**Sustainable Tourism and Community Development in Malaysia**

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**ABSTRACT**

This chapter explores tourism and community development in Malaysia towards sustainable tourism practice. Tourism development is closely aligned with the aim to eradicate poverty, rural community development, reduce the disparity between the rich and poor, leading to national cohesion and cultural commodification. Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a type of rural tourism usually managed by communities and intended to deliver wider community benefit. Currently, studies on sustainable tourism is heavily dictated by economic and environmental aspects, ignoring the significance of socio-cultural perspective. The local people are strongly attached to their culture and they believe that tourism helps them not only to protect their culture but also to learn foreign culture from tourists. ‘Outsiders’ through various developmental initiatives have been always guiding the local communities to engage in tourism business effectively. However, the generally used top-down approach has resulted in forced involvement of the community in tourism development in their areas. Thus, the issue of sustainable tourism practice is still questionable when the planning and implementation of development projects are mainly influenced by the outsiders. This chapter specifically presents the importance of community-based initiatives towards sustainable tourism in Malaysia. This unique contribution will be a significant addition to the body of knowledge in the sustainable tourism aspect. In a nutshell, CBT can be considered as a desired form of tourism towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**9.1 Tourism Industry**

According to Presenza et al. (2019) tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world and it is a social phenomenon of major importance. Due to this positive expansion, tourism has achieved a position, where it can bring various advantages to the people involved and the particular country where it is to the people involved and the particular country where it is developed. According to Theobald (2005), the tourism industry expanded massively in the 1960s, has grown tremendously by uplifting the economy and community in the system. Kayat (2011) stated that global tourism began to grow exponentially since the 1950s due to stimulation by interrelated “push” factors, which originated mostly from individual and social needs and demand, as well as the “pull” factors stimulated by tourist destinations worldwide.

The development of tourism in the contemporary era was elevated by the significant growth in tourist arrivals internationally. Kunasekaran (2013) noted that with growing economic activity in the emerging markets, the tourism industry provides an important opportunity for developing countries to move up the value chain toward the production of innovative tourism products and quoted UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (2011) who stated *“at a time of profound global economic uncertainty, tourism’s ability to generate socio-economic opportunities and help reduce the gap between rich and poor is more important than ever.”*

Kayat (2011) cited Mason (2003) who suggested five major reasons for the growth of travel at the end of the 19th century; improved standard of living due to a rise in industrial output associated with the Industrial Revolution, cheaper and more accessible travel due improvements in transportation, the introduction of annual holidays, changing perceptions of the environment, and an increasing desire to travel due to education. Despite the “shocks” that the industry went through in the past 30 years due to exogenous factors such as war, terrorism, recession, economic downturn, SARS, Bird flu and Tsunami, it has shown to be strong and resilient. Tourism is an important tool for countries’ economic development and growth, and is a catalyst for creating employment and poverty alleviation.

As global travel increases every year, tourism development has become an important developmental agenda for countries throughout the world. The main reason for this tourism development is that tourism is seen as a business that provides economic assistance to a community. She also highlighted that however, tourism has the potential to generate harmful effects that are costly to the community. She stressed rightly that as such, concerted determinations must be made on how these developments should look like, as well as to see who should benefit the most, who should benefit the least and who and what should change.

Kayat (2011) concluded that in aiming for growth in tourism, which is always measured by tourist arrivals or tourist spending from year to year, many nations worldwide concentrate their resources and efforts in developing tourism as an important economic sector for their countries. She reiterated that tourism should also be developed as a means to enhance the living standards of the nations’ population and to enrich the lives of both the hosts and the guests. According to Fridgen (1990), tourism development is the long-term process of preparing for the arrival of tourists. It involves planning, building and managing the attractions, transportations, accommodations, services and facilities that serve the tourist, while taking into consideration all of the factors that may influence travel to a specific destination.

Thus, if managed strategically, tourism development efforts usually result in the growth of the number of tourists to a specifically developed destination, unless something that is beyond the control of the management takes place that actually hinders the tourists from visiting that destination, as what had happened during the recent cases of natural disasters or terrorist attacks. Tourists are defined as “people who travel to, and stay in, places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated, from within the place visited (World Tourism Organisation, 1995). There are many different purposes and motivations for people to travel. According to Richardson and Fluker (2004), the primary reasons for travel may be vacation and leisure, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) or business. Whatever is the purpose or motivations of the tourists, the travel to a destination directly or indirectly affects the host community as they are the ones who eventually provide hospitality to the tourists and the tourists experience a different atmosphere from their place of origin.

**9.2 Tourism Industry in Malaysia**

Situated in the Southeast Asia region, Malaysia is bordered with Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, and Indonesia. In 2018, Malaysia has a population of 32.6 million (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). The country has different ethics group from different background, beliefs, languages and culture. Before Independence Day, tourism was not a notable type of industry in Malaysia (Musa, 2000; Marzuki, 2010). Malaysia once highly depended on the primary commodities, however, the global economic regression and slashed of oil price forced the government to find an alternative source of income (Habibi et al., 2009). Thus, tourism was recognized as a tool to improve the economy of the country.

The tourism industry is the primary contributor to the services sector, constituting approximately 15% of Malaysia GDP or RM201.4 billion in 2017 (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2018). Tourism is also the second main contributor of foreign exchange income (Mosbah, & Al Khuja, 2014), anticipating foreign tourists to contribute at least RM100 billion to Malaysian economy by 2020. Tourism delivers major benefits to the local people and is a tool to grow employment opportunities and offer better income distribution.

Malaysia is a famous tourist destination in the Asia Pacific region (Habibi et al., 2009). Based on the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index published by the World Economic Forum (2017), Malaysia ranked 26th place as the most competitive tourism destination. It is also a global top 10 medical tourism (Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, 2018). Table 1 summarises some global achievements and recognition.

(Table 1 goes here)

Malaysia has been experiencing tourism difficulty over the past five years when the two most airline tragedies involved Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 and the MH370 flight which occurred in 2014 (Yang, Tjiptono, & Poon, 2018). This has asserted heavy impacted on Malaysia’s tourism industry particularly the inbound Chinese tourists. It was reported that over 60% of the booking from Chinese were cancelled (Bizcommunity.com, 2019). Meanwhile, the security and safety issue has called an alert for the tourism industry (Ayob and Masroni, 2014). Moreover, haze in Malaysia has caused Chinese tourists to divert their vacation to other destinations (Malaysiakini, 2019). In addition to this, high competition from neighbouring countries such as Vietnam and Thailand had further impacted the tourism industry (Jaafar, 2018). In order to gain the interest of foreign tourists, the Malaysian government has allocated RM100 million for promotional and marketing campaign (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2018).

(Table 2 goes here)

Table 2 shows that a total of 25.83 million tourists visited Malaysia in 2018 compared to 25.95 million in the year 2017, a slightly dropped by 0.46% and the tourist receipts also reduced by 2.4%. However, the Malaysian government is optimistic about the future of tourism.

**9.3 Tourism Development in Malaysia**

Tourism development in Malaysia is closely aligned with the state’s objectives which are to eradicate poverty, rural community development, reduce the disparity between the rich and poor, leading to the cohesion of the Malaysian culture and ultimately, the promotion of national unity. Goeldner, Ritchie and McIntosh (2000) recommended tourism to gain competitiveness in tourism development, the government agencies must work with relevant stakeholders to achieve sustainability.

Generally, it can be claimed that the strategies put forth by the government to achieve competitiveness and sustainability is linked by the need for a management information system specifically for tourism in order to support policy formulation, strategic planning, routine decision-making and overall performance evaluations. The competitiveness of a tourism destination can be defined as its capacity to compete and grow profitably in the tourism business. Sustainability, on the other hand, relates to the ability of a destination to maintain the socio-cultural and environmental attributes while competing in the business platform.

According to Kayat (2011), the development of tourism in Malaysia depends on several factors which are mainly the ‘pull’ factors and government interventions in the form of policies and strategies for the destination. Kayat cited Page (2003), who described ‘pull’ factors as those factors within the destination zone that attract tourists to travel from one zone to another zone. The pull factors that influence tourist arrivals to Malaysia includes among others the geographical proximity between originating zone and destination zone, accessibility, attractions, cultural relationships, infrastructure includes among others the geographical proximity between originating zone and destination zone, accessibility, availability of attractions, cultural links, availability off infrastructure and services within the destinations, affordability, peace and stability, positive market image and pro-tourism policies (Kayat, 2011).

Malays, Chinese, Indians and various indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak live and work alongside harmoniously in a multi-ethnic society. This is also reflected in the Malaysia, Truly Asia promotional campaign by Tourism Malaysia – *“To know Malaysia is to love Malaysia. A bubbling, bustling melting pot of races and religions where Malays, Indians, Chinese and many other ethnic groups live together in peace and harmony”* (Tourism Malaysia, 2012). According to Khan, Misnan and Ismail (2019), the Malaysian government has strongly supported and encouraged longer staying tourists by promoting “Malaysia My Second Home” (MM2H) campaign. As for the MM2H campaign, the selling point for the target market is very much zoomed on retirement and the associated healthcare or fitness especially with Malaysia being marketed as a healthcare hub within the region. What more with the National Heart Institute extending special deals of US$6,000 to US$7,000 for a regular by-pass heart surgery at the Institute (Malaysia Healthcare Association, 2017). In the 1970s, Malaysia’s economy was well sustained by good prices for export commodities such as tin, rubber, oil palm and timber. However, the economy suffered in the early 1980s due to the plummeting prices of these commodities which are highly influenced by the fluctuations in the world economy. Kayat (2011) noted that such instabilities coupled with budget deficits and balance of payment deficiencies had made the policy makers recognise the importance of service industries such as tourism.

Kayat rightly pointed out, that the hosting of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Conference in 1972 by the Malaysian Government was an impetus for tourism development. With that, the government established a Tourism Development Corporation under the Ministry of Trade and Industry in the same year. On 20th May 1987, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture was established which evolved with a new identity in 2002 – The Ministry of Tourism or in short MOTOUR.

**9.4 Tourism Products in Malaysia**

Attractions form the very basis for travel to a destination. Attractions are the tourism products which form the important element that attracts tourists to visit a destination. A product is anything that can be presented to a potential group of buyers for attention, procurement, use or consumption that can satisfy a want or a need. It includes physical objects, services, places, organizations and ideas (Saidhani and Sudiarditha, 2019). Therefore, a tourism product in the Malaysian context is any attraction that includes physical objects such as *batik, songket* and local handicrafts, services such as accommodation, transport, food and tour guide, scenic places like Cameron Highlands, historic places like Malacca, establishments like the Bario community in Sarawak and niche areas like CBT Tourism. Planned events like Formula 1 racing and Le Tour de Langkawi Cycle Racing could also be included as tourism products. All of these are packaged and catered to tourists to accelerate the fulfilment of their travel intentions.

Tourism in Malaysia can easily fall under any one or a combination of several categories as follows:

* Nature-based – eco-tourism, jungle-trekking, scuba-diving and snorkelling.
* Adventure-based – mountain climbing, cave exploration and kayaking.
* Culture-based – culinary tourism, music festival and indigenous tourism.
* Recreational-based – parasailing, jet-skiing, golf tourism and horse-riding.
* Health-based – spa tourism, medical treatment and physio-theraphy.
* Heritage-based – urban tourism, educational tourism
* Community-based – CBT tourism, indigenous tourism and
* Religious-based – rituals, festivals, visiting temples and places of worship
* Rural-based – CBT, agro-tourism and cottage industries.

**9.5 Community-based-tourism in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, communities involve in tourism sector in several ways. Most of the communities are using the concept of community based tourism to the process of community development. This section reviews and analyses the previous tourism development and the implementation of CBT in the community in Malaysia. Table 3 summarized the CBT studies in Malaysia. It appears that most of the CBT’s in Malaysia focus on homestay program and conducted in rural areas (Harris, 2009, Yusof et al. 2013; Amran & Haniza, 2012). For instance, Othman, Sazali, and Mohamed (2013) studied the operation of the homestay initiative in the state of Kedah focusing on CBT.

(Table 3 goes here)

CBT have been promoted in a community as a result of the government’s policy of using tourism to maximize the positive economic impacts (Ibrahim, 2008). A study conducted in Redang, Mabul, and Perhentian Island reported that the local communities in those islands enjoyed the benefits brought by tourism (Daldeniz & Hampton, 2013). However, language, seasonality and cost of training are some of the main barriers from stopping local community in tourism. Harris (2009) conducted a case study how pro-poor CBT integrated into community well-being in Bario, Sarawak, Malaysia. Meanwhile, Davison, Harris, & Vogel (2005) studied the role of e-commerce for CBT in Bario, Sarawak, Malaysia. A rural ICT project, e-Bario, was raised to promote CBT tourism (Harris, 2009). As a result, the social and economic life of the community has improved.

In many rural areas, Malaysian government recognized community empowerment in cooperatives is vital to improve the socio-economic benefits (Munikrishnan et al. 2015; Nor Haniza & Amran, 2013). One of the good successful CBT story in Malaysia is the establishment of community based cooperative (KOPEL) in Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah (Munikrishnan et al. 2015). Local communities were found actively participate in KOPEL’s tourism activities. It was reported that 14 percent of the total population are the member of cooperative. They addressed four important criteria in successful CBT such as 1) planning and empowerment, 2) awareness and training, 3) collaboration with other stakeholders and 4) impacts of rural tourism. KOPEL actively work together with many government agencies, local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private organisations. The collaboration allows KOPEL to get training, funds to protect wildlife and forest restoration. As a result, the income generated from KOPEL increased from RM38, 000 (USD12, 000) in 2000 to RM1.6million (USD500, 000) in 2012. Thus, government encourage local community to participate and involve in the rural tourism to gain economic benefits (Yusof et al. 2013).

Nevertheless, some researchers include the indigenous local communities into CBT (Majin, Azman, & Lamun Jailani, 2016; Kunasekaran et al. 2013; Shazali, Sridar & Syamsul, 2015). For instance, an indigenous community study conducted by Majin et al. (2016) in Carey Island, revealed that tourism has impacted on the community life in term of economically, socially, culturally and environmentally. However, the community feel anxious the lack of natural resources will cause the degradation of their culture and tourism (Kunasekaran et al. 2013). On the other hand, the unique culture is used by Bidayuh community to promote tourism (Shazali et al. 2015; Shazali et al. 2017). In the absence of development plan by the government, Bidayuh community is still willing to participate in tourism and to share their culture to outsiders.

**9.6 Towards Sustainable Tourism in Malaysia**

Sustainable tourism is no longer a buzz word as many governments in developing countries encourage sustainable tourism even though sustainable tourism was arguably lack of practical and challenges (Gossling, 2018). Buckley (2012) opined that tourism is not close to sustainability. For example, Higgins-Desbiolles (2018) critiqued the sustainability of tourism and mentioned that tourism has ‘problem' because the growth of development of tourism is not in line with sustainable goals. Failing to incorporate a well-planning for a tourist destination will result in serious negative consequences (Teh & Cabanban, 2007). In Cambodia, sustainable tourism remains questionable (Carter et al., 2015). As Fodness et al. (1993) contented, ‘it is necessary to go beyond traditional tourism problem-solving paradigms and approaches to achieve reliable replicable results’. Font and McCabe (2017) stressed that tourism products require a more innovative and sustainable strategy so that it can be marketed.

Despite the economic benefits of tourism, it could also cause adverse impacts such as the destruction of flora and fauna, impact natural resources such as water and soil. In addition, the implementation of sustainable tourism is always a challenge and difficult (Muangasame & McKercher, 2015). Apart from that, tourism can also threaten the communities from excessive development, carrying capacity and manipulation of local culture. Tourism also heavily consumes the resources it depends on. In contrast, sustainable tourism is planned to benefit the local community, appreciate their culture, protect natural resources, channel the economic benefits directly to the local community and create awareness to both tourists and local community about the significance of conservation.

Sustainable tourism practice in Malaysia mainly focusses on the community well being perspectives as compared economics and environmental pillars (Kunasekaran et al., 2017 and Bhuiyan, 2019). Four success factors of CBT such as dynamic leadership style and organizational relationship, the establhisment of a tourism cooperative, corporations with government agencies and tourism industry stakeholders and a resilient pledge to biodiversity conservation were highlighted in Miso Walai homestay in Kinabatangan, Sabah (Amran & Haniza, 2012). In a study in Langkawi Islands, Malaysia, inadequate information, an ineffective approach, residents’ attitudes and exclusion from participation processes were found barriers in public participation in decision-making processes (Azizan, Hay, & James, 2012). They agreed that public participation in decision-making processes is viewed as imperative for successful tourism planning in. Similarly, a study carried out in Tioman Island revealed that local community’s welfare was neglected and this certainly affect the local communities’ participation in tourism (Ho, Chia, Ng, & Kunasekaran et al., 2017).

Similarly, Nor Haniza and Amran (2013) studied how a tourism cooperative in Kinabatangan River, Sabah creates socio-cultural and environmental benefits to its members. The Model of Economically Sustainable Community Tourism (MESCOT) is perceived as a successful business model that adopted in CBT. This business model has been proven to grow the community business ventures through cooperative. On the other hand, Goh (2015) conducted a study in Kinabatangan, Sabah to identify the impacts of CBT. The researcher concluded that CBT are able to reduce the poverty rate, enhance local community participation and protect the nature environment. The researcher also highlighted that cooperating with different stakeholders at different levels are important.

**9.7 Conclusion**

Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG 17) heavily stresses the importance of community development as compared to economic sustainability. This is evident by several goals which are relevant to enhance community well-being;

* Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms.
* Goal 2: Zero Hunger.
* Goal 3: Health.
* Goal 4: Education.
* Goal 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment.
* Goal 6: Water and Sanitation.
* Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
* Goal 10: Reduced inequalities
* Goal 17: Global partnerships

By giving specific attention to the significant issues determining sustainable tourism in terms of local community’s involvement, this aspect could be addressed. Usually, the opinion of the local people often overlooked by the governmental agencies. This scenario leads to dissatisfaction of the local people because they feel that they are not valued and empowered. Although the communities are included in preliminary developmental plans, the ultimate decision of developmental projects however will be taken by the government or outsider funding agencies. If this situation prolongs, rural communities will feel isolated with any tourism developmental programs structured by the government. Therefore, the relevant authorities should not simply consult the community to satisfy procedures, on a token basis. They should allow and value the community’s viewpoints and prepare a platform of trial and error. By doing this, the community can be self reliant and move towards community capacity building in long run.

In addition, the approach used by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2003), by making successful eco-tourism operators motivate other villagers into being involved in tourism, brought major development in Ban Mae Kampong in Chiang Rai, can be adopted in Malaysia. This scenario shows that the villagers tended to be involved in tourism when they were convinced by fellow villagers, rather than outsiders like government agencies. If this strategy is implemented by Malaysian authorities, rural people with a negative perception, in terms of economic benefits, awareness and entrepreneurial knowledge, may have a better perception of tourism. This effort will also provide employment opportunities for the local people to be involved in tourism activities. In terms of environmental sustainability, indigenous tourism initiatives should be encouraged for preservation of community resources (Timothy, 1999) by targeting all the community members regardless of their state of involvement in the industry. Coetzee (2003) also suggested that the carrying capacity problem of tourism should be addressed to avoid environmental impacts.

Dernoi (1981) stressed that rural tourism will help to keep the next generation of villagers in the villages, instead of moving to cities to find other jobs. Negative perception on socio-cultural impacts can be reduced if tourism premises are developed in the rural areas to provide better job opportunities, such as tour guides, chefs or event planners. These new and varied attractive jobs will make the next generation of the rural people stay on, rather than finding jobs in urban areas. In terms of facilities, road and land development, long-term financial support by the government is essential. Sharpley (2001) identified that short-term development often involves; very high investment costs but low yields, low demand, a lack of critical skills and the dominance of mass tourism operators, as main obstacles. Therefore, long-term financial support is important, if tourism is to play an efficient rural revitalizing role.

In a nutshell, a major effort that needs to be taken especially by governmental agencies such as Tourism Malaysia and *Kraftangan Malaysia* under the Ministry of Culture Arts and Tourism is to create greater visibility of the existence of this indigenous community. The uncertain tourist arrivals have been the biggest difficulty for the community to involve in tourism. Without a strong and consistent demand, operating tourism is a high risk business. At the moment, the arrival of international tourists depends on several tour guides who have established network with the villagers. Thus, the relevant agencies should study and identify the target market which has interest in community-based tourism. Then, direct promotion to these target groups may draw higher tourists’ arrival to these areas. This initiative will lead the local communities guided towards sustainable tourism practice.

**KEYWORDS**

* Tourism development
* community tourism
* sustainability
* Malaysia

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**Tables**

Table 1: Selected global achievements and recognitions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Year** | **By** |
| 1. 4th World's Top Retirement Haven
 | 2015 | InternationalLiving.com |
| 1. Medical Travel Destination of the Year
 | 2015 | International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ) Medical Travel Awards 2015 |
| 1. 11th Most Visited Country in the World 2014
 | 2015 | UNWTO |
| 1. Asia's Best Golf Destination
 | 2014, 2015 | Creative and Innovative In Culture Anf Tourism Sector |
| 1. Kuala Lumpur - 2nd World's Best Top Shopping Cities
 | 2015 | Muslim Travel Shopping Index (MTSI) 2015 |
| 1. World's Travel Award Asia &Australasia 2016
 | 2015, 2016 | World Travel Awards.com |
| 1. Lonely Planet's Top 10 Cities For Best In Travel
 | 2017 | Lonely Planet |
| 1. Kuala Lumpur - World's 5th Top Shopping Destination 2016
 | 2016 | Expedia UK |
| 1. No.1 World’s Top Muslim - Friendly Destination
 | 2015 - 2017 | Mastercard-Cresent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index |
| 1. Kuala Lumpur; Ranked as 10th City in terms of international tourist arrivals by Top 100 City Destinations Ranking 2017 Edition
 | 2017 | Euromonitor International |

Adapted from Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (2019)

Table 2: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia from 2009 – 2018

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Arrivals** | **Receipts** |
| 2018 | 25.83 million | 84.1 billion |
| 2017 | 25.94 million | 82.1 billion |
| 2016 | 26.76 million | 82.1 billion |
| 2015 | 25.72 million | 69.1 billion |
| 2014 | 27.44 million | 72.0 billion |
| 2013 | 25.72 million | 65.4 billion |
| 2012 | 25.03 million | 60.6 billion |
| 2011 | 24.71 million | 58.3 billion |
| 2010 | 24.58 million | 56.5 billion |
| 2009 | 23.65 million | 53.4 billion |

Source: Tourism Malaysia (2019)

Table 3: Summary of the CBT studies in Malaysia.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Researcher** | **Study site** | **Subject matter** |
| Harris (2009) | Bario, Sarawak | Community development |
| Kayat (2002) | Kampung Relau, Kedah | Homestay |
| Kayat and Nur Farrah (2002) | Throughout Malaysia | Homestay |
| Jamal et al. (2011) | Banghuris, Selangor; Tanjung Piai, Johor; and Pelegong, Negeri Sembilan | Homestay |
| Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010). | Malaysia | Homestay |
| Razzaq, Hadi, Mustafa, Hamzah, Khalifah and Mohamad (2011) | Muar, Johor | Homestay |
| Parveen, Arif, and Norizan (2016). | 20 homestay owners from three villages in Sarawak | Homestay |
| Rosazman and Velan (2014) | Sabah | Homestay |
| Othman, Sazali, and Mohamed (2013) | Kedah | Homestay |
| Amran and Haniza, (2012) | Kinabatangan, Sabah | Homestay |
| Azizan, Hay, and James (2012) | Langkawi Island | Public participation |
| Munikrishnan, Rajaratnam, Mura, and Nair (2015) | Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah | Cooperatives |
| Goh (2015) | Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah | Homestay |
| Shazali et al. 2015; Shazali, Ahmad, Sridar, Syamsul, & Puvaneswaran, (2017) | Bau, Sarawak | Indigenous community tourism |
| Hitchner, Apu, Tarawe, Galih Sinah, Supang, & Yesaya, E. (2009) | Kelabit Highlands, Sarawak  | Ecotourism |

(Source: self developed)

**Biography**

**Prof. Dr. Neethiahnanthan Ari Ragavan,** has over 25 years of academic experience and holds a doctorate degree from France. He is highly involved in hospitality and tourism education in Malaysia and the region. In November 2013, he initiated the setting-up of the ASEAN Tourism Research Network or now aptly known as ASEAN Tourism Research Association (ATRA), a regional cooperation among Universities in ASEAN countries for greater research and education collaboration on issues related to Hospitality & Tourism. He is presently the President of ASEAN Tourism Research Association (ATRA) and has been active in various International Boards such as Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

His areas of research include on Higher Education Models and System, Hotel and Tourism Development and Innovation; and, Food and Culture. Presently, he is the Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Leisure Management overseeing 5 Schools and 1 Institute, one of the school is currently ranked Top 14 in the world by QS World University Rankings by Subject which is the School of Hospitality, Tourism & Events and it is internationally benchmarked by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) TedQual certification.

**Dr. Puvaneswaran Kunasekaran** is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events at Taylor’s University, Malaysia. His research mainly focused on community based tourism, indigenous tourism, sustainable tourism practices and cultural tourism studies. He is also the Honorary Treasurer of ASEAN Tourism Researchers Association (ATRA). He has published more than 50 academic articles in reputable journals. Apart from active research involvement, he is also involved in community development project especially in the rural areas of Malaysia by creating community capacity using tourism as a tool.