



***LOCAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTION TOWARDS ECOTOURISM ACTIVITY  
AT BUKIT BAKAR AND JERAM LINANG RECREATIONAL FOREST,  
KELANTAN***

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**BY**

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For the Degree of Bachelor of Park and Recreation Science in the  
Faculty of Forestry  
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Masri Md Hassan, who taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which is learned for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my late mother, Siti Zabadah Yusof, who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it done at time. Thank you too Nur Aqilah Daud as she taught me that a man should honor his word in making things and all friends.



## ABSTRACT

Concerned with the decreasing number of visitors towards the Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang recreational forest, the Department of Forestry Kelantan took the responsibility in re-developing the recreation forest as ecotourism site to attract visitors. The present study determines the local community perception towards the ecotourism activity at Bukit Bakar recreational forest and Jeram Linang recreational forest. A qualitative research is used to understand and determined their perception towards ecotourism activity and involvement. Results from the study showed that the local community have positive perception towards ecotourism activity at Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang recreational forest as it provides high business opportunity to the local community. The result also show that people in the community mostly work depending on the recreation forest as their main income. Moreover, local community also perceive that the safety of the facilities in Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang recreational forest are in worried situation. The facilities of the recreational forest show differently as it need maintenance and the visitors hope it been rebuilt. As conclusion, the local community in Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang give positive impact in redeveloping the recreational forest as ecotourism site in the area.

## ABSTRAK

Berhubung dengan penurunan pengunjung ke kawasan hutan rekreasi Bukit Bakar dan Jeram Linang, pemerintah yang merupakan Jabatan Perhutanan bertanggungjawab membangunkan hutan rekreasi sebagai tapak ekopelancongan untuk menarik pengunjung. Kajian ini menentukan persepsi masyarakat tempatan terhadap kegiatan ekopelancongan di hutan rekreasi Bukit Bakar dan hutan rekreasi Jeram Linang. Kajian kualitatif digunakan untuk menentukan responden memahami dan menentukan persepsi mereka terhadap aktiviti dan penglibatan ekopelancongan. Hasil daripada kajian menunjukkan masyarakat setempat mempunyai persepsi positif terhadap aktiviti ekopelancongan di hutan rekreasi Bukit Bakar dan Jeram Linang kerana ia memberikan peluang perniagaan yang tinggi kepada masyarakat setempat. Hasilnya juga menunjukkan bahawa orang dalam komuniti kebanyakannya bekerja bergantung kepada hutan rekreasi sebagai pendapatan utamanya. Selain itu, masyarakat setempat juga menyadari bahawa keselamatan kemudahan di kawasan hutan rekreasi Bukit Bakar dan Jeram Linang berada dalam keadaan bimbang. Kemudahan hutan rekreasi menunjukkan berbeza kerana ia memerlukan penyelenggaraan dan pengunjung berharap ia telah dibina semula. Sebagai kesimpulan, masyarakat setempat di Bukit Bakar dan Jeram Linang memberikan kesan positif dalam membangunkan semula hutan rekreasi sebagai tapak ekopelancongan di kawasan tersebut.

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## APPROVAL SHEET

I certified that this research project report entitled '**Local Community Perception towards Ecotourism Activity at Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang Recreational Forest, Kelantan**' by Muhammad Irfan Bin Masri has been examined and approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Park and Recreation Science in the Faculty of Forestry, University Putra Malaysia.

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| DEDICATION   | ii          |
| ABSTRACT   | iii         |
| ABSTRAK  | iv          |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  | v           |
| APPROVAL SHEET   | vi          |
| LIST OF FIGURE   | viii        |
| <br>CHAPTER  |             |
| 1 INTRODUCTION   |             |
| 1.1 General Background                                 | 1           |
| 1.2 Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest                    | 3           |
| 1.3 Jeram Linang Recreational Forest                   | 4           |
| 1.4 Problem Statement                                  | 5           |
| 1.5 Research Question                                  | 7           |
| 1.6 Objective  | 7           |
| <br>2 LITERATURE REVIEW                                |             |
| 2.1 Perception   | 8           |
| 2.2 Forest Recreation                                  | 9           |
| 2.3 Ecotourism Activity                                | 12          |
| 2.4 Redevelopment Site                                 | 15          |
| 2.4.1 Community-Based Research                         | 17          |
| 2.4.2 Qualitative Research                             | 20          |
| <br>3 RESEARCH METHOD                                  |             |
| 3.1 Introduction                                       | 22          |
| 3.2 Study Area   | 22          |
| 3.2.1 Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest                  | 22          |
| 3.2.2 Jeram Linang Recreational Forest                 | 23          |
| 3.3 Data Collection                                    | 26          |
| 3.3.1 Survey Instrument                                | 28          |
| 3.3.2 Sampling Technique                               | 28          |
| 3.4 Clustering of Content Analysis                     | 29          |
| 3.5 Qualitative Analysis                               | 29          |
| <br>4 RESULT AND DISCUSION                             |             |
| 4.1 Selection of Participation                         | 30          |
| 4.2 Socio-economic of the Villagers                    | 34          |
| 4.3 Knowledge of Ecotourism Activities and Involvement | 35          |
| 4.4 Summary of Qualitative Finding                     | 42          |
| <br>5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION                    |             |
| 5.1 Conclusion   | 45          |
| 5.2 Implication of Study                               | 46          |
| 5.3 Recommendations                                    | 47          |
|  | 49          |





## LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure  | Page |
|---|------|
| 1.1 Map of Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest, Kelantan  | 23   |
| 1.2 Map of Jeram Linang Recreational Forest, Kelantan | 21   |



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General Background

Malaysia is a green country and locals and visitors alike love Malaysian national parks. Over 60% of its total land area is forested. Tropical Rain Forest in Peninsular Malaysia is one of the most complex ecosystems in the world. It is also a very unique natural heritage that has been in existence for more than a million years. It is rich in a variety of different plants and wildlife, includes 2500 species of trees, 200 species of mammals, 600 species of birds, 110 species of snakes, 80 species of lizards and thousands of insects. Our forests are part of a natural heritage and plays an important role in the protection and conservation of biodiversity. It sequesters carbon and also functions as carbon sink.

Our natural forests have unique and beautiful landscape that meets recreation and ecotourism needs. Establishment of Forest Eco Park in forest reserves is consistent with the National Forestry Policy, 1978 (revised 1992) to maintain a sufficient number of areas as a place of recreation, ecotourism and public awareness on forestry. Forest areas with attractive and natural environment that serves as areas to stay away from the noise and busy city life are termed as amenity or recreational forests. This is emphasized in the one of the

statement of the National Forestry Policy for community forestry programs and to provide for recreational facilities and tourism. The establishment goals of Forest Eco Park are as provide places for the public to relax, carry out family or group activities such as picnic and recreational activities, create awareness among the public on the importance of maintaining the environment for better life, enhance individual performance and release from the stress of work and busy city life, provide opportunities for the public to explore forest areas and enjoy its natural beauty by walking through forest trails, the use of facilities for activities such as for hiking, boating and functions as open laboratories for conducting research and education.

Currently, there are 130 forest areas in Peninsular Malaysia designated for public recreational use; these are known as Forest Recreational Area or Amenity Forest under the Forest Act, 1984. The main focus of the establishment of Forest Recreational Area (FRA) areas is to provide suitable areas for the public to enjoy the forest environment. The demand for forest recreation in Malaysia was felt as early as 1965. Since the establishment, FRA was focused on the need to provide suitable area for public to enjoy and carry out recreational activities. With the present emphasis on ecotourism, many nature and recreational areas are facing increases in demand. As providing facilities and services at the recreational forest would be beneficial to public as it attracts more people, improves facilities and infrastructure to fulfil the needs of visitors.

## 1.2 Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest

Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest, Machang, Kelantan is one of the popular recreational forest in Kelantan's state as it is well known for its historical and scenery view of the place. The Bukit Bakar, Machang recreational forest was opened in 1975. The area of this forest is 3.14 hectares located within the 6 forest reserves of Ulu Sat. Bukit Bakar' village was located 9km from Machang' town and there are about 5-6 villagers that located near the recreational forest. The villager's population that located near the Bukit Bakar recreational forest has a population about 500 (personal communication with the forestry officer of Kelantan Forestry Department, 2018). Andriotis (2005) stated that the local community is one of the most important stakeholders for a place to set up business travel especially in the tourism sector. It cannot be denied that tourism sector gives benefits to the local community as their additional income.

Therefore, it is important to understand the local community's perception towards tourism as their place as they have their own thoughts about tourism either in a negative or positive way. These negative and positive thoughts would have an impact on the tourism businesses because it is related to their sociocultural, economic and environmental beliefs and life experiences. Meanwhile, Bukit Bakar recreational forest is one of the important recreation forest in Kelantan that is well known as a potential destination. Because of that, the result of the re-development for the ecotourism sector and recreation area increased in order to support the tourism sector.

Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest received big flood and causes of infrastructure and facilities such as toilet, mosque, gazebo, food stall and fence damaged and most of the sidewalk destroyed. Plus, visitors that came by left litter and pollute the environment and the management not taking any action due to that problem. Due to the abandoned facilities and infrastructure, result the number of visitors become decrease. Therefore some action been taken to re-develop the Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest as the abandoned place also resulted in negative impacts on the economic, social and environment of the recreational forest.

### **1.3 Jeram Linang Recreational Forest**

Jeram Linang recreational forest is located in the forest reserve area of Ulu Sat, in the Machang district, Kelantan as the Bukit Bakar recreation forest is also famous in the area. This forest is the earliest rapids and waterfalls developed in Kelantan. The area has a waterfall of as high as 12 meters, so the name of the forest is popular. Visitors who come to this forest, mostly from the area, Pasir Puteh, Kelantan and outside. It is located about 65km from the Kota Bharu, Kelantan and about 10 km away from the Pasir Puteh's town. The villager's population that located near the Bukit Bakar Recreational Forest has a population about 500.

Jeram Linang is a very popular recreation forest area in Kelantan. This forest was discovered and opened by Pak Mi Mi. His ancestors found this area and named Jeram Linang. According to the people of Pasir Puteh, PakSu Mi's ancestors are brave and respected during his life.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

The study was conducted to determine the perception of the local community towards ecotourism activity at Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang recreational Forest, Kelantan. The reason for carrying out this research is because there is re-development of the recreation forest demand from the Forestry Department in need to attract the visitors come there. The facilities at the Bukit Bakar recreational forest are in bad condition as the facilities are not in maintenance. According to (Azmi, 2011<sup>a</sup>) in his article about Bukit Bakar recreational forest, he said that the facilities in the area need to rebuild back to attract the visitors to come to the place. This results is starting to have negative impacts from the visitors especially from its state. According to (Azmi, 2011<sup>b</sup>) also, Jeram Linang recreational forest has been a famous destination among the visitors especially when it came to school break or weekend. He said that the place is abandoned and not popular anymore like past 20 years where people came there to have a recreation.

The forestry department take the responsibility in redeveloping the area as to maintain the facilities in order to bring positive impact in attract the visitors. As the research were conducted at the Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang recreational forest it is important to know the story from the community. This studied tended to explore the community base demographic and analysis the problem and critic that will happen to the community as the re-development at the recreational forest. Powerful story and various experience help the study relate with the big issues and outreach with the community.

The way the local community perceive the economy, sociocultural and environmental elements affects the manner in which they react to the development of the tourism sector, which includes the conative elements of perceptions (Andriotis, 2005). So to get good responses and support from the local community toward the ecotourism activity for the tourism sector in a particular area, it is important for planner to identify ways to minimize the problem that can affect their livelihood.

Therefore, this study is carried out to determine the perception of local community of ecotourism activity in Bukit Bakar recreational forest, Machang, Kelantan and Jeram Linang recreational forest, Pasir Puteh, Kelantan. This is important to ensure the development for tourism purposes are supported by the local community itself and bring benefits to them.



### **1.5 Research Question**

- a. What is the local community perception toward ecotourism activity at recreation forest?
- b. Is there any relationship between local community perceptions toward re-development at recreation forest?

### **1.6 Objective**

The objective of this study is:

- a. To identify the socio-demographic characteristics of local community around Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang recreational forests.
- b. To determine local community's knowledge about ecotourism.
- c. To determine the local community perception towards ecotourism redevelopment at Bukit Bakar and Jeram Linang as recreational Forest, Kelantan.

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