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Research paper

Indigenous Cultural Heritage Tourism in Rompin, Pahang

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Abstract

The strategic purpose of this research project is to promote cultural heritage tourism for economic development among Jakun indigenous community in the district of Rompin, Pahang. This research is to determine whether tourism is a viable economic factor that could improve the living standards of the indigenous community through the use of culture and heritage. This research process is divided into four distinct phases, the first phase is the identification of resource analysis, the second phase is the summarization of the situational analysis, while the third phase is the identification of tourism products and activities, and the fourth and final phase is the recommendation of training programs for the area. A face-to-face interview is conducted with the Jakun people in six orang asli villages located in Rompin. The researchers have identified two potential Culture and Heritage areas located in Kampung Batu 3, Sabak and Kampung Selinkong. Rumah Adat, indigenous homestay, nature trail and wood handicraft has been identified as tourism products from these areas. Training programs such as homestay operator, indigenous culture performance, nature guide and making wood handicraft can be proposed.

Keywords: *Indigenous; Orang Asli; Culture heritage; Tourism Development*

1. Introduction

Indigenous People in Peninsula Malaysia

It is estimated that, there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread through 70 countries worldwide (Jaura, 2010). Practicing exclusive customs, the indigenous people maintain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinctive from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, indigenous people are the descendants of those who colonized a country or a geographical region at the time when people of dissimilar cultures or ethnic origins arrived (Masron, Masami and Ismail, 2013).

In Peninsular Malaysia, indigenous people or 'Orang Asli' is the earliest population that lives in the last 5,000 years ago. It is believed that most of them were originated from China and Tibet which followed the migration routes through mainland of Southeast Asia before residing in the Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesian archipelago. 'Orang Asli' is a Malay term which translates as 'original peoples' or 'first peoples.' It is a collective term introduced by anthropologists and British administrators for the 18 sub-ethnic groups generally classified for official purposes under Semang (Negrito), Senoi and Aboriginal Malay (Proto Malay) as listed in Table 1 (JAKOA, 2011).

According to Nicholas (2003), the Orang Asli is not a homogeneous group because each tribe has its own language and culture; and perceives itself as different from the others. Linguistically, some of the northern Orang Asli groups (especially the Senoi and Negrito groups) speak languages which nowadays termed as Aslian languages that suggest a historical link with the indigenous people in Burma, Thailand and Indo-China. The lifestyle and means of subsistence of the indigenous people varies from tribe to sub-tribes. In Peninsular Malaysia, fishing is the main occupation of coastal communities of Orang Laut, Orang Seletar and Mahmeri. While others, including some Temuan, Jakun and Semai communities, practise permanent agriculture and manage their own rubber, oil palm or cocoa farms. Approximately 40% of indigenous people live close to or within forested areas. These comprise the Semai, Temiar, Che Wong, Jahut, Semelai and Semoq Beri communities which engage in land widening by cultivating hill rice as well as hunting and gathering of forest plants. Most of them trade in *petai*, *durian*, *rattan* and resin as their main source of cash income.

Indigenous Tourism

Indigenous tourism has become a powerful attraction for tourist and as such they have drawn the attention of tourism entrepreneur, government agencies and academic. Indigenous tourism represents an opportunity for indigenous people to gain economic independence and cultural rejuvenation (Butler and Hinch 2009). The integration of indigenous people into a global culture on one hand while encouraging indigenous communities to protect and enhance local advantages on the other may give them a competitive advantage in this global economy. Land is the basis for lifestyles, cultures and identities of indigenous people and right over lands, territories and natural resources are the most important and contentious issues for indigenous people.

Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is the type of tourism that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future (Mehmet, 2005). Sustainable Tourism is the current global trend practice where natural envi-

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ronment has a basis for marketable tourism attraction or product. The relationship between tourism and environment is the key feature to tourist selection (Yeoman et al, 2007) Therefor given the significant role of tourism in the economy, there is a need to ensure that the tourism industry remain both environmentally and economically sustainable (Siti Nabiha et al, 2011).

Cultural Heritage Tourism

Culture is defined broadly as quoted in Meethan (2005) as a set of practices, based on forms of knowledge, which encapsulate common values and act as general guiding principles. It is through this form of knowledge that distinctions are created and maintained, for example one culture is marked off as different from another. According to Diab and Ahmad, (2006) refers culture and heritage to the fundamental aspects which represent a country identity and dominancy, which include historic building, cultures and invaluable assets which reflects the soul and spirit of a nation. Today culture heritage has become more popular in most country. Tourism which include culture heritage has been identified as one of the main key of industries growth in the next decade and there for, it has become one of the fast-leading tourism sectors in South East Asia (Jamieson, 2000).

Cultural Heritage tourism is commonly regarded as tourism with the main purpose of viewing tangible representations such as historic and cultural elements of the built environment and the physical landscape, but also includes intangible components including myths, folksongs and value systems. The term of cultural tourism is so broad that it covers concepts such as heritage, arts, creativity, urban, culture, rural culture, indigenous culture and popular culture. Attention will be paid to the heritage aspect of cultural tourism. After investigating cultural tourism, the subject will be narrowed down to concentrate on built heritage. Given the large variety of forms that cultural tourism can have, it is unrealistic to provide only one definition, as broad as it could be.

However, Richards (2008) suggests that cultural tourism covers "not only the consumption of the cultural products of the past, but also of contemporary culture or the way of life of a people or a region. Cultural tourism therefore covers "heritage tourism" (related to artefacts of the past)". Heritage tourism is widely concerned with the representation of the past.

Conservation of indigenous cultural heritage

Conservation of indigenous cultural heritage is clearly described in Article 9 in Nara Document of Authenticity (1994) stating that all conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical period rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. It further stated that that it is our ability to understand these values depends in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the culture heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspect of authenticity. Preserving cultural heritage appears to be a key factor in economic policies supporting tourism development. It is a widely accepted fact that preservation of cultural heritage is important and it is also used as a tool for tourism development differentiation (Cuccia & Cellini, 2007).

Profile of Research Area in Rompin, Pahang.

The district of Rompin is the 9th district of Pahang state. It is located on the south eastern coastal part of Pahang. It ends on the border of Mersing, Johore and was formerly known as Kuala Rompin, Pahang. This district is divided into five sub-districts of Endau, Keratong, Kuala Rompin, Pontian and Tioman. Rompin district is 573,493.3 hectares in size with a population of 101,877 people (Majlis Daerah Rompin, 2016). The name of Rompin town was derived from the name of a tree called “Ru tree” or Casuarina tree found growing in the area. The trees are found everywhere along the beaches of Coastal Pahang. The town is a stopping point for traders and fisherman that commute the east coast Peninsular Malaysia between Kota Bahru, Kuantan and Singapore to the south.

The economic activities in Rompin district are agriculture, fishing and tourist area, while the main agricultural economic activity is mostly from commodity crop of rubber and oil palm production. Fishing industry in Rompin area is divided into two categories which is coastal fishing and deep-sea fishing. The third source of economic activity is the district's tourism attraction of which consists of their reserved forest, beaches and the river. In Rompin, the main tourist attractions are the deep-sea fishing activities in the South China sea and the beautiful beach in Tioman island. These water activities have attracted many enthusiastic anglers for its annual International Billfish and Marlin Competition event. Other tourist attraction is giant prawns *(Udang Galah)* fishing, this type of prawn is mostly breed in the Kuala Rompin river and is well known for its taste and high price. The town itself is always a huge attraction for seafood lovers of both local and international tourists.

Recreation and Natural eco-tourism in Rompin district are famous for its Endau Rompin forest reserve and its beautiful Lanjut Beach. Here, the beaches are not meant for sea sport activities but more towards its beautiful scenery because the beaches are facing the South China open sea. The district is developing fast because it is a stop over town for travellers, tourists or traders that commute linked the east coast highway from Singapore, Mersing, Kuantan, KualaTrengganu and Kota Bahru, Kelantan.

Jakun Tribes of Rompin Pahang.

The Orang asli tribes of Rompin can be found living in two areas, one area is in Muazzam district and the other is in Rompin district. There are 15,372 Orang asli population with 3,379 families living in the area of 40 villages in Rompin (JAKOA Rompin, 2017). The Orang asli population are from Proto Malays type which is commonly known as “Melayu Asal” or original Malays. The Jakun tribes settled on the coastal and inner part of Southern Pahang. Their source of economic livelihood is fishing and farming of oil palm and rubber trees. Among the aboriginal tribes, the Jakun tribes are the most enterprising communities of Orang asli in the Peninsular Malaysia. Jakun tribe’s lifestyle are of typical Malay life style where they are in close contact with other ethnic communities of the Malay, Chinese and Indian race.

The Jakun population in Rompin is approximately at 15,372 peoples from forty villages of subdistrict Muazzam and Rompin. It is fourteen (14) percent of the total population of Rompin district (JAKOA Rompin, 2016). The research was conducted in six villages of Kampung Api Larat, Kampung Kemendol, Kampung Landai, Kampung Meranti, Kampung Selingkong and Kampung Batu 3, Sabak.

Research Design

The research design appropriate for this study is the combination of exploratory and descriptive designs. It is an exploratory study since the dimensions and the depth and extent of findings on the site is relatively unknown. It is a descriptive study since the outcome of the study represents a description of the various resources to be examined. It is aimed at investigating the site, beachfront and inner land to determine resources, community-related activities and land use patterns. Descriptions on each village in the

sub-district will be based on the nature of signification dimensions on each of the resources to be studied.

A multi-level analysis was carried out to combine information collected from the various sources and the perspectives of stakeholders. Primary data were collected via observations on resources conditions and unstructured interviews with local community, authorities and local authorities, businessmen and entrepreneurs, the community leaders and the state and political leaders. Secondary data such as published information for example the statistical data from tourist office and state development authority, local authority, town councils and research project reports.

Basically, two principle means of data collection had been utilized: (1) Interview with Jakun community, local and state authorities, government agencies and town councils, (2) Non-participative observation of natural resources, cultural resources, site analysis, community analysis, environment assessment, and tourism facilities and services.

The data were collected in-situ by five researchers and research assistant teams with each team responsible for collecting data from the Jakun villages in Rompin. Each research team is led by a leader, a co-researcher and two to four research assistants.

In addition to the two methods of data collection, the Delphi technique were used to identify tourism products. A group of six tourism experts has been engaged to help identify the potential tourism products and training programs to address the economic viability of culture heritage tourism as a mean to alleviate poverty among Jakun people in Rompin.

2. Main Body

Research Findings

Findings on the Resource Analysis from Orang asli villages in Rompin, Pahang:

Natural Resources

There is Pantai Sabak, a nearby beach where community collect clams and conduct fishing activities. Activities such as fresh water fishing and giant prawn along the Sabak river estuary has become the Jakun people source of food and income. In the nearby forest reserve in Kampung Batu 3 and Kampung Kemendol, the Jakun people sometimes spent leisure time to bird watch and jungle trekking. They also source medical herbs and plants for own consumption. Forest reserve is located more inland and provides main source of economic activities e.g. (forest plant, herbs) for the orang asli.

Cultural Resources

Preservation and conservation of folklore as main attractions can be evident from the cultural resources available at the location.
There are traditional handicrafts being made at Kampung Selinkong by the Jakun people. Woodcrafts such as chopping board, pestle and mortar, driftwood carving, ladle for cooking are made for sales of souveniers when outside people come and visit their villages. *Mengkuang* handicraft made of palm leave and *rattan* plant which is weaved into floor mat, basket or container is made for household and utilize for farming equipment.

The Jakun people believe in many rituals and ceremonies. For the Jakun people, there will a ritual where they bathe and make-up the deceased, wear them with favorite nice cloth, the family will whisper to the decease wishing good life in the after world before the deceased is buried. Usually they bury the dead in a cool and nice place of the forest away from the village.

According to the Jakun people tradition, during the engagement ceremony, the future groom will ask is parents to approach the future bride's family for *risik-risik* in order for them to know each other's family. For those who can afford to buy a present for the bride, they will bring a ring to the bride's family or another form of appreciation like foods or gifts. They will discuss the wedding date and other necessities. This tradition is seen similar to the Malay people culture.

Kenduri or feast is when the family will offer a feast of buffalo or chicken to the guests. The guests will give RM8 to both the groom and bride *as a sign* of blessing and tips on marriage life. During the *bersanding*, the bride and groom will be seated on bridal *dias* in front of the audience of the family from both sides. This is an act of receiving blessings from family and friends during their marriage ceremony. Some Jakun people still use traditional bride and bridegroom wedding costume, some wear modern costume depending on their preferences. After the *bersanding*, they will proceed to performing a dance called *ronggeng*. Ronggeng is normally performed during wedding where bride and groom as well as guest dance together to the traditional music played. Free flow of rice wine or *nira* are offered to adults during the *kenduri*. It is a custom that guests bring *nira* to wedding ceremonies.

Some childbirth among Jakun people still carried out in the village by a *bidan* or midwife. In rare cases, there were two mid-wives during labor, one is to assist the mother to push baby while the other is to receive the baby. This technic of pushing the baby has to be performed by experienced *bidan*, otherwise, both mother and baby life is in danger. The younger generation would choose to go to the hospital for childbirth.

Jakun people consume medicinal herbs and plant for their health and well-being. Medicinal herbs found in Kampung Batu 3 are *Tongkat Ali*, it is used for health and energy for male; *Kacip Fatimah*, is used for women wellness; *Dukong Anak* is used to cure fever and other illness, and *Daun Rama-Rama* is used for anti-cancer. *Aloe Vera* plant is also used for burn and other skin conditions.

Jakun people are also known for their traditional food. *Ubigaru*t is a type of tapioca root of which are usually eaten for dessert or main dish in replace of rice. The Jakun people will cut the tapioca and soak it for two days kept inside the urn with water. After two days they pressed and removed the water and dry it in the sun which will form a sago flour. It can be kept for months and it will be used in making traditional dessert or main dish. The *ubigarut* will be served with brown sugar as a dessert. Other than that, *ubigarut* can be eaten as the main dish with grilled fish or vegetables. Some will make it into pancakes cooked in *Daun Palas*.

Rumah Adat located in Kampung Batu 3, is a place where the tribe will gather for special occasions like communal meetings, weddings, engagements, and festivals. The house is made of a wooden hut with *Nipah* roof. The Jakun people also use the *Rumah Adat* to display their traditional items to guest and visitors to the area.

Nipah cigarette made from *Nipah* is smoked by most male and female elders and youth. It is made from *Daun Nipah* which is found abundant in the village river bank. To process the *nipah* cigarette, the top shoot of the *nipah* leave is taken and separated from the leaves from the twigs (lidi). The bottom part of the *nipah* leaf is taken from the twig and dried in the sun to make the cigarette. One kilo of *nipah* cigarette is priced at RM2.80. Usually 1 bundle of *nipah* leaves can produce 5 to 6 kilo cigarettes. The Chinese trader will come twice a week to collect the cigarette. Mainly the *nipah* cigarette is made by a group of ladies during their free time where they meet and gossip.

Community Analysis

The Jakun villages comprises of a combination of wooden and concrete houses. The concrete houses are built by the government under the Public Low-Cost Housing Scheme Program to help the aborigines in the rural area. The wooden houses are the old traditional village houses that have a concrete extension to the house structure. The area surrounding the villages are rural forest. Some areas are well kept but majority of the surrounding areas are not maintained. Scrubs and jungle plants grow wild around the village homes. The community development here is slow with household income varying from RM0 to RM1000 per month. However, their source of income is seasonal due to a good fishing season and can be more depending on the harvesting of jungle plants for sale to outside people. The adults Jakuns involve in recreational activities such as playing football in the afternoon. Slow growth of population in the area where household size is between five to seven people per family. There are about 264 people with 55 families in Kampung Selinkong, 587 people with 61 families in Kampung Batu 3, 332 people with 61 families in Kampung Kemendol and 691 people with 163 families in Kampung Api Larat. Major household transportation mode is motorcycle, the minority has a car especially those families that engage in business as their source of income.

Environment Assessment

There is a clear evidence of clearing of land for oil palm plantation in Kampung Batu 3. Pollution can be seen in the river where the river turns into red color due to the logging at upstream Sungai Bebar. Sometimes, the evidence of dying fishes nearby the river due to water pollution can be sighted at Kampung Landai.

Site Analysis

Most of the villages have agriculture activities such as palm oil and rubber tree plantation. The villages are near to the Rompin town ranging from 10 to 20 minutes-drive. Kampung Api Larat is the furthers of the 6 villages that researchers explored. The villages have adequate utility facilities such as electricity, telephone lines and water supply. Primary schools and Pre-school for orang asli children are available in the villages. The villages surrounding are very serene and well maintained. Many flora and fauna are found during the journey into the villages. The inner roads leading to the villages are well covered and has adequate signage. Main economic activities are farming, hunting in the forest and there are families who own businesses such as selling handicrafts, jungle products and traditional medicine to outside people. Some orang asli work in oil palm plantation and nearby factories. The area is located in-between south and north of east coastal region. Anglers heading to Rompin town or Nenasi will pass by the orang asli area. The area is nearby a fishing town therefore basic facilities and minimum standards of accommodation & lodging, restaurants and eateries are available in this area. Accessibility to the area is quite easy with proper road condition and road signage.

Identification of Tourism Products and Activities, and Identification of Proposed Training Program.

Based on the situational analysis of the resources, the following areas have been identified for potential Indigenous Cultural Heritage tourism in Rompin:

Area 1

The area that has been identified to be developed as Indigenous Cultural Heritage tourism is located at Kampung Batu 3, Sabak under the sub-district Rompin. The tourism products that can be proposed are *Rumah Adat*, Homestay and Nature Trail. The activities that can be included in promoting Indigenous Homestay varies from Indigenous Heritage Food making, Indigenous Traditional Culture Performance. Other nature activities such as nature trail through activities such as fishing, river trail and boating at Sungai Pontian can also be promoted.

With this tourism product in mind and evidence of resources that were sighted during the research, the proposed training for the indigenous Jakun tribe in this area would be mostly related to Homestay Operator, Indigenous Culture Performance, Indigenous Gastronomy Cooking and Nature Guide.

Area 2

The area that has been identified to be developed as Indigenous Cultural Heritage tourism is located at Kampung Selinkong under the sub-district of Rompin. The tourism product that can be proposed is making Wood Handicraft. The activity that can be included in promoting Indigenous crafts making is the making of traditional cooking utensils such as chopping board, ladle, and mortar from wood craft. The products can be sold to tourist or distributed to cities outside the area for showcase or sales.

With this tourism product in mind and evidence of resources that were sighted during the research, the proposed training for the indigenous Jakun tribe in this area would be mostly related to making traditional Wood Handicraft.

The main objective of the proposed package of one-day trip to Rumah Adat, Orang Asli Homestay and Nature Trail at Kampung Sabak,Batu 3 and Kampung Selinkong, is to aid Jakun communities in both areas to increase their livelihood through economic activities. This is also to promote indigenous cultural heritage tourism among local and international tourist in Malaysia.

Table 1: Package Trip to Rumah Adat, Orang Asli Homestay and Nature Trail (One-Day)

Time	Itinerary	Activities
08.00 am	Pick up from hotel at Rompin town.	Start of Excursion
08.30 am	Proceed to Orang Asli Settlement at Kampung Sabak, Batu 3	Rumah Adat and Orang Asli Homestay
9.00 am	Visit Rumah Adat and Homestay at Kampung Sabak, Batu 3	• Meet local Jakun guide • Welcome ceremony by Jakun community • Wearing head-dress given by Tok Batin • Observe and listen to the historical information History of Jakun tribe and its origin at RumahAdat • Visit show case and artefacts display • Participate in Indigenous Traditional Culture Performance (Sewang Dance) • Indigenous Traditional Culture costume (Wedding Costume) and craft on display • Participate in Indigenous Traditional wedding customaries • Photobooth using Indigenous Traditional wedding costume for tourists • Demonstration on Indigenous Heritage Food making
01.00 pm	Lunch at the Homestay	• Traditional Food prepared by the Jakun tribes (Rice and grilled fish) • Local fruits

02.30 pm	Proceed to Kampung Selinkong	• Visit workshop making traditional wood handicraft • Demonstration on making traditional cooking utensils such as chopping board, ladle and mortar from wood craft • Souvenir shop selling wood crafts
04.00 pm	Proceed to Sungai Pontian	Water activities
04.30 pm	Nature and water activities at Sungai Pontian	Fishing, river trail and boating during sunset at Sungai Pontian
07.30 pm	Depart to hotel at Rompin town	End of Excursion

Note : Fees include guided tour, interactive demonstrations, lunch and transportation.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is clear that there is a direct link between tourism and natural environment. Organizations, working in the tourism industry should meet all the requirements to preserve sustainable use of natural resources, hence, at the same time, develop the livelihood of the indigenous people living in the area. Tourism development depends so greatly on the condition of resources such as cultural, community, natural and environment. For some people, wilderness provides an appropriate quality of life, therefore, environmental degradation poses a threat on the viability of tourism and this threat stems from the activities of other sectors of the economy, as well as from the activities related to tourism itself. It is necessary to use natural resources considerably, paying special attention to the most vulnerable parts and communities. The purpose of this research was conducted to determine whether tourism is a viable economic factor that could improve the living standards of indigenous community through the use of culture and heritage.

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