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## Empowerment Tourism Village Natural Resources in Improving the Economy of the Community of Pagar Alam City, South Sumatera Province

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### ABSTRACT

Natural resources are something that can be used for various interests and needs of human life in order to live a more prosperous life around our natural environment. Utilization of a resource is determined based on the use of these resources for humans themselves. Therefore, the more useful a natural resource is, the more valuable it will be. Utilizing existing natural resources is a form of empowerment based on local potentials that strongly supports community development. Good natural resources management can improve the welfare of local communities. The implementation of community service activities (PKM) was carried out by using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method and the approach method with related parties, especially the Pagar Alam City Tourism Office. In addition, the collection of data on the potentials and natural resources in Pagar Alam is also carried out through a database search at the Tourism Office. From the results of the data collection obtained, it can be concluded that the empowerment of natural resources in Pagar Alam City can help the community's economic growth. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Pagar Alam City, Pagar Alam City's economic growth in 2021 grew by 4.39%. The highest growth was achieved by the accommodation and food and drink provision sectors at 8.83%. This is an indication of the empowerment of existing natural resources. Pagar Alam with its potentials can be further developed into an international standard tourist village by implementing the empowerments given.

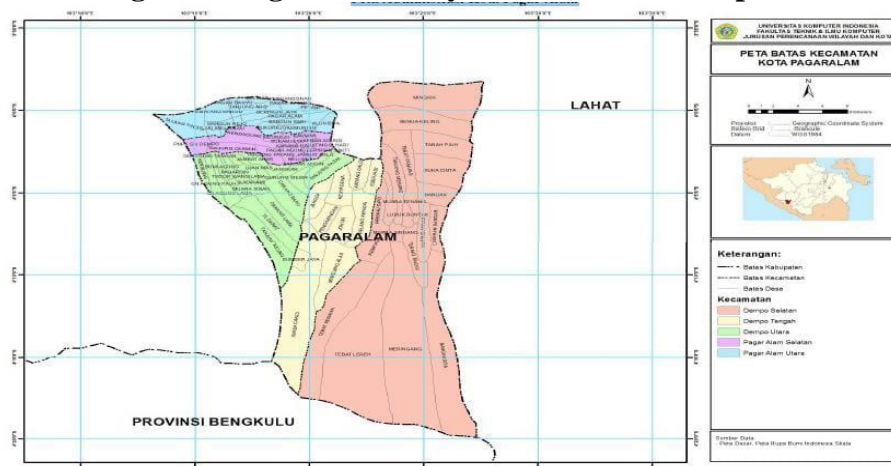
## 1. Introduction

Pagar Alam City is one of the cities in South Sumatra Province which was formed based on Law Number 8 of 2001 (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2001 Number 88, Supplement to the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4115). Previously, Pagar Alam City was geographically located at the position of 4o South Latitude (LS) and 103, 15o East Longitude (BT) with an area of 63,366 South Latitude Ha (633.66 Km<sup>2</sup>) and is located about 298 km from Palembang City and is 60 km southwest of the capital city of Lahat Regency (Pagar Alam Dalam Angka Tahun 2013. Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Pagar Alam).

The location of Pagar Alam City is adjacent to the sub-districts in Lahat Regency, South Sumatra Province, in the North side it is bordered by Jarai District, Lahat Regency, in the south side it is bordered by Bengkulu Province, in the east side it is bordered by Kota Agung District, Lahat Regency and in the west side it is bordered by Tanjung Sakti District, Lahat Regency.

The location can be seen as in Figure 1

**Figure 1. Pagar Alam City Administration Map**



Based on information on Communication and Culture of Pagar Alam City, the number of natural tourism attractions by sub-district are 47 spreaded in the regions of Pagar Alam City. In South Dempo region there are 18 tourism attractions; in Central Dempo there are 6 tourist attractions; In North Dempo there are 15 tourist attractions; In South Pagar Alam there are 2 tourist attractions; and in North Pagar Alam there are 6 tourist attractions. Pagar Alam City has nickname "*Rena Besemah*", meaning Besemah Land. This is believed to be the reason why this city is the cultural center of Besemah with a large number of cultural heritages as cultural attributes of Besemah (Arios et al., 2012).

The vision of Pagar Alam City is the realization of Pagar Alam City into an Islamic Agribusiness and Tourism City. Based on this vision, the main driving force for the development of Pagar Alam City is the field of Agribusiness and Tourism. So far, these two fields have become the mainstay of Pagar Alam City in generating local revenue (RIPPDA, 2004).

Existing cultural relics such as megalithic sites, traditional Baghi houses, customary rules, languages, scripts, tools, and so on. In addition to cultural heritage, there are artistic and cultural activities that still exist and continue to be developed, namely dance, speech, theater, fine arts, music, traditional singing, the annual arts and culture festival of Pagar Alam City, such as the Pelang Kenidai

festival, Basemah Expo / Besemah festival, art studio festival, and other festivals organized by the government. These culture and literature potentials also can attract students of any level to visit Besemah land to study and learn or do research about the areas mentioned. This is in line with [Rohani & Pratama \(2021\)](#), who said that local wisdom was very important to be developed to preserve and enrich students' knowledge about the culture of the local area.



**Figure 2.** The tourism potentials of Pagar Alam City

Looking at the potentials which Pagar Alam city has, it is important to develop the potentials to be one of the main regional income to Pagar Alam city. Due to the empowerment which is still low, then it was initiated that local government and the community to be given empowerment to improve and increase their economic levels and incomes from tourism sectors.

Empowerment in the context of economic growth here was the attention to the growth of economic improvement by exploring the local potential in sectors that are considered strategic and superior in the area. One of the leading sectors today is the tourism sector. This tourism sector has an impact on improving the community's economy through the *trickle-down effect*, which in turn can increase regional income ([Larasati, 2017](#)). This *trickle-down effect* is also supported by sustainable development in the tourism sector in Pagar Alam City.

Furthermore, [DuBois & Miley \(2005\)](#), stated that the basis for empowerment includes:

- a. Empowerment is a collaborative process between the client and the executor of work together which is of mutual benefit;
- b. The empowerment process views the client system as components and capabilities that provide avenues for income sources and provide opportunities;
- c. Clients must perceive themselves as free agents of influence;
- d. Competence is acquired or improved through life experiences, strong specific experiences rather than circumstances that dictate what is done;
- e. Empowerment includes access to sources of income and the capacity to use these sources of income effectively;
- f. The empowerment process is a dynamic, synergistic, ever-changing, and evolutionary problem that always has many solutions;
- g. Empowerment is an achievement through parallel structures of individual and student development.

Natural resources are all materials that humans can find in nature that can be used for their survival. For humans, natural resources are essentially the most important thing in the form of living (biological)

or inanimate (non-biological) objects. Both types of natural resources are used to meet the needs of human life (Soetomo, 2012).

Natural resources are something that can be used for various interests and needs of human life in order to live a more prosperous life around our natural environment. Natural resources can be found anywhere such as in soil, water, land surface, air, and so on. For humans, the nature of natural resources is very important, both natural resources in the form of living (biological) and inanimate (non-biological) objects. Both kinds of natural resources can be used to meet the needs of human life, a country with many natural resources will become a rich country (Yasin, 1986).

Natural resources in an area indicate a livelihood for the community. For example, the potential of highland areas, so most of the people have a livelihood that is engaged in agriculture and trade (agricultural products). As long as the potential of the region is still abundant, it can be used to drive an independent economy like a village community. In addition to meeting the needs of the community, natural resources also have advantages or potential for people's lives. So in one of the verses of the Qur'an, Allah gives a signal that in nature has a lot of resources, which must be enjoyed in human life. And make the best use of it in a good way, the following verse:

Meaning: " *It is Allah who created all that is on earth for you and He willed (created) the heavens, then He made the seven heavens, and is Knower of all things* " (Al-Baqarah: 29)

In surah al-Baqarah verse 29 above, it is explained that Allah gave a gift to humans by creating the universe to be used and made a good lesson. "lakum" or with the meaning for you. In this verse according to Al-Baidhawi's interpretation, it means for your sake and for your benefit in the world by using the earth for the benefit of your body with or without intermediaries on one side. Utilization of these crops is based on the earth, Allah brings out water to grow plants and fertilize plants with various types, shapes and colors (Hamka, 2015). Plants and plants produced from the earth will then continue to be abundant which can be a potential human need. From the potential of natural resources, humans learn to develop, and continue to learn to create opportunities for the better. These natural resources are produced from within the earth, in the form of water that can be used for basic human needs or to provide fertility for plants and celebrities, and in the form of other natural products such as coal, oil, and gold content contained in the soil.

So, every corner of the earth has its own potential, both urban and rural areas, because it has different water and soil contents so that the natural resources produced are different. There are several potentials owned by the village that function as an attraction to be developed, including the potential including; Nature (alternative tourism based on nature); culture, such as agro, crafts, arts, local wisdom, local uniqueness, ceremonies, technological systems and tools; and special potential (Marsono, 2019). With these potential advantages, it can become the background that a village can be developed. Especially for the process towards the welfare and independence of the community by means of awareness.

## 2. Methods

In order to achieve the objectives of this activity, the implementation of community service activities is carried out using the empowerment of *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) method and the approach method with related parties such as the heads of the villages around Pagar Alam city. There were 20 participants attended the *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD), consisted of 16 village head (kades) and 4 officers of Tourism Office of Pagar Alam city. The steps in implementing this training program were:

- a. The licensing process begins with making a permit from the respective universities, namely IAIQI Indralaya and STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagar Alam, where the dedication is carried out, namely at the Pagar Alam City Tourism Office.
- b. FGD was conducted to prepare the place.

c. Preparation of tools and equipment in the FGD

The empowerment was given by giving lectures on the topic of exploring potential resources to increase community's economic growth. The lectures were giving orally by using Power Point as the media of delivery and Questions and Answer Method as the method of discussion. In addition, the collection of data on the potential and natural resources in Pagar Alam is also carried out through a database search at the Tourism Office.



**Figure 3. Discussion with the head of Dinas Pariwisata Kota Pagar Alam**

### 3. Results and discussions

As one of the tourist destinations in South Sumatera, Pagar Alam's tourist attractions must be able to attract tourists and visitors to come Pagar Alam and in its development it can make these tourist attractions as the main destinations.

Tourism has become one of the sectors which contributes much in Pagar Alam economic growth. According to the data of Dinas Pariwisata (Tourism Office), tourism sector contributes Rp. 776.500.000 or 5.2 % to the city's real growth rate in 2017. ([RENSTRA Dinas Pariwisata Kota Pagar Alam 2013-2018](#)).

The success of a tourism development in a tourist destination is very dependent on 5 (five) main factors, ([Gunn & Var, 2002](#)), namely:

1. Attractions; is the main attraction of people to travel, attractions have two functions, namely as an allure, an incentive for people to travel and as a giver of satisfaction to visitors. Meanwhile, according to the Directorate General of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia and Pearce, 1986), attraction, things that can attract visitors are further divided into 2 (two): 1. *Site Attraction* : natural or artificial places that can attract visitors to come such as, beautiful nature, historical places, customs, and others. 2. *Attraction event*: events that can be a concern for visitors such as festivals, exhibitions, parties, sports, and others.
2. Service; are services or facilities provided, including restaurant or restaurant facilities, travel agents, and shops that serve regional specialties.
3. Promotion; is an important activity in tourism development that can be carried out by the government or the private sector. This promotional activity can be done by placing advertisements through public relations activities or providing incentives, such as cutting admission tickets.
4. Transportation; is an important component in the tourism system which also means accessibility or ease of getting to a tourist attraction location.
5. Information; the existence of travel information, information can be presented in the form of maps, manuals, articles in magazines, brochures or via the internet.

The formulation of the strategy for developing natural tourism objects in Pagar Alam City resulted in 7 strategies, namely;

1. Optimizing the potential for the attraction of Pagar Alam City tourism objects which are included as national tourism strategic areas by involving the community around the tourist potentials and tourism associations based on the Pagar Alam City tourism planning document.
2. Increasing promotions to attract tourists to visit by optimizing Atung Bungsu Airport facilities and collaborating with travel agencies.
3. Maximizing the government's role in increasing the quantity and quality of accessibility, infrastructure and human resource conditions related to tourism.
4. Increasing public awareness of the importance of tourism for the progress of an area by utilizing existing tourism associations in the community.
5. Attract private parties or investors to invest, so that they can increase capital for maximum development and maintenance.
6. Make clear directions and strategies for the development of natural tourism to be protected and supported by law enforcement.
7. Guidance to the community on the negative impacts of tourism development. Involving all parties in the development of natural tourism, both the government, the private sector and the community as well as the management.



**Figure 4.** Pagar Alam's Tourism Potentials

From the results of the data collection obtained, it can be concluded that the empowerment in natural resources and potentials in Pagar Alam City could help the community's economic growth. This can be seen from homestays, gift shops, handicraft outlets and culinary places that are growing rapidly in Pagar Alam City.

Natural tourist attraction objects (ODTWA) that have potential as attractions in Pagar Alam City are the Mount Dempo tea plantation area, waterfalls, the peak of Mount Dempo-Merapi, bamboo forests, lime stone, rivers and lakes. With the highest potential, it is located in the Mount Dempo area which consists of the Gunung Dempo tea plantation area, Embun waterfall, Mangkok waterfall, Tujuh (7) Kenangan waterfall, Alap-alap waterfall, Rimau waterfall, Daun waterfall, and bamboo forest (Darfin, 2022). The capacity of tourists that can be accepted by the Gunung Dempo area for each tourist activity is for recreational activities of 8678 people/day and camping activities of 4631 people/day.

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Pagar Alam City, Pagar Alam City's economic growth in 2021 grew by 4.39%. The highest growth was achieved by the accommodation and food and drink provision sector at 8.83%. This is an indication of the empowerment of existing natural resources.

Empowerment that takes place in village communities was to awaken the potential that exists in individuals or groups by providing encouragement, providing awareness of the potential they have in order to be able to process local potential results (Kiki, 2020). So with the awareness that has been raised, the community is expected to be able to be independent to run the economy.

#### 4. Conclusions

Pagar Alam with its potential can be developed into an international standard tourist village. This statement can be seen from: a) The handicraft sector. The handicraft sector by utilizing natural resources is often found on roads leading to and in Pagar Alam City. b) Hotel/lodging/homestay sector. From the lodging sector, there are many homestays, ranging from cheap, affordable to expensive rates. Many people take advantage of their houses/shops to open a lodging business. c) Culinary tourism sector. From the culinary sector, many people sell and market the original culinary of Pagar Alam City, both online and non-online.

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