

IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON ENVIRONMENT IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction

Tourism development activity is considered to be one of the most active economic activities in Malaysia. It has attracted many entrepreneurs to get involved in resort development particularly along the coastal areas mainly in Peninsular Malaysia. The rapid development of tourist centres throughout the country has led to environmental deterioration in the project areas. This research was to monitor and mitigate the impact of development on environment. The purpose of this study was also to produce environmental guidelines for tourism development particularly at the coastal areas.

Materials and Methods

Information related to physical, biological and socio-economic were gathered as the basis for the study. The monitoring were done as to reveal the level of impact of the development on the ecosystem of the area. Social Impact Assessment was also conducted as to assess how the project

has affected the livelihood of the surrounding residents, the tourists or visitor and the employees.

Results and Discussion

The study has identified two prominent tourism development areas namely, the coastal areas and fresh water lakes (ex-mining pools, fresh water dams and natural inland lakes). However, much of the study was conducted at selected coastal resort areas in Peninsular Malaysia. In many cases, the study has found that there was some degree of environmental deterioration at and near the development areas. At elevated areas, soil erosion was still a major problem causing small streams blockaded. Improper sanitation facilities lowered the quality of coastal seawater due to deterioration of marine lives and coral reefs. Assessment on the livelihood of the local residents, the study has found that not many local residents have benefited from major tourism development because many of the workers are foreigners. However, locals who have participated in the development such as involving in chalet operation and petty trading tend to benefit most. Transportation facilities remain one of the major problems related to accessibility to some of the isolated coastal beaches particularly coastal islands.

Conclusions

Coastal tourism remains one of most important tourism activities in Malaysia. It has lot of potentials. However, entrepreneurs should be reminded of the importance of sustaining the environment, as the environment will also be an asset to their economic activity.