Sustainable Eco-Culture Tourism in Royal-Belum-Temenggor Forest Complex, Perak: Emerging Prospects and Challenges for Orang Asli

© Khairul Hisyam Kamarudin
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

10 December 2014, Gerik, Perak
Contents

1. Introduction
2. Concept of sustainable eco-culture tourism (ECT)
3. Data collections of two villages
4. Perceptions towards sustainable ECT prospect
5. Issues and challenges for sustainable ECT
6. Conclusion
Introduction

Eco-culture tourism (ECT) has brought a multitude of definitions for individuals from varied backgrounds.

"an individual or a certain human group travel to enjoy the nature’s beauty and also the unique cultural diversity of human populating the earth, where the relationship between both elements (nature and the local community’s culture) happens symbiotically."

Kamarudin et al. (2014)
Introduction

- A harmonious and supportive relationship between these aforementioned two elements indirectly shows the importance of the eco-culture tourism in achieving a sustainable development.

- the implementation is also potentially viable to contribute to the simultaneous goal achievement of preservation and development of the community.
Concept of sustainable eco-culture tourism (ECT)

- Natural resources (managed or not), community (local host) and tourism (tourists) are the stakeholders for tourism development $\rightarrow$ balanced + success.

- At a bigger frame + complex relationship between the three stakeholders $\rightarrow$ also + taking into account the three pillars of sustainability (i.e. economy, social and environment).
Figure 1: Proposed conceptual model for sustainable eco-culture tourism.

Source: Adopted from Kamarudin and Ngah (2007) and Kamarudin (2007)
Principles of sustainable ECT

- The development of tourism should help the conservation of environment, cultural heritage as well as developing a source of income for the local people (through job opportunities).
- Encourage a better and more diverse local economic sources and land use planning for long term profit.
- Opening opportunities for active participation of local community to voice opinions/share ideas and suggestions on a certain action.
- Planning, design and location must be as parallel as possible to the need of encouraging the quality of local environment.
- Must put moral and ethic responsibility as a core belief that drives the action and attitudes which in turn, will shape the environment and cultural aspect of a certain location.
Principles of sustainable ECT

- There is a need to include an action to educate all levels and all parties where the locals, government agencies, non-government agencies, industry (operators) and tourists through channeling of information either before, after or during the trip.

- There is also a need to show a symbiotic relationship (as per conceptual proposal); i.e. the control on the tourism would in as much consider the local people’s aspiration. This control is made in order to ensure the profit is distributed equally and fairly to its rightful receiver (local community). On the receivers’ end of the bargain, these people should in turn actively contribute to efforts done to conserve and encourage resource maintenance.

- To encourage a good understanding and involves smart sharing between multiple players; either before and during the tourism activities (government agencies, non-government agencies, industry (operators), scientists and local people).

- To involve an acceptance and agreement on the limitations which is bearable by a certain tourism resource to maintain sustainability.
Data collection from two villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village (or Kampung)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semelor</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sungai Tiang</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village (or Kampung)</th>
<th>Sub Ethnic</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jahai</td>
<td>Temiar</td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semelor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sungai Tiang</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perception of local stakeholders towards sustainable eco-culture tourism (ECT) prospect

Source: Research fieldwork in 2014

n=13

92% Yes
8% Not sure
Perception of local stakeholders towards sustainable eco-culture tourism (ECT) prospect

n=13
Source: Research fieldwork in 2014
Issues and challenges for sustainable ECT program

- Vulnerability of the communities
- Conflict between people and wildlife
- Regroupment schemes and the contest for resources

Source: Research fieldwork in 2014
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Specific Indicators</th>
<th>Findings/Results</th>
<th>Remarks/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average household income</td>
<td>100% live in poverty (&lt;RM600)</td>
<td><strong>WEAK</strong>: High incidence of poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Do households have more than one source of income? | • 15% have more than one source of income  
• 85% have only one source of income | **WEAK**: High level of dependence on single source of income. |
| Has there been a need for households to develop multiple sources of income? | 100% agreed that they need to develop multiple sources of income | **STRONG**: High level of perception on the need to develop multiple sources of income. |
| Has there been any significant change in the main employment sector in the last 20 years? | • 63% maintain doing the same jobs for the last 20 years  
• 37% change jobs | **WEAK**: Most respondents remain in traditional/forest-related jobs (which offered a low, short term, and unstable income). |
| How stable are the existing employment sectors? | • 54% said that they are unstable  
• 37% said that they are stable  
• 9% were not sure | **WEAK**: Most respondents believe that their existing employment sectors could not offer stable employment |
| What are the prospects for ongoing/future economic development and employment sectors? | • 69% mentioned about the lack of prospects  
• 23% were still confident  
• 8% were not sure | **WEAK**: High level of dissatisfaction among respondents regarding the prospects of the employment sectors |
| Do households depend on money from relatives living and working outside of the community? | • 23% said yes  
• 77% are not receiving money from relatives outside | **WEAK**: Low number of family members living and working outside of the villages. |
| Is the community receiving government welfare support/funds/subsidies? If yes, how important are they to the community? | 100% said yes (i.e. welfare payment for low household income) | **WEAK**: High level of dependence on government welfare support (mostly financial). *NGOs are also directly involved in supporting these communities. |

**Source:** Kamarudin et al. (2014)
Regroupment schemes and the contest for resources

Based on field observation with specific focus on the level of physical and economic development of the Orang Asli communities, it can be initially concluded (but open to further and detail studies in future) that the regroupment schemes adopted by the government → successful / not? → to realise its fundamental objectives

1. To eradicate poverty or to reduce the number of hardcore poor among the Orang Asli.
2. To modernize their way of life through provision of social services and basic facilities such as education, health, housing, water and electricity supply, etc.
3. To regroup and recognise (menyusun) Orang Asli in suitable centres in their traditional areas.
4. To guarantee the security of the Orang Asli from subversive and anti-national elements (JHEOA, 1992: Lampiran A).

Regroupment schemes and the contest for resources

- Initial proposal for a resettlement policy adopted during the Emergency period (1948-1960) was derived from the military approach

- Early regroupment schemes were located along the spine of the central mountain range (or known today as the Central Forest Spine, CFS)

- This study draw a conclusion that other objectives especially the poverty eradication and community modernisation initiatives are becoming the afterthoughts agendas

- A bigger challenge → during post-Emergency → how to sustain and enhance the livelihood of a growing Orang Asli population in all regroupment schemes. Relocation of different groups of people from their traditional territories into a centralise site under a single management + sharing of common resources, and later on becoming the contest for (limited) resources → in line with the growing number of population regroupment schemes
Regroupment schemes and the contest for resources

- Case of Sungai Tiang
- Case of Desa Aman Damai

Photo: Sungai Tiang (Anwar Harun, 2014)
Conflict between people and wildlife

- Interactions between wild animals and people in RBTFCC often resulted in negative impact, either for people (loss of economic resources such as agricultural projects) or for wild animals (loss of habitat).

- Information from field observation also strengthen the authors’ notion i.e. when the growth of human population overlaps with established wildlife territory, tension and conflict of resources between people and wild animals will increase.

- Case of Semelor → small holders rubber tappers

- How to reduce conflict, create a more harmonious relation → community based natural resource management → potential of sustainable ECT
Thank you

Head
Geo-Sustainability Research Cluster
UTM-High Impact Research on Royal Belum (TRANSROYAL)
http://royalbelumconference2014.wordpress.com

Member
Rural Research & Planning Group (RRPG)
http://rrpg.org

KHAIRUL HISYAM KAMARUDIN, PHD
Lecturer/Researcher in Planning (Rural Development & Sustainable Tourism)
UTM Razak School of Engineering & Advanced Technology
UTM Kuala Lumpur

http://khairulhkamarudin.wordpress.com