Revitalization and Development of Cultural Heritage Tourism in Gresik Old City

Nuruddin*  
1Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Together with old cities in Southeast Asia, Gresik is a city visited by many world traders in the 15th century. Some of the old cities have been transformed into tourist areas, while those in Gresik have not yet been realized. This study aims to analyze the government's efforts to revitalize cultural heritage and its use as a tourist attraction in the old town of Gresik. This study uses a qualitative method with a critical descriptive approach with interpretive analysis. Research data were obtained from government archives, library sources in the form of books and scientific articles, interviews with stakeholders in the Gresik old town area. After the data is collected, the research is continued with the process of data analysis using a qualitative interpretive analysis approach. The results of this study can be concluded that activities related to preservation, revitalization, and utilization of cultural heritage in the old city of Gresik have not been maximized. This can be seen from the efforts to identify and determine cultural heritage that have not been completed; spatial planning of cities in historical areas still leaves many differences of opinion; and regulations regarding tourism planning in the old city of Gresik do not yet exist. The solution that can be done is to involve the community who owns ancient buildings from data collection to tourism management, so that the tourism that is developed can be sustainable.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gresik is an old city that is unique and cannot be found in Indonesia, because of its role in the past. In the era of pre-colonial development, Gresik became an important port for Majapahit, which was proven by the existence of a syahbandar system managed by Majapahit (Rahmawati et al., 2014; Supriharjo et al., 2016). When it entered Islamization, Gresik’s position was strengthened by the emergence of a spiritual ruler who controlled the port trade. When Dutch colonialism entered, Gresik became one of the centers of the spice trade involving traders from all over the world.

Gresik has a uniqueness that is not shared by other cities in Indonesia. The old city of Gresik has a very long and varied historical value, because the city experienced a very long dynamic (Inayah et al., 2019; Rahmawati et al., 2016). Starting from the 15th century until before Indonesia’s independence. The diversity of the old city of Gresik lies in the people who inhabit it, who come from various ethnic groups. They come from Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Chinese, Arabic, Indian and Malay. This can be seen in their former living space which can still be found today. In the past, Europeans occupied an area, which is now called Kampung Bedilan. Arab and Middle Eastern people live in Kampung Arab, while the Chinese community live in Chinatown Village (Saputra, A. A., Surjono, S., & Meidiana, 2015; Zuhri et al., 2023). While the Malays who mixed with the natives, settled in Kampung Pekelingan.

Historical facts related to the role of Gresik in the past can be seen from the artifacts left behind, especially in the old town of Gresik. In order to realize a historical concept that continues in the future, it is necessary to revitalize it, so that the cultural heritage is sustainable (Maruta et al., 2021; Muhatta, Z., & Soesanti, 2018). According to previous study conservation activities are not only physically important for historic buildings, but also for local people and the cultural identity and characteristics of the place itself (Al-hagla, 2010; Orbasli, 2000). Conservation activities in an urban area usually have three main interrelated goals, namely physical, spatial, and social conservation (Orbasli, 2000; Sutherland, 2007). Over the past 50 years, the protection of the world’s cultural heritage against the effects of natural and man-made disasters has received international attention, because cultural heritage is considered important in fostering the quality of life in all civilizations, so that it exists together with messages and historical information conveyed by cultural materials (Barbieri et al., 2017; Fallahi, 2008; Njatrijani, 2018).
In the present and in the future, cultural heritage is still needed in the historical context and social characteristics related to the identity of the people who occupy it. Many historic buildings in the Gresik old town area that surrounds the square are in quite poor condition, so conservation and real utilization measures need to be taken (Al-hagla, 2010; Kangiden et al., 2017; Kersten et al., 2017). Historic areas that are unique are in Arab Village, Chinatown Village, Pekauman Village, Bedilan Village, Kebungson Village and Pekelingan Village. In this area there are also many non-material cultural heritages that strengthen the identity of each region.

Studies related to the revitalization of the Gresik old town area have been carried out by several researchers, one of the only study explain that the revitalization of the Gresik old town square is in accordance with the planning and implementation of the square revitalization is good and quite effective (Firdaus & Abidin, 2020). Other study explains that there have been many changes, one of which is caused by the owner’s desire to change the color of the paint, the addition of the number of family members, the architect’s incompatibility with the tastes of the building owner (Risbiyanto & Hariyani, 2008). Research on the Arab Village by previous study explaining that the existence of a courtyard model in Kampung Arab Gresik is able to create a balance for the community, because it can provide space for social–communal activities between dominating activities with high demands for privacy (Ariestadi & Wulandari, 2017).

Even though there are quite a lot of potential old buildings in the Gresik old town area, their existence is quite threatened because the physical buildings are not properly maintained (Muhatta, Z., & Soesanti, 2018; Widyastuty, 2011). According to previous study the threat to buildings there is due to many physical and environmental changes caused by physical factors (land users and building conditions), non-physical factors (economic, socio-cultural and surrounding communities and legal factors) (Riski et al., 2018; Widyastuty, 2011).

Substantially, the study above is different from this research, because history and social phenomena as well as existing conditions, some of which originate from this research, are only used as initial references to probe deeper into history and problems to be used as references in their use in the world of tourism. The difference with this study that will be carried out is lies in the limitations of future use, namely exploring the potential and perceptions of the government and local communities in its utilization as a cultural heritage tourist attraction. The aims of this study are to analyze the government’s efforts to revitalize cultural heritage and its use as a tourist attraction in the old town of Gresik.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method that emphasizes process and meaning and not on the quantity side, so that it is more social reality experienced by researchers with the subjects studied (Gill, 2020). In general, this research used a lot of qualitative data obtained from government archives, library sources in the form of books and scientific articles, personal interviews with stakeholders who have authority over the old town area in Gresik Regency. Data in the form of archives were obtained from Gresik Regency Government Reports, Letters of Assignment, Government Decrees and Certificates issued by related institutions. Qualitative research design generally concerns how material evidence is summarized and linked to the paradigm in the formulation of the problem, who and what will be studied in the field; what research strategies will be used, what methodologies and research tools will be used to collect and analyze material data. After the data is collected, the research is continued with the process of data analysis using a qualitative interpretive analysis approach. Interpretive-qualitative analysis is used to operate on data collected through interviews, observation, and literature (Ratna, 2010). This type of analysis is data analysis that is carried out continuously from the beginning until the research ends. Even though the data has been described and categorized and linked to similar data, this is not yet an actual analysis. Thus, it is necessary to carry out classification and comparison using interpretation, namely describing everything that is behind the existing data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result
The Beginning of the Emergence of Preservation Efforts
Concrete efforts from revitalization activities carried out by the government are the formation of a team of cultural heritage experts. The Gresik government argued that the construction of the new building was based on the needs of a representative building in Gresik. Several community groups were also presented for audience with the regent and his deputy. Among them are the Gresik History Lovers Society (Mataseger), Suara Gresik, the Gresik Update Community, the Jalan Community, and the Matkodak
Community. The hearing did not produce results, because there were still many local people who disagreed, so the Gresik Regency government formed a Gresik Cultural Heritage Expert Team (TACB Gresik).

After it was formed, TACB Gresik collected data and historical facts about the GNI Gresik building. However, at that time, TACB Gresik did not yet have a competency certificate, so it could not provide a recommendation for GNI status. The results of the study are then submitted to the National Cultural Heritage Expert Team to obtain recommendations. The results of the decision of the National Cultural Heritage Expert Team provide recommendations for the status of GNI as a district-ranked cultural heritage building. Due to the absolute requirement for determining a cultural heritage to be carried out by a team of certified cultural heritage experts, in November 2015 all Gresik cultural heritage expert teams were dispatched to Jakarta to take part in cultural heritage certification, from 1 to 4 November 2015. At that time, the participants who took part in the certification activity numbered six people. The implementation costs are not borne by the participants, but are borne by the central governement and local governements.

After being assessed by the assessors for about four months, out of the six participants who passed, three people were declared qualified, so they were entitled to receive competency certificates and were declared experts in the field of cultural heritage, since April 12 2016. Referring to Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Conservation article 1 number 13, namely the Cultural Conservation Expert Team is a group of conservation experts from various fields of knowledge who have competency certificates to provide recommendations for the establishment, ranking and elimination of Cultural Conservation, the Gresik Regency government made adjustments regarding the members of the Gresik Cultural Heritage Expert Team.

In relation to the above, on March 20 2017 a Decree of the Gresik Regent Number 800/360/HK/437.12/2017 appeared concerning the Gresik Cultural Heritage Expert Team, which determined three people who passed the assessment and had competency certificates as a team of cultural heritage experts. Even though there has been a formal change in membership, a small portion of the old team is still involved in determining information and knowledge about Gresik culture, before decisions are made by a team of certified experts. In addition, to fulfill the voting quorum that results in decision recommendations, each determination session always invites a Team of Cultural Conservation Experts from districts outside Gresik.

**Results of the Work of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Team**

Overall, the Cultural Heritage Expert Team that was formed in Gresik Regency held three meetings on the proposal for designation, which was then submitted to the Gresik Regent to designate it as a cultural heritage. The results of the determination of the Gresik Cultural Heritage Expert Team during their work recommended the designation of 35 cultural heritage buildings, with 12 site categories, 19 building statuses, 2 object statuses, 1 structure and 1 cultural heritage area. However, in 2019, the Gresik Regency Cultural Heritage Expert Team was no longer active, because some team members continued their studies at a higher tertiary level.

However, of all these proposals, not all were approved or approved by the Regent of Gresik at the time, Sambari Halim Radianto. There are only 16 proposals from the Gresik TACB, because there are hundreds of ancient buildings in the Gresik old town area that have the potential to become cultural heritage. However, until now not much of this potential has been designated as legally protected buildings. Referring to the data in the National Registration System for Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, there are 18 material cultural heritages in Gresik Regency, of which are 7 sites, 2 objects, 8 buildings, and 1 structure.

**Implemented Revitalization Principles**

The main concept of the development of the old downtown area Gresik is to strengthen the character of the historic area as a cultural heritage and cultural tourism area. Thus, the concept to be developed is in the form of a Preservation and Revitalization effort. The concept of structuring the area is through data collection on cultural heritage buildings; register; stipulation or ratification of regional regulations on cultural heritage buildings; installation of register boards – information on cultural heritage buildings; provision of incentives for owners of cultural heritage buildings; utilization of the potential of cultural heritage buildings and the old city area for tourism; development of local economic activities through community empowerment through Community Self-Reliance Bodies, development of local special products; community empowerment in supporting the development of historical tourism, such as; as tour guides, selling local specialties and souvenirs, using pedicabs as a means of connecting transportation between the old city areas, and the like.

Regarding the arrangement plan in the Gresik old town area, the government has also mapped out the tourism potential there, which includes: 1). Packaging Village: Gajang Mungkur House, as well as historic
ancient buildings around Jl. Nyi Ageng Arem, Jl. Nyi Ageng Arem III, Jl. Faqih Usman, Jl. Hasyim Ashari as a culinary tourism area; 2). Chinatown Village which includes a city-scale service trade area that is connected to the Gresik souvenier center area; 3). Arab Village which includes the Tomb of Maulana Malik Ibrahim, an Arabic architectural style building around Jl. KH Zhubair, home industry of kopiyah and various Moslem clothes, shops/ stalls selling souvenirs; 4). The TPI Lumpur area was developed with a modern concept, including a fishery product processing home industry; 5). The development of tourist route routes can be integrated with the arrangement of regional identity, especially the pathway elements; 6). Implementation of cultural festivals that cross several main road corridors or are carried out at one point in the old city area, such as special food festivals, damar kurung painting festivals, typical traditional arts, pencak macan, macapatan, kedungdang, hadrah, terbang cuncang, and kemanten circumcision.

Separately, the Regional Secretary of Gresik Regency said that the purpose of the revitalization carried out by the government in the old Gresik city area was to preserve cultural heritage by means of an appearance adjustment approach without changing old elements. However, the most important of all revitalization activities is improving the lives and economy of residents by utilizing the area as a tourist attraction.

**Discussion**

**Results of Cultural Heritage Revitalization in the Old City of Gresik**

The government decided to build an Islamic Center there, which is combined with the cultural heritage area around it, namely the Jami Gresik Mosque and the Tomb of Maulana Malik Ibrahim. The government at that time also had plans to establish Islamic Centers in the Districts of Cerme, Driyorejo, Gresik and Sidayu. However the Gresik Regency Government decided to only realize one project, namely the Gresik square due to budget constraints (Amaliah et al., 2020; Firdaus & Abidin, 2020; Ramadhan et al., 2022). It can be said that the activities carried out by the government on the square in the old town of Gresik are not revitalization, but the construction of new buildings on the land of the old town square of Gresik, because the old buildings and areas have completely changed.

Gresik Regency government is carrying out revitalization activities for several house buildings in the old town area of Gresik, to be precise in the Pekelingan Village, Gresik District. The work which began on September 16 2020 and ended on December 14 2020 using the APBD budget of Rp. 197 million. The form and details of the work are as follows, namely plastering, plastering, threading, and painting, at H. Chisni’s house, Gajah Mungkur’s house, and the house on Nyai Ageng Arem Gang V Street Pekelingan Gresik. The appearance of the house before and after the revitalization can be seen in the following photo. Revitalization activities that have been carried out by the Gresik Regency government in Chinatown Village are focused on the village road environment. The work carried out includes the construction of residential paving roads, the construction of waterways, and public street lighting (Elan & Solihati, 2022; Indrayani & Suparmi, 2021).

**Efforts to Develop Cultural Heritage as a Tourist Destination**

The government has tried to develop the potential for historical heritage in the old town of Gresik, but the results have not been optimal as evidenced by not being able to increase local revenue. On the other hand, tourism in an old city must use an interdependence approach, where the results of city tourism can be used to finance development in the area to make it more attractive, so that tourist motivation increases (Ma et al., 2020; Parma et al., 2021; Yanto & Efendi, 2021). Presumably this has not been done in the old town of Gresik. Although the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan and the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan include a tourism development program, specifically there are no regional regulations or other legal products related to tourism planning for the old town of Gresik.

Some of the efforts that have been made by the local government are as follows: First, the government has provided assistance for the formation of Pokdarwis in each sub-district or village in the Gresik old town area (Putrawan & Ardana, 2019; Rianna & Mardliyah, 2021). District-level Pokdarwis Association that can assist in coordinating all Pokdarwis in Gresik Regency, including the Gresik old town area. Second, the government has held training to improve human resources in the field of tourism destination entrepreneurs, with the main target being tourism object managers and Pokdarwis heads in Gresik Regency.

Third, the government also conducted training to improve human resources related to the tourism accommodation business in the Gresik old town area with the main targets being tourism object managers and lodging managers. The government is also empowering resources for Tourism Ambassadors or what is known as Cak Yuk Gresik. Fourth, the government will hold an election for tourism ambassadors for Cak Yuk Gresik, fostering and sending delegates to take part in the Election of East Java Raka Raki Tourism Ambassadors. Fifth, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government also carried out activities related to
implementing health protocols and registered the Protect QR for tourism entrepreneurs and tourist destinations.

The implications of this research can provide insights and recommendations for developing cultural tourism in Gresik Old City. With a better understanding of the potential and value of cultural heritage, efforts can be made to revitalize and develop attractive tourist destinations for local and foreign tourists. This research may be limited by changes in context that may occur in the future. Factors such as changes in tourism policies, political situations, and economic conditions can affect the implementation and sustainability of efforts to revitalize cultural heritage tourism in Gresik Old City.

4. CONCLUSION

In general activities related to the preservation, revitalization and utilization of cultural heritage buildings that make up an area in the old city of Gresik have not been maximized. The first aspect relates to efforts in the form of identification and determination of cultural heritage structures and buildings which is the most prominent effort among the other three. The second aspect relates to urban spatial planning that has a nuance of revitalization in the area in the old city of Gresik which was carried out by the Gresik Regency government. The third aspect related to government does not have a final plan regarding the utilization of cultural heritage in the old town of Gresik as a tourist destination.

5. REFERENCES


