularly in Lombok, has to face another test due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which entered Indonesia in early 2020. The World Health Organization (WHO) through their official website state that the *coronavirus disease 2019* (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the new coronavirus, which was first discovered and became a plague in Wuhan in December 2019.

Based on the press release of the NTB COVID-19 Task Force, as of July 5, 2021, there were 14,961 positive cases of COVID-19 in NTB, where 13,603 recovered, 618 died, and 740 still positive [3]. Compared to other provinces in Indonesia, the case of COVID-19 in NTB is considered low in numbers. However, they greatly affect NTB in many sectors, particularly tourism. This is because many countries, including Indonesia, make policies to stop COVID-19 transmission, including restrictions for travel and outdoor activities.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the real impact of COVID-19 on travel and tourism is that it may cause 50 million people around the world to lose their jobs. The Indonesian Ministry of Manpower reported that as of June 2, 2020, 3.05 million workers were affected by COVID-19. Moreover, it is estimated that there will be

additional unemployment of 5.23 million if the impact of COVID-19 continues to grow. Data from the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) shows that, as of early April 2020, 1,266 hotels were closed due to the impact of the COVID-19 and 150,000 employees were now laid off due to sluggish business. PHRI estimates that the potential loss to the Indonesian tourism industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic could reach up to US\$1.5 billion or Rp21 trillion.

The West Nusa Tenggara also face the same potential loss, where the majority of the people live in tourism areas and become one of the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to restrictions imposed by many countries. Recreational activities have been stopped. Featured annual events in NTB have been postponed. Tourist objects that were previously busy with tourists are now deserted with no visitors. These in turn cause hotels, restaurants, and places of entertainment to lose their income. In fact, some of them are forced to temporarily close their businesses. As a ripple effect, thousands of employees have to be laid off and local people who make a living through tourism supporting businesses, such as travel agents, local food industry, merchandisers and hotel and restaurant suppliers, lose their income. Tourism, which was previously the driving force of the multi-sector economy in West Nusa Tenggara and became the *prima donna* of local revenue for districts/cities, seems to be a dead faint.

The pressure on the tourism industry is most evident in the massive decline in international tourist arrivals with massive cancellations and a drop in bookings. The decline is also due to sluggish domestic travel. Most Indonesians are reluctant to travel because they are worried about the impact of COVID-19. The decline in the tourism and travel business has disrupted MSMEs and employment. In fact, tourism has long been a labor-intensive sector, absorbing 13 million workers. The number excludes the multiplier effect, including the derivative industries [4].

Meanwhile, data on tourism workers from the Tourism

Office of the West Nusa Tenggara and the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, on May 15, 2020 shows that 15,000 tourism workers in NTB have been laid off due to COVID-19: 6,122 hotel workers; 1,874 members of Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group); 1,357 travel/guides; 676 porters; 213 home-stay actors; 2,410 creative economy workers/Small and Medium Industries (IKM); 394 art studios; 353 culinary places; 617 boatmen; and 984 cleaners, ticket clerks and hawkers [5]. Due to the difficulty of predicting the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, real collaborations between businesses and local governments, fully supported by the central government, are needed to develop a tourism concept that can coexist with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health and safety protocols should be the main endorsement from the tourism actors not only in West Nusa Tenggara, but also in Indonesia and even around the world. The tourism industry is given time to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, where every tourist destination is required to improve and to prepare strict COVID-19 prevention protocols. Apart from being an obligation, this will also be a special attraction for tourists. The implementation of New Normal will at least encourage tourist destinations to make their services *healthier* and *more hygienic* as well as *safer* and *more secure*. A sense of security and convenience when traveling will make a tourist destination more preferable to spend time in the midst of an endless pandemic.

In West Nusa Tenggara, the local Tourism Office and the tourism stakeholders have prepared many things for the new normal era. Awanadhi Aswinabawa, the head of Indonesian Tourism Industry Association (GIPI) of NTB, states that nationally Indonesia has officially put top three priority destinations for tourism in new normal era: Bali, Yogyakarta, and Batam. Bali was chosen because it's an icon of Indonesian tourism, whereas Yogyakarta to attract domestic tourists, and Batam to attract Singaporeans, Malaysians, and other Asians. While five other destinations are in the second priority or so-called super-priority destinations, including Mandalika in Lombok and several destinations in Java. Despite being in the second tier, NTB should gradually be prepared for the new normal era.

Based on data from mandalika post on June 3, 2020, the recovery of NTB tourism after COVID-19 pandemic has been started since July-December 2020 period. Tourist destinations are gradually opened based on their safety levels. In general, NTB will open three destinations, i.e., their tourism icons, in the new normal era: 1) three Gili (small island) areas in North Lombok; 2) Gili areas in Sekotong, West Lombok; and 3) Mount Rinjani area. It is also stated that tourism in New Normal era requires Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) to regulate all health, hygiene, safety, and security aspects in tourism management.

This research aims to determine the transformation of tourist destination management at the Sembalun Geosite after the 2018 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic. In this research, the researcher tries to answer the question, why is a transformation in the management of tourist destinations at the Sembalun Geosite needed and how is this transformation implemented in tourism management at the Sembalun Geosite?

2. METHOD

To reveal the transformation of tourism management

destination in Sembalun, East Lombok by the Destination Management Organization (DMO) [6], the authors used qualitative method with descriptive case study approach. In this research, tourism destination management in Sembalun was the natural object, while the researchers were the key instruments to analyze the subject. Triangulation was used while conducting inductive data analysis, and the results of the research emphasized meaning rather than generalization [7].

The researchers explored a case of transformation of tourism destination management, particularly in Sembalun, in the post-event of the 2018 earthquakes and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The data collection was in-depth and multi-sources. The researchers directly observed the planning process in the tourism management by the Sembalun DMO during 2021 and conducted in-depth interviews with several key informants of the DMO and other stakeholders. In addition, to gain secondary data, they conducted a literature review on books, journals, and other relevant documents. This is line with scholars [8] who stated that case study approach is one of qualitative research, where a researcher explored a case timely and thoroughly and collect in-depth data, involving multi sources of information (such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents and reports) and case reports and case-based themes. The informants of the research were the Director and several staff of Sembalun Destination Management Organization (DMO), the manager of the Management Body of Rinjani Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark, the Chief of Rinjani East Lombok Hiking Business Association, the Organizer of Sembalun Seven Summit, the representative of Tracking Organizer and the Head of Kecamatan Sembalun Districts.

Furthermore, Yin [9] stated that research with case study approach requires a researcher to comprehend, explore, and elaborate a phenomenon deeply. Yin [9] also stated that a case study will not be sufficient if it only relies on "what" questions. It should include "how" and "why" as well. Therefore, in addition to revealing the transformation of destination by Sembalun DMO in the post-event of disasters, this research sought to reveal why it was implemented in Sembalun Geosite.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kecamatan Sembalun (Sembalun District) is a geosite in Rinjani Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (RLUGGp). A geosite is a landmark with land, rocks, fossils, and other geological phenomena [10]. Sembalun District comprises 6 villages: Sembalun Bumbung, Sembalun Lawang, Sembalun, Timba Gading, Sajang, and Bilok Pitung. Based on the 2020 monograph from the District Office, Sembalun covers an area of 217.08 km² and is at an elevation of 390-1180 meters above sea level. The landscape of the Sembalun District can be seen in Figure 1. The monograph also reveals that Sembalun used to decline dramatically in economic growth after the earthquakes in late 2018. Nevertheless, in early 2020 the economic growth started to rise. The rise of Sembalun tourism after the 2018 earthquakes, as shown in the monograph, can improve the community income because tourism can be a side hustle for the people of Sembalun [11].

In fact, before the disasters, Sembalun had been an agritourism with natural scenery and fresh mountain breeze for domestic and foreign visitors to enjoy [12]. However, the calamity had not over yet. After the natural disasters, in early 2020 the region was hit by a non-natural one: COVID-19

pandemic. The Law no. 24 of 2007 on disaster mitigation classifies disasters into natural, non-natural, and social. COVID-19 is a non-natural disaster. On April 13, 2020 the Indonesian government changed its status to a national non-natural disaster [13]. The case of COVID-19 in Indonesia was first announced by President Joko Widodo on Monday, March 2, 2020 [14].



Figure 1. Sembalun's landscape
Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2021

COVID-19 has affected many sectors of life. One that is greatly affected by the pandemic is tourism [15]. Sembalun is a district in Mount Rinjani area with lots of visitors in the beginning of the new normal era. It is a phase where people can live and coexist with coronavirus. It has been applied since May 2020. People are encouraged to do their activities while keep on fighting against COVID-19 by applying health protocols: maintaining a safe distance, wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, and washing hands [16].

The large number of local and domestic visitors in Sembalun Geosite during the new normal is due to the popularity of nature tourism in the era. Moreover, Sembalun has been recognized as a covid-free area in West Nusa Tenggara. When this research conducted, none of the people of Sembalun were infected by COVID-19. "Sembalun is a green zone," said Mertawi, S.Pd., the then Head of Sembalun when this research was conducted. In fact, at the time the number of COVID-19 cases in NTB was considered high and Mataram City was declared a red zone. When the researchers left Sembalun for Mataram, they were forbidden to go back to Sembalun in the near future, because it was feared that they would carry the virus.

Sembalun District, a destination in Mount Rinjani area, is the first and only Indonesian destination with a Destination Management Organization (DMO) chartered by the grassroots. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy previously recognized 15 DMOs: Sabang, Toba, Kota Tua, Pangandaran, Borobudur, Bromo-Tengger-Semeru, Batur, Rinjani, Flores, Tanjung Puting, Derawan, Toraja, Bunaken, Wakatobi, and Raja Ampat. DMOs are tourism destination managements that plan, coordinate, implement, and control Indonesian tourism organizations. They were established between 2010 and 2014 [6]. Uniquely, during data collection phase, the researchers found that Sembalun DMO was not established by the Ministry, but the grassroots. Sembalun people are the ones who chartered the organization. They submitted the proposal to the local government, i.e., the

Regent of East Lombok, for the authorization of the organization in order to get the same functions and authorities as those of the Ministry.

The natural and non-natural disasters and how they affected the tourism in Sembalun had been particularly reviewed by the Sembalun Destination Management Organization (DMO). The organization took them as a momentum to transform the tourism development in Sembalun. As a tourism charm that has long captivated local, domestic, and foreign visitors, its organizers have developed strategies for its development. Mount Rinjani is famous for its natural beauty and uniqueness, which make all hikers from all over the world vying to reach its peak at an altitude of 3726 meters above sea level. Moreover, since 2018 Mount Rinjani and the entire area at its foot has been recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark. This implies that the area has a remarkable geological, biological, and cultural wealth.

However, based on an evaluation from the Sembalun DMO, the tourism development in Sembalun Geosite so far has not met the principles of sustainable tourism development. As stated by Amerta [17], the principles of sustainable tourism development are (1) maintaining the quality of the environment, (2) providing benefits to local communities and tourists; (3) maintaining the links between tourism and the environment; (4) maintaining harmony among local people, and environment, (5) create dynamic conditions tailored to carrying capacity, and (6) all stakeholders must work together on the same mission to realize sustainable development. Some of these six principles have not been applied in Sembalun.

Due to a limited space to convey the results of the analysis, in this paper the researchers will not describe the evaluation of the tourism management in Sembalun from the committee. They will only focus on the transformation of tourism development by the Sembalun DMO in order to meet the principles of sustainable development. Thus, the researchers provide the followings to answer why Sembalun DMO transformed the tourism destination management in Sembalun Geosite: It is (1) an effort to improve tourism management based on their evaluation; (2) a response to apply the principles of tourism development in the new normal era; and, the main thing, (3) an effort to make tourism development in Sembalun Geosite meet all sustainable principles.

How the Sembalun DMO implemented the transformation of tourism management in Sembalun Geosite will be discussed in the following section. As discussed in the introduction, compared to other DMOs, the Sembalun DMO is unique. Its establishment was initiated by the people of Sembalun themselves, not the tourism ministry nor the local government. Based on the data, it is found that in 2010 the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy established DMOs in 15 tourism destinations. One of them was Rinjani DMO. However, they were only assigned to manage tourism from 2010 to 2014 [6]. Since 2014, they are no longer performing their duties, especially the one in Sembalun. The current DMO in Sembalun Geosite was initiated by Baiq Sri Mulya. The head of Sembalunina NGO eventually managed to establish it and became the director based on the Decree of the East Lombok Regent Number 188.45/327/PAR/2021 on the organization committee of the Sembalun tourism destination management for the 2021-2026 period. Based on data from in-depth interviews and direct observations, the DMO seek to transform the tourism management in Sembalun Geosite.

According to Law No. 25 of 2004 on the system for national development planning, planning is a process to define

appropriate future actions by providing options and taking the available resources into account. The Sembalun DMO's planning is trend-oriented. It is one that aims future objectives based on the development of the current management and considerations [18]. The necessity to face the new normal era and to recover from the earthquakes and the pandemic is one that encourages them to realize the transformation. It is based on the means to implement clean, health, safety and environment (CHSE) as well as adaptive, mitigative, innovative, and collaborative principles.

The first one is changing the orientation of tourism development, from quantity to quality. Previously, the development was always based on the growth of visitor numbers. Now the DMO has initiated the one that is not oriented to that, yet it is still able to contribute to regional income.

Quality tourism is a concept that DMO Sembalun aims to promote in the transformation of tourism destination management in Sembalun. Wibisono states that quality tourism is a tourism development concept that not only focuses on the development of tourism infrastructure and facilities but also emphasizes the enhancement of human resources quality as the main factor determining tourist satisfaction. When tourists are satisfied with the provided services, they tend to spend more time in a tourist destination, which translates to increased expenditure in that destination. Therefore, in the concept of quality tourism, foreign exchange earnings remain as a measure of success, but the approach has shifted. Tourism no longer solely focuses on the number of visitors but also emphasizes the length of their stay in the area [19].

How to perceive Sembalun tourists or visitors must also be changed. Prior to the disasters, the tourism organizers perceived them and the investors as a king. They always accommodated market demands without taking the negative impacts on the environment and Sembalun people into account. It has to be changed. The tourists or visitors should be perceived as a partner. They can be involved to maintain and preserve the destinations in Sembalun.

This is closely related to the numbers of visits to Sembalun Geosite. They should be distributed as even as possible. Previously, the management recognized *peak season* and *low season* because other systems, such as office and education, worked seasonally. The DMO thought that this should be changed in the future. The development planning must be based on an even distribution of visitors throughout the year by, among others, limiting the numbers of visitors and applying different prices for different seasons.

Efforts to transform the concept of quality tourism have started to be implemented in the development of tourism in Sembalun, following the COVID-19 pandemic in the era of the new normal. One of the implementations is evident in the Rinjani Geopark Sport Tourism Festival (RGSTF). DMO Sembalun actively participated in the festival, which was organized through collaboration from various parties within and outside the Sembalun region, ultimately allowing the concept of quality tourism to be applied.

In general, the application of the quality tourism concept in the Rinjani Geopark Sport Tourism Festival (RGSTF) involved limiting the number of participants in the competitions. A selection process was conducted, and those who successfully passed the selection were allowed to come to Sembalun and participate in the event. Additionally, the scheduling of the competitions was staggered between October 24th and November 7th, 2021, to prevent

overcrowding at any given time and to extend the participants' stay in Sembalun.

Previously, the management didn't play their roles orderly and thoroughly in the development of Sembalun tourism. Many of the destinations were offered to the market without proper infrastructure like waste management and water distribution. There should be a transformation to change this condition. The roles of the management in the tourism development must be played orderly and thoroughly. The Sembalun DMO is an effort to accommodate the transformation.

DMO Sembalun is a destination management organization for Sembalun tourism, established on June 16, 2021, and officially recognized through the Decree of the Regent of East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Number 188.45/327/PAR/2021. The responsibilities of DMO Sembalun are as follows: (1) building communication, cooperation, and partnerships for the development of the tourism destination with the pentahelix of sustainable tourism development to generate memoranda of understanding and cooperation contracts; (2) developing a governance system, strategies, and concepts for sustainable tourism development in collaboration with all stakeholders; (3) promoting integrated tourism development with an ecosystem landscape approach; (4) advocating and disseminating information to ensure stakeholder engagement in supporting sustainable tourism development in Sembalun; and (5) ensuring monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and impact of tourism development programs on the environment, economy, society, culture, and locality. The ecosystem landscape approach enables the holistic development of tourism in Sembalun, allowing for effective implementation of management functions.

All this while, the tourism was always developed by altering the natural environment of Sembalun to meet the market demands, where it should have been done by preserving. This is true to natural tourism destinations, ecotourism, and geotourism. Tourism development should be able to strengthen its main elements.

The development of tourism support facilities in Sembalun has been carried out without proper spatial planning. Local authorities have constructed public facilities such as resting areas ("berugak" in the local language), parking lots, and public toilets without appropriate planning. Consequently, this has diminished the aesthetic beauty of the region that Sembalun possesses. The poor quality of construction has resulted in rapid deterioration of these public facilities, rendering them unable to be utilized to their maximum potential, as exemplified by the toilets at Pusuk Sembalun Destination.



Figure 2. Kebun Kupa Sembalun's coffee shop
Source: Facebook Account of Kebun Kupa Sembalun, 2022

Furthermore, the ease with which investors obtain permits to establish tourist destinations without prior environmental

assessments has led to numerous buildings being erected in Sembalun, thereby altering and even damaging the natural landscape of Sembalun. An example can be observed in the provided Figure 2, where a permanent coffee shop has been constructed on a hill, which can disrupt the stability of the surrounding land. Ideally, tourism development should not necessitate altering and damaging the existing landscape. The construction of tourism facilities can be carried out by utilizing the natural concept that serves as the main selling point of Sembalun.

The culture of imitating trends in tourism development is also prevalent in Sembalun. The old strategy is obvious when we see the same pattern of development, i.e., replicating one destination to another. As a result, every destination has no uniqueness because they copied what the market was interested in another destination. In fact, a tourism destination should be developed into something unique with more selling value than others.

Thereby, it will make it win the competition over those with uniform development. The booming culture of taking selfies, driven by technological advancements, has prompted tourism stakeholders in Sembalun to compete in constructing selfie-friendly tourist spots. Unfortunately, many of them build these photo spots without considering the environmental damage they may cause. For example, the photo spot depicted in Figure 3 showcases a large structure made of concrete, disregarding the damage it may inflict on the natural contour of the hillside.



Figure 3. Taman langit Sembalun’s tourist destination
Source: Beritamandalika.com, 2022

The culture of imitating trends in Sembalun is unnecessary. Even without resorting to environmentally damaging development, Sembalun can offer unique and appealing tourism attractions. The local community's customs and local culture can serve as significant selling points for tourism in Sembalun when effectively presented. A concrete example is the tradition of gathering wild cattle on the hills and providing them with water (Figure 4), which is a highly unique activity for tourists. This experience is exclusive to Sembalun, making it even more special. If properly packaged, this activity can become a delightful and enjoyable tourism experience that can be pursued in Sembalun.

Moreover, the competition among tourism destination organizers in Sembalun Geosite led to an unhealthy tourism development. An organizer often verbally or expressively discredited one they considered a competitor. What should be

done is actually collaborations among organizers. To increase the numbers of visitors of a tourism destination, a cooperation and collaboration are needed because tourism is a sector that relies on immeasurable variables. Two of them are the security and the convenience of a destination.



Figure 4. Feeding cows’ attraction
Source: Jadesta.kemendparekrf.go.id, 2021

The concept of conquering the 7 mountain peaks in Sembalun, initiated by the Sembalun 7 Summits committee, demonstrates a form of collaboration and beneficial cooperation among all tourism stakeholders in Sembalun. With this concept in place, tourists are challenged to conquer the seven peaks, automatically leading them to undertake a minimum of 7 climbing expeditions. Repeated climbs to these different mountains have a multiplier effect on the progress of tourism. Tourists stay longer in Sembalun, resulting in increased expenditure on food, beverages, and accommodation. Moreover, a greater number of stakeholders are involved. Restaurant owners, accommodation providers, supply stores, mountain managers, and even guides accompanying tourists all benefit from increased financial income. The success of this concept should serve as an example for other tourism destinations to collaboratively develop a more planned and integrated tourism concept.

Based on the discussion, the transformation of tourism management in Sembalun Geosite in the pre- and post-event of disasters is shown in Figure 5.

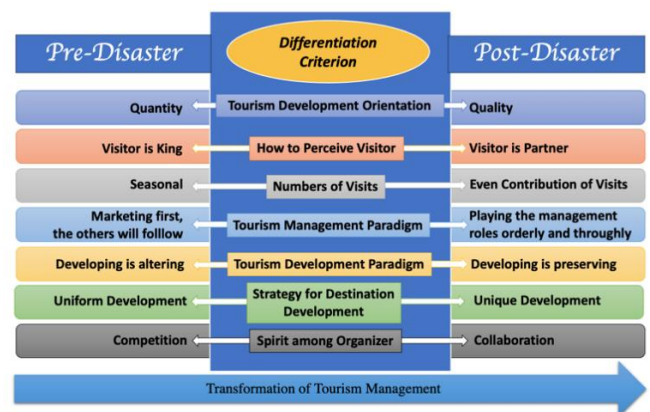


Figure 5. Transformation of tourism management in Sembalun Geosite East Lombok Regency West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

Source: DMO Sembalun’s Document & Researcher’s Modification, 2022

The Sembalun DMO's planning to transform the tourism destination management in Sembalun Geosite has met good planning principles. This is because it has been logical, flexible, and objective [18]. It is understandable and in accordance with the reality. It is flexible because it keeps up with the times. It has been adjusted to the conditions of Sembalun Geosite in the post-event of disasters, i.e., the earthquakes and the pandemic. Lastly, it has been objective because it is based on systematic and scientific considerations. The committee of the DMO defined their specific goals and objectives based on the results of their previous studies.

The transformation of tourism development in Sembalun Geosite has been adjusted to certain tourism characteristics. It has been oriented to a practical application of policy making and future tourism development. The concepts of future tourism development have been sustainable, system-oriented, comprehensive, integrated, environment-oriented, focused on a development that encourages community involvement [20].

4. CONCLUSIONS

The transformation of tourism destination management in Sembalun Geosite is conducted by the Destination Management Organization (DMO) as a response to the evaluation on the previous one. The natural and non-natural disasters are the momentum of the transformation. They lead to the necessity to implement *clean, health, safety and environment* (CHSE) as well as adaptive, mitigative, innovative and collaborative principles. In general, it is conducted as an effort to make the tourism development in Sembalun Geosite fully sustainable. The transformation was implemented by: (1) changing the orientation of tourism development, from quantity to quality, from customer-is-king to customer-is-partner; (2) distributing tourist visits as even as possible; (3) encouraging the tourism management to play their roles orderly and thoroughly; (4) developing tourism based on preservation, not alteration; 5) developing strategies for unique tourism developments; and (6) fostering collaborations among tourism destination organizers in Sembalun Geosite. The transformation is still part of tourism development planning for Sembalun Geosite. Making a successful implementation of the planning requires lots of efforts and collaborations among all stakeholders. Hence, conducting additional research on the collaboration among stakeholders engaged in implementing tourism transformation in Sembalun is imperative for the successful establishment of quality tourism in the region.

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