

THE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC COVID-19 TO CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM PRAMBANAN TEMPLE COMPOUNDS

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Abstract

Background:

The COVID-19 outbreak began at the end of 2019, affecting various sectors around the world, including Indonesia's tourism sector, which saw major effects of COVID-19. Prambanan temple compounds, located in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, has also been affected by Covid-19. This research aims to identify the general profile of Prambanan temple compounds, the impact of Covid-19 on the Prambanan temple compounds and identify the next action by stakeholders to develop Prambanan temple compounds during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology:

The type of research used is qualitative to describe the situation and conditions that occur in the field as they are. This study took place in the Prambanan Temple Compounds, which is located in Prambanan District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. Data collection techniques in this study were in-depth interviews, observation and document review.


Findings:

Prambanan, the largest Hindu temple compound in Indonesia that consist of Prambanan Temple (also called Loro Jonggrang), Sewu Temple, Buraah Temple and Lumbung Temple, The Prambanan site, has been designated as one of the strategic national areas and managed by Taman Wisata Candi, Ltd (TWC). Prambanan Temple Compounds has been badly affected by COVID-19.

Conclusion:

During the pandemic, there was a drastic decrease in the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists. PT TWC adapts to the conditions by taking various actions and strategies in order to create a safe and attractive environment for the tourists.

Keywords: *prambanan covid-19 cultural heritage tourism*

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of 2020, the world has been shocked by the outbreak of the Corona virus that originated in Wuhan, China. This Corona virus caused a fever outbreak in China in December 2019 and has spread to other countries, including Indonesia. Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities on all continents. All parts of its vast value-chain have been affected. In Indonesia, since February 2020 the number of foreign tourists entering Indonesia has decreased very drastically, and the peak occurred in April 2020 with only 158,000 tourists. (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, 2021). In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, until May 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in a loss of IDR 27 billion, due to no tourists coming to tourist attractions and staying at hotels (Prayudi, 2020).

Prambanan temple compounds is one of the tourism site nuanced with art and culture. This temple is one of the largest temple and become the the pride of Indonesia people both as a tourism attraction and a place of worship. Prambanan temple has its own peculiarities and the historical heritage that still exists. Built in the 10th century, this is the largest temple compound dedicated to Shiva in Indonesia. Rising above the centre of the last of these concentric squares are three temples decorated with reliefs illustrating the epic of the Ramayana, dedicated to the three great Hindu divinities (Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma) and three temples dedicated to the animals who serve them (UNESCO, 2009).

Unfortunately, Prambanan temple compounds, located in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, has also been affected by Covid-19. Reporting from Media Indonesia (Utantoro, 2021) tourist visits to Prambanan temple experienced a drastic decline. It reached only 690 thousand tourists in 2020, compared to 2.5 million or three million tourists the previous year. In 2021, temporary closure of the Prambanan that affected their income. Based on that background, the author conducted a study of "The Impact of Pandemic Covid-19 to Cultural Heritage Tourism Prambanan Temple Compounds". This research aims to:

1. Identify the general profile of Prambanan temple compounds.
2. Identify the impact of Covid-19 on the Prambanan temple compounds.

3. Identify the next action by stakeholders to develop Prambanan temple compounds during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage. Heritage is not only manifested through tangible forms such as artefacts, buildings or landscapes but also through intangible forms. Intangible heritage includes voices, values, traditions, oral history. Popularly this is perceived through cuisine, clothing, forms of shelter, traditional skills and technologies, religious ceremonies, performing arts, storytelling. Today, we consider the tangible heritage inextricably bound up with the intangible heritage. In conservation projects we aim to preserve both the tangible as well as the intangible heritage (Anonim, 2009).

In their research, Luo & Ren (2020) noted that cultural heritage tourism is among the oldest forms of tourism, since its subjects often date back to ancient times. As a result, it is not surprising that it is one of the most popular forms of tourism. The 2018 UNWTO report on Tourism and Culture Synergies, before the COVID-19 pandemic, notes that even in the 1990s, 37% of all trips contained a cultural element, and the growth rate of tourist trips was forecast at 15% per year. Meanwhile, in the 21st century, the percentage of cultural elements in tourist trips is estimated at about 40%, and according to the OECD report, it is as much as 50% in European and American tourism (Naramski et al., 2022).

Cultural heritage has great potential in improving the economy in Indonesia. Various roles of cultural heritage are essential for people's lives, including educational values, religious values, and historical values that can attract domestic and foreign tourists to study and visit them. Cultural heritage tourism is different from other types of tourism. The condition of the building is the main object that underlies the cultural history-based tourist attraction. The uniqueness of the structure and its physical form is an identification that distinguishes it from other tourist destinations (Shankar, 2015; Bullen and Love, 2011; Sahubawa et al., 2010 in Auwalin et al., 2022).

The tourism sector has been the mainstay of the government as the source of Indonesia's second-largest contribution. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything. No one can survive because no travelers are visiting this archipelago. As the world is facing an unprecedented global health, social and economic emergency with the COVID-19 pandemic, travel and tourism is among the most affected sectors with airplanes on the ground, hotels closed and travel restrictions put in place in virtually all countries around the world (UNWTO, 2020). Since the government's instruction to carry out physical distancing and to keep moving at home to break the chain of distribution of COVID-19, the tourism sector has begun to slow down and even almost collapsed. The study conducted by Atmojo & Fridayani (2021) gave result, the number of foreign tourist visits or foreign tourists to Indonesia decreased in 2020 by 28.85% compared to the number of visits in 2019. Some areas, such as Bali and Yogyakarta, have lost both local and foreign tourists. This situation has affected MSME providers of travel, hotels, souvenir providers, regional handicrafts, and food and beverage providers in tourist areas.

METHOD

The type of research used is qualitative to describe the situation and conditions that occur in the field as they are. This study took place in the Prambanan Temple Compounds, which is located in Prambanan District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. Data collection techniques in this study were in-depth interviews, observation and document review. Interviews were conducted with the Prambanan temple tourism management, PT. Taman Wisata Candi (TWC / Tourism Park Ltd)

RESULTS

1. Prambanan Temple Compounds

Prambanan is the largest Hindu temple compound in Indonesia, built in the 10th century. At the center of the last of these concentric squares rise three temples decorated with reliefs illustrating the Ramayana epic, dedicated to the three greatest Hindu divinities (Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma), along with three temples dedicated to animals who serve these divinities. These compounds are located on the border

between the two provinces of Yogyakarta and Central Java on Java Island.



Figure 1. Map of Prambanan Temple Compounds

Prambanan Temple Compounds consist of Prambanan Temple (also called Loro Jonggrang), Sewu Temple, Bubrah Temple and Lumbung Temple. Prambanan Temple itself is a complex consisting of 240 temples. All the mentioned temples form the Prambanan Archaeological Park and were built during Sailendra's dynasty in Java in the 8th century AD.



Figure 2. Prambanan Temple

While Loro Jonggrang, dating from the 9th century, is a brilliant example of Hindu religious bas-reliefs, Sewu, with its four pairs of Dwarapala giant statues, is Indonesia's largest Buddhist complex including the temples of Lumbung, Bubrah and Asu (Gana temple). The Hindu temples are decorated with reliefs illustrating the Indonesian version of the Ramayana epic which are masterpieces of stone carvings. These are surrounded by hundreds of shrines that have been arranged in three parts showing high levels of stone building technology and architecture from the 8th century AD in Java. With over 500 temples, Prambanan Temple Compounds represents not only an architectural and cultural treasure, but also a standing proof of past religious peaceful cohabitation (UNESCO, 2009).



Figure 3. Sewu Temple

National Cultural Property in 1998, and a 2010 law also supports its protection and conservation. Management of Prambanan Temple Compounds is incorporated in a Presidential Decree issued in 1992 that established central government ownership of the 77 ha that encompass the property. This area is divided into two zones. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism manages Zone 1 or the area within the boundary through two different regional offices, namely the Archaeological Preservation Office of Yogyakarta and Central Java. The Borobudur, Prambanan and Ratu Boko Tourism Park Ltd. are responsible for Zone 2 which comprises the buffer zone. In order to safeguard the property, the government has established a regulation regarding national vital object areas. The regulations have been well enforced and implemented.



Figure 4. 27 May 2006 Earthquake Monument

In order to improve the management of the property, government issued the law in 2007 and government regulation of 2008 concerning national spatial planning which means that spatial planning in World Cultural Heritage area will be prioritized. The Prambanan site, which includes the Compounds of the Prambanan temple and other related temple remains, has been designated as one of the strategic national areas. The Action Plan of 2007 has been implemented with the involvement of the local community around the property.

2. *Impact of Covid-19 on The Prambanan Temple Compounds Tourism*

The Covid-19 pandemic has severely affected livelihoods, local industries and the economy

in general. The tourism industry was one of the hardest hit sectors amid the outbreak. Preventive measures against the virus such as citywide lockdowns, travel curbs and restricted movements have resulted to the closure of businesses, landmarks, entertainment parks and also the natural and cultural heritage tourism.

Prambanan Temple Compounds has been badly affected by COVID-19. During the pandemic, there was a drastic decrease in the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists. In 2019 (before the pandemic), tourist visits to Prambanan could reach 3.5 million people. When this research was conducted (April 2022), the management of Taman Wisata Candi (TWC) said that the number of tourists had not been able to reach half of that number. In addition, Prambanan Temple artists cannot do their work as usual and do not get income.

During the pandemic, Prambanan Temple Compounds had to close its tourist destination several times. In 2020, Prambanan Temple Compounds have been closed for 3 months. There report that said TWC manager claimed to lose hundreds of billions during that time. In 2021, Prambanan Temple had to be closed several times to comply with government regulations related to preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. *The Action by Stakeholders to Develop Prambanan Temple Compounds During and After Covid-19 Pandemic*

Prambanan Temple Compounds management company is PT. Taman Wisata Candi. PT Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan & Ratu Boko (Persero) (hereinafter referred to as PT TWC) was established on July 15, 1980. As a State-Owned Enterprise, currently all shares of PT TWC are owned by the Government. PT TWC's main business fields are divided into 4 pillars, namely, Heritage Park, Cultural Park, Amenities and Attractions and supported by subsidiaries PT Bhumi Visatanda and PT Management CBT Nusantara.



Figure 4. Implementation of Health Protocol in Prambanan

During Covid-19 pandemi, PT TWC adapts to the conditions by taking various actions and strategies in order to create a safe and attractive environment for the tourists. To start with, PT TWC applied the new normal tourism standard provides guidelines for all arriving tourists in Prambanan

Temple Compounds to follow health protocols, including wearing masks, washing hands, passing through disinfectant chambers, and checking body temperature. Other visitor management strategies include implementing physical distancing, minimizing cash payments (cashless), providing hand washing at several points, installing signs and information boards for the COVID-19 protocol, and offering a health clinic for sick tourists.



Figure 3. Guidelines for Health Protocol

Another strategy is to offer attractive tour packages like the Prambanan Pruputan Package, where tourists can explore Prambanan early in the morning with additional facilities such as electric cars and breakfast at Prambanan restaurant. The Prambanan Temple tourism manager also prepared a number of activities to celebrate the long Eid holiday. It requires careful preparation and synergy with various stakeholders because this Eid holiday is different from the last two years. PT. TWC ensures the readiness of excellent safety-based services without reducing the comfort of tourists, by either enhancing the facilities in the field or by collaborating with stakeholders to ensure health protocols, including the smooth use of the PeduliLindung application.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result and discussion explained above, it can be concluded that:

1. Prambanan temple compounds, located on the border between the two provinces of Yogyakarta and Central Java on Java Island is the largest temple compound dedicated to Shiva in Indonesia with reliefs illustrating the epic of the Ramayana, dedicated to the three great Hindu divinities (Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma) and three temples dedicated to the animals who serve them and managed and protected by government.
2. Prambanan Temple Compounds has been badly affected by COVID-19. During the pandemic, there was a drastic decrease in the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists. Prambanan had to close its tourist destination several times too in 2020 and 2021.
3. During Covid-19 pandemi, PT TWC adapts to the conditions by taking various actions and strategies in order to create a safe and attractive

environment for the tourists such as applied the new normal tourism standard provides guidelines for all arriving tourists in Prambanan Temple Compounds to follow health protocols and offer attractive tour packages like the Prambanan Pruputan Package.

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