

THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN SARAWAK

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate economic impact of tourism development such as local economy development, tourism entrepreneurial activity and tourism employment generation in alleviating poverty. Five hundred and twenty local community from Kuching and Miri, East Sarawak, Malaysia have participated in the research. The result indicates that the tourism development contributes to the local economy development, creates tourism entrepreneurial activity and generates tourism employment among the local communities' in increasing the household income.

Keywords: Tourism Development; Poverty Alleviation; Sarawak.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism development is an economic, social, cultural and environmental panacea for developing countries and is an effective tool for poverty alleviation and raising the quality of livelihood, particularly on a long-term basis through the usage of tourism resources (i.e., culture, nature, wildlife, rural and physical) (Scheyvens, 2012). On this note, poverty is multidimensional concepts involving issues such as lacking basic needs, inadequate earnings, scarcity of access to education, ineligible credit facilities, poor healthcare, insecurity, inferiority complex, a sense of helplessness, the absence of development, depravation, equal and human rights (Holden, 2013). The contribution of tourism development in alleviating poverty could be traced back in the 1970s (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2016). Over the decades, tourism development has become an economic panacea for developing countries since during the 1950s. In the early 1990s, tourism development has increased the quality of livelihood, with a high degree of participation by local communities (Scheyvens, 2012).

In this vein, Sarawak is a tropical paradise with flora and fauna richness, beautiful rivers and forest. It is also rich in diverse cultures, customs, traditions, ethnicity and religions. Subsequently, the internal tourist arrivals in Sarawak increased from 4 million (2012) to 4.9 million (2014); while the total internal tourism expenditure was RM8.7 billion (2012) and increased to RM10.7 billion (2014) (Ministry of Tourism Sarawak, 2015). The increasing number of internal tourist arrivals and tourism receipts offers an interesting platform for this study to investigate on the impact of tourism development in Sarawak. By encouraging tourism development, the tourism industry may provide jobs for 15,000 unemployed locals which in turn, improve their livelihood (Ministry of Tourism Sarawak, 2016).

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