

# Optimization Mursala Waterfall in Improving Community Potency, Welfare through Local Wisdom in Central Tapanuli Regency

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**Abstract:** *The tourism sector in each country, if it is developed properly, will improve the economy of a country. In Indonesia there is a good number of tourism which can be developed by the local government. Unfortunately, however, not all tourism sectors get the local government's decently sufficient attention. The thing is the same with Mursala waterfall in Tapanuli Tengah regency; it is still deprived of the local government's attention. Mursala waterfall is a unique one because the water directly falls into the sea and it is located between Sibolga and Nias. Special attention is required by the Local Government in developing this tourism by involving local communities and local wisdom to create local community empowerment. In this study the author uses a qualitative approach with descriptive research type of data collection by way of observation, interview, and bibliography study. The result of the study clearly indicates that the tourism sector – if it is optimized involving various community-based tourism programs – may potentially empower the community through local wisdom and create community development around the Mursala waterfall.*

**Keywords:** Community Development, Community Empowerment, Local Wisdom.

## 1. Introduction

The tourism is one of the sectors that is quite strategic in providing income and improving the economy of a region. This can be seen from the value of the benefits felt by the local community. The value of benefits arising from tourism activities is expected to be able to contribute significantly in improving the economy of a region. If tourism activities can be managed optimally, it is expected to develop into industrial activities that are able to drive the economic, social and cultural sectors. The value of these benefits can be in the form of employment in the tourism sector and through the development of economic activities supporting the tourism sector such as: hotel development, cottages, water play facilities, restaurants, transportation facilities, money exchange services and good road infrastructure.

In order for this tourism sector to develop optimally, the participation of local governments and local communities is needed to work together in building tourism areas. Community-based tourism development brings together collaboration from various parties including the government, community, non-governmental organizations and research institutions. In developing the community-based tourism sector, it involves maximally community participation in every activity program. Local communities play an important role in community-based programs.

According to Situmeang (2015), participation is an active community involvement in every stage of development the scenery of the tourists. In addition, the roar of the waves on the beach that is not too large and which is relatively safe is great for satisfying your desire to play with children or friends on the edge of the beach while enjoying the breeze

That feels good. Sitting on the beach, with a cold drink and snacks, is unforgettable moments while on the beach.

Because Sibolga is a city surrounded by the sea, it's no wonder that the climate in the area is quite hot. Sibolga city climate varies between a maximum temperature of 32° C and a minimum of 21.6° C. Rainfall in Sibolga tends to be irregular throughout the year. The highest rainfall occurs in November and December. The islands included in Sibolga are Poncan Gadang Island, Poncan Ketek Island, Sarudik Island and Panjang Island. With regional boundaries being east, south, and north with Central Tapanuli Regency, and west with the Indian Ocean. While the rivers that flow in the city are Aek Doras, Sihopo-hopo, Aek Muara Baiyon, and Aek Horsik.

The Sibolga community consists of various ethnicities, including the Toba Batak, Mandailing Batak, and Minangkabau. But in their daily life, the language used is Minangkabau Coastal dialect (Simorangkir, 1989). With the main potential of the economy sourced from fisheries, services, trade and maritime industry. The main fishery products, among others, grouper, tuna, snapper, bloating, bambangan, fly, sardines, lencam, and anchovies. Still few people use the available natural resources as their livelihood.

If the tourism sector in the Central Tapanuli area can all be managed optimally, it can certainly generate a lot of income for the region and have a positive impact on the empowerment and welfare of the local community. One of the hopes of community-based tourism is that the business in the tourism sector can directly be felt by the local community. In other words, regions that have no small number of tourist destinations will reflect the welfare of the local community; this is still not seen in Tapanuli Tengah

where the people are still living in a mediocre manner because they have not been able to increase their income from the maximum management of the tourism owned by their area.

To create local welfare, local wisdom is needed to empower local people to become more resourceful and independent. According to Ife (Situmeang, 2015), local wisdom is: the maturity of the community at the level of the local community which is reflected in the conducive attitudes, behaviors and perspectives of the community in the development of local material and non-material potentials and resources that can be used as forces to realize more change good or positive.

There is required better understanding by local community in developing local potency and resources to be managed optimally by local government together with local community towards beneficial result for society. The motto *Marsipature Hutanebe* was also launched in improving the tourism sector in this region. *Marsipature Hutanebe* is a slogan issued by the government of North Sumatra, whose meaning is "let's fix each other's villages". This *Marsipature Hutanebe* slogan was coined by the late Raja Inal Siregar, former Governor of North Sumatra, while he is still holding office. This motto persists until now.

The *Marsipature Hutanebe* motto is basically addressed to each North Sumatra regional son who goes out or migrates outside North Sumatra to return to the village and rebuild the village he left behind to make it better; this is closely related to local wisdom, where the resources owned in an area can be maximally developed towards beneficial results. The *Marsipature Hutanebe* Motto finally became very popular in the eyes of the people of North Sumatra. Even not a few of the immigrants returned to North Sumatra (who has been successful) to build North Sumatra (his hometown) to be more advanced and successful.

It is unfortunate indeed if the local government be less active in developing areas that are filled with beach tourism with various community-based government programs, in view of the fact that Central Tapanuli is one of the tourist destinations that are in great demand by tourists, because many of them have tourism potential in it. The Regency of Central Tapanuli also has a fairly strategic geographical location as one of the cities that is very potential in the tourism sector; if it is optimized it does not rule out the possibility of a large opportunity to become a trade and industrial city.

To create and increase economic activities, adequate infrastructure facilities are needed. Infrastructure is everything that supports the implementation of a regional development process. The growing need for infrastructure

development to support economic growth has led the government to provide a better framework for attracting investment and private participation on a measurable scale in infrastructure projects. Infrastructure is the driving force of economic growth. Infrastructure also has important implications for improving the quality of life and human welfare, among others in increasing the value of

consumption, increasing labor productivity and access to employment, as well as a real increase in prosperity. Infrastructure also has an important influence in increasing consumption value, increasing labor productivity and access to employment (Atmaja and Mahalli, 2015).

Livelihoods and the main potential of the community's economy are sourced from fisheries, services, trade and the maritime industry. The main fishery products, among others, grouper, tuna, snapper, bloating, bambang, fly, sardines, lencam and anchovies. This area is a producer of salted fish in North Sumatra; if the development of the tourism sector can be managed optimally, with a view to improving their native livelihoods, it can then integrate the natural resources possessed by Sibolga city as well as the main livelihoods of the local community, such that eventually the regional economy and society will increase.

Therefore, special attention from the local government and the community in developing community-based tourism is necessary in order that the potential of natural beauty and waterfall objects in Central Tapanuli can be managed well to bring local and foreign tourism by digging local wisdom owned by the local community. Ethnic diversity in the city of Sibolga is also an attraction. Various Batak ethnics exist in this region but it is the Sibolga coastal ethnic that unites them. Sibolga and Central Tapanuli Coastal Ethnic is one of the earliest communities of ethnic origins in the coastal areas of the western part of Sumatra island in North Sumatra province, where the community group has a long history as a separate ethnic of "Coastal ethnic". The forms of art and language used in the coastal community Sibolga also have similarities with the forms of art and language used by some other community groups, in that the coastal languages have similarities with the language used by the ethnics of Minang and Batak. The language they use is a combination of Minang and Batak languages.

Local wisdom is one of the foundations in this research where local wisdom that is supposed to be maintained in managing coastal tourism in Central Tapanuli will create uniqueness and special attraction for tourists who want to visit the area.

The purpose of this research is to give input to the local government of Tapanuli Tengah in optimizing the waterfall attraction which as yet has not received special attention. This waterfall tour if managed optimally will have a positive impact on the area and the local community. Natural wealth owned is wealth for the community if the local government cooperates with and engages the community actively in optimizing waterfall tourism, so that the livelihood of the community can penetrate the tourism industry sector which will improve the welfare of the community. The research objectives are inter alia:-

- 1) To include efforts to develop community-based waterfall tourism with a view to improving the resourcefulness and welfare of the community through local wisdom in the regency of Central Tapanuli.
- 2) To engage the participation of the local communities in managing community-based waterfall tourism to improve the economy of the community so as to boost community resourcefulness and prosperity.

Mursala Island is the largest island in Central Tapanuli Regency and is a beautiful hilly area with fresh waterfalls that fall directly into the sea, with a rocky river that divides Mursala Island, and with marine biota diversity.

The potential of small islands in terms of biodiversity, the beauty of natural scenery and the uniqueness of the island can be used for various activities, including tourism; also, the small islands have the potential for the development of marine tourism.

Marine tourism is one of the superior products and priorities in national tourism development with the direction of development consisting of destination recognition, diving, surfing, cruise. The concept of maritime tourism is based on the view of the uniqueness of nature, the characteristics of the ecosystem, the ideas of cultural arts, and the characteristics of the community as the basic strengths of each region.

The potential of coastal and waterfall tourism owned by Central Tapanuli Regency is very large, however, it is not yet widely known, so it requires an active role of the local community in introducing this waterfall tour, so that tourists can find out Mursala waterfall tours. It is on this basis that the researcher wants to invite the local government to cooperate with the local community without losing sight of the existing local wisdom to make known to the world that Central Tapanuli is one of the potential tourist destinations.

It is hoped that the local government will continue to make information through the existing communication media in introducing the Mursala waterfall.

According to Rogers (2003), there are several types of media/communication channels, inter alia:

- 1) Interpersonal channels, namely face-to-face communication with family, neighbors/friends, farmer tools traders, extension agents. Interpersonal channels between individuals are very effective, as there is interactive dialogue and direct feedback. Interpersonal channels between individuals can change the attitude of the audience, taking place face to face between one or more recipients with information providers. Meeting place can be extension office, home, land or market.
- 2) Mass media channels, which are in printed and electronic forms. Printed are rural newspapers, magazines, brochures, books, posters. Electronic are radio, television, internet. Mass media channels have the potential to spread information quickly.

Through this interpersonal channels the local government is assisted by extension agents in transferring knowledge to the local communities to enable them to be partners in waterfall tourism optimization, and through this mass media channels the local government can introduce waterfall tourism, such as through advertising in various local and national media, and distribute information through local and national print media so that through this tourism the benefits are not only felt by the local government but also conducive to boost the resourcefulness and welfare of the local community.

Thus the objective of optimizing the community-based Mursala waterfall the tourism can be achieved.

The development of coastal tourism objects will significantly affect the sustainability of these coastal tourism objects. Conceptually, sustainable tourism must meet economic, social and cultural conditions as well as the environment itself. With this concept of sustainability, ecotourism can be used as a reference in developing a coastal tourism object. According to TIES (The International Ecotourism Society), in the early 1990s the definition of ecotourism was as follows: "Ecotourism is a responsible journey to natural places by preserving the environment and improving the welfare of the community/local population".

Community welfare is the main goal in development. The government in every implementation of policy always makes welfare the goal to be achieved. In achieving the development of a resourceful and prosperous society, the regional government is expected to be active in conducting development communication onto its people.

Development communication has such purposes as providing information, being persuasive (arousing feelings), changing behavior, changing and directing opinion, realizing public participation, and increasing income. These development communication goals are expected to cause changes in society or social change.

According to Nora C. Quebral (Harun and Ardianto, 2011), the purpose of development communication is to achieve sustainable development. Development wants that a mass of people with low literacy and income level, and socio-economic attributes should change; first of all, they all become open about information and motivated to receive and use massively ideas and unfamiliar skills in a short time compared to the process taken under normal circumstances.

The purpose of this development communication is expected, among others, to improve the quality of the local wisdom of a region.

The concept of local wisdom, according to Mitchell, et al. (2000), is rooted in local or traditional knowledge and management systems. Local wisdom is a collection of knowledge and ways of thinking that are rooted in the culture of a human group, which is the result of observations over a long period of time. According to Ife (1995), local wisdom is the maturity of the community at the level of the local community which is reflected in the conducive attitudes, behaviors and community perspectives in the development of local material and non-material potentials and resources that can be used as forces in realizing a better or positive change.

According to Rahyono (2009), local wisdom is human intelligence owned by certain ethnic groups which is obtained through community experience. That is to say, local wisdom is the produce of certain communities through their experience that is not necessarily experienced by other communities. The values of the produce will be very strongly attached to certain communities and those values has gone through a long-time journey, throughout the

existence of the community. Therefore, local wisdom is knowledge developed by the ancestors by way of anticipating the environment, making that knowledge part of the culture and introducing and continuing it from generation to generation to remain and continue to grow.

Attention towards local wisdom in the implementation of community development will bring about a community development process where the idea of change starts from the bottom. There are five things related to change from below, which show the concern for local wisdom, namely:

- 1) Respecting local knowledge.
- 2) Respecting local culture.
- 3) Respecting local resources.
- 4) Appreciating local skills.
- 5) Respecting local processes.

## 2. Research Methodology

The research method used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research method is a research method used to examine the condition of a natural object (as opposed to an experiment) where the researcher is a key instrument, with data collection techniques being carried out jointly, data analysis is inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize the meaning of generalization (Sugiyono, 2014).

The research paradigm that the researcher uses is the post-positivism paradigm. The post-positivism paradigm is a flow that wants to improve the weaknesses of Positivism which only rely on the ability of direct observation of the object under study.

The type of research used in this study is explorative research. Explorative research is research conducted for the purpose of exploration so that it is more familiar with and knows the picture of a social phenomenon more deeply (Silalahi, 2012). The explorations carried out in this study are particularly exploratory.

In this research the technique used to collect data is obtained from:

### Primary data

- 1) In-depth Interview  
In-depth interview is a way to collect data or information by directly facing the informant, with the intention of getting a complete picture of the topic under study. In-depth interviews are conducted intensively and repeatedly. (Bungin, 2010).
- 2) Observation  
Observation is a daily activity of humans using the eye senses as the main aid besides other senses such as the ear, smell, mouth, and skin. Therefore, observation is the ability of a person to use his capacity through the work of the senses of the eye assisted by other senses.
- 3) Focus Group Discussion  
Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a data collection technique that is generally carried out in qualitative research with the aim of finding the meaning of a theme according to the understanding of a group. This technique is used to reveal the meaning of a group based on the results of a discussion centered on a particular

problem. The FGD is also intended to avoid the wrong meaning of a researcher towards the focus of the problem being studied (Sutopo, 2006).

### Secondary data

Other secondary data are obtained through documentation studies. According to Sugiyono (2014), documentary study is a record of events that have passed, the documentation can be in the form of writing, drawings, or monumental works of a person. Documentation studies are complementary to the use of observation and interview methods in qualitative research. The aim is to obtain information that supports data analysis and interpretation. (Kriyantono, 2007).

In this study, documentary studies were obtained from photographs of activities, newspapers, websites of Tapanuli Tengah district government, as well as article clippings containing news about coastal tourism attraction in Central Tapanuli region.

The locations used as the place of this research are among others:

- 1) Regional Government Office of Central Tapanuli Regency.
- 2) Tourism Office in Central Tapanuli Regency.
- 3) Mursala Waterfall Tourism.

Data management technique used in this study is data analysis. According to Bodgan and Biklen, qualitative data analysis is an effort carried out by working with data, organizing data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesizing them, finding patterns, discovering what is important and what is being learned, and deciding what can be told to others. (Moleong 2010).

## 3. Data Analysis and Discussion

Development in the field of tourism aims to promote the national and regional economies (Sayed et al, 2004) as well as to support the state revenue sector other than oil and gas sector. Study of the developmentalist perspective by Pye and Lin 1983 in Nugroho (1997) which affirms that international tourism markets actually contribute a lot of speed, acceleration, and direction of tourism development in developing countries; tourism has the potential to make it possible for the formulation of development strategies in developing countries such that it is considered an "entrance" to the welfare of society. In addition to being a source of foreign exchange revenue, tourism is also felt to have many elements that can drive economic transformation, from the traditional agricultural state character to the modern industrial society, from the condition of the subsistence society to the market-oriented society (Hendarto, 2003).

Attractiveness is a factor that makes people want to visit and see directly the tourism sites. The assessment of this attraction component aims to know the description and form of attractiveness and available resources. According to PHKA (2003a), attractiveness is the main capital that allows visitors to come. Elements assessed on this attraction criteria are uniqueness, sensitivity, variety of activities, salient types of resources, object cleanliness, safety, and comfort. The

elements of attractiveness that are found in each of the attractions including attractions of Mursala waterfall.

Mursala Waterfall is a waterfall sourced from a river on the island of Mursala which has a length of 700 meters and is the shortest river in Indonesia. The flow of water from this river runs directly into the sea through a ridge of reddish granite rock on the edge of the island, with a cliff about 35 meters high. The depth of sea water on the banks of Mursala is about 15 - 25 meters, when approaching the waterfall, there are visible some coral reefs but its visibility is not good. There are several attractions that are not less interesting in Mursala Island over and above the beauty of waterfalls, among others:-

- a) Jambe Island, a shallow waters consisting of coral reefs and various types of fishes.
- b) Labuan Hunik Bay, a spot suitable for diving and snorkeling.
- c) Silabu Island Na Menek, having a rock protruding in the shape of a bird that is located at an altitude of about 70 meters above sea level on a steep beach commonly referred to as Batu Garuda; there is also natural Red Pinang Bonsai on steep rocks.
- d) A lagoon with white sand beach that blends between the island of Silabu-labu Na Godang and Kalimantan Na Menek Island.
- e) Princess Island, a beautiful white sand beach with shallow waters and breathtaking underwater life.

To go to the region is one of the factors that visitors often complain about. Accessibility is an indication that the object is easy or otherwise to reach by visitors. According to Soekadijo (2000), accessibility is a very important condition for tourism objects. Without being connected to the transportation network it is not possible for a tourism object to get a crowded tourist visit. Tourism attraction is the end of a tour and must be easily found and reached. Therefore, there must always be a good and easy way to go to tourism attractions.

The road is an access to tourism objects and the access road must be related to public infrastructure. The condition of public roads and access roads determines the accessibility of a tourist attraction. Access to Mursala waterfall attraction is by fast boats (speedboat). Accommodation is one of the factors needed in tourism activities, especially for visitors who come from afar. The elements assessed are the number of accommodations and the number of rooms. From the results of site observations and information from officials and the surrounding community there is disclosed that around the waterfall attractions there are no accommodation available for visitors. Visitors who come from outside the city usually stay at the inn/hotel in Sibolga, and the next day just continue the journey to the Mursala waterfall attraction.

If people want to stay near the Mursala waterfall, the natives usually give them a place to stay. The population of Mursala island is about 90 families and nearly most of the local people are willing to accommodate the tourists who want to spend the night in the waterfall Mursala

## Optimization of Mursala Waterfall Tour Supporting Facilities

Supporting infrastructures are facilities that can support the convenience and comfort of visitors in tourist activities. Assessed infrastructure and supporting facilities are infrastructure and supporting facilities that are far from tourism objects. The supporting infrastructure assessed includes the post office, telephone network, health center, electricity network, and drinking water network. Supporting facilities assessed are restaurants, market centers, souvenir shops, and public transport. But if the visitors want to stay overnight in the town of Sibolga the facilities available will be more complete.

Health and medical facilities and infrastructure is something that is very important in every tourist area and it is supposed to be able to be the first aid if there are tourists who have an accident while traveling in the Mursala waterfall site. However, the health infrastructure is far from the tourist attractions so it will be quite problematic in case something unwarranted happens to tourists.

Concerning the facilities and infrastructure it is said that a certain tourist once said,

*"Facilities and infrastructures are not yet available which make the tourists reluctant to linger in the tourist area of Mursala waterfall. The beauty of nature here makes the tourists enjoy the air and very comfortable atmosphere. It is necessary for the local government to advance this tourist spot, especially respecting health and medical infrastructure."*

Health and medical infrastructure around tourism sites are inseparable from the active role of local communities regarding the importance of community health development and also the availability of facilities and infrastructure to support public health programs. High awareness of health is reflected in the effort taken by the residents to maintain the environment of settlements and tourism.

Efforts taken by the population to maintain health around the tourism area include maintaining environmental cleanliness, healthy living culture, and provision of clean water infrastructure.

## Availability of Clean Water

Clean water is a factor that must be available in the development of an object for both management and service. The elements assessed include the volume/adequacy of water, the distance of the water source to the object, the easy flow of the water to the object, the feasibility of consumption and continuity. The distance from the source of clean water to the location of the object is not yet close and is very easy to channel. In general, the consumption of Mursala waterfall is not to be worried about because it is suitable for consumption but simple treatment is needed, viz. to boil it first, except for bottled water.

The availability of clean water does not need to be worried because throughout the year, even during the dry season, there is still clean water for visitors. The availability of clean

water is enough to help people and tourists protect their health and the environment.

### Cultural Tourism Object

The town of Sibolga is a town of many people; this designation is not just a motto. The town community consists of various ethnicities, which have diverse cultural wealth. There are at least 15 ethnic groups in Sibolga, namely Batak Toba, Pesisir, Mandailing, Minang, Java, Nias, Chinese, Malay, Indian, Simalungun, Karo, Aceh, Angkola, Padang Lawas, Bugis. Various art and cultural activities to date are still maintained in the Sibolga area, including:

- 1) Sikambang art of coastal communities, which combines music, dance, humming, popular rhymes in the town of Sibolga. This Sikambang art is usually performed during marital ceremony, welcoming ceremony, and festive days.
- 2) *Mangure Lawik*; it is a cultural event that is carried out as a form of gratitude as well as offering prayers for the preservation of the sea, carried out when fishermen will start a fishing season. A variety of cultural events are displayed in this activity.
- 3) *Tor-Tor* dance of Batak community; it is a typical dance art of Batak community that is used at wedding ceremony, death ceremony, and other custom events.
- 4) *Upa-upa*; it is an event that can be nationally equated with a flour meal program, which is essentially a form of gratitude and a time to offer a prayer. Usually it is carried out at weddings and greetings.
- 5) *Gordang Sambilan* of Mandailing community; it is the music art of Mandailing community in the form of nine-drum instruments.
- 6) *Tulo-Tulo*; it is a dance from the Nias community, usually displayed on holidays.
- 7) *Barongsay*; it is the art of the Chinese community, which combines dance and music. Shown together with other cultures in Sibolga town, especially during Sibolga Anniversary.
- 8) *Talempong* of Minang society; it is the art of music and dance that is used in the event of customs, and the big days.
- 9) Tourism Day Event and Sibolga Town Cultural Festival.
- 10) Sibolga Anniversary Event.

The culture that develops generally can be witnessed in various official ceremonies carried out, such as traditional ceremonies, marriages, celebrations of historical days, festivals and others. In general, every ethnic group in Sibolga form own associations which aim to foster ethnic unity and togetherness. Even in these ethnic groups there are still sub-associations such as clans, an association based on the region of origin, and others.

To maintain harmony of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relationships of different customs then there is formed a Communication Forum of Customary Institutions (*FORKALA*). And specifically for the Batak ethnic group, there is formed already the Sibolga Central Tapanuli Batak Community Customary Institution (*LAMBASA-TT*) which aims to develop the Batak tradition in Sibolga Tapanuli Tengah and the activities related to it.

Maintaining harmony of inter-ethnic relations is a form of local wisdom from Sibolga society which becomes the selling point for tourism. This was reinforced from interviews conducted with the local adat chief saying that:

*"The harmony of religion, customs and culture will always be maintained for the continuation of social life in our society; besides that, the harmony becomes a strength for the community in creating communal resourcefulness and prosperity".*

### Object and Attraction of Natural Tourism around the Mursala Waterfall Area

In addition to the objects and attractions of natural tourism in the Mursala Waterfall area there are also potential natural tourism that can support tourism potential. The tourism potential has not yet been managed and utilized optimally by the villagers around Mursala Waterfall area. In the interviews conducted by the author one of the informants said that:

*"The character of Mursala Waterfall visitors ranges from 17-32 years, males and females coming from the area around the Mursala waterfall. But there are some visitors who come from outside North Sumatra province. Usually they know the existence of this Mursala Waterfall orally from visitors who have come to the place."*

They came to Mursala waterfall by a fast boat through two beautiful islands; because of the beauty of Mursala island and Mursala waterfall it is used as one of the shooting locations by Hollywood film directors. The shooting of the film, King Kong, took place on Mursala Island in 2005.

The beauty of nature and the uniqueness of this waterfall is a natural tourist attraction that must be optimized by the local government so that the reputation of Mursala waterfall tourism, known to the world in 2005, to not end in this King Kong film but to continue to be reputed not only in Indonesia but also in the international world.

### Motives and Activities of Visitors

The travel motives of the visitors are very diverse; from the interviews that the author did, some said as follows:

*"Filling off time and leisure time, besides that there are also those who really have the desire to feel the natural beauty of the Mursala waterfall area such as enjoying the scenery and the calm and comfortable atmosphere that is not to be found in urban areas, and the air is still fresh and the water is not polluted. Most of the visitors got information about the place from friends and relatives who had already visited Mursala Waterfall. Visitors who come from areas close to the location generally have visited Mursala waterfalls more than three times, but those from outside North Sumatra usually visit Mursala waterfall for the first time."*

Their purposes to visit Mursala waterfall are varied; some are just enjoy the scenery and fill their free time. From the interviews that the author did, most visitors that came to the Mursala waterfall wanted an addition and improvement of

supporting facilities and infrastructure such as roads, transportation, electricity networks and better services.

They also expect tourism management to be carried out optimally so that the tourism potential of Mursala waterfall can become a leading tourist attraction not only in North Sumatra but also in Indonesia and even in the world.

### Local Wisdom of Village Communities

The Mursala waterfall area is traversed by two interaction islands, namely the island around and directly adjacent to the Mursala waterfall area so that the community interacts with the Mursala waterfall area both directly and indirectly. This interaction is mainly seen in terms of land use and utilization of natural resources and human resources both in and around the Mursala waterfall area. In connection with Mursala waterfall tourism activities there are two islands, namely Puti Island and Situngkus Island.

The knowledge of the people of Mursala Island is still considered lacking; it can be seen from the fact that the community only know about the existence of tourism potential but does not know the manager's plan for the potential. The involvement of the community in tourism activities and planning upon the Mursala waterfall is still not there at all.

From the interviews that the author did with the local people, one of them said:

*"People really want to be involved in the development of Mursala waterfall tourism attractions because they think that if the waterfall is managed optimally it will bring a large income for the local community. People who have been relying only on uncertain incomes will find a more secure job."*

The optimization of local wisdom of the local community is still not made at all. The community wants training in nature tourism guided by the local government by involving local community tour guides for visitors. In addition, the local community leaders also mentioned that the villagers strongly wanted that the Mursala waterfall tourism management to involve them in various tourism activities such as collaborative management with the community in tourism activities at Mursala waterfall.

Basically, every management of natural tourism must be carried out with maximum planning involving the participation of local communities. Tourism planning is intended to increase the resourcefulness of local communities in the social and economic fields. In this plan, however, efforts should be made to avoid social change and environmental damage by providing regular training and socialization to the local community. Maintaining the environmental quality of Mursala waterfall attractions is absolutely necessary because the main attraction lies precisely in a natural and clean environment.

### Mursala Island Community Resourcefulness

Community-based tourism as an empowering approach should involve and put the community actively as an

important actor in the context of a new paradigm of development, viz. sustainable development paradigm.

Community-based tourism is an opportunity to mobilize all the potential and dynamics of society in order to balance the role of large-scale tourism business actors and explore the local wisdom possessed by tourism entrepreneurs, being in this case the community on the island of Mursala.

Community-based tourism does not mean merely a small and local effort, but it needs to be put in the context of global and integrated community collaboration. This cannot be separated from the important role of local governments that is the driver of community-based tourism. The output obtained is long-term where the resourcefulness of local communities will slowly increase. In addition, the socio-cultural level of the community will begin to focus. The potential of the community will be seen and can be maximized to achieve the empowerment of this Mursala island community.

The interviews that the author conducted with the local community indicated that:

*"Basically people want to be involved in every planning of tourism activities that exist together with local governments and participate actively towards the success of tourism activities."*

### Marketing and Promotional Media

Activities for marketing and promotion of tourist attractions that are still not widely known by the general public are serious homeworks for the local government to continue to strive so that tourist attractions can be known to local tourists (Indonesian people) and foreign tourists. One of them is by developing tourism products that are typical of the area.

In addition thereto, by providing information about the existence of Mursala waterfall tourist attractions by way of publication through various publication media, printing and electronic, covering leaflets, booklets, posters, and participation in cultural exhibitions at local, regional, national, and international levels.

However, efforts to promote tourist attractions in the area are not as easy as promotional activities for company products and services. Besides the difference in characters, tourist attractions need to be sold by utilizing the local wisdom of the local community. Promotion of tourist destinations is needed by areas that have a lot of potential.

Certainly the efforts of this activity become very important in the framework of the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia up to the Regional Government Level II. Promotion of well-designed and interesting tourist attractions will certainly provide a special attraction for the users of these promotional media. Additionally, it can also be an extra source of revenue of the region, and encourage the multiplier effect of local economic development around the tourist destination.

The above intimation is justified by one of the local community leaders who said that:

*"The promotion made to develop Mursala waterfall tourism is very complex in that it involves the local government, community leaders, and local communities. If promotion be carried out only by using print media it is rather difficult to be known by local and foreign tourists. I hope that in the near future the local government will be serious in managing this Mursala waterfall so that local people can flourish all the time."*

Promotion of regional tourist attractions is an activity of economic actors in certain economic localities that have the potential of attractive tourism sites. The potential can be in the form of outstanding natural beauty, unique cultural wealth, historical sites, cultural and religious events, and the potential of unique centers of economic activity, trade and investment not possessed by other alternative localities. It is to be noted well that development in natural tourism sites must first be addressed involving existing human resources so that upon optimization the promoting media has its own appeal.

The purpose of this tourism promotion activities should be conceptualized well and clearly in the community development plan towards community empowerment through the improvement of regional economy, so that it will be a barometer for the implementation of the promotional program itself, as well as a reference for money-related activities.

The purpose of regional tourism promotion can be categorized into several destinations such as promoting tourist locality as an attractive and lucrative tourist destination for tourists as well as enhancing and establishing the image of regional tourism in domestic and international markets, spreading knowledge about tourism products that have been developed by the surrounding community and building and fostering effective communication with local and national media and international media, so that it is not only known in Indonesia but also in the international world.

#### 4. Conclusion

Optimization of Mursala waterfall tourism should be carried out by involving active participation from each local community. Empowering people for the better is one of the goals of the local government by looking at existing local wisdom. Natural resources that are available if optimized will bring a large income to the local area.

Good cooperation between local government and local people is a must to improve accommodation and transportation to Mursala town and to introduce Mursala waterfall tour to local and foreign tourists.

Proper marketing and promotion will help provide accurate information about the natural beauty of Mursala Island to introduce Mursala waterfalls. The natural beauty that has been tested and has been recognized by the world as indicated by the selection of Mursala island as a place of filming a Hollywood movie in 2005, titled King Kong.

Local governments and local communities are assets in optimizing Mursala waterfall tourism.

#### 5. Suggestion

The involvement by local government of community in the management of Mursala waterfall tour is still very minimal. This must be immediately taken into account by the regional government in optimizing Mursala waterfall tourism. If the community's involvement in various tourism activities begins to be taken into account it is the right step to introduce Mursala waterfall to local and foreign tourists.

Additionally, medical and health personnel in the tourism sector must be prioritized for first aid if something unexpected happens.

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