

KUALA KEDAH TOWARDS A HERITAGE TOURISM DESTINATION: A PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

At present heritage is generally an important aspect for many tourists. In many parts of the world, heritage is categorized and recognized as one of the vital components of tourism development especially when it is linked to tourism and recreational activities. Nowadays, there is increasing evidence that traveling to a destination rich in heritage is gaining more popularity and becoming a growing trend. Due to greater potential of heritage-based tourism all over the world Kuala Kedah, which is known as a fishermen village and very synonymous to the history of Kedah's Sultanate, should take the opportunity to be developed as a destination for heritage tourism. Therefore, this conceptual paper will unwrap and explain aspects such as definition and concept of heritage, heritage tourism, dynamic interaction between tourism and sustainability and threat of tourism to cultural heritage before discussing some potentials and opportunities in developing Kuala Kedah as an attractive and successful destination for heritage tourism. At the end of this paper, some recommendations will be proposed to help Kuala Kedah plan and develop a more efficient and ideal tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, heritage is becoming increasingly important for tourism industry. All over the world, heritage is classified as one of the essential components of tourism development especially when it is linked to tourism and recreational activities. Currently, there is increasing evidence that traveling to a heritage-based destination is becoming more popular and chosen by many tourists.

In global context, most major tourism destinations are heritage cities which are listed as world heritage. Travelers and tourists eagerly wish to visit and view the world heritage by themselves as such 'heritage' can hardly be found elsewhere. Heritage cities such as Paris in France; York, Bath, Cambridge and Oxford in England; Amsterdam in Netherlands; and, Pisa, Venice and Florence in Italy are well known to tourists all over the world. Malaysia, in this context, is not left behind as it is also a home for several heritage cities which can be conserved and listed as world heritage, such as Georgetown, Melaka – the Historical City, Kuching, Kota Bharu and Taiping.

Malaysian government has acknowledged the importance of heritage particularly in the context of tourism. In the 8th Malaysian Plan (2001-2005) several projects were implemented to preserve cultural and heritage sites and to meet the interest and demand of tourist towards heritage attractions. More than 60 monuments and 25 historical sites have been upgraded as tourist attractions. New and old cultural centers have provided mediums to exhibit traditional Malaysian arts and crafts such as batik, *pua kumbu* and *songket*. On the other hand, throughout the 9th Malaysian Plan (2006-2010) heritage tourism is highly recognized as an important agenda. It has been stated that: *the preservation and restoration of historical sites, buildings and artefacts will be continued as part of efforts to conserve national heritage as well as increase the number of tourist attractions*. To proceed with the strategy, several historical sites and buildings have been identified to be conserved and restored during the Plan period. Those places include Kota Kuala Muda in Kedah, Fort Alice in Sarawak, and a Neolithic area in Bukit Tengkorak Sabah. Thematic heritage trails will also be developed and these include Baba Nyonya heritage, Portuguese and Dutch era in Melaka, the war relics in Kota Bharu and the *Bunga Mas* in Kedah and Kelantan.

Kuala Kedah, a small town popularly known as ‘fishermen village’ (*kampung nelayan*) also has its legacy of historical heritage. Historical battles and struggles against Siamese invasion hundreds years ago can now be seen through some ‘leftovers and relics’ at the Kota Kuala Kedah such as a unique and mystical light house and several legendary canons, restored and conserved by the respective government agency. Due to great potentials in terms of heritage elements available in this small town, Kuala Kedah should grab this opportunity to be developed as a destination for heritage tourism. In fact, with its other tourist attractions and supporting facilities, Kuala Kedah surely has the prospect to emerge as a new heritage tourism destination.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is actually extracted from an on-going PhD research entitled “*Sikap dan persepsi masyarakat nelayan terhadap pembangunan pelancongan di Kuala Kedah: ke arah pembangunan pelancongan lestari*” (Attitudes and perceptions of fishing community towards tourism development in Kuala Kedah: towards a sustainable tourism development). As the methodology of the original PhD research, this paper is also ‘exploratory’ in nature as it was conducted to clarify and explore answers for the research questions and to obtain new beneficial information that can be used specifically in formulating related policies for planning the most ‘desired’ tourism development in Kuala Kedah as well as to be used and applied by future related research.

In the context of this paper, research methodology applied was ‘simpler’ and focused more on secondary data collection. However, primary data was obtained from telephone interviews with several individuals from related agencies and organizations, and from a series of ‘brief’ interviews with several community leaders in Kuala Kedah. On the other hand, secondary data was obtained from references such as journals, theses, press statements, government gazettes, newspaper cuttings and others from libraries, related agencies, and websites of agencies, organizations and ministries related to the area of study.

Followings are the information and data collection methods for this paper:

- Library research – it helped in collecting data and information by accessing related documents and records at the libraries visited. Data gathered using this technique are secondary data that will be used for other purposes. Two different libraries were visited to collect the data namely *Perpustakaan Awam Negeri Kedah* in Alor Setar and *Perpustakaan Sultanah Bahiyah* in Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Internet research – various related websites like of Ministry of Tourism, World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), State Tourism Action Council and several universities and organization were ‘visited’ and utilized. Information and data collected helps to answer several questions regarding the area of study
- Telephone interviews – few simple telephone interviews were conducted in order to get related information such as total number of general population and number of fishermen in Kuala Kedah, actions and efforts that have been taken by related agencies and organizations to promote Kuala Kedah and other information. In this context, few individuals from related organizations and agencies such as *Majlis Bandaraya Alor Star (MBAS)*, *Lembaga Muzium Negeri Kedah*, *Lembaga Kemajuan Ikan Malaysia (LKIM)*, *Persatuan Nelayan Kawasan (PNK) Kuala Kedah*, *Majlis Tindakan Pelancongan Negeri Kedah (MTPN)*, *Jabatan Perangkaan Negeri Kedah* and *Jabatan Perancang Bandar dan Desa Negeri Kedah* were interviewed.

- ‘Brief’ interviews with community leaders – through these interviews, information like the uniqueness and attraction of Kuala Kedah, readiness of locals to ‘host’ and ‘entertain’ visitors, and expectation of local people on positive consequences of tourism development has been obtained.
- Site visits (brief observation) – a series of site visit and observation at spots where tourism related activities take place including attractions and supporting facilities available around Kuala Kedah has provided beneficial information and sparked ideas for future planning and development. Among those information is activities and attractions that draw many visitors to engage, attractions and uniqueness that have great potentials to be promoted, supporting facilities and infrastructures available in Kuala Kedah, host-guest interactions between host community (including service providers and local people) and guest visitors, and other related information.

AREA OF STUDY

Heritage: definition and concept

"Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. They are our touchstones, our points of reference, our identity" (WHC 1996).

Heritage plays a vital role in our lives. Though it is not equally important for all of us, it is impossible to deny its impact on our future as well as present lives. World Heritage includes sites of universal value, but the selection and the nomination of each site is dependent on national concepts of heritage. As an international movement, tourism can contribute to the development of global heritage awareness, and better appreciation of our common values.

A ‘fresh’ and ‘lively’ heritage is generally unique, irreplaceable and not renewable. In fact, more efforts and conservation responsibilities are needed from present generation. For instance, smaller objects such as cultural artworks and masterpieces need to be ‘collected’, preserved and displayed in museums or art galleries. At international level, strategies and efforts of protecting and preserving cultural and natural heritage were proposed by UNESCO during the *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1972. For the record, there are 830 world heritage sites in 138 countries consisting of 644 heritage sites, 162 natural sites and 24 combination (natural-heritage) sites in 2006. Each of these sites is importantly valuable to the human race.

The world heritage conference in 1972 also outlined that “cultural and natural heritage are in danger, not only by traditional destruction but also due to economic and social changes. The destruction or loss of world’s culture and nature would cause heritage extinction for all races in the world.” Hence, to avoid extinction from happening, continuous effort to preserve and conserve today’s valuable heritage is necessarily to be implemented and should be improvised from time to time. In this context, conservation means an area of various disciplines which includes preservation of monuments, cities, historical buildings, historical sites and aspects of socio-economic and culture. Basically, a vast knowledge and understanding is needed in this ‘area’. In general, conservation would involve experts in various fields and professional; such as material surveyor, historian, building contractor, town planner, architect, engraver, antiquarian, etc.

In its broader context heritage means “something transferred from one generation to one another” (Nuryanti, 1996). The word ‘heritage’ itself includes the cultural and natural elements. Heritage, in the cultural context, indicates both material and non material forms (Nuryanti, 1996)

such as artefacts, historical remains, building, monuments, architecture, philosophy, social values and custom traditions, history event, historical celebration, different way of life, literature, folklores, educational practice, arts, and other artistic expression of human activity. Generally, non material cultural heritage are harder to preserve compare to material cultural heritage. In the natural context, heritage includes parks, forests, wilderness, landscapes, mountains, hills, islands, flora and fauna. Since its value is dependent on subjective human assessment, natural heritage also has cultural components.

According to Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), the term 'heritage' is applied in variety of contexts. It is used as a synonym for objects from the past or historical sites with no existing physical structures but associated with past events. 'Heritage' is even used to refer to non physical aspects from the past such as cultural and artistic productivity. Furthermore, in many countries "national heritage" is almost identical with or has more or less meaning as "national culture".

In local context, Din (2000) has classified heritage into three categories: natural heritage, street-culture heritage and show-culture heritage. According to Din, street-culture heritage incorporates characteristics of lifestyle or way of life that can be seen as local community's practices that include religious and social ceremony, chores, and local cuisine. Moreover, show-culture heritage is 'immortal' cultural features of the in the form of stage shows, exhibitions and models. As a comparison, third-world countries are popular with street culture attraction like cultural festivals, religious ceremonies and night markets; while in developed countries such as England and France; museum, gallery and other cultural shows are more prominent.

Heritage also is a cultural, economic and political resource. Since heritage has been seen as a value in itself, thus heritage artifacts are very suitable and practical to be made as collection and award items, and the artifacts should be preserved as precious and valuable objects. According to Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), national heritage based on national history depicts the distinctiveness of the nation through time. In this context, heritage itself is a valuable tool to enhance and increase national unity and pride, or to create a national image.

As an economic resource, heritage can be used in various forms. 'Heritage industry' is a major commercial activity based on sales of goods and services with a heritage component (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). Obviously, tourism and leisure services indeed play an important role in this industry, but the sale and manufacturing of heritage products can also be considered as similarly significant. Heritage aspects can also be used to establish images of a destination or places and can also be used for promotional purposes.

In general, the definition of heritage is very subjective and has vast meanings (Razak, 2006). Obviously, there is no time line or time limit that can acknowledge certain objects or relics to be recognized as heritage even though they were inherited from one generation to another.

Heritage tourism

From a general context, heritage tourism is a form of tourism that seeks all 'treasure' of heritage inherited from earlier generation like history, culture, arts, natural world, artifacts and others (Razak, 2006). Swarbrooke (1994) has defined heritage tourism as "tourism which is based on heritage, where heritage is the core of the product that is offered, and heritage is the main motivating factor for the consumer". This definition clearly includes a wide scope of related activities, from visiting historical town or places to cultural exhibition in the museum. From tourism's point of view, heritage as the main attraction must be appealing, interesting and accessible to tourists or visitors. To attract visitor or tourist to visit a destination, heritage should be a major motivation (reason), or the secondary factor apart from other tourist attraction in destination.

Heritage tourism is relatively a new phenomenon, though travelling based on culture and historic motivation has been in existence since ancient times. However, this type of tourism has flourished and grown rapidly in recent years due to a group of general and specific factors. In

general, more disposable income, increased leisure time and mobility, and the development of package travel have all led to the growth of tourism. Specifically, the improving social status of heritage, higher education levels, an increasing nostalgia for the past, and the diversification of tourist motivations have all resulted in a higher demand for tourism based on heritage.

The existence of new types of heritage tourism products has also created a more complex new demand which indirectly describes the growing popularity of heritage tourism. As a result, the supply of present heritage tourism products has dramatically increased in the last two decades especially through the opening and introduction of new heritage attractions and also through a more competitive packaging of heritage products. As indicated by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), typical heritage tourists are of above average income, belong to the middle class, have better than average education, are experienced in foreign travel, have a relatively high per diem spending, and travel without young children. Meanwhile, heritage trips in general are short, include a number of different places, and are taken as an additional holiday throughout the year.

Nuryanti (1996) believes that the central challenge in heritage tourism is the way of reconstructing the past in the present through interpretation. In this sense, interpretation does not only describe historic facts, but creates understanding or emotional response, increases awareness, appreciation and enjoyment. Therefore, interpretation should involve much more than information provision as proposed by the following six main principles:

- *Interpretation should relate the presented heritage to the personality or experience of the visitor.*
- *Interpretation includes, but is more than information.*
- *Interpretation is an art, combining many art forms.*
- *The major aim of interpretation is provocation, not instruction (though the educational role of interpretation is not negligible).*
- *Interpretation should aim to present the whole rather than a part.*
- *Interpretation should be designed with different visitor segments on mind, following a fundamentally different approach in the case of each segment.*

It is very important to understand the scale of heritage attractions by taking into account the following market segments: only a minority of heritage sites can be considered as international attractions while the rest appeal to national, regional or local visitors only. Jenkins (1993) has emphasized that there are two levels (even on international scale) namely: “primary international attractions generate visits from foreign countries on their own, while secondary attractions are not themselves the major determinant in the tourists' choice of destination, but have sufficient value to make tourists visit them once they have arrived in the given county”.

FINDINGS OF STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Kuala Kedah: potentials and challenges

Kuala Kedah which is located in the northern part of Kedah is a small town in Kota Setar district which is known as a town of fisherman with its historical relics especially those at Kota Kuala Kedah (fortress). It is only 11 kilometers from Alor Star. Kuala Kedah is a lowland area located in the seaside overlooking the Straits of Malacca. There are eighteen villages in Kuala Kedah; to name a few - Kampung Tok Pasai, Ulu, Tepi Laut, Tengah, Seberang Kota, Sematang Bogak and Kampung Padang Garam. These villages are located nearby one another and have different names according to their locations and significant events that happened in the villages. Fishery is the key economy for Kuala Kedah since its location on a coastal area. Nevertheless, agricultural activity especially rice cultivation also contributes to the economy of this small town.

The struggle against the Siamese colonial in the past has been immortalized by remnants of Kota Kuala Kedah, which is strongly protected and preserved by the authority, known as the lighthouse and several legendary cannons with their own distinctive myth. The Tok Pasai bridge steadily stands across Sungai Kedah, promises a panoramic and scenic view especially during dawn and dusk. From this bridge one can witness vast paddy fields, rows of busy fishing boats and ships. In fact, Alor Star Tower, Gunung Keriang, Gunung Jerai and several islands nearby Langkawi Island can also be viewed from this bridge when the weather is 'good and clear'.

Kuala Kedah actually does not lack of attractions. From the historical and cultural heritage aspects to the riverine activities flowing on Sungai Kedah and the beautiful Kuala Kedah Yacht Marina's project, Kuala Kedah does indeed has many attractions to offer to tourists and visitors. Fresh seafood, laksa and pulut sambal (creamy glutinous rice with dried spicy shrimp sambal), Kuala Kedah undeniably has its own appeals to 'outsiders'. Since it is only 11 kilometers from the state's capital, visitor would not face much problem to visit tourism attractions in the city of Alor Star such as the Balai Besar, Royal Museum, Masjid Zahir, Telekom Tower, Balai Nobat, Balai Seni Negeri, State Museum, Rumah Kelahiran Mahathir and Pekan Rabu.

Kuala Kedah is also an 'entrance' to Langkawi Island via sea route. It takes 1 hour 15 minutes to reach Langkawi Island by ferry from Kuala Kedah Passenger Terminal. Indisputably, Kuala Kedah is a tourist transit to Langkawi. Since the number of tourist to Langkawi has shown a steady growth, it is a 'great loss' a loss for Kuala Kedah if it does not take the opportunity to further develop this small town as a new tourist destination. At least, efforts should be made to attract potential tourist which also includes those who are just transiting to stay and spend their money here, so that it will make tourism development of Kuala Kedah more significant.

Besides its heritage appeal, local's way of life, unique food distinctively known as Laksa Kuala Kedah or Laksa Teluk Kechai and *pulut sambal* as well as fresh sea food dishes, other dominant attraction often associated with Kedah's history is Kota Kuala Bahang or more popularly known as Kota Kuala Kedah. Even though it is not as glorious and ancient as Kota A' Famosa in Malacca, Kota Kuala Kedah has its own matchless history and priceless heritage. It is located nearby the bank of Sungai Kedah, this historic 'complex' that also included palace and fortress, was built in 1782 to protect Kedah's government from the attacks of Siamese, Aceh and Dutch invasions. Among the valuable heritage relics that has remained until today is the chess-palace-shaped lighthouse which is still functioning and operated by solar power, the original fortress wall, several mysterious cannons including two legendary cannons known as "Tok Badak Berendam" and "Katak Puru", Malim's Gate (*Pintu Malim*), Kota Alor Melaka's Gate and an old palace building which has been transformed and renovated as a museum which displays historical artifacts and materials found in the area. Tomb (*Makam*) of Tok Pasai which is located in parking area of Kuala Kedah's Passenger Terminal is another historical relics associated with the opening of today's Kuala Kedah town. Perhaps due to its location and lack of conservation effort such as heritage interpretation, it seems like Makam Tok Pasai is left isolated and becoming a forgotten heritage element.

Kuala Kedah Yacht Marina which stands beautifully near Kota Kuala Kedah promises a charming sight and surely can attract anybody who loves beautiful scenery and unique-designed building to capture his or her moment at the site. The coast and the Malay village surrounded by vast green paddy fields also offer an amazing sight especially early in the morning and during dusk time. Indeed this area would intrigue those who love beautiful scenery especially photography enthusiasts.

Another attraction associated with natural heritage in Kuala Kedah which many do not realize is bird watching. According to Hymeir Kamarudin, based on his exploration between Kuala Kedah and Kuala Sala (between latitude 6° 06' and 5° 57') since 1997, there are varieties of birds that can be identified over there. During his four years of bird watching activity, 75

species of birds were successfully identified and recorded. Among these species of bird are King fisher, White Magpie, Bornean Bristlehead, Little Egret, Crested Goshawk Eagle, Black collared Swallow and Brahminy Swallow. The location of Kuala Kedah which is not far from other tourist attractions such as Pantai Murni, Seri Perigi Water Fall and Batu Hampar in Yan and also attractions around Alor Star, gives extra credit and added value for the fishing village to be developed as an attractive and popular tourism destination.

Scholars such as Lickorish and Jenkins (1999), Swarbrooke (1999), Davidson and Maitland (1997), Inskip (1991) and Pearce (1989) have agreed that in order to become a successful destination, focus and emphasis must be given to the five following elements: attractions, facilities, infrastructures, transportations and hospitality resources. Attraction (including events) is the key aspect to attract tourist and visitor to a destination, while facilities, infrastructures, transports and hospitality resources are also required to further support those attractions and events. In the case of Kuala Kedah, its diversity of attractions actually has great potential to “fish” more tourists and visitors to come and keep on coming (repeat visit). Yet in order to become known as a heritage tourism destination, more effective efforts and measures are essential to be carried out especially related to the aspects of planning and development that include marketing and hospitality training to the local population.

In addition to the elements of attraction, Kuala Kedah also has the other three elements namely facilities, infrastructures and transports (as listed in **Table 1**). Ironically, hospitality resources which is the last element needed to become a successful destination, are insufficient in Kuala Kedah. Actually, hospitality resources have crucial role specifically to create a feeling of welcome and respect of local community to visitor in a destination. To overcome this ‘shortage’, a hospitality training program should be planned and implemented to local community to boost their confidence to receive and interact ‘properly’ with visitors. This in turn will make the locals more friendly and sensitive to visitors’ needs.

Proposal

To establish a viable and competitive tourism destination that can attract tourist and visitors to a destination, academic figure have generally agreed that the five 'A's of tourism (access, accommodation, attractions, activities and amenities) should be given more attention by concerning parties. These factors are greatly needed to develop a successful destination. In the case of Kuala Kedah, it cannot be ignored that diverse attractions as well as the elements and other aspects are capable to push and attract more tourists and visitors to come. However as stated previously, in order to become a heritage tourism destination, undeniably more efforts are very much needed especially those related to planning and development including marketing and hospitality training.

To achieve a more favorable economic development, a community planning for heritage tourism must focus on the following key elements: (1) local people, (2) visitor or tourist, (3) destination and (4) principle of tourism development. An effective tourism development plan and appropriate strategies are required merely than just depending on advertising campaigns. In this context, a deep understanding over visitor or tourist and recognition towards the local's contribution and involvement should be given priority.

In the initial stage, due to a shortage of 'icon' or 'strong' heritage attraction, Kuala Kedah undeniably needs to rely on other attractions and those attractions in the neighboring areas especially in Alor Star. When it becomes progressively recognized, Kuala Kedah may then focus on its heritage attractions especially those available in Kuala Kedah town.

Table 1: Facilities, Infrastructures and Transportations in Kuala Kedah

Traffic and Transportation

- Present main road system has linked Kuala Kedah and Alor Setar City Center and also other cities including Sungai Petani and North South Highway.

Public Transportation

- Bus services: operated by three companies. Routes to Alor Star through some routes from Pekan Kuala Kedah. Good frequency, accurate travel time. Station and bus stops are being improved.
- Taxi Service: Services by Alor Star-based taxis, depending on demand, major taxi station at jetty terminal.

Sea Transportation

- Major entrance to Langkawi and main port of Kedah.
- Most important mode of transport that connects Kuala Kedah with Langkawi and other activities requiring sea transport.
- Several ferry service companies e.g. LADA Holding's Sdn. Ltd, Kuala Perlis-Langkawi Ferry Services and Marine Star.
- Passenger Terminal, Kuala Kedah: parking facility, ticket counter, seating /waiting area and taxi service, information on departure/arrival time and other passenger amenities.

Infrastructure and Utility

- Adequate water supply from Bukit Pinang water reservoir.
- Electricity from Pencawang Masuk Utama (PMU) Alor Star, adequate and able to accommodate present need.
- Telecommunication: central phone- capacity 300 lines, public phone at strategic location.
- Drainage system: Sungai Kedah, Agriculture Drainage, Urban Drainage.
- Sewage system maintained periodically.
- Solid/poisonous waste disposal: daily collection service by MPKS (MBAS).

Community Service Facility

- Education: Secondary and primary schools
- Health: Public health center and midwife clinics, and several private clinics (available nearby tourist spots in Kuala Kedah town /Passenger Terminal)
- Police station: a police station with adequate number of staff.
- Postal service: a post office in Kuala Kedah - modified to accommodate present need.
- Fire Station: a voluntary fire brigade, main services from Alor Setar fire station (Headquarter).
- Religious facility and cemetery: attractive new mosque and cemetery landscape.
- Recreational facilities and accommodation
- Business and financial facilities: shop lots, restaurant, mini market, bank and atm machines

Source: Draf Rancangan Tempatan Kuala Kedah (1996), and current outlook.

Like other industries, tourism in Kuala Kedah requires a harmonious and conducive environment to develop. Initially, the best means to make such an environment is through tourism planning. To make this planning process more meaningful especially to the community of Kuala Kedah, a special committee should be formed among the local people. This committee shall be responsible in investigating current trend in tourism as well as facilities and services that the community can offer. This committee would also investigate, evaluate and spread market information (such as identifying new market opportunity and explore up-to-date method of promotion to the market segment). Some information and aspects that needs to be explored by this committee are the following questions:

- Where could new market be explored and what is the potential market?

- Which market segment could still not be fulfilled by present facilities and service at a destination?
- What is the fraction of visitor or tourist expenditure at destinations?
- How can tourism increase the value of a property?
- What are the form of services, facilities and new actions required?
- How does tourism influence:
 - 'price' of other services?
 - agriculture, fishery and food and beverage premises?
 - shops and other businesses?
 - job market?
 - entertainment premises?

Hence, this special committee must also ensure that the five A's of tourism in Kuala Kedah are at an optimum level. It is important for Kuala Kedah to ensure accessibility to each destination and satisfying for example adequate parking space, other facilities and sufficient signposts. Tourists also need comfortable accommodation nearby the destinations. Hence, this committee must identify or determine the standard of accommodation according to the type or category of tourist. Attraction at destinations also needs to be monitored and ensure it is always able to 'satisfy' the best level expected by tourist. At the destinations, tourist will seek out activities that they can get involve in. Thus, this special committee not only must ensure that there are such suitable activities at destinations, this committee should also find fresh ideas to vary activities so their stay in Kuala Kedah is memorable. Facilities at destinations are facilities that are required during the journey to the destination that must always be at a satisfactory level, especially the service offered by the services. These include services offered by public transport, restaurant and cafe, shops, and tourist information centre.

To stabilize further development and tourism activity, and in efforts to help Kuala Kedah towards a destination for heritage tourism, several proposals outlined in the Kuala Kedah Local Planning Draft 1994-2005 must be acknowledged and reconsidered. Among the proposals are:

- In accordance to its function as a fishing community residential area and as the main entrance to Langkawi, the landscape image of Kuala Kedah needs to be properly 'shaped'; so that, not only its function and role can be revealed but also its 'nostalgia' as a historical defense fort that can be restored for the sake of tourism.
- Preserve and conserve Kota Kuala Kedah as a historical monument heritage.
- Publicity and promotion program must be implemented extensively.
- Establish waterfront parks along the river banks.
- Establish an integrated 'one stop' center that includes local food stalls, grilled seafood (*ikan bakar*, etc.) outlets, 'floating' restaurant, handicraft centre, commercial complex, "observation tower", traditional fisherman village, club house/marina and medium cost hotel.
- Tourist information centers should be established at a strategic spot such as the Kuala Kedah's new jetty building (Passenger Terminal) to increase effective publicity and promotion for tourism in Kuala Kedah.

Conclusion

Heritage is a motivation for tourism which has increasingly finding a place in the hearts of tourists. The concept of heritage is immensely broad and subjective, but base of certain factors, tourism base on heritage is becoming the latest phenomenon in the global tourism industry although culture travel or visit historical places have been in existence and were popular during the past. Heritage tourism is very synonymous with preservation efforts and must be carefully planned and develop because heritage elements and resources are irreplaceable if they were to be

damaged. Malaysia also has its heritage resources that have increasingly found a place, not only in the hearts of local tourist but also international tourist. There is an increase in destinations of heritage tourism due to government's effort and support. Kuala Kedah has in fact its own distinctive heritage elements and resources and has potential to become a heritage destination. However, to emerge abruptly as a heritage destination is a complex task to achieve in a short time period. Thus, planning and developing aspect of tourism including marketing and promotion need to be carried out in a sustainable context with priority given to local community for the sake of all.

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