

DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL COOL BATH (PAS) TIMURAN TOURISM OBJECT TO INCREASE THE INCOME OF MARIAH JAMBI VILLAGE COMMUNITY, SIMALUNGUN REGENCY

Chinthia Gelvani Silalahi^{1*}, Muhammad Husni Thamrin²

¹ Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan City, Indonesia

² Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan City, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: chinthiagelvanisilalahi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

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The Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran tourist attraction has great potential to increase the income of the Mariah Jambi Village community, but this potential has not been optimally managed. This study aims to identify the existing management conditions, analyze supporting and inhibiting factors, and formulate development strategies for the Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran tourist attraction in Mariah Jambi Village, Simalungun Regency to increase community income. The research method used is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out through interview techniques, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed qualitatively using Tourism Management Theory with indicators of Tourism Development components according to Cooper et al. (1995), namely Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary Service. The results of this study indicate that PAS Timuran has attractive natural potential but still faces challenges in terms of accessibility, facilities, and promotion. Current management is carried out independently with community involvement through Pokdarwis, but coordination with other stakeholders still needs to be improved. The existence of this tourist attraction has had a positive economic impact on the community, although efforts are still needed to improve skills and knowledge in sustainable tourism management to maximize its economic potential.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector in economic development in various countries, including Indonesia. As an archipelagic country with diverse natural and cultural wealth, Indonesia has immense tourism potential. One area with significant tourism potential is Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra Province. In this regency, there is the Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran Tourist Site located in Mariah Jambi Village, Jawa Maraja Bah Jambi District.

The Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran Tourist Site utilizes clear and clean water flows as its primary attraction, offering various recreational activities such as swimming and fishing. Located at an elevation of 101 meters above sea level and approximately 14 km from the center of Pematangsiantar City, this tourist site has significant potential to become a leading tourism destination in the region. According to data from the Jawa Maraja Bah Jambi District in Figures 2022, Mariah Jambi Village covers an area of 6.62 km² with a population of 3,204 inhabitants in 2021, where the majority of residents work in the agricultural sector with relatively low income levels.

Despite its considerable potential, the PAS Timuran Tourist Site still faces various challenges. Research conducted by Damanik et al. (2022) identified several key management issues, including:

1. Limited understanding of business and entrepreneurship concepts among management members.
2. Traditional and unprofessional management, particularly in financial management and operational aspects.
3. Unintegrated marketing and promotion systems, relying solely on natural advantages and word-of-mouth marketing.
4. Lack of organizational efforts to establish specialized departments for marketing, human resource management, and long-term business development.
5. Insufficient attention from local government in developing road infrastructure to the tourist site.

These issues negatively impact tourist visitation to the PAS Timuran Tourist Site. This situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that struck Indonesia since late 2020, causing activity and travel restrictions that resulted in a significant decrease in visitor numbers. This directly impacted the income of local communities dependent on tourism.

Road infrastructure in the Jawa Maraja Bah Jambi District also remains a primary constraint in developing this tourist site. Data from the Simalungun Regency Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) shows that in 2021, 68.82 percent of roads in

the district were in severely damaged condition. Only 3.60 km of roads were in good condition, 7.0 km in moderate condition, and 1.6 km in poor condition. This significantly complicates tourist access to the site.

Tourism sector development, including the PAS Timuran Tourist Site, has significant potential to improve community welfare. This aligns with experts' opinions such as Spillane (1994) and Yoeti (1997), who emphasize tourism's contribution to job creation, increased community income, and infrastructure development. Furthermore, Isdarmanto (in Ashoer et al., 2022) highlights the macroeconomic impacts of tourism development, including expanded business opportunities, employment, income distribution, and national income enhancement.

Tourism development in Indonesia is supported by a robust legal framework, including Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism (Undang-Undang Nomor 10 Tahun 2009 tentang Kepariwisataaan) and Government Regulation Number 50 of 2011 on the National Tourism Development Master Plan 2010-2025 (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 50 Tahun 2011 tentang Rencana Induk Pembangunan Kepariwisataaan Nasional Tahun 2010-2025). Both regulations emphasize the importance of tourism development in improving community welfare, creating employment, and increasing regional income..

2. METHODS

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to explore and explain in depth the phenomena related to the development of the Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran Tourist Site in Mariah Jambi Village, Simalungun Regency. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from informants and observed behaviors, as proposed by Moleong (2013). The research location is in Mariah Jambi Village, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra Province, which is the site of the Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran Tourist Site.

Informant determination in this study used purposive sampling technique, where informants were selected based on the consideration that they possess knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. Key informants include the Head of Mariah Jambi Village, representatives from the Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy Office of Simalungun Regency, tourist site managers and business actors or Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS), and tourist site visitors. A total of 13 informants were involved, consisting of one Village Head, one office representative, six managers and business actors, and five tourist site visitors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Existing Conditions

Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran, located in Mariah Jambi Village, Simalungun Regency, is a natural tourist attraction with significant potential for increasing local community income. This research examines the existing management conditions of the tourist site using a tourism component analysis approach that includes attractions, accessibility, amenities, ancillary services, and marketing and promotion.

a. Tourist Attractions

PAS Timuran offers a main attraction in the form of natural bathing pools formed by hundreds of clear water springs. This natural phenomenon creates small river flows that run throughout the year with fresh and cool water. The destination is equipped with deep natural pools, allowing visitors to swim and adventure. Additionally, there is a special fishing pool that adds variety to recreational activities.

One visitor, Mrs. Juraidah, provided positive testimony: *"First, it's affordable here, just paying for parking. There's parking for motorcycles or odong-odong (traditional vehicle). Then, there are many bathing areas for children, teenagers, and adults. The water is natural, clean, and cool"* (Interview on May 14, 2024).

As an additional attraction, this tourist site provides Water Play for children, consisting of mini pools with challenging and entertaining water rides. This area is equipped with floating balls, large water buckets, and slides, offering a fun water recreation experience.

Besides natural attractions, PAS Timuran also offers cultural attractions through traditional dance studios that perform North Sumatran traditional dances. These performances are held on the PAS Timuran performance stage during national events in Indonesia.

b. Accessibility to Tourist Site

Accessibility to PAS Timuran still faces several challenges. The tourist site is located about 14 km from Pematangsiantar City center, with approximately 30 minutes travel time by motor vehicle. Although the route to the tourist site passes through a fairly wide provincial road, there are still many potholes and damage that could endanger drivers' safety.

The main accessibility issues include:

1. Lack of road signs
2. Existing signs are outdated
3. Absence of lighting along the road to the tourist site
4. Poor road conditions, especially after entering Mariah Jambi Village area

Mr. Muhammad Hayat Ginting, a visitor, expressed his complaint: *"The bridge is scarier, really scary with the road conditions just fitting for cars and no traffic signs, to get here we got lost too, there were no road directions..."* (Interview on May 14, 2024).

The Chairman of PAS Timuran Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), Mr. Mhd. Amin, also acknowledged the infrastructure limitations: *"From pre-independence era, the infrastructure access activities are still at twenty-five percent capability. Because in our village since independence, there hasn't been any asphalt, how about the government? Well... since the New Order era until now, clearly Mariah Jambi Village hasn't had any asphalt like other villages"* (Interview on May 26, 2024).

c. Amenities and Supporting Facilities

PAS Timuran is equipped with several supporting facilities, though there are still many shortcomings that need improvement. Available facilities include:

1. Spacious parking area
2. Simple food stalls
3. Five prayer rooms
4. Public toilets

5. Rest cottages

However, there are several notable deficiencies in public facilities, including:

1. Lack of strong security facilities such as police stations
2. Poor condition of public toilets far from cleanliness standards
3. Limited and poorly managed waste bins

d. Ancillary Service

PAS Timuran is currently managed independently by private parties, namely individuals or land-owning families. The involvement of the Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy Office of Simalungun Regency is still limited to promotion and visitor count recording.

Local communities participate through the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), responsible for coordinating tourism activities, maintaining environmental cleanliness, and independently promoting the tourist site. However, coordination between Pokdarwis, local government, and private managers is still not optimal.

e. Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion efforts for PAS Timuran are still not optimal and well-organized. According to Mr. Asian Damanik, PAS management secretary: *"Promotion from radio but that was long ago, just once. When we were about to hold a sub-district level competition, as for media, there was TV, they would come and say we'll promote this, sir, like that. That was from TV Efarina. Then in 2017, there was TPI or MNC... from management, it's mostly just word of mouth... mostly visitors sharing on social media"* (Interview on May 26, 2024).

Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube do play a role in promoting PAS Timuran, but their role is still limited to individual efforts from tourists. The Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy Office of Simalungun Regency also contributes to promoting PAS Timuran through their official social media platforms.

f. Tourist Visits and Tourism Object Income

1. Tourist Visits

PAS Timuran has recorded fluctuating visitor numbers in recent years. Below is the tourist visit data from 2019 to 2023:

Table 1. Total Visit Traveler Objects PAS Timuran Tourism

Year	Domestic	International
2019	39,966	-
2020	14,200	-
2021	15,232	-
2022	170,087	-
2023	147,078	-

Source : Department of Culture Tourism and Creative Economy

In 2019 , the number of domestic tourists reached 39,966 people. However , there was decline significant in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic . The year 2022 shows improvement rapid to 170,087 people, but return decreased

in 2023 to 147,078 people.

Table 2. Total Visit PAS Tourists 2024 (January-April)

Date	Amount Traveler
January 2024	28,139
February 2024	10,849
March 2024	3,753
April 2024	56,278
Total	99,019

Source : PAS Secretariat , 2024

On four month First In 2024, PAS Timuran recorded a total of 99,019 visits tourists , showing trend positive in development tourist area . The figure is is accumulation visit traveler domestic origin from various areas around Regency Simalungun , Pematangsiantar City , and Medan City.

2. Income Objects Tour

PAS Timuran implements system management integrated and involving income public around . Source income main originate from retribution Ticket parking and rental facilities . Here is details source income temporary :

Table 3. Sources Income Temporary

No	Source Income Temporary	Amount
1.	Parking	(8)
2.	Food stalls	(24)
3.	Toilet	(15)
4.	Water Play	(1)
5.	Cottage	(24)
6.	Tire Rental	(9)
7.	Street vendor	(13)

Source : Observation Field , 2024

The parking fee system is divided into three categories:

- Motorcycles (two-wheeled): IDR15,000
- Four-wheeled vehicles or cars: IDR 30,000
- Large vehicles (six-wheeled trucks or buses): IDR 50,000

Parking fee revenue is divided according to the following scheme:

- 20% goes to PAS Timuran treasury for operational costs and development
- 40% is given to parking lot owners
- 40% is distributed among workers involved in parking management

The economic impact of PAS Timuran on the Mariah Jambi Village community is quite significant. Several business operators' testimonies show substantial income increases:

Source 1: " Roughly, monthly income at minimum is around IDR 15,000,000. That's because I have many businesses" (Interview with Mr. Abdul Syukur Tambunan on May 14, 2024)

Source 2: "Very significant, satisfying, approximately twenty million per month" (Interview with Mr. Dermawan Tambunan, on June 06, 2024)

Source 3: "For rough calculations per day around IDR 200,000, for net income after deducting capital around IDR 80,000 to IDR 100,000" (Interview with Mrs. Nurhaida on May 14, 2024)

Mr. Abdul Syukur Tambunan also emphasized PAS Timuran's positive impact on the surrounding community: *"It helps, not just us, meanwhile people who have businesses are also helped, why? How are they helped? One of them is through employment, all this time, excuse me for saying, because this Mariah Jambi nagori area has many agricultural areas, their work for example: raking whatever, raking fields right, it's hot, how much is the salary? If there they get forty thousand per day, at this tourist site they can get seventy to eighty thousand, that's very helpful, right? So, for business owners it's clearly profitable, outside of business owners it's also profitable. All along from kilometer eight until entering this tourist area are helped. Like selling gasoline, tire repair, cigarette stalls, whatever, ah let's stop to buy cigarettes there first, right, they're helped. For business owners at this PAS tourist site, it's clearly helpful, that's positive... even those who don't have businesses here are helped"* (Interview with Mr. Abdul Syukur Tambunan on May 14, 2024).

3.2 SWOT Analysis

a. Strengths

1. Unique natural beauty featuring hundreds of clear spring water sources and fresh small river streams.
2. Various types of natural bathing pools suitable for different age groups.
3. Additional attractions such as Water Play for children and fishing ponds.
4. Active involvement of local communities in tourism management and service provision.
5. Affordable admission fees (based solely on vehicle parking).
6. Presence of cultural attractions in the form of traditional dance studios.
7. Potential for local culinary tourism development from village fish pond cultivation.

b. Weaknesses

1. Poor accessibility, with damaged road conditions and lack of directional signs.
2. Inadequate supporting facilities, particularly dirty and poorly maintained public toilets.
3. Insufficient waste bins and poor cleanliness management.
4. Limited marketing and promotional efforts for the tourist attraction.
5. Minimal security facilities such as police posts.
6. Lack of community skills and knowledge in sustainable tourism management.
7. Absence of adequate tourist information centers.
8. Insufficient coordination among stakeholders in tourist attraction development.

c. Opportunities

1. Potential increase in tourist visits, especially post-COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Opportunities to develop new tourist attractions and improve existing facilities.
3. Potential collaboration with private parties or investors for tourism development.
4. Opportunities to enhance promotion through social media and other digital platforms.
5. Potential to attract international tourists through the development of facilities and services that meet international standards.

d. Threats

1. Competition with other tourist attractions around Simalungun Regency.
2. Risk of environmental damage due to poor waste management and lack of visitor awareness.
3. Potential decline in tourist interest due to inadequate facilities and poor accessibility.
4. Economic uncertainty that may affect tourist visits.
5. Risk of natural disasters or climate change that may affect spring water conditions.

3.3 Development Strategy for the Natural Cool Baths (PAS) Timuran Tourist Attraction

In formulating the development strategy for PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction, I will refer to the tourism development model proposed by Cooper et al. (1995). This model encompasses four main component indicators: attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services.

3.3.1 Development of Tourist Attractions

Tourist attractions are the primary components that draw visitors to a tourism destination. In the context of PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction, the main attraction is its natural beauty, featuring cool and clear natural springs and bathing areas. The strategy for developing tourist attractions at PAS Timuran must align with the principles outlined in Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, particularly Article 5, which states that tourism development must consider cultural diversity and local wisdom.

In the case of PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction, the strategy for developing tourist attractions can be implemented through:

1. The first strategy is to maintain and preserve the natural beauty of the springs and natural bathing areas to maintain their pristine condition. By preserving its natural beauty, PAS Timuran can attract tourists seeking pristine and natural tourism destinations. However, these conservation efforts must be balanced with proper regulations regarding visitor capacity limits, waste and drainage management, and protection of the surrounding ecosystem.
2. Developing new tourist attractions such as designated picnic areas and other nature adventure facilities that align with ecotourism concepts. Examples that can be adopted are similar to those at Silalahi Campground, located in Paropo Village, Silalahi Sabungan District, Dairi Regency, which features various nature adventure facilities such as *camping grounds* and *flying fox* that attract tourists. The development of these new tourist attractions can enrich visitors' experiences and attract a broader market segment, especially for tourists seeking nature adventure activities.

3. Exploring and promoting the cultural wealth and local traditions of Mariah Jambi Village as additional attractions. This strategy aligns with the potential of Mariah Jambi Village, where there are opportunities to develop local culinary tourism from village fish pond cultivation. Furthermore, cultural tourist attractions such as the development of traditional dance studios in Mariah Jambi Village can also become main attractions. By exploring and promoting local culture through culinary arts and traditional performances, PAS Timuran can offer tourists a richer and more authentic tourism experience while supporting the preservation of local community culture. Organizing regular cultural events such as art festivals, culinary events, or traditional performances can also be a strategy to attract tourists. A successful example is the Lake Toba Festival held annually in Toba Samosir Regency, where this cultural event successfully attracts both domestic and international tourists. Organizing cultural events such as pond fish culinary festivals or traditional dance festivals in Mariah Jambi Village can become unique attractions for tourists while promoting local cultural uniqueness and improving the economy of the surrounding community.

3.3.2 Improvement of Accessibility

Accessibility is a crucial factor that can influence tourist visits to a destination. Therefore, the strategy for improving accessibility to PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction needs to be implemented comprehensively and in coordination with various relevant parties. This aligns with Isdarmanto's (2017) recommendation emphasizing the importance of accessibility in sustainable tourism destination development. Therefore, strategies to improve accessibility to PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction include:

Coordinating with local government to improve road conditions leading to the tourist attraction, such as paving, road hole repairs, and periodic maintenance. This strategy aligns with the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Simalungun Regency 2021-2026, where one of the local government's visions and missions lies in the fifth mission of tourism development and the seventh mission of improving infrastructure quality and accessibility to support tourism development. The RPJMD includes programs for repairing and constructing environmental roads, village roads, and strategic roads connecting tourist destinations in Simalungun Regency.

Increasing the availability of clear and informative road signs and adequate street lighting. The presence of good road signs and street lighting is an important aspect of improving tourist accessibility to a destination. Local governments can allocate special budgets for installing road signs and street lighting, especially on strategic routes to PAS Timuran tourist attraction.

Pursuing the provision of public transportation or special tourist vehicles serving routes to tourist attractions. The availability of public transportation or special tourist vehicles can be a solution for tourists who don't have private vehicles or are unfamiliar with routes to tourist attractions. Mariah Jambi Village can learn from the success of other tourist attractions in North Sumatra, such as Lake Toba, which has successfully improved accessibility through road

improvements, special transportation provision, and intensive digital promotion.

3.3.3 Provision of Amenities and Supporting Facilities

Amenities and supporting facilities are important components that can enhance tourists' comfort and experience while visiting a tourist destination. In efforts to increase attraction and comfort for tourists visiting PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction, the provision of adequate amenities and supporting facilities becomes very important. Furthermore, the provision of other supporting amenities such as shopping areas for souvenirs and local products typical of Simalungun Regency, accommodation facilities like tourist cottages or small resorts, improvement of public facilities such as toilets, places of worship, and clean rest areas, as well as entertainment facilities such as cultural performances or children's play areas are also important aspects to consider.

This strategy aligns with Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism, particularly Article 14 letter (f) regarding "provision of accommodation." Then, in developing amenities and supporting facilities, managers must ensure these facilities are environmentally friendly, align with sustainable tourism concepts, and do not damage local wisdom. Additionally, it's important to involve local community participation in the development and management process of these facilities to provide economic benefits to local communities.

3.3.4 Strengthening Institutions, Partnerships, and Human Resource Capacity Building

Strengthening institutions, partnerships, and human resource capacity building are crucial aspects in supporting the sustainable and community-based development of PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction. This aligns with Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism, where Article 5 states that tourism is conducted with the principle of empowering local communities.

Applicable strategies include strengthening the organizational structure and governance of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) PAS Timuran with clear task division, transparent reporting systems, and regular evaluation mechanisms. Additionally, establishing partnerships with Simalungun Regency Government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector in providing infrastructure, marketing, and community empowerment programs is also key to success.

To improve human resource capacity, it's necessary to regularly organize training and workshops for managers and communities regarding tourism management, entrepreneurship, marketing, and service excellence. Through strategies from the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Creative Economy of Simalungun Regency, regular socialization is also conducted annually to communities around tourist destinations. Establishing partnerships with tourism education or training institutions is also important to provide sustainable mentoring and knowledge transfer. Furthermore, the Head of Mariah Jambi Village plans to implement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs by inviting companies around the village to be involved in developing PAS Timuran Tourist Attraction, both in terms of funding and community empowerment.

4. CONCLUSION

This research indicates that the Natural Cool Bath (PAS) Timuran Tourist Attraction in Mariah Jambi Village, Simalungun Regency, has significant potential as a nature tourism destination, with its main attraction being the beauty of natural springs and natural bathing areas. The presence of this tourist attraction has created positive economic impacts for the local community, such as increased income through the tourism sector. However, various challenges exist, including poor accessibility, inadequate supporting facilities, suboptimal marketing, and limited human resource capacity in sustainable tourism management.

SWOT analysis identifies that PAS Timuran has strengths in its natural beauty and community involvement in management. However, weaknesses such as poor road infrastructure, minimal supporting facilities, and lack of promotion require attention. Opportunities to increase tourist visits can be achieved through the development of new attractions, improved accessibility, and enhanced facilities. Threats such as competition from other destinations and environmental damage due to poor waste management need to be anticipated.

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