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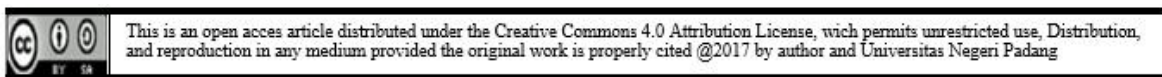
## **Analysis of the Impact of Tourism Development on Economic and Social Culture Community Aspects (Case Study in Batu Cave Gombak District, Selangor, Malaysia)**

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### **Abstract**

Batu Caves is a sacred spot for Hindu people in Kuala Lumpur. It was initially only an ordinary cave which then was built an iconic statue in front of the cave that attracts tourists to come there. A statue of the Muruga God which has 42.7 meters (140 ft) tall has been launched in January 2006, attracting travellers from various parts of the world. The Malaysian government continues to develop the construction in the Batu Caves area. The construction development in each process will have the impacts, therefore there is a need for research on these impacts in order to avoid and reduce negative impacts and encourage positive impacts. This research process uses descriptive research method using a qualitative approach. The focus of this study is the implementation of tourism industry development in it includes the development of tourist objects and attractions, infrastructures, marketing and promotion of tourism, and the development of human resources. The next focus is the impact on the economic and socio-cultural conditions of the community due to the development of tourism and previous conditions. The results show that the development of construction continues to be carried out in terms of both physical and quality human resources. This tourism progress is able to improve the economic quality of the community, especially around Selangor Malaysia. Even the Thaipusam celebration has attracted 1.5 million adherents and made this celebration one of the largest meetings in 2007 in world history.

**Keywords:** Tourism development, Batu Caves, Thaipusam

### **Introduction**

Humans are god beings who are not free from activities (Hermon *et al.*, 2018a), in terms of work, inter-country migration, shopping, recreation and so on (Hermon *et al.*, 2018b). All of these are trips made by a person or group of people by visiting certain places for recreational purposes, personal development, or learning the uniqueness of tourist attractions that are visited in a temporary period. Some are in the region, outside the region, even outside of the country in accordance with their desires and interests. Regional differences in a territory make it unique for those who see it (Hermon, 2016a; Hermon, 2016b). With its uniqueness, beauty and value in the form of diversity of natural, cultural, and man-made wealth, humans are encouraged to travel to certain places that are considered unique. The uniqueness that exists is also called tourist attraction. Tourism activities are all tourism-related activities and are multidimensional and multidisciplinary in nature which emerges as a manifestation of the needs of each person and country as well as the interaction between tourists and the local community, fellow tourists, government, and entrepreneurs.



Every country always develops the economy from various sectors (Hermon, 2016c). The tourism sector is indeed a priority in many countries. The important role of the tourism sector in the economy has been realized a long time ago. This does not only apply in developed countries, but it is very important for developing countries. In addition, there is a very high optimism that tourism is an "agent" that is "powerful" to make social and economic changes to a country (Hermon, 2010; Hermon, 2012; Oktorie, 2017). Tourism has an important role in opening new jobs and investments, changing land use and economic structure, and contributing positively to the economy of a country (Hermon, 2014; Hermon, 2015a). The impact on tourism is that there is seriousness in recruiting and preserving tourist objects because the object is an important source of income for the region. Alcántara *et al* (2014); Hermon (2015b); Kristian and Oktorie (2018) argue that experience is formed through the creation of perceptions that will benefit customers. Valuable experience will affect the customer's quality of life, interest in life and knowledge gained from the event. Therefore, the researchers show that it is very important to get an understanding of what that experience is and how it was developed from the results of visiting different tourist destinations based on a stakeholder perspective (Oh *et al.*, 2007; Oktorie, 2018). Following the argument, recent research has emerged, offering new perspectives from analyzes such as spiritual and cultural tourism experiences (Jauhari, 2010), wine travel experiences (Quadri-Filetti and Fiore, 2012), travel experiences in wetland parks (Wang *et.al*, 2012), heritage experience (Chen and Chen, 2013), factory tour experience (Lee, 2015), tourist shopping experience (Correia and Kozak, 2016) and visitor experience at the Zoo (Musa *et.al.*, 2015).

## **Method**

### **Type of Research**

This research used qualitative method (Hermon *et al.*, 2008), with the aim of the study was to describe and analyze the impact of tourism development on the economic and socio-cultural sectors of society in Batu Caves, Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia. Data analysis in this study uses Miles and Huberman, activities that provide a set of compiled information that gives the possibility of drawing conclusions requires simplification without reducing the contents (Hermon, 2009). Data validity technique used is source triangulation, researchers can check their findings by comparing them with various sources.

## **Results and Discussion**

The concept of sustainable tourism tries to harmonize and reconcile the problems of intergenerational equity, and the goals of economic growth, environmental protection and social justice. This recognizes the need for justice between local individuals and groups, and between residents and guests (Mbaiwa, 2005). Batu Caves is a limestone hill which existed hundreds of years ago and it turned out to be a place of worship for Hindus. Batu Caves has three main caves and several small caves around it. The largest cave is called the cathedral cave with its arches reaching a height of 100 meters. Many tourists go to Malaysia and always capture the moment in front of a large statue in Batu Caves. To visit this place is not difficult because it is only about 13 kilometres on the north side of the Malaysian capital. Not only Hindus can visit temples, but even Indonesian Hindus who go to Malaysia can visit Batu Caves. Batu Caves is a sacred spot for Hindus in Kuala Lumpur and to enter this tourism area, tourists do not need to spend money on admission tickets because it is free. Even though it is a holy place, this is a tourist attraction that everyone can visit. However, be prepared to get tired because there are around 272 rungs that are quite steep so you have to be careful in stepping. The uniqueness of these steps is the number on each step so that the visitors who pass the stairs will know easily how many stairs they have reached. Automatically, by looking at these numbers the visitors will forget their fatigue because they will be more motivated to continue the path up the stairs. Aside from the stairs, quite a lot of monkeys roam and try to get food from the visitors so they have to be alert.

1. The implementation of the tourism industry development includes:

a) The development of facilities and infrastructures.

The infrastructures in Batu Caves are KTM services and also the Rapid KL bus to go to Batu Caves. In addition, facilities such as toilets are also available free, the increasing parking facilities such as 56 bus parking plots and 190 motorbike parking lots. Compassionate place like a mosque is located



- outside the Batu Caves area, then also provided tents about 15 pieces for selling activities along the entrance of Batu Caves and several shops that sell typical souvenirs of Batu Caves.
- b) Marketing and promotion of tourism  
Tourism marketing and promotion of Batu Caves has been carried out by the Malaysian government. There are also many promotion through brochures, leaflets, tourism magazines and websites.
  2. Economic and socio-cultural impacts arising from tourism development in Batu Caves, Gombak district, Selangor, Malaysia, among others, create new jobs as traders around the location of Batu Caves. Many of them sell souvenirs, ingredients for prayers for Hindus, snacks and those who open restaurants with delicious and affordable prices. There are various traditional foods such as thosai, idli, vadaai and so on. Thus increasing the income of the community and can increase the income of the people around Batu Caves. With the development of the tourism in Batu Caves makes the people more creative in making unique and interesting souvenirs and they are also required to master several languages in order to communicate easier with travelers who come to visit. Travelers who want to go up into the Caves are prohibited from wearing clothes above their knees, so the guard of Batu Caves provides a fabric rental service cost of RM 5.00 and after returning the fabric, RM 3.00 will be returned to visitors.
  3. The uniqueness of the Thaipusam Celebration  
The Day of Thaipusam is a celebration for Hindus throughout the world in honor of the Hindu god, Dewa Murugan or better known as Dewa Subramaniam. This celebration is celebrated in the month of Tahi, the tenth month in the Tamil Month.

The uniqueness of Batu Caves is it features three large caves and several small caves and it has 272 steps to get to this cave. A statue also gives an interesting impression to visitors. The statue with a height of 42.7 meters Muruga God has been placed since 2006 after 3 years the statue of the Muruga god in this Hindu belief is declared the highest statue in the world. Batu Caves is also famous for the Thaipusam celebration. This celebration does not attract the attention of Hindus in Malaysia alone but Hindus from all over the world such as Thailand, Singapore, Australia, India and Europe. During the Thaipusam celebration, the regions of Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Johor and Negeri Sembilan became national holidays. The Thaipusam celebration has attracted 1.5 million adherents and made this celebration in 2007 became one of the largest associations in world history. Muljadi (2009) argues that tourism development is an effort to develop and utilize tourist attraction, which manifests itself in the form of beautiful natural wealth, diversity of flora fauna, diversity of traditions and cultural arts and historical and ancient relics. The efforts in tourism development include: (1) Development of Tourism Objects and Attractiveness, (2) Development of Facilities and Infrastructure, (3) Tourism Marketing and Promotion, (4) Human Resource Development (Hermon, 2017; Hermon *et al.*, 2017). Sopa Martina (2014) explains that tourism activities in the Kawah Putih Tourism Park has a positive effect in terms of economic that can increase the income of local people, while the negative impact caused in social terms is the problem of the erosion of the norm values of local people who tend to imitate the behavior of tourists visiting from outside the region even from abroad. The impact of tourism development will have positive and negative consequences, in fact there are 3 (three) main areas that are strongly influenced which are economic, socio-cultural, and environmental (Erawan, 1997)

### **Economic Impact in Tourism Development**

Economic impact in tourism development is the negative impact or positive impact that occurs on the economic environment in community's lives as a result of the development of tourism towards changes of employment and community income, the pattern of labor division, employment and business opportunities. (Sukadijo, 1997) Debbage (1990) postulates, 'oligopolistic structure that increases of the international tourism industry shows the intrinsic value of the profit cycle in explaining how oligopolies can shape the product cycle of a resort. By increasing tourism, it will increase profits for the region's income. Goodwin in John S. Akama and Damiannah Kieti (2007) explains that local economic development requires that the benefits of tourism be distributed outside the local or national elite to those who seek employment in their hotels and agents. This means that the development of tourism will foster an economic growth for the community around the tourism area. The positive and negative impacts of tourism development on cultural aspects according to Inskeep (1991) are: (1) Coservation of Cultural Heritage, (2) Renewal of Cultural Pride,



(3) Cross Cultural exchange, (4) Offer crowding and loss of amenities for residents, (5) Cultural Impacts, (6) Social Problems. Ardi Surwiyanta (2003) explains that tourism activities tend to lead to social action activities, which means that tourism activities are closely related to individual behavior, groups in conducting tourism and the influence of tourism activities in the community.

## Conclusions

Batu Caves is one of the main destinations in the State of Malaysia and it has become one of the centers of worship for those who are Hindus in all corners of the world. Obviously the development of this area is a priority for the State Tourism Ministry. There have been many developments in terms of infrastructure were built so that the Batu Caves area is the economic foundation for the people in the Selangor region in particular and Malaysia in general. Apart from the development of infrastructure, the promotion continues to be carried out by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia through brochures, leaflets, tourism magazines and website. Various impacts are considered if viewed from the aspect of socio-cultural economy such as the opening of new jobs, increasing the economic income of the community even though sometimes only Batu Caves season is crowded. Then in terms of socio-cultural make this region's culture preserved, increasing the creativity of the community in the field of skills and art crafts. But the negative side is the reduced sense of mutual cooperation and the increasing individualism of society due to the ease of materialistic they can get.

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