

LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TOWARDS ECO-TOURISM AT GUNUNG SENYUM, PAHANG

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the involvement and participation of local communities in tourism development at Gunung Senyum, Pahang. To explore this research topic, the study examines two key concepts which are community participation in the tourism development decision-making process and community participation in the sharing of tourism benefits. Based on the findings obtained, this research concludes that local people wish to play a role in the tourism development decision-making process. In general, local people want to see decisions about tourism development in their area made jointly by government officials and local leaders in consultation with the local community. They also want to be involved in the sharing of tourism benefits. Tourism development is contributing positively to communities and has improved better quality of goods and services, entrepreneurial training, household income and also general quality of life from one aspect to another.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The tourism industry is becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors of 21st century (WTO, 2000). Tourism represents a “massive and complex interaction of people, who demand a wide range of services and facilities, and inputs” (Price et al, 1997, p.251). As in Malaysia, tourism industry started from early 1970s and has become the second highest foreign exchange earner for the country after the manufacturing sector (NTP 2004-2010 Main Report, 2004.p.9). The sector is predicted to grow at the rate of 6.9% per year and contribute almost RM30 billion to the nation’s economy (Bernama News, 19 Mac, 2004). In the early growth of the industry, tourism was more focussed at beach resort as a destination for relaxations and today our tourism industry is going towards sustainable tourism.

The definition of sustainable tourism is sustainable development in the context of tourism could be taken as: tourism which is developed and maintained in area (community, environment) such manner and such as scale that is remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that is prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes.

Sustainable tourism strives to meet the needs of the host communities, the tourists and the investors while ensuring environment protection. A great deal of recent research on tourism has focused on small-scales sustainable tourism approaches like ecotourism, rural tourism and alternative tourism (Kent, 2005). There are many type of tourism that been applied or used in