

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN INDONESIA : CURRENT PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Tourism is now a global industry involving hundreds of millions of people in international as well as domestic travel each year. Travellers are now spoiled for choice of destinations, which must compete for attention in markets cluttered with the messages of substitute products as well as rival places. Then one of the most possible way to develop a tourist area in the developing countries with the maximum in addition to relying on the budget of the government is to involve the private sector in investment activities. The government of Indonesia has set 10 tourism destinations to be a development priority since 2016. However there are still big problems that have to be improved in the tourism industry. The research is carried out to know what the problems and challenges faced. To obtain a clear point of view from the participants as they experienced the phenomenon, in-depth interviews were employed in this study. This study also employed questionnaires to triangulate the instruments. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain the perception of the participants on the tourism industry, while questionnaires were distributed to support the data gained by interviews. The research proved that infrastructure is the most important factor in developing tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Tourism, global industry, infrastructure.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades, the tourism industry has shown sustained growth in both revenues and number of tourists, and has left broad economic, social, cultural and environmental footprints reaching almost every part of the world. Factors underpinning this growth include the growth of incomes and wealth, improvements in transport, changing lifestyles and consumer values, increased leisure time, international openness and globalization, immigration, special events, education, information and communication technologies, destination marketing and promotion, improved general and tourism infrastructure and so on“ (Matias et al., 2007). Touristic activity generates significant economic benefits to both host countries and tourists’ home countries alike. Especially in developing countries, one of the primary motivations for a country to promote itself as a tourism destination is the expected economic improvement, mainly through foreign exchange earnings, contributions to government revenues, and generation of employment and business opportunities.

As mentioned above, the government of Indonesia has set 10 tourism destinations to be a development priority since 2016. The development of these tourism areas is targeted to boost the country's foreign exchange from the tourism sector to US \$ 20 billion in the next five years, from the current range of US \$ 10 billion. These ten areas are Lake Toba - North Sumatra, Mandalika - West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Morotai- North Maluku, Tanjung Lesung -Banten, Labuan Bajo -NTB, Kepulauan Seribu -DKI Jakarta, Wakatobi -Southeast Sulawesi, Belitung Islands, Bromo-East Java and Jogjakarta.

Then one of the most possible ways to develop a tourist area with the maximum in addition to relying on the budget of the government is to involve the private sector in investment activities. Through these activities in the supporting sectors of the tourism industry, it is expected to be able to accelerate the growth of the number of tourists to Indonesia. In fact, the spirit of the government in boosting the tourism sector in Indonesia has received support from businessmen in Indonesia. They want to invest as long as their investment is guaranteed and protected by the government. Therefore, it is the duty of the government and society to work together to make tourist locations in the archipelago more attractive and liked by tourists. With foreign investment in Indonesia, the government's targets in tourism can be achieved, one of which is to bring in 20 million foreign tourists by 2020. However, the development of tourism industry in Indonesia cannot be separated from the problems and challenges.

The purpose of this paper is a review of problems and challenges faced by tourism industries in Indonesia so that improvements can be done by related parties in order to make an important contribution to the Gross Domestic Product.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Building a tourist destination is not a simple thing because modern tourist seeks to have experiences, feelings, not to be subject of a tourist tour, a source of revenue. Success in tourism depends on counteroffer, the even temporary chance to escape from daily routine (Richards and Rotariu, 2009). Jafari (1981) stated Tourism is a study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs and the impacts that both he and the industry have for the host socio-cultural, economic and physical environments. By tourism product Krippendorf states that there is a bundle of tangible and intangible elements offered to consumption and which should bring some benefits to the buyer, meaning to satisfy it (Krippendorf, 1987, p.109).

The tourism industry cannot be separated from the tourism products offered. There are some experts' opinions related to tourism products. Ashworth and Voogt (1990) describe the tourism product as a bundle of services and experiences (Vassiliadis, 2008). Gunn's (1988) model of the Tourist System denotes the tourism product as a complex consumptive experience that results from a process where tourists use multiple travel services during the course of their visit (information, transportation, accommodation, and attraction services) (Murphy, 2000).

One of the most popular approaches for understanding the tourism products in terms of tangibles and intangibles was the one put forward by Shostack (1982). She proposed a molecular model of an enterprise as being made up of a tangible and intangible nucleus surrounded by additional tangible or intangible elements (Jones and Lockwood, 2004). The visitor satisfaction depends on certain characteristics of the tourist product offered, such as transportation, accommodation, gastronomy, attractiveness and cost of the service (Pizam et al., 1978). Medlik and Middleton (1973) conceptualize tourism products as a tourism experience. This bundle consists of five components: destination attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, images, and price. Their "components model" (as Middleton refers to it) has been borrowed by other authors, including Wahab, Crampon, and Rothfield (1976), Schmoll (1977), and Gunn (1988).

Turtureanu (2005) states the different types of tourism products which is a combination of tangible and intangible products can be a thing, an event, or a place which motivates the tourists towards it. There are different ways in which the tourist products can be classified into (1) Natural Tourism Products. These include natural resources such as areas, climate and its setting, landscape and natural environment. For Example : countryside, climate-temperature, rains, snowfall, days of sunshine, natural Beauty- landforms, hills, rocks, gorges, terrain, water- lakes, ponds, rivers, waterfalls, springs, flora and fauna, wildlife, beaches, islands, spas, scenic attractions and (2) Man Made Tourism Products which are created man for pleasure, leisure or business. Man- made tourism products include: (a) Culture ( Sites and areas of archaeological interest, Historical buildings and monuments, Places of historical significance, Museums and art galleries, Political and educational institutions, Religious institutions, (b) Traditions ( Pilgrimages, Fairs and festivals, Arts and handicrafts, Dance, Music, Folklore, Native life and customs), (c) Entertainment (Amusement and recreation parks, Sporting events, Zoos and oceanarium, Cinemas and theatre, Night life, Cuisine), (d) Business ( Conventions, Conferences).

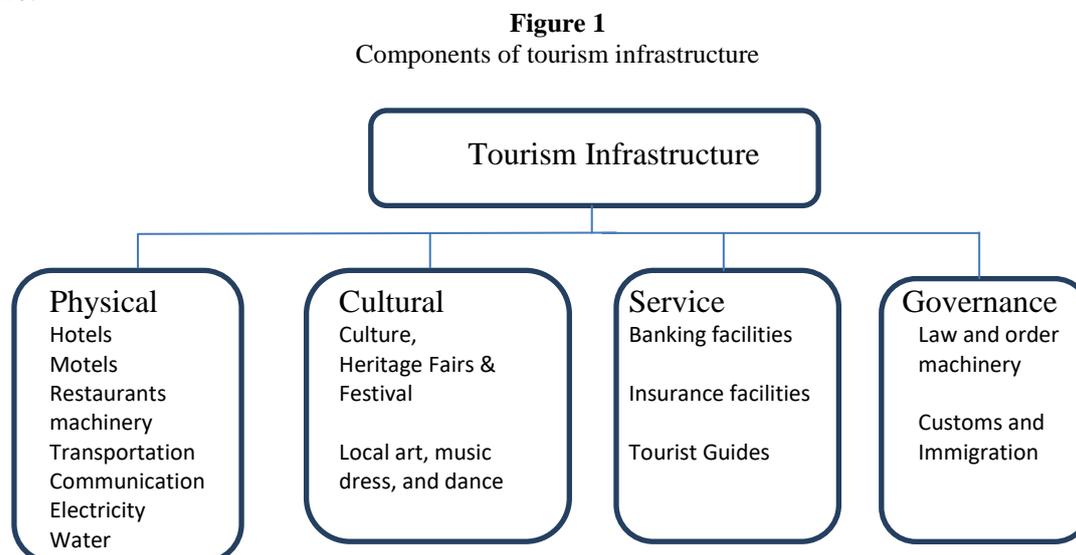
However, if we talk about tourism, this is not only related to tourism products, but there are other things that become important factors for the successful development of a region into a tourist area. Jovanovic (2016) states that tourism infrastructure is the basis of tourism development, as well as a base for utilization of destination resources. The importance of tourism infrastructure is reflected in the fact that it can contribute to increasing the efficiency of production and distribution of tourism services, and, in some cases, such as remote destinations, even increase the supply of tourism services.

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Infrastructure is defined as the provision of public safety, transportation services, medical systems, financial systems, education systems, and other services involved in the population's, as well as in tourists' demand (Ritchie, Crouch 2005). As a component of the regional tourism product, tourism infrastructure is of special importance for long-term tourism growth and the general progress of tourist destinations in providing the required services to tourists as stated by Jovanovic (2016).

According to the Tourism & Transport Forum (Tourism & Transport Forum, 2012), tourism infrastructure is the supply chain of transport, social and environmental infrastructure collaborating at a regional level to create an attractive tourism destination. *Transport infrastructure* in this chain provides destination access to tourists from the international and domestic markets, and includes roads, airports, and railways. *Social infrastructure* relates to accommodation facilities in the form of rooms to accommodate tourists and other supporting physical structures for various kinds of activities and services that attract tourists. This infrastructure includes hotels, convention centers, stadiums, galleries, and other necessary facilities. *Environmental infrastructure* is a natural value, and refers to national parks, marine parks, and reserves which visitors can tour.

In addition to this classification, literature often points to the classification of tourism infrastructure into four categories, namely: 1. *Physical* (Hotels, Motels, Restaurants, Transportation, Communication, Water, Electricity) (Jovanovic, 2016), 2. *Cultural* (Culture, heritage, fairs and festivals, Local art and music, dress and dance, Language and food); 3. *Service* (Banking facilities, Travel agencies, Insurance agencies, Tourist guides); 4. *Governance* (Law and order machinery, Customs and immigration) as seen in the following figure.



*Source:* According to: Raina, A., Ecology, Wildlife and Tourism Development: Principles, Practices and Strategies, 2005. pp. 192

In addition to infrastructure, another factor that is also very important in the success of tourism is marketing. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) warned that the product or hotel service should be developed with the help of marketing so that they can together cause a desire to be purchased and consumed by the customer, while the marketing techniques giving a helping hand in designing and implementing a strategy to achieve the market to ensure a greater number of customers, sales and results. Lechter (2003) argues that the development of hospitality forced hoteliers to look to the market in a more dynamic way and one of the novelties was the need to realize the desires, tastes and demands of the market itself and moreover, we can't forget that only through the provision of service with great quality is possible to maintain high levels of consumption by customers.

Schwartz (1984,p.1) considers tourism marketing as a process of searching and obtaining the optimum market based on actual and recognized needs for the best interest of the company and consumer. According to the definition above, tourism marketing is a process that can best meet both customer needs and maximization of the profit of the company providing tourism services. Another author, from the Romanian literature, Nicolescu Eugeniu in its work, *Marketing in tourism* considers that tourism marketing would be the policy promoted by the tourism enterprise or organization, which, by constantly studying present and future tourism consumption requirements, - by specific methods and techniques - aims at constantly adapting its offer to these requirements, for their best fulfillment and for achieving of a profitable business under the given market conditions (Nicolescu, 1975, p.40). The authors Zeithaml V. A., Parasuraman A. and Berry L.L. in their work *Problems and Strategies in Services Marketing* have identified the four characteristics that define marketing services, thus formulating the so-called principle - HIPI (heterogeneity, intangibility, perishability, inseparability) (Zeithaml, Parasuraman et al, 1985). Nedelea believes that a local tourism

company to be successful in promotion must be: more creative and spectacular, limited to an essential publicity message, to repeat the advertisement (frequency is essential) and to use images (Nedelea, 2003).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs In Depth Interview and Self Completed Questionnaires as data collection techniques. Semi-structured interviews was chosen because it allowed me the opportunity to direct the interview more closely, to have a pre-determined set of questions while simultaneously allowing the interviewees sufficient flexibility to shape the flow of information given (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). May (2001) states that the semi-structured interview gives the interviewer the freedom to probe beyond the answers in a manner which would appear prejudicial to the aims of standardization and comparability. It is also adaptable, flexible, and relatively unstructured and open ended. The interviewer can ask more questions, if the answer does not come up to expectations (Robson, 2002). In addition, Robson (2002) also says that it is appropriate to use the interview when the individual perceptions of processes within a social unit are to be studied. The participants for in depth interview consists of 3 entrepreneurs of tours and travel businesses to gain information about their experience on tourism products, marketing strategy as well as problems and challenges faced in tourism development, 2 officers of Regional Tourism Office, to dig deeper their perspectives on government's programs to develop the tourism industries in Indonesia and 1 official of the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia. The total number of participants for in depth interview is 6 people.

Beside in depth interview, this study also employed self-completion questionnaires as the instrument of data collection which served as triangulation and were distributed to 30 member of society. It is a form of survey which involves written questioning in which it is delivered to the respondents by mail or handed to them personally by the researcher in their homes, at work, school or any other place according to Robson (2002) and Sarantakos (2005). Self-completion questionnaire is employed as one of the research instruments because of its advantages to this particular research. Questionnaire was designed in a semi-standardized one which contains a moderate structure and cut down open-ended questions to a minimum as well as Wisker (2001) suggested to put the most simple and obvious questions at the beginning and make them more complicated since this will keep the participants with us and not make them confused at the start.

In this study, triangulation was employed in order to increase the validity. Before the interview and distribution of questionnaires, the author piloted them to two students and two colleagues, requesting their opinion and modifications were made accordingly. Then, it was known that the open ended questions should be limited to prevent misunderstanding of the meaning of each terminology. Finally, the method of 'triangulation', whereby the authors obtained the information not only from the questionnaires was employed in this study. The above factors are to extent and ensure the validity of the study.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study used interactive analysis from Miles and Huberman (1984). In this analytical model, the three components of the analysis of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification activities conducted in an interactive form with the data collection process as an ongoing process, repetitive, and continuously to form a cycle. Furthermore,

researchers only move between the three components of the analysis, thus forming a cyclic pattern. Data reduction can be defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplification, abstraction, and transformation of dummy data that emerged from the written record in the field. Thus the data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, classifies, directs, disposes of unnecessary and organizes data in a way such that its final conclusions can be drawn and verified (Patton, 1990).

### **Tours and travel business entrepreneurs' data**

Of the three entrepreneurs interviewed, the three said strongly agree if the government will declare 10 priority tourist destinations. Of the three entrepreneurs interviewed, all of them strongly agree if the government of Indonesia develops other areas as tourist destinations. "So far, the people of the world only get information about the beauty of Bali alone, but we have a lot of tourist attractions that can be enjoyed not only by tourists from abroad but also by domestic tourists. Therefore we need to develop other areas in Indonesia in order to become tourist destinations that can have a high value. However, the government should make a mature planning especially in terms of infrastructure because without a strong infrastructure, all efforts will be in vain. "Participants also said that infrastructure is the most important factor in the development of tourism as stated by Jovanovic (2016) that as a component of the regional tourism product, tourism infrastructure is the special importance for long-term tourism growth."

The three entrepreneurs also outlined that the limitation of infrastructure is an important factor to improve for the sustainability of tourism activities, such as the provision of access, accommodation, tourist transportation, and other supporting facilities. There are still many tourist areas that have potential but still not supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure. In addition, facilities and infrastructure built only for local purposes have not been able to serve the needs of the implementation of tourism outside the location. Such as the provision of tourist transport is available in tourist areas only, but the means of transportation to reach the area from outside access is not yet available.

"In addition, based on our experience, tourist sites that already have good transportation system and road infrastructure are generally only available in Java and Bali. That is not all available at tourist objects, many still have poor road access and limited transportation. Currently, Indonesia only relies on the main gate of Bali and Jakarta, whereas almost all regions in Indonesia have enormous tourism potential. Eastern part of Indonesia for example has an amazing nature but the tourism planning is still weak so that the potential of tourism in the area is not utilized optimally. "

In addition to the lack of infrastructure, another problem that is also the weakness of Indonesian tourism products and cause Indonesia failed to compete with neighboring countries is that the lack of product diversification and quality of Indonesian tourism services as said by Krippendorff (1987, p.109) there is a bundle of tangible and intangible elements of tourism products offered to consumption and which should bring some benefits to the buyer, meaning to satisfy it. Indonesian tourism actors are not paying enough attention to develop new products that are more competitive and in line with market tastes. This is also in line with what Turtureanu (2005) declared that the different types of tourism products which is a combination of tangible and intangible products can be a thing, an event, or a place which motivates the tourists towards it.

Another problem that also occurs on the government that most of the Department of Tourism continue to spend funds for promotion abroad but no attempt to organize the object and tourist attraction and infrastructure that becomes very important for access and the needs of tourists. Unfortunately, the promotion is nothing particular. A better, more creative and spectacular promotional program is needed as said by Nedelea in the work *Marketing policies in tourism* believes that a local tourism company to be successful in promotion must be: more creative and spectacular, limited to an essential publicity message, to repeat the advertisement (frequency is essential) and to use images (Nedelea, 2003).

In addition, the lack of cooperation between government, private sector, academician, NGO, and community sectors is also one of the unsuccessful development of the tourism sector in the region as well as at the national level. "In addition to infrastructure, the strategy to be taken is to increase the variety of new products based on natural resources, with the principles of environmental conservation and community participation, targeted planning is a strategy to increase regional and international use of local genius and competition."

The impact of the imbalance development was seen when the government launched the visit of Indonesia year 2008. The number of tourists came is not too many. The policy was actually excellent in concept but not followed by integrative and comprehensive planning pattern with the arrangement of tourism object, repair and procurement of infrastructure.

The three entrepreneurs also agree that in addition to the above issues, security issues are also important factors in the development of tourism in Indonesia if the government wants to invite many foreign tourists. Indonesia will remain attractive to foreign visitors as long as security is fully guaranteed. One of the greatest challenges of tourism industry has always been the security situation of popular destinations. Acts of terror have been shaking up holiday spots for several months now. "Based on our experience with terror attacks of recent years, they generally do have any consequences in the long run. People are still going to travel and will use alternative destinations on a short-term basis." After the recent terror attacks, some countries have issued travel warnings or restricted flights to the respective destinations.

### **Government Officials' data**

From the interview with an officer of the regional tourism office, it shows that the government has allocated over US\$ 500 million for preparing the infrastructure and tourism marketing. "According to the law, there are four elements that make a destination a tourist destination. The first element is infrastructure, second is attractiveness, the third is accessibility and the fourth is the need for marketing, namely marketing and destination imaging. If all these things exist, then the development will go well. The seriousness of the government in boosting Indonesia's infrastructure investment in the field of tourism is visible from the construction of the current Makassar railway line."

Yet there are still many other infrastructure investments that still have to get attention and guarantee. Some examples include highway and tourism accommodation. The same applies to tourism objects outside of Java and Bali. The priority tourism infrastructure development process includes road construction, Water Supply System, and slum area management. It also integrates the development of the tourist area with toll roads in several areas, such as its plan to auction off the Serang-Panimbang toll road project this year to facilitate access to Tanjung Lesung.

Another problem faced by Indonesia is the lack of coordination between local government agencies and tourism stakeholders. For example, the relationship in cooperation between local governments with entrepreneurs managing tourist objects, hotels, restaurants, transportation, telecommunications, tour guides and so forth. The development of tourism in Indonesia is still uneven, especially in eastern Indonesia, so the economic growth rate of eastern Indonesia from the tourism sector is still low.

Beside the above mentioned problem, another one is the implementation of regional autonomy in the tourism sector arise competition between regions. Tourism competition is not aimed at increasing the complementarity and enrichment of tourism alternatives. "Many regions develop their tourism without seeing, connecting and even combining with the development of neighboring regions and the nearest province / district / city. Even tends to increase competition between regions, which will ultimately have a negative impact on the quality of products produced.

Whereas, the development of tourism should be across the province or cross district / city, even no longer recognize the limit due to the advances in information technology. In addition, the specialty and uniqueness of attractions and tourist activities on offer still have not become an attraction for foreign tourist because the products offered are not packaged properly and interestingly as is done by other neighboring countries. "To support the increasing number of foreign and domestic tourists, the government has also enforced visa-free for 160 countries, to make it easier for people to be tourists in Indonesia."

Another element is the empowerment of the community around the destination. "Our society must understand hospitality in order to entertain tourists well, and understand that tourism can improve their economy," as Lechter (2003) notes that we can't forget that only through the provision of service with great quality is possible to maintain high levels of consumption by customers. In some countries, there is still a fundamental lack of basic cognition of the economic importance of tourism as an industry and its positive impact as a potential source of foreign exchange and employment.

Last element but not less important that also requires special attention in the tourism industry is safety. The safety of tourists is among the primary factors for any successful tourism industry and should, thus, be one of the basic objectives of tourism planning and provisions. Safety-related tourism problems, whether real or perceived, exert a negative impact on the reputation of host countries.

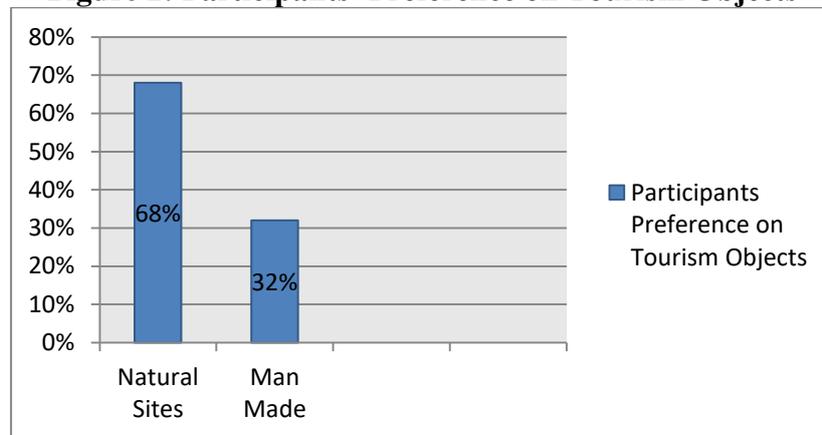
### **Questionnaires' data**

To be able to dig deeper information related to the perspective of students to the student exchange program, authors distributed 30 questionnaires. Triangulation was done to get a better picture on the perspective of the society on the tourism in Indonesia. Of the 30 questionnaires distributed, we know that there were 12 participants work as professionals, 10 were housewives, and 8 were university students. As described above that the questionnaires were distributed with the aim that researchers get more valid data to support their research.

Of the 30 questionnaires distributed, 68% of participants prefer natural tourism such as mountains, countryside, hills, rocks, gorges, terrain, water- lakes, ponds, rivers, waterfalls, springs, flora and fauna, wildlife, beaches, islands, Spas, scenic attractions while 32% prefer

man made which include recreation and games, cinemas, art galleries, business trips, pilgrimages, Fairs and festivals, arts and handicrafts, as shown in the following chart:

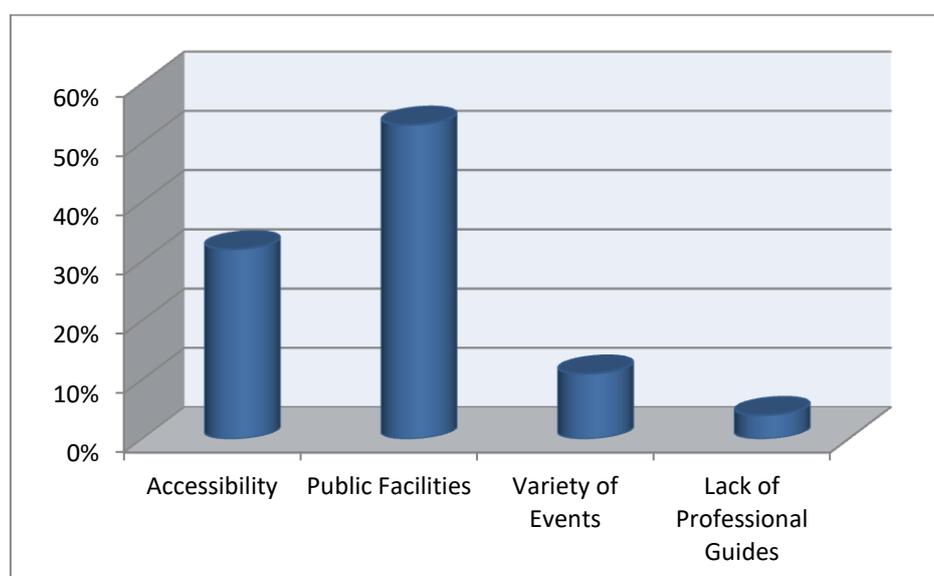
**Figure 1: Participants' Preference on Tourism Objects**



When asked to answer what things they do not like when traveling to a tourist attraction, 32% of the participants said that infrastructure is the biggest problem that related to access road to tourist attractions that are generally in poor condition. Moreover, the destinations are natural sites which are generally located outside the city center. In addition, 53% responded to inadequate public facilities such as the difficulty to obtain clean water, environmental hygiene issues, as well as poor toilet condition.

While 11% of those who like to visit historical places complain about the lack of various events presented such as the heritage fair and festival so that in general museums or historical sites are in less desirable by the society and 4% say about the lack of a professional tourist guides. So far, professional guides in the tourist attractions are freelancers who do not have adequate training background so that they are less skilled in providing information and procedures for communicating with tourists.

**Figure 2: Aspects on Tourism that need improvement**



## CONCLUSION

From the above explanation, we know that infrastructure is the most important thing in the tourism industry. Without good infrastructure, it is impossible to advance our tourism sector. The government must have a commitment to improve the infrastructure and equip the necessary facilities and infrastructure. Coordination between related agencies should be improved so that the development in the tourism sector can mutually support between one region with other regions and not become a competition. In addition, security guarantees are also an important aspect in the development of tourism. For business players associated with the tourism industry, it is expected to create new products that are creative and innovative so that the world of tourism in Indonesia continues to show progress.

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