



The Sumenep Government's Tourism Diplomacy Strategy and its Impact on the Sumenep's Economic Growth in 2021—2023

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Abstract

Diplomacy activities in its implementation are not only carried out by the state with the central government as the main actor. In an effort to achieve regional development interests and goals in the fields of culture, tourism and economy, for example, district governments (pemda) also play an important role in practicing diplomacy. The Sumenep regency government is currently one of the districts in Indonesia that is very active in conducting tourism diplomacy. In developing the tourism sector, the Sumenep regency government applies a pentahelix strategy, which involves the involvement of five important elements in tourism: government, academics, bureaucracy, entrepreneurs and the media. In addition, in facilitating the internationalization of tourism, the Sumenep regency government specifically conducts paradiplomacy with international circles. This study found that the tourism diplomacy strategy carried out by the Sumenep regency government is effective in bringing in domestic and foreign tourists, which then has a significant impact on increasing the economy of the Sumenep regency.

Keywords: Economic growth, Sumenep government, Tourism diplomacy

Introduction

Economic growth is an absolute prerequisite for the prosperity of a region. The more a region's economy grows, the more opportunities for the region to become prosperous. One of the driving sectors of regional economic growth is tourism. Recently, many local governments in Indonesia have seriously worked on the tourism sector and contributed significantly to the growth of the Indonesian economy. Tourism development in a region with the local government as the driving force certainly requires a precise strategy that is expected to contribute to the promotion of the tourism sector in the region. Each local government has its own strategy in advancing the tourism sector. As long as it does not contradict the constitution and positive law, the state will never prevent local governments from launching strategies that are believed to be effective in making tourism a catalyst for the nation's economic growth.

This is in line with the vision of the central government with the Ministry of Tourism as the leading sector which considers that the tourism sector is the foundation of the government to reduce poverty in Indonesia. As a follow-up, the central government in recent times has taken positive steps to promote the tourism sector by encouraging the spread of new tourism destinations in various regions and at the same time the quality and tourism destinations in Indonesia have also continued to be improved. More concretely, the government has established five of the ten super-priority tourism destinations such as Lake Toba, Borobudur, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo, and Likupang. Moreover, the government is also

serious about developing destinations such as Maritime Wakatobi, Raja Ampat, and so on (Risfil, 2024).

The more quality tourism destinations that are built and evenly distributed in the regions, it is likely to attract domestic and foreign tourists, causing a double effect such as the birth of new jobs, the growth of the creative, micro, small and medium economic sectors which then contribute to the national economy. Based on data released by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, the tourism sector in 2021 contributed 2.3 percent to Indonesia's gross domestic product. In 2022 the contribution of tourism to Indonesia's GDP increased to 3.6 percent and in 2023 the contribution of the tourism sector increased again to 3.9 percent of Indonesia's gross domestic product. The increasing contribution of tourism to the national GDP cannot be separated from the factor of the soaring number of Nusantara tourists and foreign tourists who carry out tourism activities in tourism destinations in Indonesia. Based on the data, the number of domestic tourist visits in 2023 reached 749.11 million trips from the target of 1,200-1,400 million trips. While foreign tourists visiting Indonesia in 2023 reached 11.68 million visits from the target of 6–8.5 million visits. This data clearly shows that tourism in Indonesia is in a positive trend so that it has a significant impact on national economic growth (Ministry of Tourism, 2024).

The government's commitment to advancing the tourism sector inevitably makes local governments both at the provincial and district / city levels actively make great efforts such as conducting paradiplomacy by establishing communication and partnerships with international parties to support the development of the tourism sector in the region. One of them is the provincial government of East Java, which based on data in 2023 became the origin province that contributed as much as 24.59% to the tourism sector development to the country and also became the main destination province that contributed 24.98% of Nusantara tourists with the highest number of Nusantara tourist trips in Indonesia (Ministry of Tourism, 2024).

In order to promote tourism potential in East Java, the East Java Provincial Government authorities are actively engaged in international diplomacy to introduce tourism potential in East Java. For example, on November 19, 2024, East Java Acting Governor Ady Karyono welcomed 10 delegates from several countries, including the Ambassador of Romania to Indonesia, H.E. Dan-Adrian Balanescu and the Deputy Ambassador of Denmark to Indonesia, Per Brixen. They visited the East Java governor's office at the Grahadi State Building in Surabaya to get to know more about the potential of culture, tourism and superior commodities of East Java (East Java Province Government, 2024).

This constructive thing is apparently also contagious in the scope of the Sumenep District Government, which in its implementation is quite agile in conducting paradiplomacy in order to promote the tourism potential, culture and regional attractiveness of Sumenep both to national and international circles. A more detailed explanation of the Sumenep district government's paradiplomacy will be presented in the next sub-chapter.

The Sumenep regency government (Pemkab Sumenep) is one of hundreds of local governments in Indonesia that explicitly views tourism as important for regional development. In an interview with the researcher, the Sumenep regent explicitly stated that tourism is the locomotive for regional economic growth (Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo, personal interview, June 4, 2024). As a follow-up, the Sumenep regency government is seriously developing the tourism sector. In realizing tourism development, the Sumenep regency

government has its own way of distinguishing it from other local governments. This can be seen from the tourism sector development strategy and the diplomacy strategy applied by the Sumenep regency government in promoting the tourism sector that has previously been built.

Furthermore, the Sumenep regency government is one of the local governments in Madura Island, East Java, which has recently been aggressively campaigning and internationalizing the field of tourism and culture. In realizing its tourism potential campaign, the Sumenep regency government conducts tourism diplomacy to many groups by involving parties such as mass media (national and international), entrepreneurs, community leaders, religious leaders, communities, stakeholders in the tourism sector, culture and creative economy through a variety of varied activities that attract the interest of domestic and foreign communities.

Geographically, Sumenep district is an archipelago district consisting of 27 sub-districts, 19 mainland sub-districts and 8 island sub-districts as well as 332 villages/sub-districts with a total area of 2,093.47 km². Specifically, Sumenep district also has a total of 126 islands, of which 48 are inhabited and 78 are uninhabited (Sumenep government, 2022) In this district, there are several potential areas such as oil, gas, fisheries, plantations, agriculture (Sumenep government, 2014). In addition, Sumenep district has world-class tourist attractions such as nature-based health tourism destinations on Gili Iyang Island, which is known as the island that has the second best oxygen levels in the world after the Dead Sea in Jordan and other tourism sector potentials (Azmi, 2023). On this basis, the Sumenep district government is actively conducting tourism diplomacy to many parties both nationally and internationally to make tourism a driver of community economic growth.

The first district from the eastern tip of Madura Island makes good use of its natural, social, cultural and local wisdom potential—and packages it in an attractive tourism program and sells it to local, national and international communities. The aim is to introduce the socio-cultural potential and uniqueness of Sumenep to the public at large and bring in potential revenue from these activities. Tourism diplomacy is the strategy chosen by the Sumenep regency government in advancing tourism in the Keris City—a nickname of Sumenep. The Sumenep regency government's tourism diplomacy is positively correlated with the birth of new tourist destinations in the area, the increasing number of tourists visiting Sumenep district, the growth of the accommodation business, the food and beverage industry, and the rapid flow of investment into Sumenep.

The Sumenep regency government with all the efforts it has made in the view of researcher can be classified as the only local government in Madura Island that seriously conducts tourism diplomacy. Therefore, viewed from the perspective of international relations, the efforts of the Sumenep regency government through its various activities are certainly very interesting to be examined further; does the Sumenep government-style tourism diplomacy effectively make Sumenep known to the national and international community so that they are interested in visiting Sumenep, investing there and having a significant impact on aspects of economic growth in the district? How are the patterns and strategies of tourism diplomacy carried out by the Sumenep regency government in the 2021-2023 period?

In fact, referred to the data, during 2021-2023, there was a unique phenomenon related to the trend of foreign tourist visits to Sumenep which shows a significant spike from

year to year. This fact sparked the researcher's interest to find out what is behind the upward trend in the number of foreign tourist visits to Sumenep in this period? It turns out that this curiosity was answered after researchers conducted direct research. The answer lies in the tourism diplomacy strategy carried out by the Sumenep regency government. The existence of quite massive media exposure related to the tourism potential of Sumenep made me who was previously not interested in Sumenep to be inspired to research Sumenep directly, not wanting to just believe the media. And I decided not to write what is written by most of the media related to Sumenep tourism which only writes on the surface. This research is the answer. Sumenep has world-class tourism that is worth selling and I am called to publish it through research.

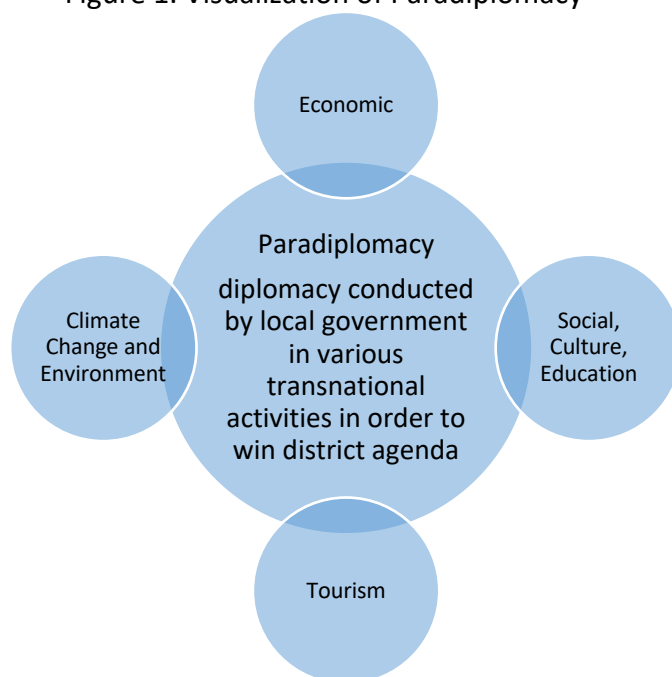
This research was inspired by research on green paradiplomacy conducted by five students (Adinda Aulia Hafizha, Innayah Yanwari, Shafa Salsabila Nadiah Putri, Maharani Herwidianti, Diaz Prameswara) of the International Relations study program at Veteran University Jakarta (Hafizha et al., 2024). They specifically examined the diplomatic activities of the Jakarta government under the leadership of Governor Anies Baswedan with international actors in an effort to make Jakarta green and environmentally friendly. From this study, researcher gained an understanding that substate actors such as provincial governments, regency/city governments have equal right in establishing international diplomacy with any international actors in order to achieve regional interests as long as they do not conflict with principles, norms and constitutions.

Based on the research of a group of students, Jakarta province was concluded to have successfully carried out green paradiplomacy and had a significant impact on the realization of concrete actions with international actors and parties in making Jakarta one step further in tackling pollution, climate change, and green campaigns. From the Jakarta government's green paradiplomacy, the researcher then examined paradiplomacy activities in other field that have been carried out by local authority living close to the researcher. I then selected the tourism paradiplomacy efforts of the Sumenep regency government in an effort to promote its tourism potential and its impact on the district's economic growth.

Under the legal framework, local government cooperation with foreign parties is regulated in Government Regulation (PP) Number 28 of 2018 concerning Regional Cooperation; Minister of Foreign Affairs Regulation (Permenlu) Number 3 of 2019; and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation (Permendagri) Number 25 of 2020. Specifically, based on Government Regulation (PP) Number 28 of 2018, the form of local government cooperation with foreign parties consists of local government cooperation with local governments abroad (KSDPL) and regional cooperation with foreign institutions (Dwijayanti dan Gurusinga, 2023). This is the formal basis for local governments to conduct diplomacy and establish partnerships with foreign parties.

In its implementation, the local government in conducting paradiplomacy with foreign parties either on a Government to Government or Government to private basis aims to achieve regional strategic interests in areas such as mitigating the effects of climate change, the environment, economy, social, education, culture, tourism, and so on. From the practice of local government diplomacy, the terms green diplomacy, economic diplomacy, education diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and tourism diplomacy emerged. In winning the interests of local governments in these fields in order to get international support and response, diplomacy is the key. Here is the visualization of paradiplomacy and its types.

Figure 1. Visualization of Paradiplomacy



Source: Adapted from Kuznetsov, 2015

Moreover, etymologically, diplomacy is the business or organization of official relations between one country and another, knowledge and skills in terms of relations between countries and countries (The Big Indonesian Dictionary VI). Meanwhile, tourism is related to travel for recreation; travel; tourism (The Big Indonesian Dictionary VI). Legally formal, tourism is a variety of tourist activities and is supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, entrepreneurs, the Government, and Regional Governments (Law Number 10 of 2009). From this understanding, tourism diplomacy then becomes one of the important elements in every diplomatic activity carried out by state actors and or sub-state actors.

Tourism is an attraction as well as a diplomacy tool in supporting the achievement of national and regional interests in various fields such as encouraging economic growth, introducing local and national culture, and promoting new tourism potentials. Conceptually, tourism diplomacy is closely related to cultural diplomacy. This is because tourism can increase cultural interaction and bring people closer to each other. It is said so because a tourist who travels to a country or an area indicates the tendency of the tourist to study other cultures so that he is moved to visit, know, and feel firsthand the uniqueness of the culture of the area or country he visits (Tasam.org).

Furthermore, tourism diplomacy is a crucial part of a country's foreign policy where it is certain that every state leader will work hard to make its country attractive to foreign tourists. In this form, official state administrators form tourism agencies abroad such as tourism attachés in order to attract many tourists or travelers to visit their country (Horváth, 2021). Given that Indonesia already has a basic legislation that allows local governments to cooperate with foreign parties, local governments have the flexibility to build partnerships,

conduct diplomacy with international actors in supporting regional targets and interests, including conducting tourism and cultural diplomacy. So, tourism diplomacy is diplomacy carried out by state or sub-state entities to advance the tourism sector which is expected to have a positive impact on progress in the country or region.

In this research, researchers will focus on examining the practice of tourism diplomacy carried out by the Sumenep district government with international circles (foreign government and foreign private sector) and its impact on the economic aspects of Sumenep district.

Conceptual Framework/Theory

To explain the Sumenep regency government's tourism diplomacy strategy, understood as a synergy between five stakeholders in the success of tourism consisting of government, academics, bureaucracy, entrepreneurs, and media (Septadiani et al., 2022). The collaboration of these five elements is a necessity in an effort to build a region's tourism sector.

Paradiplomacy can conceptually be understood as the involvement of small parts of one country (region) in various cross-country activities in an effort to realize its regional agenda through activities such as trade and cultural missions abroad, making cooperation with parties from other countries, and participating in international cooperation networks (Kuznetsov, 2015). The form of paradiplomacy practices carried out by local governments consists of several key variables as explained by Brian Hocking in his article entitled *Patrolling the Frontier: Globalization, Localization and the Actorship of Non-Central Governments* and published in a book entitled *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments* (Keating and Aldecoa, 2013), include the following.

1. Aims & motivations

This concerns the purpose and motivation for a region to conduct paradiplomacy in various fields. For example, a local government conducts pre-diplomacy because it has the motivation and purpose to achieve economic, political, social and cultural targets.

2. Extent and direction of involvement

This concerns the direction of the extent of local government involvement in international participation as evidenced by the involvement of subnational actors, the direction chosen, and the opportunity to have an impact. Some of the reasons that influence a local government to engage in paradiplomacy are bureaucratic capacity, inter-state and inter-subnational regional position, policy position and scope, and the level of authority given by the state to the local government.

3. Structures and resources

A region's involvement in paradiplomacy is influenced by the structural factors of the local government itself and the resources they have in achieving the local government's targets and goals in the international world.

4. Levels of participation

The level of participation here is the network through which local governments in the world can conduct paradiplomacy which is categorized into: subnational, governmental, intergovernmental, transgovernmental, and transnational.

5. Strategies

There are three strategies that local governments can adopt in paradiplomacy. One, mediation strategy, in which local governments use existing channels in national policy-making. Two, primary strategy, where local governments utilize their resources to participate in the international arena with the intention of increasing the prestige of the local government in the eyes of the international community. Three, secondary strategy, reflects the condition of local governments that their needs are not accommodated by the central government, which makes them interact and build cooperation with other local governments and networks in the world.

Method

The research methodology that the researcher used in researching this topic is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The author ensures that all data and facts used in this research using primary and secondary data derived from interviews with the Sumenep regent, Sumenep Culture, Youth, Sports and Tourism Office (Disbudporapar) authorities, news releases, journal articles, books and output documents sourced from authoritative institutions under the auspices of the Sumenep regency government so that the author believes that the validity and credibility of the data presented in this research can be accounted for.

As for data presentation techniques, the author uses the explanatory method, namely by elaborately explaining the pattern of tourism diplomacy strategies that have been carried out by Sumenep government. Furthermore, the author will analyze the impact of the Sumenep government tourism diplomacy strategy on the economic growth of Sumenep regency in 2021-2023 period.

Finding and Discussion

Pentahelix as the basis for Sumenep government in developing tourism sector

As the highest leader in the Sumenep regency, Sumenep Regent Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo is the driving force and facilitator in every tourism development agenda in the district. Since being elected as the Sumenep regent in 2020 and officially inaugurated in early 2021, Regent Fauzi in an exclusive interview with the researcher explained that he has launched tourism as one of his government's priority agendas (personal interview, June 4, 2024). He is well aware that the Covid-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia and other countries in the world since 2020 has had a negative impact on the weakening of the national economic sector, including the economy of Sumenep regency. Therefore, in 2021, which marks the first year of his leadership where the Covid-19 pandemic is still endemic, he devised a strategy for the tourism sector to gradually recover and grow rapidly. Regent Fauzi admits that what he did—for example, seriously starting to build the tourism sector during the pandemic—was relatively quiet because the pandemic made everything limited. However, he took the initiative to embrace and involve strategic parties (multi-stakeholders) in tourism such as academics, entrepreneurs, bureaucracy, and the media (Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture, 2021).

Regent Fauzi invited them to work together and think of solutions so that tourism in Sumenep continues to exist despite the pandemic. Regent Fauzi also said that he specifically asked all local media crews in Sumenep district to proactively report on the tourism potential

in Sumenep district. Not only that, as a follow-up to discussions with key parties in tourism, the Sumenep regent on behalf of the Sumenep regency government is also committed to advance the Sumenep tourism sector by providing grants of 10 percent of the regional revenue and expenditure budget to support the development of the tourism sector in Sumenep district where the remaining 90 percent is fulfilled by the private element (Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo, personal interview, June 4, 2024).

This inevitably has a positive impact on the life of tourism events and the birth of new tourism destinations in Sumenep District, especially village-based tourism destinations. There are many new tourist villages that were born from the seriousness of the Sumenep government in developing the tourism sector during the pandemic and the transition period after the pandemic. Based on the data, in the period 2021-2023, eight (8) new tourist villages were born in Sumenep with details: 2 new tourist villages were born in 2021, 4 new tourist villages were born in 2022, and 4 new tourist villages were born in 2023 (Disbudporapar Sumenep, 2023).

In addition, in preparing the annual event agenda that starts from January to December, the Sumenep regency government actively involves media crews, communities, village governments, authorities and parties related to tourism and culture. Simply put, in the context of tourism development, the Sumenep regency government acts as a facilitator who is ready to facilitate what is needed by citizens, communities and tourism businesses related to tourism activities. This is deliberately done so that the tourism sector grows from below (bottom up) so that each of them feels called and has mutual responsibility in succeeding every tourism agenda in Sumenep regency.

The Sumenep regency government's initiative to embrace strategic parties in tourism as the substance of the pentahelix concept is very effective in advancing tourism in Sumenep regency. The progress of tourism is then an asset for the Sumenep regency government to conduct tourism diplomacy to the national and international public. Simply put, the Sumenep regency government first ensures that tourist destinations and supporting facilities such as accommodation in Sumenep are really ready to receive tourists, only then does the Sumenep authority carry out massive exposure about their tourism potential to national and international circles through tourism diplomacy.

Sumenep Government Tourism's Paradiplomacy and its Strategies

Pentahelix and paradiplomacy are two things that cannot be separated from each other. Pentahelix, which means multiple parties, is closely related to the tourism paradiplomacy carried out by the Sumenep district government. That is, in building the tourism sector in Sumenep district especially Sumenep district has a vision to attract as many foreign tourists as possible travel to Sumenep of course Sumenep district requires international parties in the success of the vision of internationalization of tourism Sumenep. One of the efforts is to communicate and establish partnerships both through the G to G scheme and with private parties or international private. This is what is meant by the link between pentahelix and paradiplomacy.

In reality, tourism paradiplomacy activities carried out by the Sumenep regency government in order to advance the tourism sector in Sumenep government based on field research and review of electronic information obtained by the researcher can be explained in detail as follows.

1. Aims & motivations

The Sumenep regency government actively establishes relationships with foreign parties (foreign government and private parties). In every working visit of the Sumenep regent abroad, such as during working visits to the Netherlands, France and Belgium in his three years of leadership (2021— 2023), the Sumenep regent actively promoted the tourism and cultural potential of Sumenep. To the researcher, the Sumenep regent explicitly said that in every opportunity and forum he attends both domestically and abroad, he must communicate about the tourism and cultural potential of Sumenep.

2. Extent and direction of involvement

The Sumenep regency government at this stage is limited to establishing tourism diplomacy with foreign parties on a limited basis. The Sumenep regency government's tourism diplomacy is limited to embassies, consulates general, private parties, individual international writers, foreign media (CNN international). In city to city relations abroad, based on researcher interviews with Sumenep Regent Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo and Head of the Sumenep Disbudporapar Mohammad Iksan, the Sumenep regency government until this research was carried out did not have formal cooperation in the field of tourism and culture. Only since 2018, the Sumenep regency government has had cooperation in the cultural field with the Institut Francais Indonesie (IFI), an institution under the French Embassy in Indonesia that focuses on cultural missions, linguistics, scientific cooperation and universities (Basri, 2018).

3. Structures and resources

The paradiplomacy activities carried out by the Sumenep regency government can occur because of the enthusiasm and seriousness of its leader. Sumenep Regent Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo even became a direct ambassador in promoting Sumenep tourism openly to all circles (national and international). He does this in the simplest ways such as being active on social media, inviting anyone to travel to Sumenep, interacting with anyone international to introduce tourist destinations in Sumenep and inviting international writers to visit Sumenep, providing them with accommodation, then with the facilitation of the Sumenep Disbudporapar official they are then invited to enjoy the tourism destinations in Sumenep regency and ask them to write the prospects and all the uniqueness of tourism owned by Sumenep regency in international channels based on their empirical experience after exploring tourism destinations in Sumenep regency.

What the Sumenep regent did was supported by the existence of qualified resources owned by the Sumenep regency government. Regional device organizations such as Disbudporapar Sumenep are no less active in campaigning for all the tourism potential of Sumenep. Both offline and online, they are bureaucrats proactively conducting tourism diplomacy both with national and international circles.

4. Levels of participation

Paradiplomacy carried out by the Sumenep regency government is categorized at the subnational level. This means that the level of participation in international diplomacy is carried out by the local government at the district government level with the regent as the spearhead in every diplomatic practice followed by the Sumenep Disbudporapar as the leading sector in tourism.

5. Strategies

Of the three existing strategies (mediation, primary, secondary), the practice of paradiplomacy carried out by the Sumenep government during the 2021–2023 period according to the analysis of researcher applies a lot of primary strategies, namely the Sumenep regency government really uses all its potential to raise the prestige of the tourism potential of the Sumenep regency in the eyes of the international world. This is very evident from the seriousness of the Sumenep regent who is proven to go directly to become a promoter, brand ambassador, and icon of the tourism campaign promoted by the Sumenep regency government.

The Sumenep regent also asked residents of Sumenep who are studying abroad to write about the tourism potential of Sumenep in English and publish it on digital platforms. In addition, the Sumenep highest leader also requires every student in Sumenep to campaign for tourist destinations in Sumenep on their social media. This is very effective in raising the prestige of tourism destinations in Sumenep regency known to the national and international public which then has a good impact on the soaring number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Sumenep.

Potential of the Tourism Sector in Sumenep Regency

There are several tourist destinations that are the main attraction as well as superior tourism commodities owned by Sumenep regency. Based on the data, the tourism potential in Sumenep regency. can be grouped into cultural/historical tourism, religious tourism, marine tourism, nature/health tourism, artificial tourism/village tourism, culinary tourism, event tourism and so on (Hidayaturrahman et al., 2021).

More specifically, here are the potential tourism objects in Sumenep.

Table 1. Tourism Potential in Sumenep regency

Cultural/Historical Tourism	Religious Tourism	Nature and Health Tourism	Artificial Tourism/Village Tourism	Event Tourism
Sumenep Palace Museum, Kalianget Old Town	Jamik Mosque Sumenep, the graves of Sumenep kings at Asta Tinggi, Asta Sayyid Yusuf	Lombang beach, Slopeng beach, nine beaches in Gili Genting, Badur beach, Pajuddan cave, Ponjug beach, Kiermata source, Yellow cave, Batu Guluk beach, Mamburit beach, coral reef in Saobi island, Panaongan sand mountain, Gurujugan river, marine and coral park in Saor island, White sand beach in Saebus island,	TSI swimming pool, Water Park Sumekar (WPS), Bukit Tinggi, Tectona Park, Tawap Lengleg Hill (BTL), Aeng Tong-Tong Village Tourism, East Legung Village Sand Village Tourism, Batang-Batang, Sumenep	It is based on a calendar of tourism events compiled by the Sumenep regency government and the general public and supported by the government. They come from communities such as the cycling community, automotive bird lovers and other animals. There is also a culinary festival and snacks

		Sapeken, health tourism in Gili Iyang (an island with the second best oxygen quality in the world) and Gili Labak island.		typical of Sumenep district.
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(Source: Adapted from Hidayaturrahman at all., 2021 and Arieza, 2023)

Of all the potential tourism objects above, the Sumenep regency government only manages three tourism destinations, namely: Sumenep Palace Museum, Lombang Beach and Slopeng Beach (Mohamad Iksan, personal interview, October 7, 2024). This means that the Sumenep regency government's tourism levy is fully sourced only from these three potential tourism objects. The rest of the tourism sector revenue is managed by the private sector if the existing tourist attraction is purely from and by the private sector, and managed by the village government if the tourist attraction is under the auspices of the government through a village-owned enterprise (BUMDes).

Making tourism and cultural potential a magnet for diplomacy

The Sumenep regency government is very observant in reading opportunities. In order to bring the tourism and cultural potential of the Sumenep regency to be known to the world, the Sumenep regency government with the facilitation of the central government makes good use of every international momentum. For example, when Indonesia hosted the G20 Summit that took place in Bali Island on November 15–16, 2022, kris produced by kris craftsmen from Aeng Tong Tong Tourism Village, Saronggi, Sumenep were used as one of the souvenirs for the G20 Summit delegates who attended (Mochammad Agus Saleh Akbar, personal interview, June 4, 2024). This reflects clear evidence that the Sumenep regency government is fully aware of their cultural and tourism potential so that it is then used as an effective diplomacy magnet in attracting foreign tourists to travel to Sumenep.

For information, in the same year, exactly in October 2022, Aeng Tong Tong Village achieved a national level achievement, namely coming out as the first winner of the visitor attraction category in the 2022 Indonesian Tourism Village Award held by the Ministry of Tourism (Supriyadi, 2022). And as Regent Fauzi told the researcher, in every tourism diplomacy that has been carried out, the Sumenep regency government has been focused on selling culture, heritage and creative tourism events with several event themes in English such as the Sumenep Culture Festival, Sumenep Investment Summit, Sumenep Fishing Tourism, Old Community Gathering, Madura Culture Festival, Gili Iyang Oxygen, Madura Ethnic Carnival, Sumenep Heritage Beach Marathon, SALT Jazz Festival, Enduro Racing Championship, Motor Cross Championship, Sumenep Moring Fresh. The Sumenep regency government is also consistently imaging Sumenep with the Soul of Madura branding. This is the diplomacy strategy and constructive steps taken by the Sumenep regency government in an effort to make the tourism sector have a positive impact on the economic growth of the Sumenep society.

The Rise of the Tourism Sector in Sumenep Regency

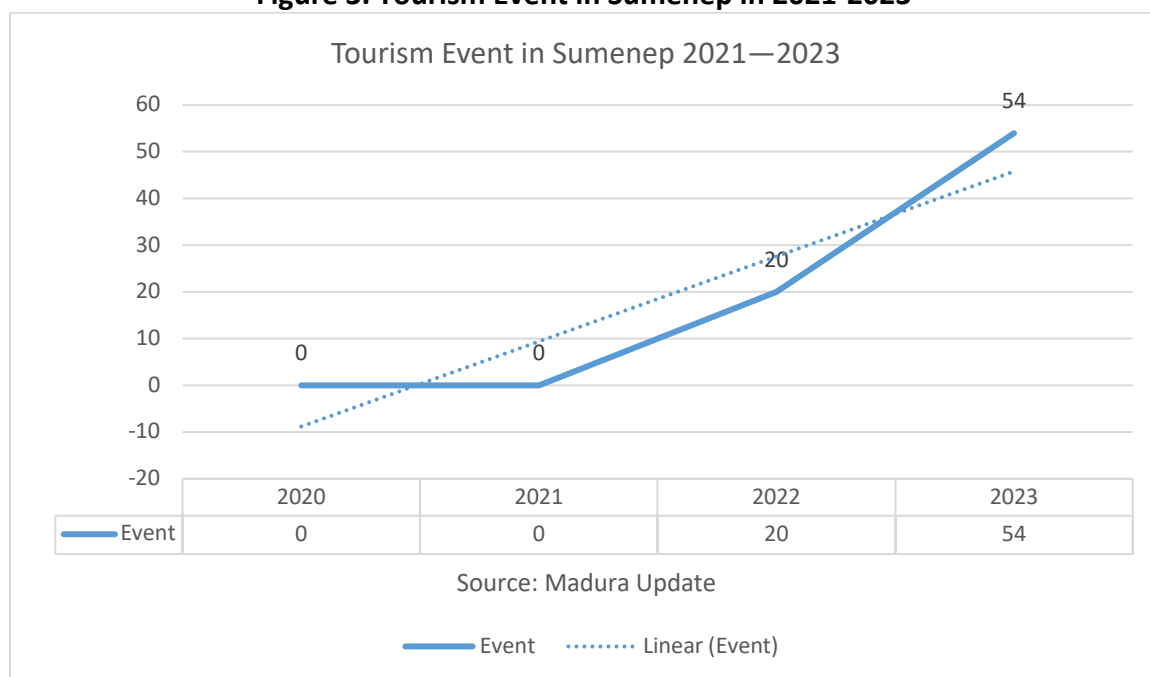
2021 is arguably a tough year in the history of Sumenep tourism. This year, foreign tourists recorded zero, none at all, due to the implementation of lock down or regional quarantine policies implemented by countries in the world and the policy of enforcing restrictions on community activities (PPKM) by the Indonesian government. However, unexpectedly, based on data, the number of domestic tourists to Sumenep regency in 2021 apparently increased to 248,158 people from the previous year (2020) which was only 208,093 people. This is just the first fruit of the good initiatives taken by Regent Fauzi. Although internationally, the number of foreign tourists is not yet in 2021. However, the number of domestic tourists in numbers seems to have grown relatively compared to 2020 (Sumenep Statistics Bureau, 2024).

Figure 2. Tourist Trend in Sumenep in 2021-2023



After there was no tourism event in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2022, the Sumenep regency government held another event entitled the Sumenep Culture Festival which took place from August–December 2022. There are 20 tourism events held within that period (Madura Update, 2022). Entering 2022, which is a transition year from the pandemic era to normal life, the Sumenep government is increasingly aggressively campaigning and promoting tourism. If previously tourism promotion was limited to involving local circles, entering 2022, the Sumenep government began to involve international parties. The form, in addition to cooperating with individual international writers, Sumenep regents also partnered with international CNN-class writers and media in an effort to internationalize the tourism sector in Sumenep district. These parties are specifically asked to promote the tourism potential of Sumenep regency (Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo, personal interview, June 4, 2024).

Figure 3. Tourism Event in Sumenep in 2021-2023



In the following year (2023), along with the revocation of the pandemic status to endemic, the Sumenep regency government organized tourism events throughout 2023 with a total of 54 events (Kurniawan, 2023). Furthermore, in underpinning the tourism mission, the Sumenep regency government through the Sumenep Disbudporapar also partners with foreign private parties such as Destination Asia, a travel company based in Thailand and has an agency in Bali. They agreed to establish special cooperation in the field of providing cruise ship tourism packages by offering tourism destinations owned by the Sumenep regency government to foreign tourists (Toufan Indra Purnama, personal interview, June 4, 2024). Based on the data, after two years of vacuum due to Covid-19, in 2023, there were three cruise ships carrying foreign tourists visiting Sumenep regency. On March 1, 2023, the Ocean Odyssey cruise ship brought 125 tourists, followed by the MV National Geographic Orion cruise ship which visited Sumenep district on August 25, 2023, bringing 80 foreign tourists and then the MV National Geographic Orion cruise ship visited on October 1, 2023, bringing 67 foreign tourists so that the total number of foreign tourist visits from cruise ships was 272 people (Disbudporapar Sumenep, 2023).

This effort to cooperate with international parties in promoting tourism in Sumenep regency has a significant impact on increasing the number of foreign tourists in 2022 and 2023. Evidently, in 2022 the number of foreign tourists reached 21 people and increased to 444 in 2023. Meanwhile, the number of domestic tourists in these two years has soared compared to the previous two years. Based on data, in 2022 the number of domestic tourists reached 1,057,455 people and increased again to 1,389,366 people in 2023. The increase in the number of domestic and foreign tourists, which reached 31.35 percent in 2023 based on data, mostly occurred at the Museum and Sumenep Palace tourism destination (Sumenep Statistics Bureau, 2024).

The Growing Economy of Sumenep Regency

The tourism diplomacy strategy launched by the Sumenep regency government has a positive impact on the life of tourism activities in the Sumenep regency. This means that the stretching of the tourism sector in Sumenep regency as explained by researcher in the previous section has contributed to the growth of the Sumenep regency economy. In the period 2021-2023, data shows that the Sumenep regency economy grew significantly. As an illustration, in 2021 the economic growth rate of Sumenep was 2.61 percent. Entering 2022, the Sumenep regency's economic growth rate increased to 3.11 percent. At its peak, in 2023, the Sumenep regency's economic growth rate reached 5.35 percent and cumulatively the Sumenep economic growth contributed to the 18th economy in East Java with a contribution of 1.45 percent (Sumenep Statistics Bureau, 2024). In addition, the flow of investment to Sumenep regency has also increased dramatically. In 2022, investment money entering Sumenep regency amounted to 1.78 trillion rupiah (Imandiar, 2023) and a year later (2023) investment capital entering Sumenep regency reached 2.3 trillion rupiah (Herdiyana, 2024).

The increasing economic growth rate of Sumenep regency is inseparable from the real contribution of the tourism sector and blessing of the hard work of the Sumenep regency government such as consistently compiling an annual event calendar containing promotion and execution of tourism-based programs such as cultural arts festivals, creative economy, culinary, MSMEs, youth activities to bring in potential domestic and foreign tourists. The presence of these visitors or travelers then creates a new crowd where the presence of tourists (local and foreign) visiting Sumenep then requires lodging, eating and drinking. Therefore, the accommodation sector and the food and beverage industry contribute significantly to the growth of the Sumenep district economy. The adage where there is sugar, there are ants is very relevant to illustrate that the more crowded and dense the number of tourists who come to enjoy the tourist destinations in Sumenep regency, the more positive the economic growth rate of Sumenep regency.

Data shows that the accommodation, food and beverage business sector contributed Rp245.35 billion (2.88 percent) to the gross domestic product of Sumenep regency in 2021, Rp283.93 billion (10.89 percent) in 2022 and Rp324.21 billion (11.47 percent) in 2023 (Sumenep Statistics Bureau, 2024). Specifically, in terms of accommodation, according to the Sumenep regent's information, three three-star hotels and one four-star hotel have been built in Sumenep and all accommodation services are functionally operating to welcome local, national and foreign tourists.

Specifically, in 2021, the contribution of local revenue (PAD) of Sumenep regency from the tourism sector amounted to IDR 24,860,000 from the target of IDR 575,000,000 (Sumenep government, 2021). Meanwhile, in 2022, the tourism sector contributed IDR 690,000,000 to the PAD of Sumenep regency (Rasikin, 2022). In 2023, the contribution of the tourism sector to the PAD of Sumenep regency reached Rp760,000,000 (Mukhlisah, 2024). The researcher then verified the findings of these data to the Sumenep Disbudporapar authority and the results of the data accuracy corrected to: the contribution of the tourism sector to the PAD of Sumenep regency in 2021 has not changed or is completely accurate. The contribution of the tourism sector to the PAD of Sumenep regency in 2022 was Rp694,230,100 and the contribution of the tourism sector to the PAD of Sumenep regency in 2023 was 760,437,500 (Andri Zulkarnain, personal interview, October 3, 2024).

The improving performance of the tourism sector has also had a positive impact on the improving economic conditions of Sumenep regency, which can be seen from the decreasing poverty rate in Sumenep in the last three years. The poverty rate in 2021 was at 20.51 percent, then fell to 18.76 percent in 2022, and fell again to 18.70 percent in 2023 (Sumenep government, 2023). Nominally in numbers of people, the poverty rate in Sumenep regency in 2021 amounted to 224.73 thousand people, and in 2022 it fell to 206.20 thousand people, and in 2023 it fell again to 206.10 thousand people (East Java Statistics Bureau, 2024).

The Power of Publication and Media Exposure as a Powerful Weapon for Tourism Diplomacy

From my interview with Sumenep Regent Achmad Fauzi Wongsojudo, one principle in the context of tourism was revealed. One of the big secrets why many domestic and foreign tourists are interested in visiting to feel the sensation and charm of tourism in Sumenep regency is because of the massive news related to tourism potential in Sumenep. The seriousness of the Sumenep government in collaborating with individual writers and national and international media to expose tourism destinations in the Sumenep regency to the wider community is positively correlated with the increase of tourist visits to Sumenep. Data on domestic and foreign tourist visits over the past three years (2021–2023), which shows a very significant increase, is concrete evidence of the powerful impact of publications and media coverage. This indicates that writing, reporting and massive promotion by involving the public, writers, national and international media are very effective as tourism diplomacy strategies.

Conclusion

The tourism diplomacy strategy carried out by the Sumenep government today is a continuation of the development of the tourism sector which has previously been pursued seriously by the Sumenep government. Tourism diplomacy is carried out to introduce the tourism potential of Sumenep regency to the national and international public. The form of domestic and international tourism diplomacy strategies that have been carried out by the Sumenep government is to embrace as much as possible local and national mass media both print and digital to participate in reporting the potential and tourism destinations in Sumenep regency. As for the internationalization of tourism potential, the Sumenep government actively communicates and cooperates with foreign parties both public and private such as with embassies, foreign consulate generals in Indonesia and foreign private companies engaged in travel services. The Sumenep government also actively promotes the tourism potential of Sumenep when the Sumenep regent has a work agenda abroad. More than that, the Sumenep government also cooperates with international writers, local sons of Sumenep who study abroad, and CNN International media to promote all the tourist attractions in Sumenep. This tourism diplomacy strategy in its implementation has proven to be very effective in bringing domestic and foreign tourists in the 2021–2023 period to visit Sumenep regency.

Suggestion and recommendation

Building the tourism sector both targeting local, regional, national and international segments will reach an ideal if a tourism destination location is sterile from waste. In the

experience of researcher observing several tourism locations, both event and non-event tourism in recent times, the issue of waste has become a serious obstacle to the convenience of traveling in Sumenep regency. Departing from this experience, researcher recommend to the Sumenep government or related leading sectors to really pay attention to the issue of waste. The Sumenep government must dare to discipline local residents, tourists and anyone who comes to travel to Sumenep not to litter and respond to waste wisely. In plain sight, garbage is trivial. However, waste can be a disaster as well as a destroyer that can disrupt the aesthetics and progress of tourism that has been pioneered before.

In order to maximize the tourism diplomacy strategy as well as a manifestation of the seriousness of the internationalization of its tourism potential, the Sumenep district government needs to have sister cities, namely cities / districts abroad that formally have an interest and commitment to work together in advancing tourism and culture. This is important to do so that the tourism potential in Sumenep District is increasingly globalized so as to attract more foreign tourists to visit Sumenep District. The fact that Sumenep has world-class tourism destinations such as the natural attractions of Gili Iyang Oxygen Island and other tourism destinations that also have positive appeal such as Aeng Tong Tong Tourism Village, Sumenep Palace Museum, Gili Labak, Tawap Hill, Beach Nine and others. The Sumenep district government also needs to increase international partners such as adding international media networks, writers, tourism agent companies and international hotels to support the vision of internationalizing the tourism sector in Sumenep. The hope is that the number of Sumenep tourism destinations will be increasingly recognized by the world so as to bring a multiplier effect where the number of domestic and foreign tourists will increase so that it can drive the economy of the Sumenep Regency community.

Furthermore, the Sumenep government needs to increase the capacity of tourism business managers and guides for strategic tourism that has the potential to bring in foreign tourists such as health attractions on Gili Iyang Oxygen Island, Gili Labak, Sembilan Beach, Lombang Beach, Slopeng Beach, Sumenep Palace Museum tours, Aeng Tong Tong Village tours, Kampung Pasir Village tours, with adequate English language skills and digital skills. This is very crucial to further strengthen the image of Sumenep tourism in the eyes of the international world. That tourism in the Sumenep regency has gone international and who can do tourism diplomacy is not only the Sumenep regent or the head of the Sumenep Disbudporapar, but tourism diplomacy can also be carried out by tourism businesses and tourism guides in the Sumenep regency. That way, it creates a wider opportunity to promote the tourism potential in Sumenep regency so that the economic growth opportunities of Sumenep are increasingly wide open. While digital skills such as digital marketing, creative content creation and so on are today's skills that will always be relevant to master in order to support the promotion of the tourism sector and other lines of business that have the potential to boost economic growth.

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