

# WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARTICULARLY IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

A case : Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu, Terengganu

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## ABSTRACT

*Community-based tourism, is often recognized as a good example of sustainable tourism development that creates employment and income. Sustainable development includes long term positive economic, social and environmental perspective. Community development is emphasized in rural area as a part of development agenda that benefits local community thus can be used as a tool to reduce poverty in rural area. This paper focuses on women participation in rural development initiative of Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu that has been identified as a case study to show their involvement in community-based tourism through women's organization which is PEWANIS and KUNITA. These organizations receive an initiative from Nestle Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. and WWF to enhance the livelihoods of local communities particularly women group by providing an opportunities for them to participate in sustainable development program. Thus, this paper will answer the research objective which is to identify the role and potential of women's organization in order to empower local women in rural area. Local women are provided with relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to participate in sustainable community development program. Initial observation found that, local women are actively involved in women's organization by participating in various type of socio-economic activities in their area. Through existing women's organization, local women are encouraged to participate in socio-economic opportunities such as small business activities and environmental awareness like conserve the mangroves and wetlands, that can be an attraction for local tourism in their area. Hence, by describing the roles of women's organization, it is an effort to increase the status of local women and to evaluate women performance in community-based tourism initiatives particularly in rural area. The majority of local women expressed a positive view with the effectiveness of efforts from women's organizations in improving the lives of local women in their area.*

**KEY WORDS** Women participation, rural development, sustainable development, women's organization, community-based tourism

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism sector became an important sector has the potential to grow rapidly. Furthermore, tourism sector is one of the main sector that contributed to the national income (Yusnita, Aziz & Shalahudin, 2012). Globally, tourism has experienced continued growth to become one of largest economic contributor to many countries around the world (Tourism Malaysia, 2011). According to UNWTO, tourism industry became one of the fastest growing economic sector

in the world for the past six decades. In many developing countries, tourism is one of the main economic contributors particularly in terms of export exchange earnings, creating job opportunities and other related economic opportunities (UNWTO, 2008). However, unlike developed countries, the development of the tourism industry in developing countries has been slow in terms of their administration and planning approach (Kadir and Jabil, 2010).

Concurrently, the tourism industry became the second largest industry contributing to Malaysia's economic growth after manufacturing and servicing industries (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia; Yahya, 2010). Besides, the total number of tourists arriving in Malaysia in 2013 increased to 25.72 million, compared to 25.03 million in 2012 (Tourism Malaysia, 2013). One type of tourism industry that contributes to national economic growth is rural tourism, which takes various forms such as agro-tourism, culture and heritage tourism, adventure tourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism, and other variants. In recent years, community-based tourism (CBT) has been concerned with the impact of tourism on the community and environmental resources that emerge from a community development strategy, using tourism as a tool to strengthen the ability of the local community in order to manage tourism resources, particularly in rural areas.

Furthermore, community-based tourism is fast expanding and becoming increasingly important for it is used to meet the demands of tourists as well as a strategy to develop rural areas. Hence, efforts and planning considerations have been undertaken mainly by various government agencies to further develop rural areas, particularly to enhance their contribution towards socioeconomic community development, especially in Malaysia. For that reason, this paper will reveal women participation in rural development, particularly community-based tourism (CBT) in Setiu fishing village, which is Kampung Mangkuk, identified as the study area. Based on an exploratory study, this paper examines the nature of women participation through women organizations, which has influenced the success of women empowerment in Setiu, Terengganu. Their success is also influenced by their commitment, strong leadership, and their hardiness in managing their living and resources (Amran & Zainab, 2009; Yahaya & Abdul Rasid, 2010). Interestingly, many of their activities and programs are based on community-based tourism sources from their own environment, which is a way to guarantee the sustainability of output produced by the local women of Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu, Terengganu.

## **THE DEFINING OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM (CBT)**

In general, community-based tourism (CBT) is a type of sustainable tourism that promotes pro-poor strategies in a community setting with the aim to involve the local community in the running and management of tourism activities as a means of alleviating poverty and providing an alternative income for the community. Tiffin (2005) states that Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a community development tool to enhance the ability of communities, particularly in rural areas, to manage tourism resources while ensuring the extensive involvement and participation of community members. Besides, APEC noted that Community Based Tourism (CBT) is able to create direct employment opportunities as well as to increase income levels and to reduce the level of poverty in rural communities.

Basically, Community-based Tourism (CBT) is defined as tourism owned or managed by communities and intended to deliver benefits to communities through initiatives implemented. The large majority of community-based tourism initiatives are based on the

community development. In addition, refers to Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project (REST,1997), CBT will be defines as tourism that takes environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life. According to Scheyvens (1999), she argued that the ultimate goal of community-based tourism is to empower the local community at four levels of empowerment which is economic, psychological, social and political.

Moreover, Brohman (1996), indicates that community-based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the economic, social and cultural well-being of the community. Besides that, Hatton (1999) states CBT as innovative tourism development in local communities, involving individuals, groups, small business owners and local organizations and governments. Interestingly, it would also seek to strike a balanced and harmonious approach to development that would considerations on local economy, both culturally and environmentally, and potentials of the local community. As alternatives to mainstream tourism, Community-based tourism is often more effective in combating poverty issues particularly in rural areas.

Others than that, poor communities in isolated rural areas often have a comparative advantage in tourism development as they have a rich natural and cultural heritage. Furthermore, one of the key differences between community-based tourism and other forms of tourism is the focus on empowering the local community through community development. The development of local community including the raising of awareness, the running of tourism education and training programmes, and the provision of business advisory support, knowledge and ability of the local community to control and manage their own development.

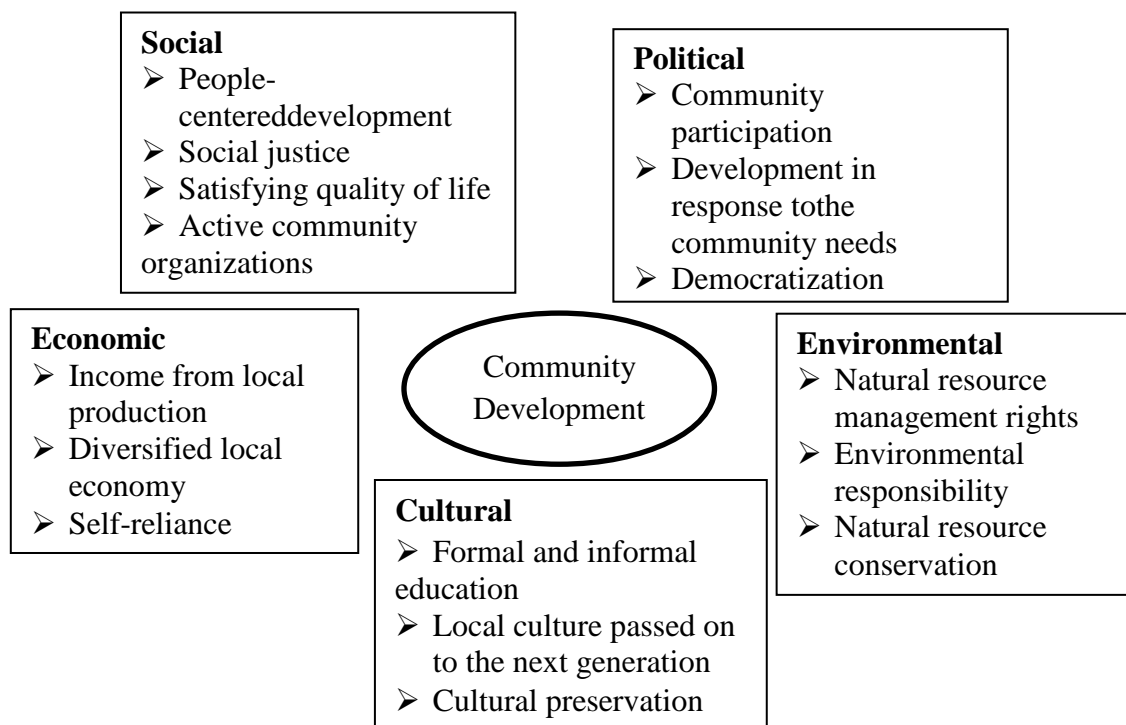


Figure 1 : Five Principle Aspects of Community Development

Sources :Adaption from *Community Based Tourism: Principles and Meaning: Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project (REST,1997)*

Additionally, CBT and community development are inherently connected, because they shared the same natural and cultural resource. Other than that, tourism can be a powerful tool for community development, especially when tourism and community development are necessarily connected. Through CBT programme, local communities, especially women group can expose their ability and performance in order to manage their local resources. Hence, the following table suggests the ways that the principles of sustainable development can be put into practice to make tourism sustainable.

Table 1: Shows how CBT can be used as a tool for community development

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise funds for community development</li> <li>• Create jobs in tourism</li> <li>• Raise the income of local people</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the quality of life</li> <li>• Promote community pride</li> <li>• Divide roles fairly between women/men, elder/youth</li> <li>• Build community management organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the participation of local people</li> <li>• Increase the power of the community over the outside</li> <li>• Ensure rights in natural resource management</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study the carrying capacity of the area</li> <li>• Manage waste disposal</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the need for conservation</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage respect for different cultures</li> <li>• Foster cultural exchange</li> <li>• Embed development in local culture</li> </ul>

Source :Adaptation from *Community Based Tourism: Principles and Meaning* :Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project (REST,1997)

Lastly, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is one of the tourism product that has been given emphasis by the government through Ministry of Tourism. This emphasizes the priority in resources allocation given to CBT programme which can have a wide of benefits and contribute towards injection especially into rural economic. Thus, CBT giving benefits for local communities by providing an opportunities to local communities to generate sources of income, improving their quality of life and increase their socio-economic. However, the supporter from outside agencies or local NGO will often be needed in order to equip women with relevant skills and knowledge, to expose them to the involvement in community development especially in tourism initiatives.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN TOURISM INITIATIVES**

According to Scheyvens (2000), tourism initiatives can empower local communities by giving them awareness of the importance of their resources and increase a sense of pride in

to manage and control over their own development. Besides, the empowerment is a process in which local communities acquire the ability to act in ways to control over their lives .

Furthermore, the development of tourism can be successful if having the promoting efforts of the empowerment in which local communities have some measure of control over tourism development and sharing benefits among themselves. However, the involvement of local communities in tourism development is often difficult (Scheyvens, 2002). This is because, community consists of many kinds of people, in which unequal position and different aspiration. Hence, it leads to an unequal opportunity of community to participate and involve in tourism development initiatives. Moreover, the community likely to be divided according their class, age, gender, and ethnic affiliation.

## **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

In general, the success of tourism relies on the cooperation and involvement of local community in tourism because they are essential part of the tourism products (Murphy, 1985). However, there are various ways in which local communities can be involved in tourism initiatives. Based on the previous study, have discussed the different ways in which local communities can be involved in tourism activities.

In addition, tourism can have a positive effect on poverty by expanding income earning opportunities especially for low income women, disadvantaged groups, and unskilled youth. Women, even in more conservative and traditional society, they are often plays an important roles especially in tourism sector. This may imply that women participation as a development strategy is based on community resources, needs and decision making in their community because women is the main actor in the development process.

Moreover, community participation especially women group in the tourism development process has emerged and been refined in the context of developed countries. According to Timothy (1999), the community involvement in the tourism development process can be viewed from at least two perspectives, in term of decision-making process and in the benefits of tourism development. The proponents of community participation have contended that community participation as an element of development has been considered, and promoted into the development process in different way. Furthermore, Smith (1981), noticed that the interest of the community in direct participating in decision-making and the demand in the development process have emerged due to the needs of itself, as a response to community action.

Besides, community participation refers to a form of voluntary action in which individuals confront opportunities and responsibilities of community. According to Askew (1989), he indicates that participation is an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs and increasingly assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control and assess the collective actions that are proved necessary. In other words, community participation is to design and development in such a way that intended benefits are encouraged to take matters into their own hands, to participate in their own development through their own resources (Stone, 1989).

On the other hand, the concept of community participation is seen as a powerful tool to educate the community in right ways (Low, 1991). In addition, it is stated that the

leadership of society was necessary to ensure that its members were educated in the broadest sense of community development particularly in community-based tourism. In this phase local communities have full control over the decision making process as well as over the execution and benefits. Hence, in case of Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu, women organization which is PEWANIS (Women Entrepreneurs Group) and KUNITA (Fishermen's Wives Group) plays an important roles in pursuit local women to received and shared benefits of tourism activities which is community-base tourism initiatives program among them. The success of the women groups depends on the roles and charismatics of leadership of their leader, as well as the commitment of the formal agencies involved. In this case, the women organization in Setiu which is PEWANIS and KUNITA, is also attributed to the strong leadership of the few dominant women involved in their programs.

## RESEARCH SETTING IN SETIU, TERENGGANU

Kampung Mangkuk, is under Setiu District of Terengganu, that facing to South China Sea and lagoon. These coastal fishing village, Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu can accessible by air and highway from the capital town. The north of Setiu is Kelantan District, meanwhile the south is Pahang District. The distance of Setiu about 55 km from Kuala Terengganu and 460 km from Kuala Lumpur. Besides, Setiu is also the name of the parliamentary constituency in which the district is situated. It is also has four state seats contiuensy named: Jabi, Pemaissuri, Langkap and Batu Rakit.

From the capital town of Setiu, journey by car and motorcycle will bring us to the coastal village of Kampung Mangkuk, which is have a harmony community like malays, chinese and a litle bit of indian community. But majority of the community are dominated by malays community is which three quarter of community in Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu is engaged in fishing and agricultural industries while the rest are self-employed businessmen, and others village job. Since the local economy is mainly based on fishing, Kampung Mangkuk is famously known with the marine based products and naturally like Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) products.



Figure 1: Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu, Terengganu

## **WOMEN ORGANIZATION ( PEWANIS AND KUNITA)**

Recently, Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia (LKIM), Fishiermen Association of Setiu (PNK Setiu), and local tourism department are planning to develop Setiu village which is Kampung Mangkuk, as an community-based tourism destination that can attract more tourists. Several potential products have been identified for Community-based Tourism attraction like mangroves plants and wetlands area, natural beaches and marine products.

Furthermore, others are women organization which is PEWANIS and KUNITA are mostly as a attraction for this area based on their activities and programs. PEWANIS (Women Entrepreneur Group) and KUNITA (Fishermen's Wives Group) could be empower local women by providing an opportunities for women to contribute into community-based tourism activities thus improve their skill and creativity towards generating extra income for their family. They are officially contribute and involve into the community programme in term of leading, decision making, planning, monitoring, problem solving and training community to participate into tourism activities through financial and business model. Besides, these women's organizations are also involved in social activities such as awareness of environmental conservation.

The advancement made by PEWANIS and KUNITA will definitely allow them to go further in their business venture and perhaps encourage more participation from other women in the area. It is very likely that these concept can be adopt in other communities where women who are merely homemakers can make a difference to society. The efforts made by women's organization have shown that by coming together with mission, they are united and have the strength to enhance themselves and their community. Besides, local women earn an income for their efforts and go further to officially register their organization to be eligible for more assistance and funding.

For Setiu people, The Fishing Association of Setiu (PNK Setiu) is viewed not only as a vital government agency that becomes the mobiliser to local socio-economic activities especially in Setiu, but also plays an important role in strengthening the social solidarity and building capacity between villagers and the community. Solidarity among the villagers is also equally attributed by the active role plays by PEWANIS and KUNITA group, which has became the backbones to the community development in Setiu especially in Kampung Mangkuk and also become a catalyst of the development of entrepreneurship and small business activities among women in Setiu district especially.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a mixed methods research design through using quantitative and qualitative data. A mixed methods research design has many advantages, the main one being that it gives the opportunity of triangulation (Mikkelsen, 2005). The study has used both primary and secondary data to attain the objectives and carried out by adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods. All the local authorities of the Setiu District consist the study population and were selected as sample area for data collection. The respondents for the survey were direct or indirect beneficiaries of community-based tourism development program, women organization, and local community. Furthermore, the questionnaires and interviews session were employed to gather the required additional information. Moreover, qualitative approaches guided to conduct fieldwork in which held in-depth interviews, and

collected notes through participating observation and direct observation, and informal interactions in the locality. Besides, a structured questionnaire has been used in this study with open and close ended items. The secondary data are collected from some reliable sources such as journals, books, government agencies, several reports.

## **FINDINGS**

Although there are some constrains to full local participation, but finding shows that these problems mainly occur with the communication between the community and outsiders. Within the community however, community members especially women group seem to be very involved with tourism development. Besides that, despite the constraints, local women seem to be confident that they are in control over the tourism development in their village.

Furthermore, study found that women participation in community development particularly in community-based tourism program that implemented by local authorities in several stages in the process. A significant number of respondents, agrees that women are consulted in the designing and planning phases of programs. The study also found that women are involved in the fund management process of community development program in community-based tourism initiatives. Community development program would focus specifically on women empowerment if women members are involved with decision making process at community-based tourism initiative by having more women in lead, to pay more attention for the well-being of socio-economic of community development.

Besides, the study also found that the empowerment of the women in Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu is at a positive level. The study further reveals that higher the number of women participation in the decision making process of community development programs, the bigger the contribution on the well-being of society at large. The main success factors of CBT in Kampung Mangkuk, Setiu are leadership and the unity and understanding of its community. Their keen support could be seen in the active role played by the local community especially women group which is PEWANIS and KUNITA group.

In addition, the active involvement of the local community fosters understanding and cooperation in implementing an activities in their village. Furthermore, the successful implementation of the CBT program needs peace and harmony in the local community and an organization. The CBT program is one of the strategy for rural development. However, the implementation demands high commitment and understanding among local communities.



## **CONCLUSION**

Women organization can change and improve the livelihoods of rural community especially women group, as represented by Setiu village which Kampung Mangkuk. This is demonstrated by PEWANIS and KUNITA, and individual and household processing marine products. PEWANIS and KUNITA's socio-economic and socio-cultural activity are based on formal collective action, guided and managed by LKIM, WWF and NESTLE of Malaysia Sdn Bhd. KUNITA and PEWANIS's active participation in small-scale business has boosted up the women status in Setiu in the community where their creativity, potential and intelligence are recognized not only by the local community but also those in the fishing and tourism industry.

This is evidenced when one of the KUNITA members has been selected as one of the executive board members of Local Fisherman and Association. This study is testimony that women, if given a proper opportunity, guidance and emphasizing the element of collective action can become a significant contribution in upgrading their socio-economic status utilizing their environment products in a sustainable manner and finally strengthening the social structure of their own community.

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