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**ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT
AND LOCAL COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION:
CASE STUDIES OF BATU PUTEH AND
SUKAU VILLAGE
IN LOWER KINABATANGAN AREA
OF SABAH, MALAYSIA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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and Applied Social Sciences,
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University of Glasgow, UK**

June 2006

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ABSTRACT

Governments in developing countries have frequently claimed tourism or ecotourism as a strategy for development especially to improve the local communities' level of income and the quality of their lives. Ecotourism development, at the same time, also raises concerns for the resources on which it depends in protected areas such as National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. However, the issues of ecotourism development in Malaysia, which could benefit the local communities in remote areas, were rarely mentioned in the federal government's tourism policies. The issues that were mentioned are often limited to factors such as supplementing income in (eco)tourism activities which was regarded as a priority, but never beyond that. This was the dilemma in the early phase of the implementation in the 1990s of sustainable (eco)tourism development in Malaysia, particularly in the state of Sabah. At the same time there were two fundamental principles of ecotourism which were not yet firmly established to guide planning and management for these destination areas: (i) provide real benefits to the local people and (ii) encourage natural environment conservation.

This is a qualitative research approach or specifically case study approach based on the critical theory paradigm or perspectives. Two villages were observed in this research: namely Batu Puteh village and Sukau village. These villages are located in the floodplain of Lower Kinabatangan River, which is extremely rich in wildlife such as mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects. It also includes natural forest types, for instance, the large areas of swamp, peat swamp forest, and rainforest. In fact, this area is an extremely important site for ecotourism in Sabah and/or Malaysia: especially through ecotourists activities such as river boating, jungle trekking and wildlife viewing. The local people generally known as "orang sungai" (the river people) have recently participated in many aspects of ecotourism activities such as tourist guides, conservation volunteers, tourist lodges workers, homestay providers etc. Thus the main issues for these villages are: to what extent does ecotourism development in Batu Puteh and/or Sukau village have positive and negative impacts on the socio-cultural life of the local community? How and why are the local communities involved directly or indirectly in ecotourism development? To what extent has ecotourism development increased the level of participation, and improved the standard of living of the local community? To what extent can ecotourism be considered a potential instrument for rural economic development and/or environmental conservation to achieve sustainable development in the destination areas? These issues will be explored thoroughly in this research.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Declaration of Author's Copyright	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	xiii
List of Tables	xv
List of Maps	xix
List of Templates	xx
List of Abbreviations	xxii
List of Appendices	xxiv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. The Background of the Study	1
1.2.1. Why the "socio-cultural" aspect is an important element in the study of ecotourism?	5
1.2.2. Ecotourism, Protected Area and Local Community: Three Different Scenarios of the Relationship?	6
1.2.3. Why Community Participation is essential in ecotourism Development?	7
1.3. The Research Problem	8
1.3.1. Ecotourism Development in the Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah, Malaysia	10
1.4. The Research Questions	12
1.5. Why were Batu Puteh and Sukau Village Selected as the Cases for this Study?	13
1.6. The Objectives of the Research	15
1.7. The Significance of the Research	16
1.8. The Structure of the Thesis	17
1.9. Conclusion	20

Chapter 2: Sustainable Development: Tourism, Alternative Tourism and/or Ecotourism – Theoretical Perspectives and Conceptual Debates	22
2.1. Introduction	22
2.1.1. The Concepts of “Tourism”, “Development” and “Underdevelopment”	23
2.2. Understanding the Relation of Development Theories and Tourism. Why is it Essential?	26
2.3. Modernisation Theory and Tourism: Tourism as a Vehicle for Development	29
2.4. Dependency Theory and Tourism: The Negative Impact of Mass Tourism in the Developing Countries	31
2.5. The Neo-Liberal Paradigm and Global Tourism: The New Development Order for the Developing Countries?	34
2.6. The Sustainable Development Approach and (Eco)tourism	36
2.6.1 The Core Elements of Sustainable Development	37
2.7. The Critical Perspectives: From Mass Tourism to Alternative Tourism (Ecotourism), and/or Sustainable Tourism Development	38
2.7.1. The Rise of Alternative tourism or Ecotourism in the Developing Countries	41
2.7.2. Sustainable Tourism Development: The Myth of Alternative Tourism or Ecotourism	42
2.8. Defining the Concept of Ecotourism: Types and Issues	49
2.8.1. The Definitions of Ecotourism	53
2.8.2. Tourist Typologies	56
2.8.3. Typologies of Ecotourists	60
2.8.4. The important of “socio-cultural” aspect in study ecotourism.	66
2.9. Ecotourism, Protected Area and Local Community: Symbiotic or Antagonistic Relationship?	66
2.9.1. The Antagonistic Relationship	67
2.9.2. The Symbiotic Relationship	70
2.9.3. The Role of NGOs in the Community-based Ecotourism	73
2.10. Conclusion	74
Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives on Socio-cultural Impacts of Ecotourism	76
3.1. Introduction	76
3.1.1. Why managing socio-cultural impacts of (eco) tourism is reconsidered?	76
3.2. Perspectives of Socio-Cultural Impact of (Eco)tourism	78

3.2.1.	What is meant by “socio-cultural” in the study of the impact of (eco)tourism	78
3.3.	Positive Socio-cultural Impacts of (Eco)tourism Development	81
3.4.	Perspective on Negative Socio-Cultural Impacts of (Eco)tourism	84
3.4.1.	(Eco)tourism and Neo-colonialism	85
3.4.2.	The demonstration effect of the tourists	87
3.4.3.	Commoditisation of Culture, Authenticity and Staged Authenticity	90
3.4.4.	The Main Approaches to Authenticity in Tourism	91
3.5.	Analysing Socio-Cultural Impact on the Destination	96
3.5.1.	Doxey’s Theory of Tourists Irritation Index	97
3.5.2.	Butler’s Theory: The Resort Cycle of Evolution	100
3.6.	Conclusion	103
 Chapter 4: Conceptual Debates of ‘Community’ and ‘Community Participation’: From Development to Ecotourism Perspective		 105
4.1.	Introduction	105
4.1.1.	The Idea of ‘local community participation’: Agenda 21	105
4.2.	Theorising Community: “Community” as Ideologies	107
4.3.	The Concept of Community in Tourism Perspectives	111
4.4.	Community Participation in the Development Perspectives	114
4.4.1.	Six Dimensions of Stiefel and Wolfe’s Participation	114
4.4.2.	Community Participation in the Development Planning	117
4.5.	Community Participation in (Eco)tourism Development Perspectives	118
4.5.1	From Local Participation to Local Empowerment: Community-based Ecotourism	122
4.5.2.	Community Participation in (Eco)tourism is a Limited Approach	126
4.6.	Conclusion	130
 Chapter 5: Research Methodology		 133
5.1.	Introduction	133
5.2.	What is Social Research?	134
5.3.	Qualitative Methods through Case Studies from Perspective of Critical Ecotourism Research	140
5.4.	The Case Studies as a Research Strategy	144
5.4.1.	The Case Studies’ Design	145

5.4.2.	A Combination Data Collection Methods in the Case Study	150
5.4.3.	Adapted the Stakeholder-based Evaluation Approach	151
5.4.4.	Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Research	153
5.5.	Data Analysis	155
5.6.	Conclusion	163
 Chapter 6: Tourism and Ecotourism Development in Malaysia: An Overview		 164
6.1.	Introduction	164
6.2.	Tourism Development in Malaysia	164
6.3.	The Decline in Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia	166
6.4.	Ecotourism Development in Malaysia	172
6.5.	Ecotourism Development and Local Community Participation in Lower Kinabatangan Area, Sabah	176
6.6.	Conclusion	185
 Chapter 7: <i>Research Findings</i>: Local Community Participation in Ecotourism in the Case of Batu Puteh		 187
7.1.	Introduction	187
7.1.1.	The Profile of Mukim Batu Puteh	188
7.2.	A Combination of Data Collection Methods	191
7.3.	The Historical Background of the Lower Kinabatangan Area and the Early Settlement of the Orang Sungai Including Batu Puteh village	193
7.4.	The Condition of Economic Activities and Land Use in Lower Kinabatangan Area including Batu Puteh Village	197
7.5.	Ecotourism Development in the Lower Kinabatangan Area including Batu Puteh Village	199
7.6.	From Conservation Effort to Community Participation in the Development of Ecotourism In Batu Puteh: The Challenges	202
7.7.	Local Community Participation in the Miso Walai Homestay Programme: The Prospects	206
7.7.1.	The Role of MESCOT in Community Based-Ecotourism	207
7.7.2.	The Challenges for Ecotourism Development Through the Miso Walai Homestay Programme	209
7.7.3.	The Negative Socio-Cultural Impact of Ecotourism?	211
7.7.4.	Who are the Eco-tourists in Batu Puteh?	215
7.8.	The Limitations of Local Community Participation in the Ecotourism's Homestay Programme	220

7.9.	The Benefits of Miso Walai Homestay on Local Community	227
7.10.	Discussion of the Findings	232
7.10.1.	The Positive Impact of Ecotourism Through Miso Walai Homestay Programme	232
7.10.2.	The Main Challenges for the Homestay and Conservation Programmes in Batu Puteh	235
7.11.	Conclusion	238
 Chapter 8: <i>Findings of the Research:</i> Local Community Participation in Ecotourism in the Case of Sukau Village		 248
8.1.	Introduction	248
8.2.	A Profile of Mukim Sukau and the Villagers: A Brief Overview	252
8.2.1.	From Conservation Effort to Ecotourism Development in Sukau Village	253
8.2.2.	A Combination of Data Collection Methods	254
8.3.	PART I: The Socio-economic Background or Characteristics of the Local Community	258
8.3.1.	Gender and Marital Status of the Respondents and Migration	258
8.3.2.	The Respondents' Place of Birth and Ethnic Origin	260
8.3.3.	The Duration of Residence in Sukau	263
8.3.4.	The Age of the Respondents and the village Administration	264
8.3.5.	The Respondents' Level of Education	265
8.3.6.	The Respondent's Occupations and Estimated Total Family income	266
8.3.7.	House holding and land ownership among the respondents, and competition for land use	271
8.3.8.	Types of land development by the Respondents	274
8.3.9.	Future land development by the respondents	274
8.4.	PART II: The Negative Impact of Ecotourism Development on the Local Community	276
8.4.1.	The negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community	276
8.4.2.	The villagers and the visitors: the contradiction of cultural values and norms	383
8.4.3.	Visitors Presence and the Individual Crime Rate	285
8.4.4.	The Use of Alcohol and the Morality of of the Village Youth	286
8.4.5.	The visitors' presence and local community's religious values and practices	290

8.4.6.	Co-operation between members of the community, collective decision-making, and individual values	291
8.5.	The Existence of a Conflict of Interests between the Local Community and the Other Stakeholders	292
8.5.1.	The villagers and the private tourist lodge operators	292
8.5.2.	The villagers and the NGOs	294
8.5.3.	The villagers and the wildlife	303
8.5.5.	The villagers and government agencies	307
8.5.6.	The Villagers and the environmental pollution issue	316
8.5.7.	Division among the villagers	320
8.6.	Conclusion	321
Chapter 9: <i>Findings of the Research: The Limitations of Local Community Participation in the Case of Sukau</i>		330
9.1.	Introduction	330
9.2.	PART III: The Positive Impact of Ecotourism on the Local Community	332
9.2.1.	Community Involvement in Various Types of New Jobs Opportunities	332
9.2.2.	Community Involvement in the Homestay Programme	336
9.2.3.	The Limitations of Local Community Participation in the Homestay Programme of Sukau Village	339
9.2.4.	Community Involvement in the Conservation Programme	346
9.2.5.	Community Involvement in Other Related Events in the Development Process	348
9.3.	Ecotourism Development and Local Community Participation: Perception of “Real Benefits” or “Limited Benefits”	350
9.3.1.	The Economic Benefits and Jobs Opportunities	350
9.3.2.	Social Facilities and Infrastructures of the Village	352
9.3.3.	Social Relations, Social Facilities and Services	354
9.3.4.	Improve Local People Culture, Knowledge and Skill	357
9.3.5.	The Improvement of Local Public Transport and Services	361
9.4.	PART IV: The Discussion of Findings	364
9.4.1.	The Socio-economic Background and Characteristics of the Local Community	364
9.4.2.	The Negative Impact of Ecotourism Development on the Local Community	366
9.4.3.	The Positive Impact of Ecotourism Development on Local Community	373
9.4.4.	The Limitations of Local Community Participation in Ecotourism Development	376
9.5.	Conclusion	382

Chapter 10: Conclusion	390
10.1. Introduction	390
10.2. Summary of the Research Findings: Case Studies Cross Conclusion	390
10.2.1. The negative impact of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community	391
10.2.2. The existence of conflicts of interests between local community and the other stakeholders	392
10.2.3. The positive impact of ecotourism on the Orang Sungai Community of Batu Puteh and Sukau village	396
10.2.4. The limitations of local community participation in ecotourism development in Batu Puteh and Sukau village	398
10.3. Implications on Theory	403
10.4. Policy Implications	407
10.5. Research Findings in the Formation of the Conceptual Framework	410
10.6. Contributions of the Study	411
10.7. Limitations of the Study	412
10.8. Recommendations for Future Research	415
10.9. Final Remarks	416
BIBLIOGRAPHY	417
APPENDICES	

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig.	Title	Page
1.1.	The Recreation Cycle Model	4
2.1.	Converging and Symbiotic Relationship Between Alternative Tourism (Ecotourism) and Mass Tourism	46
2.2.	Alternative Tourism (Ecotourism) and Mass Tourism: From a Conventional Approach	47
2.3.	Alternative Tourism, Mass Tourism and Ecotourism: From Emergent Approach	48
2.4.	Ecotourism Protects the Environment, Contributing to Socio-economic Development, and thus Strives for Sustainability	72
3.1.	Butler's Tourism Resort Life Cycle	101
5.1.	Social Sciences Research Process of Deductive and/or Inductive	138
5.2.	Types of Designs for Case Study	149
5.3.	Case Study Method	150
5.4.	Thematic and Mapping Technique for Qualitative Data Analysis of the Research	162
8.1.	Gender of the Respondents	259
8.2.	Respondents Marital Status	259
8.3.	Respondents Place of Birth	261
8.4.	The Respondents Ethnic Origin	262
8.5.	Number of Years That Respondent Lived in Sukau	262
8.6.	The Age of the Respondents	264
8.7.	Respondents' Level of Education	266

8.8.	Respondents First Reaction to the Ecotourism Project in Sukau	277
8.9.	Respondents Opinion on the Private Company Lodges in Sukau	278
8.10a	The Presence of the Visitors has had an Impact on the Traditional Values of the Respondents	287
8.10b	The Presence of the Visitors has had an Impact on the Traditional Values of the Respondents	288
8.11.	The respondent's perception on the role of the government agencies and NGO's in managing wildlife and rainforests	316
9.1.	Economic Benefits and Jobs Opportunities	351
9.2.	Social Facilities and Infrastructures for the Village	353
9.3.	Social Relations, Social Facilities and Services	356
9.4.	Improve Local People's Culture, Knowledge Skill	358
9.5.	Improve Local Public Transports and Service	361
10.1.	Conceptual Framework of Findings	410

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Title	Page
2.1.	The Growth of Tourist Arrivals by Region, Actual and Forecast, 1990-2020	34
2.2.	A Typology of Sustainable Development	39
2.3.	Shifts in Contemporary Tourism	42
2.5.	The Fundamental Ideas in Environmentalism: Ecocentrism and Technocentrism	51
2.6.	Comparison of Selected Ecotourism and Nature Tourism Definitions	57
2.7.	Tourist Typology	59
2.8.	Relative Importance Ratings, North American Ecotourists	63
2.9.	Mowforth's Typology of Ecotourism	65
2.10.	Protected Area Management Categories	68
3.1.	Ecotourism Benefits to the Socio-Cultural Environment of Local Communities	84
3.2.	Doxey's Irridex Model	99
3.3.	Stages of Tourist Resort/Destination Development and Associated Features	102
4.1.	Pretty's Typology of Participation	121
4.2.	Types of Community Empowerment in (Eco)tourism Development	124
5.1.	Complementary Uses of Qualitative and Quantitative Data in studying Linked Phenomena	143

5.2.	Relevant Situation for Different Research Strategies	145
5.3.	The Sampling Strategy of the Research	155
5.4.	Stages in Qualitative Data Analysis	157
6.1.	Total Tourist Arrival and Total Tourism Revenue in Malaysia (1980-1999)	168
6.2.	The Distribution of Tourist Arrival in Main Domestic Area/Region in Malaysia (1998 – 1999)	170
6.3.	The National Parks of Malaysia	174
7.1.	Type of socio-economic Activities in Batu Puteh	203
7.2.	Ecotourist Activities at Miso Walai Homestay (MWH) of Mukim Batu Puteh	210
7.3.	The Statistics of Ecotourist Arrivals in Mukim Batu Puteh and a Brief Annual Account of the Miso Walai Homestay (2000-2002)	219
7.4.	The Guidelines of Do's and Don'ts for Ecotourists in the village	224
8.1.	Respondents Current Occupation	269
8.2.	The Estimated Total Family Income of the Respondents	270
8.3.	House holding Among the Respondents	272
8.4.	Land Ownership of Respondents in Sukau Village and Lower Kinabatangan Area	273
8.5.	How the Respondents Gained Ownership of the Land	274
8.6.	Land Development by the Respondents	275
8.7.	The Country of Origin of Visitors that the Respondents Most Deal With in Sukau Village	279
8.8.	Number of International and Domestic Visitors in the Lower Kinabatangan	280

8.9.	The respondent's opinion regarding wild animals in the Kinabatangan Sanctuary area that most affect their crops, domestic animals and daily life activities	305
8.10.	The Respondents Opinion Regarding Protected Area and Hunting Activity	308
8.11.	The Respondents opinion regarding types of activities which still depend on forest resources in protected area	310
8.12.	The conflicts of interest between the respondents and the conservation programme managers/ officers	312
8.13.	The respondent's opinion regarding the "Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP)" of Sukau	314
8.14.	Major Causes of Pollution in the Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village	318
8.15.	The Presence of International Tourists Creates Division Within Local Community	320
9.1.	Types of Respondent Involvement in Ecotourism Activities in Sukau Village	333
9.2.	Respondents' Indirect Involvement in Ecotourism Activities in Sukau Village	335
9.3.	Reasons Why Respondents Were Not Involved	335
9.4.	Number of Visitors and Total Revenue Received by Homestay Participants in Sukau, 2002	338
9.5.	Number of Visitors and Total Revenue Received by Homestay Participants of Sukau until 29.5.2003	338
9.6.	Official Agencies Consulting Local Community Before and After Ecotourism Project Implemented	343
9.7.	The Institution that Should Lead the Ecotourism Development process in Sukau Village	344
9.8.	Types of Course or Training Programme Preferred by the Respondents	345

9.9.	Reasons for Non-involvement in the Tree-planting Project in Sukau Village	348
9.10.	Respondents Involvement in Other Related Events in the Last 5 Years	349
9.11.	River Boating Fare Rates of Sukau Village	363

LISTS OF MAPS

Map	Title	Page
6.1.	Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah, Malaysia	179
7.1.	Map of Mukim (sub-district) Batu Puteh	189
7.2.	The Four Main Villages in Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah: Abai, Sukau, Bilit, and Batu Puteh	201
8.1.	Map of Sukau village	251

LIST OF TEMPLATES

Template	Title	Page
7.1.	Menggaris Village	240
7.2.	Batu Puteh Village	240
7.3.	Elephants: Attraction or Problem?	241
7.4.	The Orang-utan: Abandoned or Preserved?	241
7.5.	The Tourists in Traditional Costume	242
7.6.	MESCOT's Volunteers	242
7.7.	Briefing Session for Ecotourists	243
7.8.	Miso Walai Homestay in Batu Puteh	243
7.9.	The Guest's Lounge in Homestay Participant's House	244
7.10.	The Guest's Bedroom in Batu Puteh	244
8.1.	Sukau Village	322
8.2.	Adventurous Gravel Road to Sukau	322
8.3.	A Villager's Oil Palm Plantation in Sukau	323
8.4.	Oil Palm Nuts: Main Source of Income or Conflict?	323
8.5.	One of the Private Tourist Lodges in Sukau	324
8.6.	Ecotourists and, an Evening River Cruise	324
8.7.	Sukau Rainforest Lodges	325
8.8.	Villagers' Houses in Sukau	325
9.1.	The Villagers and Mapping the Wildlife	385
9.2.	WWF's Meeting with Local Community of Sukau	385

9.3.	A Troop of Proboscis Monkeys	386
9.4.	The Main Attraction for Ecotourists in Sukau	386
9.5.	Ecotourists at one of Private Lodges in Sukau	387
9.6.	Shopping Time in Sukau Village	387

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AT	Alternative Tourism
CAP	The Consumers' Association of Penang, Malaysia
DANCED	Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development
(Eco)tourism	Ecotourism and/or Tourism
FELCRA	Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Agency
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFRA	Institute for Rural Advancement of Malaysia
IRDP	The Integrated Rural Development Project
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JKKK	The Security and Development Village Committee
JKR	The Public Works Department
KOCP	Kinabatangan Orang-utan Conservation Project
KOPEL	The Tourists Cooperative of Batu Puteh
MCG	MESCOT's Culture Group
MESCOT	Model of Ecologically Sustainable Community of Batu Puteh
MTC	Malaysia Tourism Corporation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)

NIF	The New Investment Fund
NTO	National Tourist Office
NTP	The National Tourism Policy of Malaysia
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PATA	Pacific Asia Tourism Association Conference
RMK	The Eight Malaysia Plan
TDCM	Tourism Development Corporations of Malaysia
UMS	Universiti Malaysia Sabah
UNCED	United Nation Conference on Environment And Development
UNCTTC	United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations
UNESCO	United Nations Economic and Social Commission
UNRISD	The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WCU	Wildlife Control Unit of Sukau
WECD	The World Commission on Environment and Development
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia

LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix I The Guideline Research Questions for Focused or In-Depth Interview with Related Government Agencies' Officers, NGOs' Officers, the JKKK Committee, the Oil palm Estate Manager, and the Head of Village.	1-3
Appendix II The Guideline Research Questions for Focused or In-Depth Interview with Private Tourist's Lodge Managers in Sukau Village.	4-7
Appendix III A Questionnaire for Local Community Face-to-Face Survey Interview in Sukau Village.	8-26
Appendix IV An Example of a Transcribed Interview	27-49

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Ecotourism development and local community participation have become important themes in tourism studies recently. However, research in this area is still limited, particularly in less developed countries like Malaysia. The main aim of this chapter is to provide a general overview of the background of the study, and the research problem. The discussions in this chapter are divided into sections as follows:

- The *first* section is the introduction.
- The *second* is the background to the study.
- The *third* is concerns the research problem.
- The *fourth* is the five main research questions to be considered in this study.
- The *fifth* is the justification of why Batu Puteh and Sukau village, located in the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah were selected as case studies.
- The *sixth* part is the five main objectives to be covered in this research.
- Section *seventh* is the significance of the research.
- The *eight* is the structure of the thesis.
- Finally section *nine* is a brief conclusion for this chapter.

1.2. The Background of the Study

The development of mass tourism and then the development of the niche market of ecotourism often requires communities, cities, regions or countries to consider their own unique identities and then package and promote them as products which they hope will attract people from other cultures to "experience" them. Culture is now wrapped and sold to tourists in the shape of ancient sites, ritual

ceremonies and folk customs. Even the everyday lives of ordinary people have been turned into a commodity to be sold to tourists (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000: 212-214). The WTO's mission is to develop tourism as a significant means of fostering international peace and understanding, economic development and international trade; but in the reality of world tourism development, this process and activity has been increasingly characterised by conflict (Robinson, 1999: 2-3). Therefore, managing socio-cultural conflict or the negative impacts of (eco)tourism has become an important item for developing countries and the developed world to consider. The reason is the people who best know the important elements of ecotourism destination such as landscapes, wildlife, forest and specific activities and understand how these elements function, are the people in the host communities who are exposed to them on a regular basis (Wearing, 2001: 395-396). However, the private operators or the planners rarely ask the host community about their vision for the area. As a result, the tourism industry that evolves does not suit community needs or use the resources to their best advantage, creating unnecessary social pressure on the host community.

In many cases, in the less developed countries, ecotourism is considered to be more than just nature-based tourism. Ecotourism has simply been labelled as such as an attractive marketing tool to appear ecologically sound and could motivate people from developed countries to travel to developing countries to experience their "pristine environments" (Scheyvens, 2002). Ecotourism has been booming since the 1990s. For instance, the number of trekkers in Nepal increased 25.5 per cent between 1980 and 1991. Visitors to Kenya increased by 45 per cent between 1983 and 1993, with approximately 80 per cent of them drawn by wildlife, and nature tourism to Honduras increased by 15 percent in 1995 alone (Scheyvens, 2002: 68).

For many rural communities ecotourism is seen as creating new jobs, new business opportunities and skills development, as well as giving them the chance to secure greater control over natural resource utilisation in their areas. There is,

however, a very real danger in accepting ecotourism uncritically and presuming it to be a common good for every destination (Cater, 1993: 85 & 89). This is because the more remote the ecotourism destinations and less developed tourism areas that ecotourists seek are, the more vulnerable they are to cultural disruption and environmental degradation.

Therefore, the promotion of “ecotourism” to indigenous populations in less developed countries has resulted in several positive and negative impacts. In cases of appropriate forms of involvement or participation, Butler and Hinch claim that indigenous populations are involved in (eco)tourism development because they are motivated by economic interests, gaining income, for instance, through the creation and operation of enterprises, through self-employment as vendors and guides, and through the production of goods and services as artists and accommodation providers (Butler and Hinch, 1996).

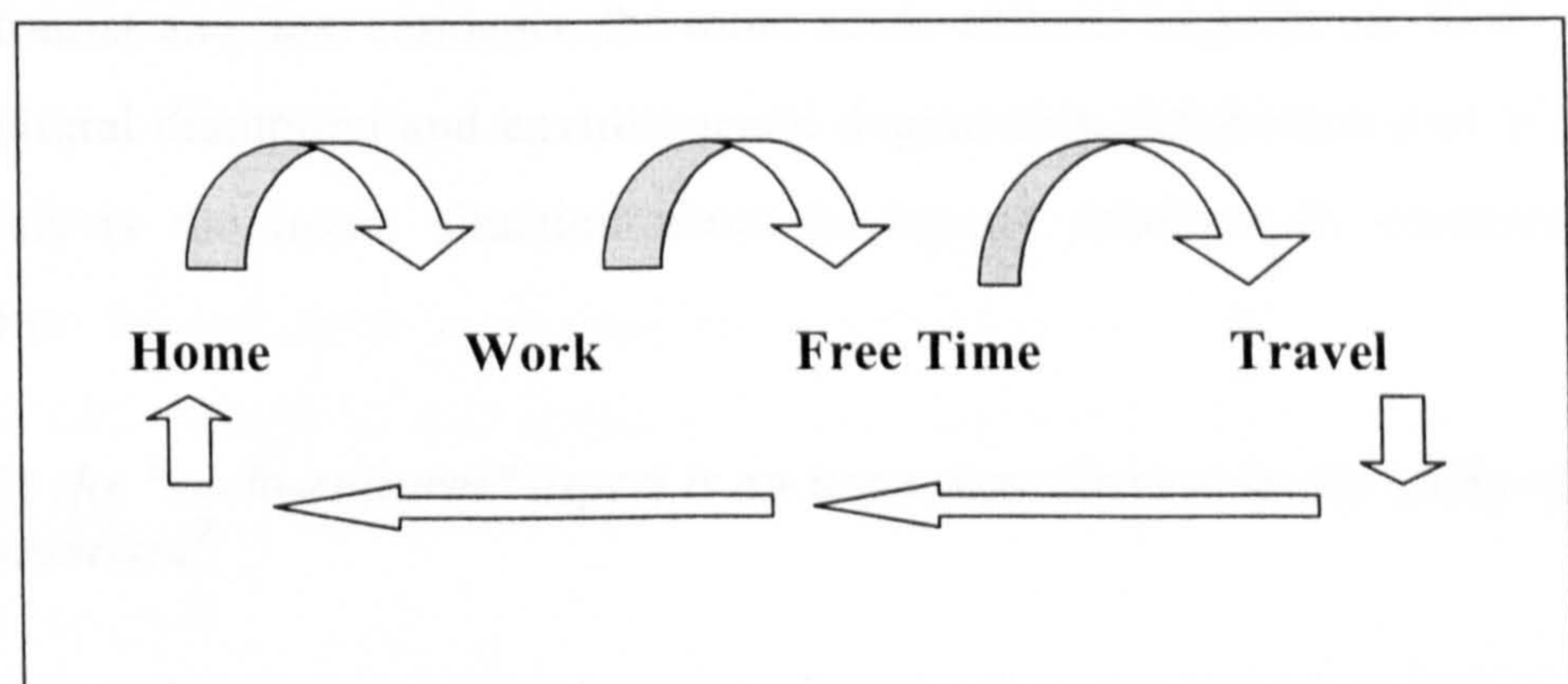
In other cases the indigenous people involved in (eco)tourism industry are using their unique traditional culture, knowledge and expertise to provide a cultural experience to the tourist. Those who are involved, however, have to undergo some personal and community readjustment in order to fulfil the “requirements of involvement” in (eco)tourism (Wall & Long, 1996). In this situation, the indigenous peoples are not passive respondents to external tourism development but have become active participants. There is a tendency for indigenous tourism to lead to ecotourism. Many destinations labelled “ecotourism” also have indigenous tourism, especially in the cases of Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Belize, Mexico, and recently in Sabah of Borneo, Malaysia.

On the other hand, the introduction of (eco)tourism into traditional societies can be harmful and create problems. Rudkin and Hall show that in the case of tourism development in the Solomon Islands, ecotourism is seen as an inappropriate type of development, especially when traditional leaders or power brokers abuse their positions. There, the lack of local consultation over development led to

opposition and contradictory opinions about the appropriateness of development brought in by external control and authority (Rudkin and Hall, 1996).

Moreover, the problem in ecotourism development is also related to the question of who the “ecotourists” actually are. Tourists, in general terms, are people who leave their usual place of residence for more than one night but less than twelve months to visit places and who are “different” for the purposes of pleasure, leisure and self-fulfilment (McIntosh et al. 1995; Theobald 1994; Cohen 1979). The motivations of the tourists to start their journey are strongly related to free time from work to travel in the ‘recreation cycle’ model (Krippendorf, 1984): The model is shown below:

Figure 1.1: The Recreation Cycle Model



Source: adapted from Krippendorf (1984)

‘Ecotourists’, on the other hand, are commonly known as a distinct and identifiable group who select a certain travel experience and destination, namely that of nature-oriented experiences in pristine natural environments (Eagles, 1992:3). However, there is an inherent risk in assuming that ecotourists are automatically an environmentally sensitive breed. There are two types of ecotourism (Cater, 1997). *The first is a deep form of ecotourism*, commonly represented by small, specialist-guided groups with highly responsible behaviour towards the natural environment. *The second is a shallow form of ecotourism*,

those who visit a destination area for a few days, unlikely ever to return to the same place because they may be more interested in their travel experience and behave less responsibly towards the natural environment (Cater, 1997). This second group of ecotourists can possibly create adverse effects on the environment and the socio-cultural life of local communities in the destination areas if their presence is not controlled or managed carefully.

Ecotourism could bring together people of diverse nationalities, races, ethnicities, cultures, sexes, socio-economic statuses and lifestyles to understand each other (Ong, 2000). In ecotourism destinations, for instance, the tourists interact with the host community, which has different perceptions, value systems, labour divisions, family relationships, attitudes, behavioural patterns, ceremonies and creative expression (Cohen, 1988b; Ong, 2000). The greater the differences between tourist and host residents, the more socio-cultural impacts are likely to lead to cultural disruption and environmental degradation (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). This is the ironic situation about host-guest relations in ecotourism destinations

1.2.1. Why the “socio-cultural” aspect is an important element in the study of ecotourism?

First, a socio-cultural element has become a "product" or target under ecotourism (for instance "services" such as lodging, dining, transport and recreation combined with "culture" such as folklore, heritage, monuments). As a result this "product" is the society's culture or identity, but at the same time, this society culture or identity and the environment, may face negative impacts from ecotourism development (Lanfant and Graburn, 1992:98-99).

Second, the word “tourism” was introduced or understood as a factor in economic development. That is why the term “socio-cultural” was absent in much tourism literature during the 1960s and 1970s. Mainstream theories of development focused mostly on the economic processes in material transformation. They

devoted less attention to the ecological, cultural and socio-political context within which the economy operates (de Kadt 1992: 52-53). This has contributed to the dominance of economic policies in the political arena, with governments often paying slight attention to the impact of such policies on culture and nature. The proponents of alternative development want to change that situation and thereby give a new meaning to development (de Kadt, 1992).

1.2.2. Ecotourism, Protected Area and Local Community: Three Different Scenarios of the Relationship?

Nepal (2000), has provided three different scenarios based on the relationships between three main actors: tourism, national parks or protected areas, and local communities in the ecotourism development context (Nepal, 2000: 74-76):

i. Win-win-win Scenario: All three players or actors mutually benefit. Tourism enhances the management capability of the park. Therefore, favourable conditions for tourism and recreation opportunities are created. Local communities benefit from parks, and are encouraged to support conservation activities. The result is that tourism benefits local communities, and local attitudes toward tourism or tourists are favourable. Prospects for inter-cultural exchange are good.

ii. Win-win-lose scenario: Tourism benefits local communities, but the park suffers from tourism impacts; tourism may benefit from the conservation efforts of the park but the impact on local communities may be negative (i.e. cultural impacts); visitors/tourists enjoy the opportunities provided by the park but do not contribute locally. Tourism benefits but both the parks and local communities lose. Local communities do not benefit from tourism, and tourism does not enhance but rather degrades the management capability of the park (Nepal, 2000).

iii. Lose-lose-lose scenario: All three players are affected negatively. In this scenario, environmental conditions degrade, tourists are discouraged from visiting the park, and local communities do not receive any economic benefits. Neither tourism nor the park is capable of fulfilling the needs of local communities. Local communities become hostile to tourists and cause severe impacts on the park by engaging in unsustainable activities.

1.2.3. Why Community Participation is essential in Ecotourism Development?

The term “community participation”, like sustainability, has become a mantra for development agencies in less developed countries, for increased stakeholder participation is now being demanded by international organisations and many NGOs (Dalal-Clayton, et al, 2003: 92-93). The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) developed this concept in the late 1970s to the majority of disadvantaged countries (communities), in the so-called Third World, could participate actively rather than passively in socio-economic development to achieve a greater capacity to advance their own interests and control their own livelihoods (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 3). Thus the term “participation” has become a voice for those excluded from the shaping of future development.

Many people and developmental organisations have defined the term “participation”. Sometimes it is difficult to understand whether those talking about people’s participation mean the same thing or simply use the phrase as a kind of magical incantation (Adnan, et al, 1992). In the worst situation, people are always dragged into participation of no interest to them, in the very name of participation (Rahnema, 1992). In general however, the term “*local participation*” can be defined as “the ability of local communities to influence the outcome of development projects, such as ecotourism, that have an impact on them (Drake, 1991: 132). The concept of “*local community*” here means “a group of people who share a common identity such as geographical locations,

class and/or ethnic background (Wearing, 2001: 395). The local community may also share a special interest or dependence, for their livelihoods, on natural resources such as hunting, fishing, wood collection, timber harvesting, trees, land and soil to sustain their increasing population. The concept of “local community” in this research however, is to mean *a group of people who are living in the specific boundaries of the (eco)tourism destination area, together with natural and cultural elements, where the tourist experience take place, and tourist product is produced, and who are potentially affected, both positively and negatively, by the impacts of (eco)tourism development.*

Thus, ecotourism is essential to ensure that the sustainability of the local community's participation can be maintained. There is a symbiotic relationship between local populations and protected area resources or biodiversity where local residents are acting as stewards of the natural resources (Wearing, 2001). In return, local communities benefit from protected areas, and the experience of the tourists may be enhanced by opportunities to interact with local people and the natural environment. In other words, community participation is essential in ecotourism development because whenever development and planning do not fit in with local aspirations and capacities, resistance and hostility can increase business costs and/or destroy the industry's potential. Therefore, if (eco)tourism is to become successful, it needs to be planned and managed as a renewable resource industry, based on local capacities and community decision-making (Murphy, 1985: 153).

1.3. The Research Problem

In the case of Malaysia, for instance, The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism formulated Malaysia's Ecotourism Master Plan in early 1995, which was accepted by the government in 1996. Its main objective is to assist both the Federal and State Governments in Malaysia to develop its ecotourism potential (Saat, 2001:3). At the same time, the plan serves both as an appropriate

instrument for the overall sustainable development of Malaysia's economy, and as an effective tool for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the country (Hussin, 2003: 206).

In other words, sustainable development in the tourism sector in Malaysia existed only in the federal government's tourism policies from the 1990s. This is because in the early phase of tourism development the favourite terms used in government documents were "foreign exchange earnings" in the 1960s, "employment and promotion" in the 1970s and "economic multiplier" in the 1980s (Din, 1997a: 154-155). Ideas on tourism development, whether in the mainstream or alternatives such as ecotourism, recommended for local communities in remote areas, were rarely subject to close examination. Until recently tourism planners and policy makers rarely mentioned the interests of the local community. If the local community interest is mentioned, it is limited to priority needs such as supplementary income from tourism activities, and nothing else. This was the dilemma in the early phase of the implementation of sustainable (eco)tourism development in Malaysia.

Policy makers in Malaysia primarily viewed ecotourism as a rural development strategy leading to sustainable development where the natural resources, the local community, the visitor and the other stakeholders could all benefit from tourism activities (Wearing, 2001:395). However, the success of this strategy depended on how government agencies and NGOs created supportive local community or host community participation in ecotourism and conservation projects.

In remote ecotourism destinations, activities such as slash and burn agriculture, cattle farming, hunting, fishing, wood collection, timber harvesting, and mineral extraction were practised by the local people in their everyday lives. For some villages in the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah, such as Sukau and Batu Puteh, these activities have been a major part of their traditional culture for over a century (Vaz and Pyne, 1997:42-43). These activities, in fact, require substantial

amounts of natural resources (water, trees, wildlife, minerals, and most of all land and soil) to sustain the increasing population. The implementation and enforcement of regulations related to protected areas, however, are sometimes very rigid. This situation may foster confusion and resentment in the local people who are accustomed to using such lands and resources. As a result, the local people may become opponents of ecotourism and conservation related projects, and, thus, undermine its operations (Schulze and Suratman, 1999; Ross and Wall, 1999: 127). This is the main obstacle to the success of ecotourism management processes toward sustainable local community participation - local people do not have control over and agreed-upon access to the resources they require.

1.3.1. Ecotourism Development in the Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah, Malaysia

Recently, the term, “ecotourism” has become the new catchword in Sabah’s tourism development. The State Government has identified ecotourism and/or nature-based tourism, particularly in the Lower Kinabatangan, as one of the major development areas generating revenue and at the same time diversifying Sabah’s economy. The promotion of ecotourism in Sabah is intimately linked to the conservation of biodiversity, especially in the form of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, but it is lacking in terms of promoting “community-based ecotourism” (Kersten, 1997). A narrow definition of “ecotourism” used by policy makers in Sabah has created a debate within the framework of “sustainable development”. The problem is how to conserve nature while conflicts, with illegal logging and hunting, deforestation, water pollution, poverty and marginalisation of local people existing in this ecotourism destination. The project of community-based ecotourism must be taken seriously into consideration by the Sabah’s state Government to achieve what many scholars have described as “sustainable development” or “a sustainable community development”.

The Chief Minister of Sabah wants tour operators to step up efforts to increase the number of international tourists coming to Sabah. The Chief Minister said, “775,000 people visited Sabah in 2000 compared with only 483, 991 in 1999”(Borneo Mail, April 9th 2001). Sabah is well known as *the Land Below the Wind*, and has abundant natural attractions such as hills, forests, rivers, beaches, and islands which are important assets for developing nature-based tourism or ecotourism.

Terms such as green tourism, adventure tourism, natural history tourism, *ecotourism* and wildlife tourism are defined in general as “travel to natural areas and participation in nature-related activities without degrading the environment and preferably promoting natural resource conservation”, and are used by the private sector and government agencies to promote “ecotourism” (Ti Teow Chuan, 1994: ix). Sabah is considered the most attractive and unique nature and adventure destination in Malaysia.

The above definition, however, is still inadequate because it does not mention the participation of local residents as an important element in the industry. The Ecotourism Society (1992), for instance, has defined the concept of “ecotourism” as:

Purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources financially beneficial to local citizens (Hawkins, 1994: 261).

However, this definition is still inadequate in promoting community-based ecotourism, especially in aspects of control over resources such as land, capital, decision-making and so on. Thus the debates on what is the best definition of ecotourism continue among tourism scholars. To overcome these debates, Malaysia’s ecotourism Master Plan (1996) adopted the official *definition of*

ecotourism produced by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), of which Malaysia is a member. Ecotourism is:

Environmentally responsible travel and visits to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present), that promote conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local population (Ceballos-Luscurain, 1996).

1.4. The Research Questions

There are five main parts of research questions considered in this study. These questions are:

- i. How and why was ecotourism introduced in the Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah? To what extent did ecotourism development give positive or negative impacts on the socio-cultural life of the local community when it was implemented in the destination areas more than 10 years ago? How and why did these impacts occur?
- ii. How and why are the local communities involved directly or indirectly in ecotourism development? To what extent do local people gain 'real benefits' from the ecotourism-related-programme in the villages?
- iii. To what extent has the ecotourism industry changed the traditional economic system and socio-cultural life of the local community? To what extent has the commercialisation of the local culture benefited the local people? For instance, how and why do the local people support the ecotourism activities through the homestay programme?
- iv. To what extent has conservation programme (i.e. Partners for Wetland) increased the potential conflicts of interests between the villagers and the other stakeholders in these destination areas? How and why did these

conflicts of interest occur? To what extent can ecotourism be considered as a potential instrument for rural economic development and/or environmental conservation in order to achieve sustainable development in the destination areas?

v. To what extent are the tourism literature, particularly, the concepts and perspectives, such as sustainable development, community participation, negative or positive socio-cultural impact of tourism or ecotourism on local communities in context of Less Developed Countries is applicable to this study? (See Chapter 4, section 4.6).

1.5. Why were Batu Puteh and Sukau Village Selected as the Cases for this Study?

To examine all of these research questions, case studies were conducted in Batu Puteh and Sukau Village, in the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah, Malaysia. The main reasons why Batu Puteh and Sukau village have been chosen as the case of the studies are:

- i. Ecotourism was implemented nearly 15 years ago in the Lower Kinabatangan area including Batu Puteh and Sukau village. In Sukau village, it began in 1991 when the first private tourist lodge was opened. In Batu Puteh the tourist company, called “Uncle Tan Jungle Camp”, started its ecotourism activities in 1988. Then, in 1997, the MESCOT (Model of Ecologically Sustainable Community) set up the homestay programme in Batu Puteh. These ecotourism-related developments in the villages, however, are inadequately explored or researched. Moreover, not much research has been done, particularly on the issue of the impact of ecotourism development (positive and/or negative impacts) on the socio-cultural life of the local communities in the destination areas.

- ii. A nature conservation programme has been introduced and implemented officially in the Lower Kinabatangan area through the “Partners For Wetlands” programme. Whether this conservation programme has had a positive or negative impact on the traditional economic system and the daily life of the local communities of Batu Puteh and Sukau village, has once again been inadequately explored. Some research has been done by *World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia (WWFM)*. Their main research, however, is focused more on wildlife behaviour and the scientific features of biodiversity. Research or studies on ecotourism development and its socio-cultural impact on the local community is still unexplored. For that reason, exploratory research on the socio-cultural impact and local community participation in ecotourism development was needed to understand the problems, and how we could adapt it to the sustainable development framework in these destination areas.

- iii. Ecotourism in Batu Puteh and Sukau Village has some problems related to the host-guest relation’s issues because of the increased number of tourists visiting the villages, and the increased number of local people participating in the homestay programme. This local participation, however, has been accompanied by problems, limitations, and conflicts of interests between the villagers and the other stakeholders in the villages. But this issue has been hidden from public discourse because no systematic tourism research or studies was done in this area.

- iv. In December 2000, I undertook a collaborative short research project with a group of student from University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in Sukau and Batu Puteh village. The main focus of this short research was ecotourism and new jobs opportunities among local community in Lower Kinabatangan area. I stayed three days in Sukau village in the

home of one of the villagers. Then I spent two days in Batu Puteh village to observe ecotourism activity involved by local community. At the same time, I attended a few local seminars between the year 2000 and 2001 in Kota Kinabalu of which the themes and discussions of the seminars focused on ecotourism and conservation programmes in this area. Therefore, this previous research experience and knowledge has inspired me (a form of “self-reflexivity”¹; see Hall, 2004: 153) on the main issues that have been mentioned above. The issues of which inadequately explored in that research and seminars, particularly on ecotourism and local community participation, and its negative impacts on socio-cultural life of local community. This previous research experience and knowledge give me an advantage in terms of “familiarisation” with the villagers’ socio-culture, and the ecotourism destinations landscape in order to carry on this study.

1.6. The Objectives of the Research

The five main objectives of this research are:

- i. To examine the positive and negative impacts of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community, within which ecotourism was implemented more than 10 years. The research identifies the social, cultural and environmental changes associated with ecotourism development in Batu Puteh and Sukau village.
- ii. To examine the host-guest relationship from the local community perspective of those who are involved in the homestay programme or who have participated in ecotourism activities generally in the villages.
- iii. To investigate the types and the degree of the involvement or co-operation between the local community and the other stakeholders such as tourist lodge owners, government agencies, and the NGOs regarding the modification of the

socio-cultural life of the local community through the homestay programme and new job opportunities in both villages.

iv. To examine the impact of the conservation programme-related ecotourism development called “Partners for Wetlands” in the Lower Kinabatangan area on the traditional socio-cultural life of the local community. This programme was initiated specifically for the long-term goal of sustainable ecotourism development in Lower Kinabatangan area. At the same time, however, how and why did potential conflicts of interest between the stakeholders in the destination areas occur such as the conflict between the local community and government agencies, NGOs, and tourist lodge owners.

v. To review thoroughly the conceptual debates and theoretical perspectives on the themes of sustainable development, community participation, negative or positive socio-cultural impacts in tourism or ecotourism literature. To what extent are these conceptual frameworks and theoretical perspectives applicable to this study?

1.7. The Significance of the Research

This study is significant in several aspects. *First*, it provides a thorough investigation for the better understanding of influential factors on ecotourism developments and its positive and negative impacts on the socio-cultural life of the local community in the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah. At the same time, this research also explores the influential factors for local community participation in the ecotourism development processes. As mentioned earlier, the amount of research in this area of study, particularly in Malaysia, is very limited. Therefore, this study is intended to expand the existing body of knowledge in this field i.e. ecotourism development and its impacts, and community participation in this development process, especially in the context of developing countries.

Second, the findings of this research hopefully provide a better understanding of the advantages, the limitations, the challenges, and the prospects of the ways that ecotourism policy was implemented in the destination areas. The results of this study provide an important source of information and/or knowledge particularly for ecotourism policy makers and/or ecotourism providers in Malaysia to review or adjust inappropriate ways that ecotourism policy was planned or implemented. In so doing, the ecotourism policy makers and/or ecotourism providers could become more adequately practical, and more adaptable to the sustainable development or sustainable community participation approach, which has been theorised, argued, and demonstrated in this study.

1.8. The Structure of the Thesis

There are ten chapters in this thesis, organised in the following order:

Chapter 1 provides a general overview regarding the background of the study, the research problem, the research questions, the objectives of the research, and a brief outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical perspectives and conceptual debates on the evolution of development theories, which started with modernisation theory in the 1950s, then shifted to the sustainable development paradigm recently, and how these notions have been applied in tourism studies. The discussion also emphasises the debates on the concepts of tourism, alternative tourism, and/or ecotourism particularly from the perspectives of modernisation theory, dependency theory, the neo-liberal paradigm, and critical perspectives. The discussion indicates that the shift in tourism development is towards the socio-cultural life of indigenous people and the pristine environment,

particularly in less developed countries, whereby these became 'exotic' products for the ecotourists to consume is crucial because of its negative impact.

Chapter 3

discusses theoretical perspectives on the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism. The discussions also focus on the meaning of the term "socio-cultural" in studying the impacts of ecotourism; how the objectivists, constructivists, postmodernists and critical analysts theorised authenticity, staged authenticity, and the commercialisation of culture issues in an (eco)tourism context. To analyse the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism in the destination areas, the discussion focuses on Doxey's Irridex Theory and Butler's Tourism Resort Life Cycle Model.

Chapter 4

clarifies the terms "community" and "participation" with the debates from an inter-disciplinary perspective in social sciences, particularly in sociology, anthropology, geography, development studies and tourism or ecotourism. The discussion reviews how classical and contemporary sociologists theorised "community", then how scholars of tourism define and apply the term "community" to a tourism or ecotourism perspective. The discussion in this chapter also emphasises the meaning of the term "local community participation"; and how the participation typologies provided by Arnstein (1971) and Pretty (1995) and the concept of "empowerment" by Scheyvens (1999) are applied to indicate the level of community participation in the (eco)tourism development process.

Chapter 5

discusses what philosophical and methodological choices were made in this study. The discussion justifies why the qualitative approach through case study research design is chosen for this study. The discussion then focuses on the combination of data collection methods during fieldwork such as the adapted participation observation method, face-to-face interview surveys, in-depth interviews, documentary research, and how the data is analysed.

Chapter 6

provides a brief overview of tourism and ecotourism development in Malaysia since the 1970s until recently. The issues discussed include the trend towards a decline in tourist arrivals in Malaysia, and the criticism of the negative impacts of mass tourism on local communities. The government, then, introduced an ecotourism master plan in 1996 in order to ensure that the tourism industry in Malaysia is managed and operated in terms of sustainability. The best example of ecotourism as a niche market in Malaysia is the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah. This, however, was also been questioned.

Chapter 7

presents the empirical findings of the research, the data of which were obtained from fieldwork in the case of Batu Puteh. The chapter also describes the historical background of Lower Kinabatangan area, and the early settlement of Orang Sungai including Batu Puteh village. The discussion of findings in this chapter indicates that community participation in ecotourism development through Miso Walai Homestay programme in Batu Puteh has had a positive impact on the socio-cultural life of local people

because this positive impact is more dominant than the negative ones. This positive impact, however, has certain limitations.

Chapter 8 and 9

present the empirical findings of the research in the case of Sukau village. The discussion of findings in **Chapter 8** indicates that ecotourism development had a strong negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. There are two major themes discussed in this negative impact: *first* is the negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. *Second* is the existence of a conflict of interests between the local community and the other stakeholders. As discussed in **Chapter 9**, though, there were also positive impacts from ecotourism development on local people in Sukau village for instance the increasing number of local participants in the homestay programme. This positive impact suffered from limitations and problems.

Chapter 10

is the concluding chapter, in which the discussion summarises the research findings of both cases and suggests possible approaches to overcome the limitations that have emerged from the study. The discussion also emphasises the implications of the study for ecotourism policy, the contribution of the study to the existing body of knowledge, particularly in development studies and (eco)tourism studies, and it emphasises the limitations of the study, and includes suggestions for further research.

1.9. Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that many governments in the less developed countries have introduced ecotourism as a vehicle for rural development as it relates to indigenous communities. In so doing, nature, community, and culture have been incorporated together and become 'exotic' ecotourism products or "niche tourism" (Macleod, 2003: 3). This ecotourism development however, has strong negative impacts rather than positive ones on the local communities who participated in or did not participate in the programme. This is the main problem, which is always associated with ecotourism development particularly in the remote communities. This problem however lacks adequate understanding or research by policy makers in less developed countries like Malaysia. Thus, the following chapters of this thesis will explore or investigate these related issues especially in the context of sustainable ecotourism development and local community participation.

Endnotes

¹ Self-reflexivity is regarded as an essential ingredient in qualitative tourism research, particularly with respect to participant observation. Researchers are challenged to reflect on their own research undertakings and the manner in which they engage with research subjects as well as the previous or current production of academic knowledge (see details in Hall, 2004: 137-155)

Chapter 2

Sustainable Development: Tourism, Alternative Tourism, and/or Ecotourism - Theoretical Perspectives and Conceptual Debates

2.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to review the theoretical perspectives of development theories from the time that modernisation theory began dominating social science literature on development studies in the 1950s and 1960s, to the emergence of the sustainable development paradigm, and its relation to tourism studies more recently. Significantly, the evolution of the notion of development theories has been paralleled by a paradigm change in tourism studies which started with the idea of mass tourism development, and moved on first to the alternative tourism phase, and then to the sustainable tourism development paradigm. Therefore, to review all these theoretical perspectives and conceptual debates of tourism development, this chapter will divide into sections as follows:

- The *first* section is the introduction.
- The *second* is focused on the issue of why it is essential to understand the evolution of development theories.
- *Third*, the discussion is specifically on modernisation theory and tourism.
- The *fourth* section discusses dependency theory and tourism.
- *Fifth* is the discussion on the neo-liberal paradigm and global tourism.
- Section *six* discusses the sustainable development approach.
- Section *seven* focuses on the view of critical perspectives related to the emergence of sustainable tourism development, particularly in form of alternative tourism and/or ecotourism.
- Section *eight* discusses definitions of the concept of ecotourism, and how certain definitions will indicate certain types and issues in ecotourism debates.

- The *ninth* section is about what the relationship is between ecotourism, the protected area, and the local community.
- Finally, section *ten* is a brief conclusion.

2.1.1. The Concepts of “Tourism”, “Development” and “Underdevelopment”

There is no absolute definition of tourism agreed among scholars in the field of tourism studies. For many people, many different definitions of tourism exist. This can cause problems in some circumstances. As Go (1997a: 5) argues, no uniform definition of tourism has been adopted; therefore tourism has become a field, which is ill understood by policy-makers and the public at large. However, Mathieson and Wall have defined tourism as a concept:

"the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of work and residence, their activities taken during their stay in those destinations and facilities created to cater their needs....while they are travelling, their social, economic, ecological and cultural impact on the host community" (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 1).

The three essential elements of the Mathieson and Wall definition are:

- i. the dynamic element which involves travel to a selected destination(s);
- ii. the static element that encompasses the actual stay at the chosen destination;
- iii. the consequential element which describes the contact between tourists and the local population and the effects of tourism on the economic, physical and social sub-system, either directly or indirectly.

As Hall (1991) argues, there are various definitions of tourism but the common elements from the definitions are (Hall, 1991: 6):

- i. Tourism is the temporary, short-term travel of non-residents, along transit routes to and from a destination.
- ii. It may have a wide variety of impacts on the destination, the transit route and the source point of tourists.

- iii. It may influence the character of the tourist.
- iv. It is primarily for leisure or recreation, although business is also important.

All these elements are inter-related and tourism finally became a phenomenon and an activity known as the tourism system (Page, 1999). Nowadays, tourism has become a global economic activity. For instance, Page and Dowling (2002) continue to predict global tourism growth for the next decades. The higher growth trend in tourism at the global scale is because a larger proportion of the world's population will travel, especially to developing countries¹ in the twenty-first century. People will holiday more often, perhaps two to four times per year. The twenty-first century's travellers will also journey further afield and one out of every three trips will be a long-stay journey. Thus, long-haul travel is expected to increase from 24 per cent of all international journeys to 32 per cent by the year 2020 (Page and Dowling, 2002: 9).

The *concepts of development and underdevelopment* are also contested notions that have long been debated. These are ambiguous terms used descriptively and normatively to refer to *a process* through which a society moves from one condition to another, and also to *the goal* of that process. The development process in a society may result in it achieving a state or condition of development (Sharpley, 2002: 23), but, at the same time, the term "development" also refers to the condition of underdevelopment to describe a lack of development (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 22). Thus, for many less developed countries nowadays, tourism or ecotourism has become an optional development strategy in order to overcome the poverty and underdevelopment faced by the majority of the population.

The term "*development*", as Harrison argued, alludes to a desirable future state for a particular society - the meanings include economic growth, structural change, autonomous industrialisation, capitalism, self-actualisation and individual, national, regional, and cultural self reliance (Harrison, 1988: 154-155). Therefore, the verb "to develop" means to change gradually, progressing through a number of stages

towards some sort of state of expansion, improvement, or completeness or a state in which the subject's true identity is revealed (Wilber and Jameson, 1979: 5) whether it become as a developed or less developed country. In this sense the verb "to develop" can be transitive or intransitive. This means that, when we use the word with reference to countries, it is possible for a country (or other groups of people) either to develop itself or to be developed by some outside agency.

If the term "development" is used to mean the state of a group of people being developed, "*underdevelopment*" refers to a state of being underdeveloped or not developed (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 22; Carter, 1995). The characteristics of underdevelopment that are faced by many less developed countries include pollution, poverty, unemployment, inequality and so on. Under the *alternative development* paradigm however, the concept of "community development" has come to the forefront and places local people at the centre of the development agenda of less developed countries in which tourism or ecotourism are becoming the preferred agent of development (Telfer, 2003: 162). In fact the United Nations has provided an early *definition of community development* as:

"a process designated to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community's initiative" (United Nations, 1955: 6 cited in Telfer, 2003: 163).

However, in the era when the economic development perspective was dominant, many policy makers in less developed countries adapted modernisation theory, and focused much more on economic growth than community development. At this stage of development, a focus was placed more on production or output related activities, particularly the commercial or monetary aspect of these activities (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 28). Under the alternative development paradigm however, the concept of community development has been considered seriously because the use of indicators of per capita income or the rate of growth of national income as a target or measures of development were considered inadequate. The alternative development paradigm has suggested that policy-makers in the less

developed world must use *human or social indicators of development* as well. These human indicators of development will include life expectancy, standards of health or literacy, access to various social or public services, freedom of speech, the degree of participation in government decision making such as on development or environmental conservation programmes (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 29). In the alternative tourism development context, the concept of community development was explored in terms of empowerment, participation and partnership, community capacity, managing the negative social and cultural impacts of tourism, and community change (Telfer, 2003: 155). Although the aims of alternative development had become more broadly defined with social indicator measurement becoming part of the development process, the importance of economic growth and modernisation remained the fundamental issue in the notion of development in many less developed countries

2.2. Understanding the Relation of Development Theories and Tourism. Why is it Essential?

For many developing countries and the less-developed world, tourism or ecotourism is widely regarded as a means of achieving development in destination areas. As Roche (1992) says, the development of tourism has long been seen as both a vehicle for progress and modernisation, and as a symbol of westernisation (Roche, 1992: 566). At the same time, tourism is also big business because of the ability of the "tourism industry" to organise increasing numbers of people all over the world to enjoy travel-related experiences (Sharpley and Telfer, 2002:12). Therefore, the relationship between tourism and development is very complex in nature. According to Telfer (2002), since the Second World War, development theory and tourism have evolved along similar time lines. For instance, during the 1960s much tourism research functioned as an instrument for development with the majority of research being conducted by planners and economists who worked for organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Telfer, 2002: 50). At this time, tourism was essentially part of the *modernisation paradigm* where many developing

countries believed that tourism and later ecotourism created increases in foreign exchange and employment and that tourist expenditure by the government generated a large multiplier effect, which stimulated local economies (Graburn and Jaffari, 1991).

In the 1970s, however, some authors began to question the benefits of tourism development in developing countries (Bryden, 1973; de Kadt, 1979). Their studies indicated that lower multiplier effects and high levels of leakages were experienced by much of the less developed world, which adopted tourism development through the modernisation paradigm. This trend was similar to the dependency theorist critique of modernisation, especially as it relates to the negative impacts of tourism in developing countries (Britton, 1989; Mathew and Richter, 1991; Harrison, 1995) in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology (Telfer, 2002: 51). In the 1980s and 1990s, the neo-liberal economic paradigm and tourism studies focused on international markets and competitive exports - tourism is an export industry in the tertiary sector - and international aid agencies provided funding to develop tourism plans and tourism infrastructure. Under the neo-liberal model, tourism development supposedly offers opportunities for both foreign and local operators to engage in tourism enterprises. This, however, fails to recognise the power relations at play. For instance, tour operators based in developed countries have inherent advantages over their developing countries counterparts as the majority of the world's tourists derive from the developed countries (Scheyvens, 2002: 25). Thus, the negative impact of tourism development on developing countries remains.

Recently, tourism research has embraced the concept of sustainability, which is part of the development paradigm (Butler, 1992; Holden, 2000). Research evaluating alternative type of tourism development, including ecotourism, has become prevalent (Smith and Eadington, 1992). Tourism authors have focused on a range of issues in developing countries including indigenous development tourism, empowerment of local communities in the decision-making process, the role of women in tourism and sustainable tourism development (Telfer, 2002: 58).

The above discussion has shown that many developed countries around the world, continue to use tourism as a vehicle of development. For less developed countries, ecotourism development is becoming a new strategy for promoting local community development (France, 1997c: 213-214). The meaning of development is not only related to economic development *per se*, but is expanding to encompass "alternative development", which is in contrast to the concept of economic development *per se* in many aspects. In other words, the meaning of development has changed several times since modernisation theory first dominated social science in the 1950s and 1960s, for instance from *economic development* to *underdevelopment*, and then to *alternative development or sustainable development* recently. Following these changes were also changes in the concepts of tourism: for instance, from *mass tourism* to *alternative tourism, and ecotourism development*.

In other words, the concept of development changed from the goals of economic growth to include broader social objectives such as the assessment of total human needs, values and standards of a good life and a good society. According to Goulet (1968) the three basic values, which represent this "good life", are:

- the sustenance of life: all people have basic requirements, such as food, shelter and health, without which underdevelopment characteristics exist;
- esteem: all individuals seek self-esteem, a sense of identity, self-respect or dignity. The nature or meaning of esteem varies from one society to the next and may be manifested in increased wealth and material well being or the strengthening of spiritual or cultural values;
- freedom: in the context of development, freedom represents increased choice for individual members of society to service or ignorance, to visit nature or other societies, and etc.

Schmidt (1989) argues that dominant development theories such as modernisation, dependency and neo-liberal paradigms have been criticised because they did not

incorporate the environment into development. The alternative development paradigm through the concept of sustainable development, therefore, tends to be focused on basic needs, people and the environment (Telfer, 2003: 160-161). Mitchell (1997) argues that the key aspects of sustainable development include *empowerment* of local people, *self-reliance* and *social justice*. Alternative tourism development strategies, according to Brohman (1996), emphasise small-scale, locally owned developments, community participation, and environmental and cultural sustainability. The success or failure of this alternative development strategy, however, is dependent on the contexts of individual countries. This is because a small number of individual, less-developed countries have made good progress towards alternative development, but the majority of them are still far behind. It is obvious that development theories have been in transition since modernisation theory began dominating social science in the 1950s and 1960s (Blomstrom and Hettne, 1984: 4). Therefore the discussion on the evolution of development theories is essential because it has been parallel with the phases of tourism development itself. At the same time, it will explore the debates of paradigm changes in tourism studies, starting with mass tourism, to alternative tourism, and to current ecotourism development processes.

2.3.Modernisation Theory and Tourism: Tourism as a Vehicle for Development

While industrialisation was seen as the main means of economic growth under modernisation theory from the 1950s through to the 1970s (Rostow, 1960; Conyers and Hills 184; de Kadt, 1992), the soft industry of mass tourism was also identified as an important tool for the economic development of many developing countries. In these decades, many governments of the developing countries embraced growth in tourism as a means of internationalising their economies and earning income for meeting national development goals (Opperman and Chon, 1997; Sharpley, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002: 21). Mass tourism development or resort-style development was that most favoured by tourism policy makers of developing countries. The governments provided many incentives to encourage foreign investment in their

tourism sectors. As a result tourism became the leading economic sector in many developing countries such as Costa Rica, Tanzania, Mexico and Malaysia.

For example, the data provided by WTO (1997) showed the economic importance of international tourism receipts for the host countries in 1997: the USA earned \$75 billion (16.9 per cent of world total), Italy \$30 billion (6.7 per cent), France 27.9 billion (6.3 per cent), Spain \$27 billion (6.1 per cent) and the United Kingdom \$20.6 billion (4.64 per cent) (Bardolet, 2000: 325). Because of the emergence of destination tourism, the market diversified regionally where East Asia/Pacific growth was 14.7 per cent and shared international arrival and receipts 18.7 per cent in 1997 (WTO, 1997). China jumped to sixth position in the world with 24 million arrivals (3.9 per cent of the total) in 1997. Thus, the historical experience of the host countries has shown that tourism is a growth industry (Todaro, 1997). Tourism is also considered to be an effective source of income and employment for local communities (Sharpley, 2002: 14). In Cyprus, for example, about 25 per cent of the workforce is employed directly or indirectly in tourism.

In many cases, the development of tourist attractions by many countries and regions lies in natural resources such as the sea, beaches, climate, mountains, wildlife, and so forth. These are free to the countries because they do not have to be built or created and can favour tourism development with low start-up costs. Telfer (1996) indicates, however, that tourism may be able to offer advantages or disadvantages of backward linkages throughout some local economy activities and other industries. For instance, tourists require a variety of goods and services in the destination, including accommodation, food and beverages, entertainment, local transport services, souvenirs and so on. Such advantages or opportunities include the expansion of the local farming industry to provide food for local hotels and restaurants, and the local construction industry. Not all destinations, however, may be able to take advantage of these linkage opportunities; to some destinations "the diversity and maturity of the local economy, the availability of the investment funds or the type/scale of tourism development, may restrict the extent of backward

linkages" (Telfer, 1996 cited in Sharpley, 2002: 19-20). In case of The Gambia, for instance, the economic benefits derived from tourism are very much limited because of the poor quality and limited availability of food and drink supplies, and the majority of tourist hotels import all their food and drink requirements, as well as all fixtures and fittings in the hotels. On the other hand, tourism as a development option may lead to infrastructure improvements and the provision of facilities that are of benefit to local communities as well as tourists, the justification for environmental protection through national parks, and, the encouragement by tourism of the revitalisation of traditional cultural crafts and practices. Thus, according to modernisation theory, every country in the world has, to a lesser or greater extent, developed a tourism or ecotourism industry for the purposes of economic growth and development.

2.4. Dependency Theory and Tourism: The Negative Impact of Mass Tourism in the Developing Countries

In the 1970s to middle of the 1980s, however, mass tourism development under the modernisation approach was criticised because of its negative impact on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of many developing countries. As de Kadt (1979) indicates, the balance of economic growth and the distribution of material benefits at regional and local level in the developing countries did not lead to 'trickle down' to ordinary citizens. Rather, many of the benefits accrued to foreign investors and multinational corporations and a minority of the local elite and businessmen. The governments invested much money in establishing infrastructures for tourism but the basic infrastructure needs of citizens for water and electricity were delayed or pushed aside. On socio-cultural aspects, Harrison (1992) argues that a number of social and cultural problems such as drug abuse, crime and prostitution occurred among the local population in the destination area. Moreover, the denigration of important spiritual or cultural sites by tourist, and a rapid undermining of the values and norms of local people were shown to be associated with tourism in the Third World.

The proponents of dependency theory argue that developing countries have external and internal political, institutional and economic structures that keep them in a dependent position in a global economic system controlled by developed countries (Frank, 1966; Corbridge, 1995; Todaro, 1997; Peet, 1999: 107). That is why it has been argued that tourism generates a form of neo-colonialism whereby large multinational cooperation such as airlines, tour operators and hotel chains, control the industry. At the same time, however, it leaves the developing countries in poverty, underdevelopment and control by these giant global companies (Britton, 1982, Telfer, 2003: 139). Power structures emerge in the tourism industry, reinforcing the dependency and vulnerability of developing destinations. Telfer (2003) continues that because of the power and control of the tourism industry by external forces, limited potential remains for community development through tourism. The community is actually exploited by the tourism industry. To counteract these forces, advocates of the dependency perspective suggest state intervention and protectionist policies in tourism. There have been attempts by some countries to develop their own state-sponsored tourism, for instance, state-run hotel chains, in order to promote self-reliance (Curry, 1990, Telfer, 2003: 159). Self-reliance, then, is a concept commonly discussed in the context of community development.

Besides all the “progress” and the remarkable image of tourism development both in developed and developing countries which have had a longer experience of and exposure to this industry in general, that the mass tourism development era in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s has been criticised by many researchers because of its negative impact on the environmental aspects and socio-cultural conditions of host populations in the destination areas (de Kadt, 1979; Matheison and Wall, 1983; CAP², 1985; Krippendorf, 1987; Sofield, 1993; Cohen, 1996; Brown, 1998; Wearing and Neil, 1999; Shah and Gupta, 2000).

Therefore, as CAP (1985) argues, “some of these negative effects include the over-exploitation and degradation of the natural environment, pollution of the seas and

coastlines, loss of traditional values and cultures, displacement of the viable communities, and loss of valuable agricultural land. Most repulsive of all is the exploitation of Third World women and children in sex tourism, which has emerged as one of the most popular items in the tourist agenda of a number of countries” (CAP, 1985: 7). The worst conditions increase because most of the developing countries do not have the capability of preventing these negative impacts efficiently (UNCTTC, 1982).

In other words, because international tourism requires high capital investment, foreign know-how, imported materials and expensive infrastructure facilities such as highways, airports, water and power supplies and telecommunications, many less developed countries have to take out heavy investment loans from international agencies like the World Bank and its affiliates, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the International Development Association (IDA) for funding the projects (Wood, 1979: 274-87). Then, the repayment for these loans together with the interest constitutes a further source of leakage from the economies of the less developed countries. In consequence,, many developing countries have awakened to the fact that mass tourism is a more delicate form of exploitation and dominance or “neo-colonialism” of the First World in the era of post-colonial society (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 49-50) Ironically, however, some developing countries are still pinning their hopes on the economic benefits of tourism development to overcome their economic ills (Hall and Page; 1999; Go, 1997b; Poon, 1989).

2.5. The Neo-Liberal Paradigm and Global Tourism: The New Development Order for the Developing Countries?

Despite the dependency critique of the development problems faced by many developing countries, modernisation theory was replaced by the *neo-liberal paradigm*. Neo-liberalism, which dominated many policies on global economic development recently, was based on a belief in market-led growth and economic liberalisation, such as removing barriers to trade and encouraging foreign

investment, and often became key government policy (Eadington and Smith, 1992; Blaikie, 2000). Under this paradigm, as claimed by the WTO (1999), tourism is a global activity or growth industry. Page and Dowling claims that tourism was generating 6 per cent of global gross national product and employing one in 15 workers worldwide. Tourism, therefore, is expected to grow at around 4 per cent per year. Global tourist arrivals are also forecast to reach 1 billion by 2010 and 1.6 billion by the year 2020 (Page and Dowling, 2002: 8-9). This represents a more than threefold increase over the arrivals of the 1990s. According to the WTO (1999) *Tourism: 2020 Vision*, the 1.6 billion tourists visiting foreign countries annually by the year 2020 would spend more than US\$2 trillion or US\$5 billion every day. Tourist arrivals are also predicted to rise by an average 4.3 per cent a year over the next two decades. International tourism receipts will climb by 6.7 per cent a year.

Table 2.1: Growth Tourist Arrivals by Region, Actual and Forecast, 1990-2020

Region	Average growth rate p. a (%)	
	1990-95 (actual)	1995-2020 (forecast)
Middle East	8.6	6.7
East Asia/Pacific	8.3	7
Africa	6	5.5
South Asia	5.9	6.2
Europe	3.4	3.1
Americas	3.4	3.8

Source: Adapted from WTO (1998: 5-10)

The importance of tourist arrival growth in developing countries compared with tourism to Europe and North America is demonstrated by figures provide by WTO (1998) as shown in (Table 2.1). However this forecast growth has been interrupted by unpredicted global events such as the Asian financial crisis, leading to an average growth of -0.01 per cent for the East Asian/Pacific region in the 1996-97 periods (WTO, 1998: 6). Then, the worst scenario for international tourist arrival growth obviously emerged with the terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001. This event led tourist arrivals worldwide to drop by 11 per cent in the last

four months of 2001, with particularly strong drops in some regions such as the Middle East (-30%) and South Asia (-24%) (Scheyvens, 2002: 6).

Despite all these problems, the governments in many developing countries, the global financial institutions such as IMF and World Bank have still placed a high priority on tourism development for the next decade (Archer, 1977; Jenkins, 1980; Pearce, 1989; Cooper, et al, 1993; Archer and Cooper, 1994; Freitag, 1994; Weaver, 1998). Many developing countries offered their “pristine environments” and “the exotic tribal culture” as a new tourism product beside their ‘3S’ traditional tourism products i.e. sun, sand and sea (Waters, 1966; Mings, 1969; Francillon, 1979; McKean, 1989). The tourism sector is growing strongly because many tourists in this decade interpret going on holiday to the Third World as experiencing “untouched environments” and “the exotic culture” (Scheyvens, 2002: 5). As WTO (1989: 9) indicates, besides a growing congestion of the tourist sites in both developed and developing countries, increased tourist awareness of global socio-environmental issues spread by the international media, is likely to lead to greater development of niche markets, such as ecotourism and cultural tourism recently.

According to Brohman (1996), however, a key problem with tourism in the Third World, under the neo-liberal paradigm, is that it continues to pursue an outward-oriented development strategy rather than encouraging domestic tourism. The narrow perspective commonly taken by governments or tourism policy makers, under the neo-liberal paradigm, is to encourage more visitors to a country to increase foreign exchange, without linking this specifically to wider development goals such as poverty alleviation or balanced regional development (Cater, 1995; Brohman, 1996; Carter, 2001; Scheyvens, 2002: 25). The previous critical issues which existed under the phase of modernisation theory, such as cross-cultural problems, dependence on foreign investment and skills, less emphasis on environmental problems, and less attention on the host's socio-cultural decay and the existence of serious spatial inequality, are not seriously considered.

Blakie (2000) also argues that there is little interest in this paradigm to think about forms of development, which build upon the skills, and knowledge of local people. A neo-liberal model of development supposedly offers opportunities for both foreign and local operators to engage in tourism enterprises. This fails, however, to recognise the power relations at play. Tourist companies or tour operators based in the developed countries have come predominantly under the control of the international tourist movement. Because of their expertise, therefore, global marketing connections and capital resources have given them a competitive advantage over local tourist operators (Cater, 1995: 200). As a result, Third World countries are suffering from foreign dependence along with persistent poverty, economic inequality, and the destruction of cultures and communities in the name of tourism development (Khan, 1997: 989). This situation is an interesting challenge to the earlier notion of the neo-liberal stance that insists on the need to restructure Third World economies to expand global economic growth.

2.6. The Sustainable Development Approach

The implementation of "sustainable development" through *Agenda 21* at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit has been agreed and approved by over 170 nations (Sharpley, 2000; Carter, 2001: 196). The Brundtland Commission Report (WCED, 1987) defined *sustainable development* as:

'[The] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987:43) (see section 2.6.1. - the core elements of sustainable development).

Since then, supporters of sustainable development have spread far beyond government development policy into the world of business and civil society. This is because sustainable development is widely seen as a *good* thing like other political concepts such as democracy or justice. It was designed as a bridging concept that could unite apparently diverse and conflicting interests and policy concerns especially in North-South relations, particularly regarding economic growth and the environment or natural resources protection (Meadowcroft, 2000).

2.6.1. The Core Elements of Sustainable Development

According to the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), the definition of sustainable development is based on the two key concepts of "needs" and "limits". The concept of basic needs for living arises from the idea that priority should be given to the essential needs of the world's poor in both the North and the South. In many cases, poverty and unequal distribution are identified as major causes of environmental degradation (de Kadt, 1992; Carter, 2001: 198). Sustainable development, therefore, requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. Yet, the concept of limits recognises that the current state of technology and social organisation imposes limits on the ability of the environment to meet present and future needs. Thus, Brundtland (1987) suggests that we must moderate our demands on the natural environment. In this sense Brundtland rejected *the Limits to Growth* ideas (Meadows et al, 1972), which claimed that higher population growth, if has no set ascertain limits in terms of resources used could lead to ecological disaster. Indeed, Brundtland demands a revival of growth in developing countries to help alleviate poverty and provide basic needs, although it seeks a more "eco-friendly" type of growth that is "less material and energy-intensive and more equitable in its impact. Lafferty (1996: 189) summarised the core elements of sustainable development as:

- i. to satisfy basic human needs and reasonable standards of welfare for all living beings (*Development*);
- ii. to achieve more equitable standards of living both within and among global populations (*Development*);
- iii. to be pursued with great caution as to their actual or potential disruption of biodiversity and the regenerative capacity of nature, both locally and globally (*Sustainability*);
- iv. to be achieved without undermining the possibility for future generations to attain similar standards of living and similar or improved standards of equity (*Sustainability*).

Some development theorists have argued, therefore, that the sustainable development approach, in some sense, is a model critical of the consequences of late modernity (Scheyvens, 2002). At the same time, however, it was also claimed as a compromise model between neo-liberalism ideology and radical green, which demands a fundamental restructuring of the market economy and the liberal democratic state through “ecological modernisation”³ solution. As Carters, (2001) has argued, the political message of ecological modernisation is that capitalism can be made more “environmentally friendly” by the reform (rather than overthrow) of existing economic, social and political institutions. Ecological modernisation seems to offer a *weak version of sustainability* (see Table 2.2. p. 39) in which the “opposing” goals of economic growth and environmental protection can be reconciled by further, albeit “greener” industrialisation such as ecotourism (Carter, 2001: 211). However, the debates between these two camps continue, and no solid compromises or solutions have been agreed, particularly about the meaning of sustainable development.

2.7. The Critical Perspectives: From Mass Tourism to Alternative Tourism (Ecotourism), and/or Sustainable Tourism Development

According to this perspective, ecotourism was seen as strong neo-liberal ideas about politics, economics and environmental issues, which has now become part of the global economic agenda. Duffy (2002) has argued that many developing countries' governments are highly committed to ecotourism because it allows for economic growth through responsible use and conservation of natural resources. At the same time, local people could benefit from ecotourism if they were to support the conservation effort. Ecotourism development however, does not challenge the existence of domestic or international political, economic and social structures. Rather, it can be devised and implemented by businesses and governments with relative ease (Duffy, 2002: 19). The question raised by this perspective is how we can maintain environmental protection and/or conservation while allowing economic development at the same time and place.

Table 2.2: A Typology of the Sustainable Development

	Policy	Economy	Society	Discourse
Stage 1 Very weak Sustainability	Lip service to policy integration	Minor tinkering with economic instruments	Dim awareness and little media coverage	Corporatist discussion groups; consultation exercises
Stage 2 Weak sustainability	Formal policy integration and deliverable targets	Substantial restructuring of microeconomic incentives	Wider public education for future visions	Round-tables; stakeholder groups; parliamentary surveillance
Stage 3 Strong sustainability	Binding policy integration and strong international agreements	Full valuations of the cost of living; 'green' accounts alongside national accounts	Curriculum integration; local initiatives as part of community growth	Community involvement; twinning of initiatives in the developed and developing world
Stage 4 Very strong sustainability	Strong international conventions; national duties of care; statutory and cultural support	Formal shift to sustainable economic accounting both nationally and internationally	Comprehensive cultural shift coupled to technological innovation and new community structures	Community-led initiatives become the norm

Source: O'Riordan (1996) cited in Carter, (2001: 201)

Under this sustainability idea, "development" is a process of transformation, which, by combining economic growth with broader social and cultural change, enables individuals to realise their full potential. Then, the principles of "sustainability" allowed a new development process to take place as long as environmental problems are considered seriously in all sectors and policy areas of economic development (Carter, 2001: 198). It is easy, however, to conceptualise the sustainability of development process in theory, but it is very difficult to implement it in reality. Because there is a contradiction of goals between the high economic growth required by conventional economic policy makers and high environmental protectionism. In other word, Brundlandt's sustainable development concept has displayed two contradictory ideas at once: the first is an *anthropocentrism*,

displayed in its concern for human welfare and the exploitation of nature; the second is a preference for an *ecocentric* interest in protecting nature for its sake and ours. Consequently, this idea has opened up environmental political debates to a wider audience (Lele, 1991; Carter, 2001: 198).

In the mid-1980s, interest in 'green tourism' or more sustainable tourism began, due to concern over environmental damage in some tourist sites because of rapid tourism development, and the problems associated with the inadequate disposal of waste from tourists (Scheyvens, 2002:24). For these reasons, many academics and NGOs suggested alternative tourism development or sustainable tourism development to overcome these global and local environmental problems (Liu, 2003: 459; Go, 1997b).

Despite widespread enthusiasm for this new paradigm of development, the precise meaning of sustainable tourism development remains elusive (Carter, 2001: 197); and what sustainable tourism is seeking to sustain, and for whom (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 64), remains a critical subject. The above sustainable development definition involves a process of change in which exploitation of the natural resource base, directions of investment, technological evaluation and institutional dynamics operate in harmony to enhance both current and future attempts to meet human needs (Milne, 1998:36). At the same time however, this definition has been criticised by some authors (Redclift, 1987; Pearce *et al*, 1996; Butler, 1998; Milne, 1998; Mowforth and Munt, 1998) as "problematic" because there are many contradictions or many different interpretations inherent in it, particularly the contested ideas between anthropocentrism and eco-centrism as discussed above. The introduction of "ecotourism" has been also criticised by many tourism scholars (Butler, 1991; Wheeler, 1992; Lawrence, et al, 1997; Weaver, 1998) because of its negative impacts on the environment and the socio-cultural life of local communities, and moreover, because ecotourism development is not a guarantee of the achievement of the sustainable development.

2.7.1. *The Rise of Alternative Tourism or Ecotourism in Developing Countries*

In general, the dramatic growth of the tourism industry during the late twentieth century was related to the varying issues of socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental factors of globalisation (Urry 1990, Mowforth and Munt 1998, Potter *et al* 1999, Scheyvens 2002). For instance there were amazing changes in technology development and innovation, transportation and communication systems, particularly, the revolutionising Information Technologies (ITs) in the 1980s that much influenced the supply-demand aspects of global tourism towards the 21st century (Buhalis, 2000). Most of these changes have also triggered, to some degree, the development of industry-related tourism in order to fulfil the needs of increasingly prosperous, educated, and sophisticated *post-industrial societies*. This situation was described by (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 53) as a shift in contemporary tourism, from an *old* to a *new* version of tourism or from *fordist* to *post-fordist* consumption (Urry, 1990: 14) or from *modern* to *post-modern* tourism (Wang, 2000; Uriely, 2005) (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Shifts in Contemporary Tourism

Old/Fordist/Modern Tourism	New/Post-Fordist/Post-modern Tourism
Mass	Individual
Packaged	Unpackaged/Flexible
Ss (sun, sea, sand, sex)	Ts (travelling, trekking, trucking)
Unreal	Real
Irresponsible (socially, culturally, environmentally)	Responsible

Source: adapted from (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 53)

After World War II many countries and regions, whether developed or developing, possessed the necessary resources for tourism development. They chose the path of developing large-scale tourism or "mass tourism" as a major national or regional activity (Smith and Eadington, 1992: 2). For developing countries tourism has

become extremely important to their economic development (Scheyvens, 2002: 7) especially in order to improve their local communities' level of income and the quality of their lives. When many of the governments and policy makers in developing countries place tourism development in their mainstream development policy agenda, the critical question they have to confront is whether they can succeed in achieving this goal in a sustainable manner.

2.7.2. Sustainable Tourism Development: The Myth of Alternative Tourism or Ecotourism

Recently, many developing countries have realised that alternative tourism, such as ecotourism, could not take over completely the mass tourism market. This is because alternative tourism is normally regarded by policy makers as a **“niche market”** or one segment of the mass tourism market (Macleod, 2003). Therefore some authors have suggested that it is useful to conceptualise distinctions between alternative and mass tourism as occurring along a continuum rather than being polar opposites (France, 1997a; Macleod, 1998). Moreover, the forms of alternative tourism, such as ecotourism, are part of a broader dominant system of development theories based on a neo-liberal economics paradigm and the notions of comparative advantage.

This notion was labelled by Duffy (2002: x) as “blue-green thought” which defines the environment as a resource with a distinct economic value, and so differs from the more left-wing ‘red-green’ idea and the ecocentric ‘deep-green’ philosophy. In this sense ecotourism as a development strategy is not inconsistent with the existing domestic economic and political structures of developing countries; rather it supports the global free market, business-oriented strategies which could attract foreign investment from developed countries and world institutional funds such the World Bank in order to develop and modernise their countries and societies. As a result, from the 1990s onwards, many developing countries saw alternative tourism, and specifically ecotourism, as a new tool for their socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development.

Pearce (1992: 17) recognised that the concept of alternative tourism began to emerge in tourism development literature in 1980 when a UNESCO-sponsored workshop involving South Pacific researchers and National Tourist Office (NTO) managers evaluated the experience, the nature and the expansion of new forms of tourism development distinguished by accommodation type 'for example, locally owned hotels, smaller motels or guest houses, village accommodation (France 1997b: 15-16).

At the first stage, Deroi (1981) put forward the concept of AT, which entered academic debates following his publication entitled, "Alternative Tourism: towards a new style in North-South relations" (Scheyvens, 2002: 11), and initially defined alternative tourism by accommodation type as:

In Alternative Tourism (AT) the "client" receives accommodation directly in or at the home of the host with, eventually, other services and facilities offered there (Deroi, 1981: 253 quoted in Pearce, 1992: 17).

However this early stage of AT definition by Deroi (1981) did not include the elements of more meaningful relationships between "host" and "guest"; in fact, alternative tourists are preferable to mass tourists because they adopt a specific approach to travel which is more sensitive to local peoples and environments (Locker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; Macleod, 1998; Scheyvens, 2002). Therefore Holden (1984) considered this host-guest element and defined alternative tourism as:

Alternative tourism is a process, which promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities. It seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity and equality amongst participants (Holden, 1984: 15).

To some extent, Holden's definition is seemingly vague when he tries to differentiate between the characteristics or forms of alternative tourism and its objectives. A clearer definition provided by Medlik (1993) as follows:

[Alternative tourism] generally used to refer to forms of tourism, which seek to avoid adverse and enhance positive social, cultural and environmental impacts. Usually characterised by small scale; individual, independent or small group activity; slow, controlled and regulated development; as well as emphasis on travel as experience of host cultures and on maintenance of traditional values and societies (Medlik, 1993: 10).

In this sense alternative tourism is seen as a solution to problems of mass tourism. In many circumstances however, alternative tourism in practice has also been problematic (Munt, 1994a: 50). For instance, alternative tourism was one of the most widely used and abused phrases in the 1990s. Like the term "sustainable development", "alternative tourism" sounds attractive; it suggests concern and thought, a new approach and philosophy towards future tourism development. In this sense alternative tourism, such as ecotourism, can mean almost anything to anyone (Butler, 1992: 31). Thus, the variety of meanings of this term became a source of major problems or conflicts for many stakeholders such as policy makers, tourist operators, local people and tourists whenever they participated or promoted alternative tourism in these tourist destinations. This problem continued when most of policy makers in developing countries ignored closer examination of this term, and ignored the interests of the local community in tourism development (Din, 1997a: 154).

In addition, it is not adequate to promote alternative tourism by making simplistic and idealised comparisons with mass and green tourism naively by claims; mass tourism need not be uncontrolled, unplanned, short term or unstable. Green tourism, on the other hand, is always considered as inevitably optimised, planned and under control (Butler, 1992: 35). Recently, academics and practitioners in tourism

development studies are increasingly challenging the views or assumptions of alternative tourism being the good option and mass tourism the bad. There are a number of reasons for this change:

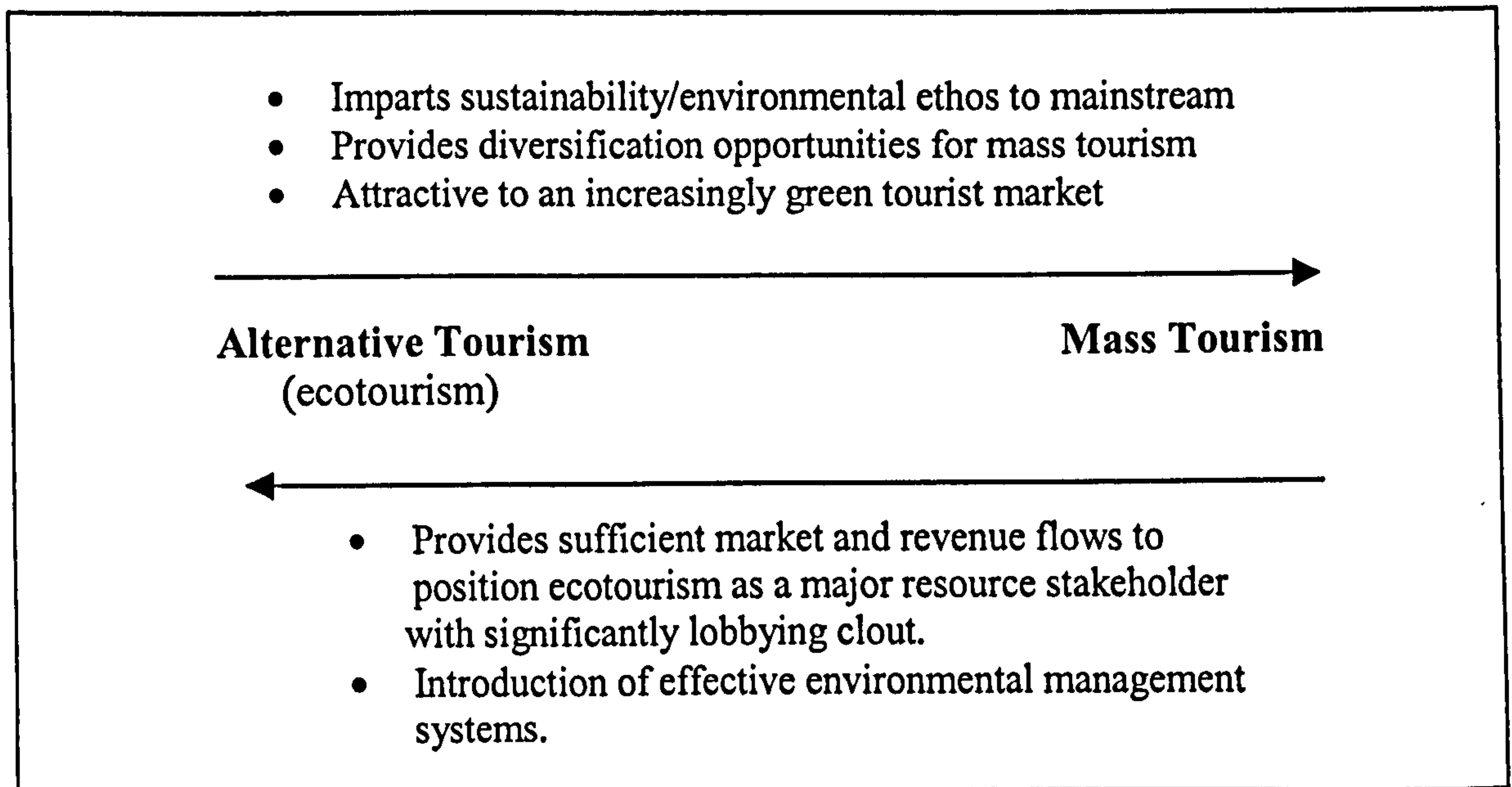
First, there is a shift in philosophy within tourism studies to what Jafari (1989a) describes as a more objective 'knowledge-based platform' - these studies are intended to contribute to a holistic study or treatment of tourism, not just its forms or consequences. The main goal is the formulation of a scientific body of knowledge on tourism (Jafari, 1989a: 25).

Second, the line between alternative and mass tourism is increasingly vague because whether it is conventional or alternative, it is a form or agent of development and change. Therefore it needs to be controlled and managed properly on a sustainable basis (Butler, 1992: 35). Without control and responsibility by tourist operators, tourists, local people and government officers, there will almost inevitably be an overreaching of some or all capacity limits and degradation. This will include the capacity limit of the environment, the resource base, and the positive participation of the local people and lead to a decline and change in tourism products. In other words, alternative tourism does have implications for the three major aspects of the social, environmental, and economic systems of destination areas similarly to what mass tourism does.

Third, many alternative tourism participants, such as soft ecotourism participants, are in mass tourists. They are engaged in ecotourism activities such as wildlife viewing, jungle trekking, white-water rafting, and mountain climbing as part of a broader, multi-purpose vacation that often places the emphasis in the mass tourism or the 3S (Sun, Sea and Sand) realm (Weaver, 2001: 78-79). If these tourists can access both the well-serviced beach-based resorts and the natural attractions of well-known protected areas, there is a primary motivation for them to visit tourism destinations such as Costa Rica and Kenya, rather than destinations that are wildlife-rich but service-poor. In this sense, Weaver (2001) demonstrates that the

relationship between alternative tourism such as ecotourism and mass tourism may be moving in the direction of synthesis, convergence and symbiosis as shown in (Figure 2.1) as follows:

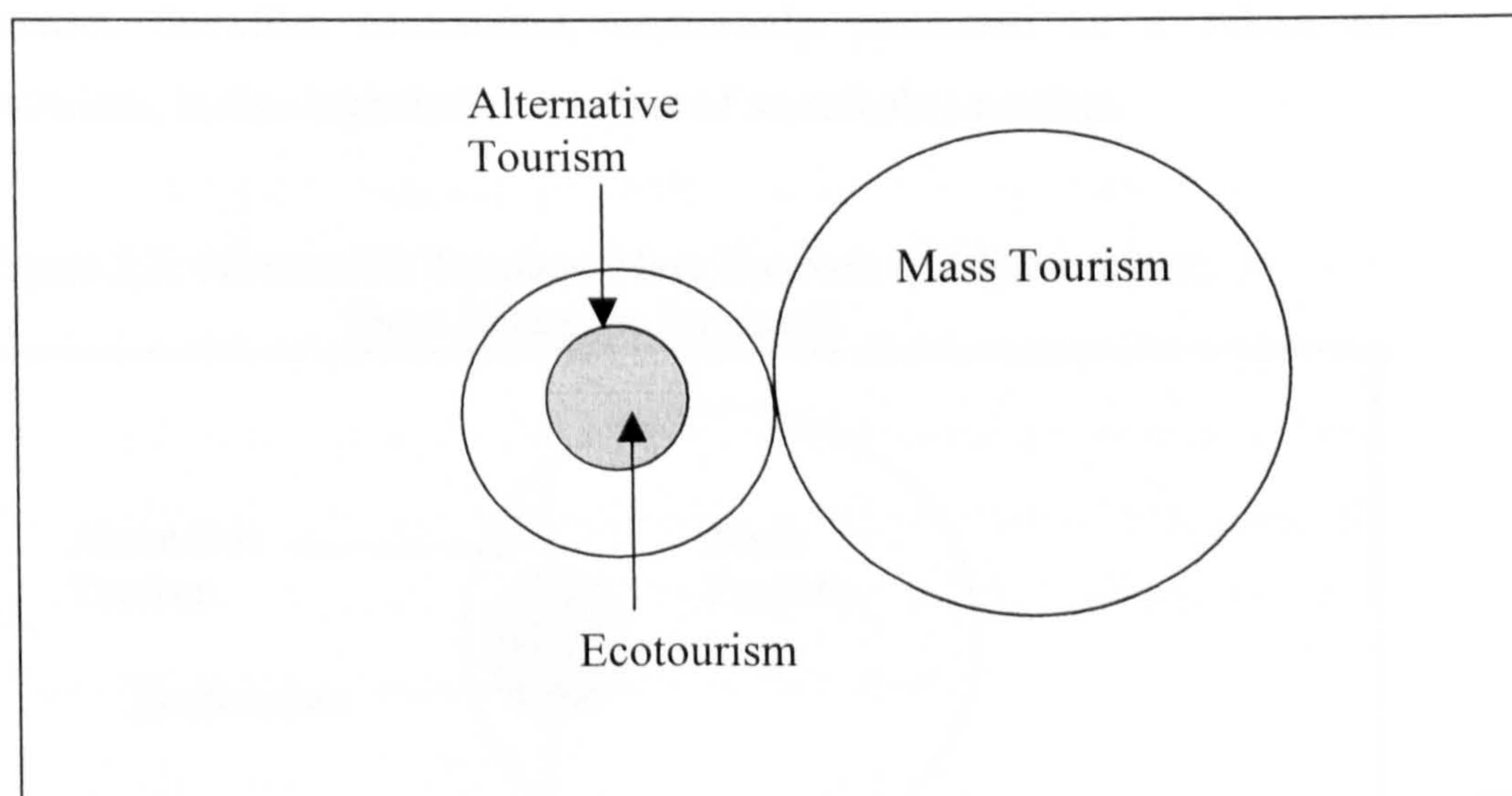
Figure: 2.1. Converging and symbiotic relationship between alternative tourism (ecotourism) and mass tourism



Source: (Weaver, 2001: 79).

As demonstrated in Figure 2.2. p. 47, the concept of alternative tourism was introduced in the early 1980s as a more benign alternative to mass tourism (Dernoi, 1981; Holden, 1984; Gonsalves, 1987). The relationships between the two forms of tourism were illustrated in dialectical and dichotomous terms with alternative tourism being the good option and mass tourism the bad option. In this way ecotourism is logically subsumed under alternative tourism. The alternative tourism category for instance has been defined mainly as a form of cultural tourism, as in vacation farms, homestays, feminist travel, etc (Weaver, 2001: 77). Current tourism research, however, shows that the ideal type of relationship between alternative and mass tourism is inadequate because both types of tourism require sustainability in most circumstances. Thus, Weaver shows the relationships between alternative tourism, mass tourism and ecotourism in its emergent approach as in (Figure 2.3. p. 48).

Figure 2.2: Alternative Tourism (Ecotourism) and Mass Tourism; from a Conventional Approach

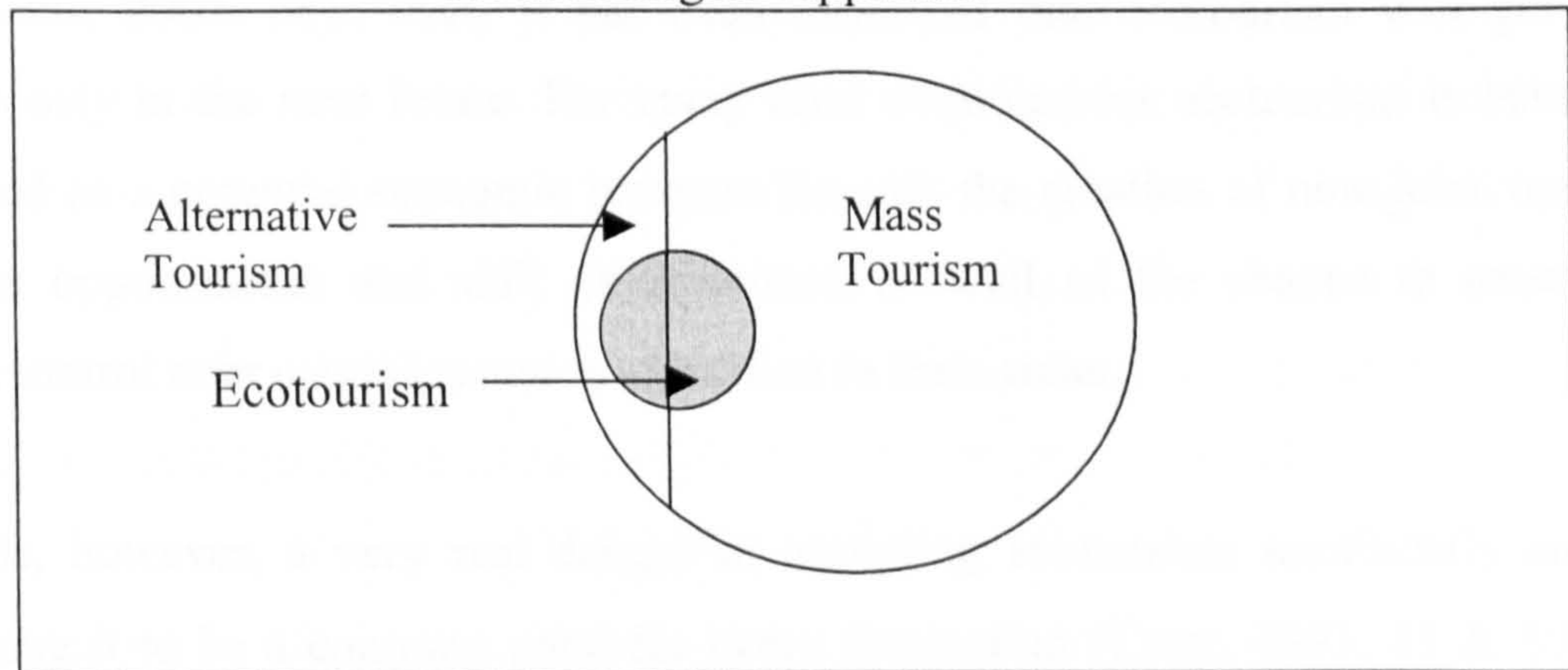


Source: (Weaver, 2001: 79).

In (Figure 2.3. p. 48) ecotourism is positioned as a diverse activity that overlaps both the alternative and mass tourism components of the circle. This circle surrounds all options from the lone wilderness hiker (hard ecotourism) to the busload of resort patrons engaged in a half-day excursion to a local wildlife interpretation centre (soft ecotourism). This association between mass tourism and ecotourism is, however, controversial because the linkage is not likely to be universally accepted by ecotourism stakeholders (Weaver, 2001: 79-80). Moreover, the disparity in power between the two sectors will mean that the influence of mass tourism over ecotourism is likely to be much greater than the reverse situation. For this reason, Duffy (2002) argues that ecotourism has become an increasingly popular label attached to various forms of alternative tourism marketing or as a means of earning foreign exchange while ensuring that the environment is not degraded to provide the backdrop to commercial service areas and recreation sites (Duffy, 2002: 14-15). Ecotourism is a diverse activity that commonly overlaps with both alternative tourism and mass tourism, which means it cannot reduce the negative effects of tourism, and it makes a very limited contribution to positive social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes, particularly improving the

welfare of local people in the less developed world (Duffy, 2002). In this sense, ecotourism can be categorised as having weak sustainability. In the sustainable tourism context, therefore ecotourism, commonly perceived as a subset of alternative tourism, is also regarded as a subset of sustainable tourism

Figure 2.3: Alternative Tourism, Mass Tourism and Ecotourism;
From Emergent Approach



Source: (Weaver, 2001: 80).

2.8. Defining the Concept of Ecotourism: Types and Issues

In a historical context, as Beaumont (1998) argues, “the phenomenon known as ecotourism is not new to Western society. It has been around since at least the 18th century but by a different name. The early geographers who toured the world in search for new lands, species and culture were ecotourists. Then, the establishment of National Parks such as Yellowstone in the US in 1872 and Banff in Canada in 1885 is further evidence of the early interest in nature tourism. In addition, African wildlife safaris and Himalayan treks in the 1960s and 1970s were also part of this trend” (Beaumont, 1998: 240)⁴.

In the tourism literature however, many authors stress that there is no single accepted definition of ecotourism. Various authors have come up with various ways and definitions to distinguish between different forms of ecotourism (Blamey, 1997; Ross and Wall, 1999; Duffy, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002). In many cases ecotourism is considered to be more than just nature-based tourism. Ecotourism has

simply been labelled as an attractive marketing tool as it is ecologically sound and could motivate people from developed countries to go out to travel to developing countries to experience their pristine environments (Scheyvens, 2002). Thus, ecotourism has become a universal panacea, a common good or a solution for developing countries' socio-economic problems and poverty eradication because it has been booming since the 1990s. In some circumstances this argument is true (Scheyvens, 2002: 68). Thus, it has been estimated that ecotourism will grow continuously in the near future. For many rural communities ecotourism is being embraced as a potential economic prospect through the creation of new jobs, new business opportunities and skill development, as well as the chance to secure greater control over natural resource utilisation in their areas.

There is, however, a very real danger in accepting ecotourism uncritically and presuming it to be a common good for every destination (Cater, 1993: 85 & 89). This is because the more remote the ecotourism destinations and less developed tourism areas that ecotourists seek are, the more vulnerable they are to cultural disruption and environmental degradation. As Ziffer (1989) comments:

"ecotourism is currently a 'hot' topic. It is a movement that potentially involves billions of dollars, high-level politics, the survival of threatened cultures, and the preservation of rapidly disappearing wild lands" (Ziffer, 1989: 1).

In general the ideal goal for ecotourism is often considered to be a potential strategy to support conservation of natural ecosystems, while at the same time promoting sustainable local development. Many case study reports, however, indicate that the failure of ecotourism to achieve this ideal goal upon which it should be founded, is because of the different fundamental ideologies or philosophical concerns in "environmentalism", especially for instance between *ecocentrism* and *technocentrism* (Accot and La Trobe, 1998: 241). These differences in fundamental ideas have differentiated ideological positions within environmentalism as shown in (Table 2.5. p. 51) In other words environmentalism is not a single perspective. It

reveals a variety of disagreement within the critique of science and science policy. While environmental care is often presented as an uncontested and positive science, the environmental debate demonstrates that decisions regarding environmental conservation are politically, socially and economically informed (Duffy, 2002:3).

Based on the above philosophical arguments, Naess (1995) developed typologies of the environmentalism such as '*deep ecology*' and '*shallow ecology*'. The shallow ecology positions are concerned with the welfare of humans alone. Humans are recognised as the only source of value so that only instrumental values are ascribed to the non-human world (Fox, 1984). Shallow ecology is also concerned with reducing pollution and resource depletion. Conservation of any parts of nature arises from concern for human health and well-being, particularly in more developed countries (Johnson, 1991; Naess 1995). Humans are recognised as separate from the natural environment surrounding them. The rest of nature has only instrumental value, and intrinsic value is also reserved for humans alone. In fact, this '*shallow ecology*' has an anthropocentric attitude toward the environment.

Therefore, a *shallow ecotourism perspective* adopts a shallow ecology position. This perspective represents a business-oriented attitude to the environment, according to its usefulness to humans. The environment is seen as a source, which can be exploited to maximise the benefits to humans. Management decisions are made from an utilitarian, anthropocentric viewpoint (Accott and La Trobe, 1998: 244). This is, similarly, viewed from the *weak or very weak sustainability perspective* where management strategies range from the primary economic policy objective to maximise economic growth, to modified economic growth using adjusted green accounting to measure GNP (Turner *et al*, 1994).

Table 2.5: The Fundamental Ideas in Environmentalism:
Ecocentrism and Technocentrism

Ecocentrism	Technocentrism
<i>Intrinsic value</i> : nature has value in itself regardless of the use to humans	<i>Extrinsic value</i> : nature's value is measured against its usefulness to humans
<i>Cartesian dualism</i> : the separation of mind and matter, subject and object is rejected in favour of a unifying holistic world view	<i>Cartesian dualism</i> : the separation of mind and matter, subject and object, is central to a metaphysical world view
<i>Holism</i> : the environment is greater than the sum of its parts; humans are part of nature	<i>Reductionism</i> : the environment is best understood by reducing it to its individual components, humans are separate from nature
<i>Bioethics</i> : all creatures are part of the same unified whole and therefore deserve equal consideration.	<i>Anthropocentric</i> : humans are separate and different from other living creatures and therefore deserve greater moral consideration
<i>Organic</i> : Mechanistic analogies are rejected in favour of an organic metaphysics	<i>Mechanistic</i> : a mechanistic analogy is used to describe how nature operates.

Source: Adapted from (Acott and La Trobe, 1998: 241)

Deep ecology, in contrast, rejects that human-in-environment image for a more holistic total field image (Naess, 1995). This image dissolves the idea that humans are separate from nature, replacing it with the notion that the world is made up of discrete separate entities, - a holistic view of the environment. Deep ecology extends biotic rights and biospherical fairness to all parts of nature, which are held to have an equal right to flourish. In brief, there are a few basic principles held by deep ecology such as that the welfare, richness, diversity and flourishing of both non-human and human life forms have intrinsic values. All human cultures are respected and have the right to flourish because humans are an integral part of nature. Moreover, the deep ecology platform also calls for a change in basic economic, technological and ideological structures to embrace an appreciation of life quality over an increased standard of living (Devall and Sessions, 1985; Naess and Rothernberg, 1989; Naess 1990). Therefore in a “sustainable development” context, Pearce (1993) and Turner et al (1994) categorised the term into 'very strong sustainability / strong sustainability / weak sustainability / very weak sustainability'.

The *deep ecotourism perspective* therefore, represents the ideas of ecocentrism or deep ecology in a similar vein. For instance, the ideas of deep ecotourism proponents emphasise the importance of intrinsic values in nature, small-scale and community identity, the importance of community participation, and encourage the uses of small-scale technology. Thus, people living in pristine natural areas have an equal right to exist alongside other elements of the landscape as long as they try to minimise the harm and suffering that they cause. From a deep ecotourism perspective, removing a group of people to allow the preservation of natural areas is would not easily acceptable (Acott and La Trobe, 1998: 246). There is a common misinterpretation that biocentrism, including both living and non-living aspects of the environment, e.g. the living river, is used to place the rights of species or ecosystems above that of humans. In fact the roles of people are fundamentally important in deep ecology. Thus in terms of a very strong sustainability perspective, it calls for a steady-state economic system and the severely constrained use of cost benefit analyses (Turner, 1993) per se because not all elements of the environment are equally suited to economic valuation (Devall and Sessions, 1985; Naess and Rothenburg, 1989; Naess, 1990; Lindber and Hawkins, 1993; Naess and Sessions, 1995; Acott and La Trobe, 1998; Ross and Wall, 1999).

2.8.1. The Definitions of Ecotourism

In ecotourism literature, it is shown that most of the definitions can be categorised into three main dimensions or principles, i.e. nature-based, environmentally educated, and sustainably managed (Blamey, 1997:110). The controversy over appropriate uses for the term and inconsistency in its application, however, has hindered the development of the concepts and its practical realisation at specific sites (Reid, 1991; Scace, 1992; Nelson, 1994; Bottrill and Pearce, 1995; Lindberg and McKercher, 1997; Ross and Wall, 1999). For instance, confusion often occurs when the concept of ecotourism is referred to along with the other type of tourism development such as nature based tourism or green tourism (Ceballos-Luscurain, 1998: 7). As (Harrison, 1997; Scheyvens, 2002) have explained, the term

'ecotourism' has become only a buzzword that assists businesses in marketing their products or as a marketing tactic to give businesses an apparent green edge on the competition, usually at remote destinations. The issues of natural ecosystem conservation and a greater degree of local participation in the planning and management of development in their area are still neglected, however. (Scheyvens, 2002: 70). Therefore, ecotourism should not be considered as a stepping stone to large-scale tourism, though it often proves to be so, but as an ideal that can best foster environmental conservation and cultural understanding (Harrison, 1997: 75).

Earlier than that, Fennell (1999: 31) traced one of the origins of the term "ecotourism" to the work of Hetzer (1965), who used it to explain the intricate relationship between tourists, the environments and cultures in which they interact. Hetzer identified four fundamental principles that needed to be followed for a more responsible form of tourism (cited in Page and Dowling, 2002: 56):

- minimum environmental impact;
- minimum impact on – and maximum respect for – host cultures;
- maximum economic benefits to the host country's grass roots;
- maximum 'recreational' satisfaction to participating tourists.

Then, the development of the concept of ecotourism grew and reflected dissatisfaction with governments' and society's negative approach to development, especially from an ecological point of view. For instance, The International Ecotourism Society defined ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993). The Australian Department of Tourism (1994) defined ecotourism as "a nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the 'natural environment' and is managed to be ecologically sustainable".

Goodwin (1996) made a distinction definition between "nature tourism" and "ecotourism". Goodwin referred to the term nature tourism as that which

“encompasses all forms of tourism – mass tourism, adventure tourism, low impact tourism, ecotourism – which use natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form – including species, habitat, landscape, scenery and salt and fresh-water features. Nature tourism is travel for the purposes of enjoying undeveloped natural areas or wildlife” (Goodwin, 1996: 287). Goodwin, however, defined ecotourism as:

“Low impact nature tourism which contributes to the maintenance of species and habitats either directly through a contribution to conservation and/or indirectly by providing revenue to the local community sufficient for local people to value, and therefore protect, their wildlife heritage area as a source of income” (Goodwin, 1996: 288).

Honey (1999) defined ecotourism as “travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and small scale” (Honey, 1999: 25). Honey suggested that real ecotourism had seven characteristics. It involves travel to natural destinations, minimises impact, builds environmental awareness, provides direct financial benefits for conservation, provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people, respects local culture, and supports human rights and democratic movements (Honey, 1999: 22-24). Even though nature-based tourism is recognised as a distinctive form of tourism, there is no universal agreement over the term “ecotourism”, because the debates of ecotourism/nature tourism dichotomy are continuing.

In other words, the debate on the dichotomy of ecotourism and nature tourism as a separate and yet related concept has resulted in various definitions by many authors. Fennel summarised and analysed these useful definitions, which contain the many principles embodied in the definition of ecotourism and nature tourism (see Table 2.7.p.57). As a consequence, to overcome the difficulties regarding the ecotourism versus nature tourism dichotomy, Ziffer (1989) has suggested a hybrid definition that implies concern for sustainable management of the resource base through the commercial use of the area for ecotourism activities or the ecotourism programme. Ziffer defined ecotourism as:

“a form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous culture. The ecotourist visits relatively undeveloped areas in the spirit of appreciation, participation and sensitivity. The ecotourist practices a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited area through labour or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and the economic wellbeing of the local residents. The visit should strengthen the ecotourist’s appreciation and dedication to conservation issues in general and the specific needs of the locale. Ecotourism also implies a managed approach by the host country or region, which commits itself to establishing and maintaining the sites with the participation of local residents, marketing them appropriately, enforcing regulations, and using the proceeds of the enterprise to the fund the management of the area as well as community development” (Ziffer, 1989: 6).

Then, the formal IUCN (World Conservation Union) definition of ecotourism was popularised by Ceballos-Lascurain (1996), in which he incorporates both the nature of tourism and the impacts of ecotourism on local environments and populations as follows:

Ecotourism is environmentally responsible, enlightening travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996: 20).

Consequently, the definition of ecotourism provided by Ceballos-Lascurain (1996), was adopted by the Malaysian Government as an official definition in their

ecotourism development master plan in the 1990s. In this research therefore, this definition is used as a framework of study in order to evaluate ecotourism development and sustainability particularly in the case of Lower Kinabatangan area in Sabah. This is because the concept of ecotourism is a niche form of tourism, which it still often used synonymously with that of sustainable tourism that fits within the larger concept of sustainable development principles generally (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1998: 8). As mentioned earlier, the existence of ecotourism is to be understood in the style of continuum analysis where mass tourism and ecotourism require sustainability in most circumstances (see Figure 2.1. p. 46).

2.8.2. Tourist Typologies

In tourism literature, for instance, Cohen (1988a: 31) has developed a typology of tourist experiences and roles composed of four main categories as follows (see Table 2.7. p. 59). This table shows that Cohen's typology has more relevance to tourist destinations because they are institutionalised, and mass tourism imposes considerable demand for the supply of those facilities and services with which the tourist can readily identify. This can lead to standardisation of facilities and infrastructure in the destination areas, where this development can affect the host community's everyday life (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 20). The reason is that in mass tourism, social contacts tend to be both limited and superficial.

Then, the notion of tourist typologies shifted again when intellectual debates in the tourism literature questioned whether the distinction between modern and postmodern tourism reflects concrete developments in the nature of tourist roles and experiences. This is because the early theories of modern tourism conceptualised tourist experiences in terms of absolute truth, where the tourist experience was viewed as a superficial and trivial quest for artificial attraction or pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1964; Bruner, 1989; Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983; Silver, 1993; Salamone, 1997; Uriely, 2005: 208). Postmodern theories make use of the concepts of relative truth because many postmodernists' academic publications (Baudrillard, 1983; Eco, 1986; Urry, 1990; Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry,

1994; Rojek, 1995; Munt, 1994b) associate contemporary tourism-related practices and experiences of the tourists in relation to a variety of developments such as the emergence of alternative tourism, the flourishing of nature-related and environment-oriented holidays, the growing attraction of nostalgia and heritage-related sites and the growing quest for simulated and theme-oriented tourism attractions such as a Disneyland Park.

Table 2.6: Comparison of selected ecotourism and nature tourism definitions

a. Main principles of definition	Definition															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Interest in nature	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X
Contribute to conservation			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Reliance on parks and protected areas	X	X			X	X		X	X				X	X	X	
Benefits local people/long-term benefits			X		X	X	X		X				X	X	X	
Education and study	X	X	X		X						X				X	X
Low impact/non-consumptive						X							X	X	X	X
Ethics/responsibility				X					X	X						X
Management					X		X			X						X
Sustainable							X			X					X	X
Enjoyment/appreciation	X				X										X	
Culture	X				X										X	
Adventure		X														
Small scale												X				X

1 Ceballos-Lascurain (1987); 2 Laarman and Durst (1987)b; 3 Hallbertsma (1988)b; 4 Kutay (1989); 5 Ziffer (1989); 6 Fennell and Eagels (1990); 7 CEAC (1992); 8 Valentine (1993); 9 The Ecotourism Society (nd); 10 Western (1993); 11 Australian National Ecotourism Strategy (1994); 12 Brandon (1996); 13 Goodwin (1996); 14 Wallace and Pierce (1996); Page and Dowling (2002)

a Variable ranked by frequency of response

b Nature tourism definitions

Source: adapted from Fennell (1999: 41)

Although there are controversial academic debates between modernists and postmodernist scholars about how to conceptualise societies and cultures in social science¹, tourism literature shows that the distinction between the two schools of thought does not reflect a position where the latter has already replaced the former (Uriely, 2005: 2002). Tourism literature, however, does assume that the depicted development in the study of tourist experiences is associated with a wider socio-cultural development. Therefore, Uriely has suggested that both modernist and postmodernist theorising on global tourist experience is considered as a complementary extension of earlier theories, but it's not as a sharp and contrasting departure from earlier modernist theorising (Uriely, 2005: 212). In that manner, it is possible to have research still critical of these contemporary tourism developments when both perspectives are utilised as an analytical device in order to understand tourist roles and experiences and their relation with the "other".

In other words, there are two main developments associated with the postmodern era. The first is the "simulational" type, that is focused around "hyperreal" experience and refers to simulated theme parks and other contrived attractions as typical postmodern environments (Baudrillard, 1983; Eco, 1986; Featherstone, 1991; Fjellman, 1992; Gottdiener, 1995; Lash and Urry, 1994; Pretes, 1995; Urry, 1990). The second type of tourist experience is a conceptualisation of the "other", in which postmodern tourism stresses the search for the authentic and points to the growing appeal of natural tourism (or ecotourism) and the countryside (Barret, 1989; Munt, 1994a; Poon, 1989; Urry, 1990). This second type of the postmodern view on the search for the authentic other is considered comprehensively in this research.

¹ However, addressing these controversial debates was beyond the scope of this research and discussion.

Table 2.7: Tourist Typology

Tourist category	Tourist Roles
Institutionalised or conventional types:	
The organised mass tourist	This role is typified by the package tour in which itineraries are fixed, stops are planned and guided, and all major decisions are left to the organiser. Familiarity is at a maximum and novelty at a minimum.
The individual mass tourist	In this role, the tour is not entirely planned by others, and the tourist has some control over his itinerary and time allocations. However, all of the major arrangements are made through a travel intermediary. Like the organised mass tourist, the individual mass tourist remains largely within the 'environmental bubble' of home-country ways and mixes little with members of the host community. Familiarity is still dominant.
Non-institutionalised or non-conventional types	
The explorer	This group usually plan their own trips and try to avoid developed tourist attractions as much as possible. In spite of the desire to mix with members of the host community, the protection of the 'environmental bubble' is still sought. Novelty now dominates but the tourist does not become fully integrated with the host society.
The drifter	People in this group plan their trips alone, avoid tourist attractions and live with members of the host society. They are almost entirely immersed in the host culture, sharing its shelter, food and habits. Novelty is dominant and familiarity disappears.

Source: adapted from (Cohen, 1988a; Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 19)

2.8.3. Typologies of Ecotourists

Various attempts have been made by researchers to define ecotourists. In the early stages of academic debate and research on tourism development the term ecotourism was described as a specific travel market or a “niche”. This “niche” market has been characterised as being composed of those who select a certain travel experience and destination, that of nature-oriented experiences in pristine natural environments (Eagles, 1992: 3). As a consequence, ecotourism generates “ecotourists” as a distinct and identifiable group who consume ecotourism-related tourism products and experiences (Page and Dowling, 2002: 88). Cater (1997), however, argues there is an inherent risk in assuming that the ecotourist is automatically an environmentally sensitive breed because there is a deep form of ecotourism: small, specialist guided groups with highly responsible behaviour towards the natural environment, and a shallow form of ecotourism, those who visit a destination area for a few days, unlikely ever to return to the same place because they may be more interested in their travel experience and behave less responsibly towards the natural environment.

In other words, there are diverse motivations and behavioural attributes within the group of people often known as ecotourists. To define the term ecotourist in a universal manner, however, is still a problem because there is lack of consensus among tourism scholars about how to apply the concept. Bourdieu (1984), however, has argued that the existence of a new form of middle class (such as a group of ecotourists) is actually a study of the relationship between cultural consumption and social class. This new form of middle class is always seeking to distinguish itself from another class (the working class) by education, occupation, residence, and of course, through commodities, which is taken to include both objects (cars, furniture, and so on) and experiences, such as holidays. They achieve this, Bourdieu (1984) argues, by constructing “lifestyle” as a useful way of considering individual uses of a range of objects, experiences, hobbies and beliefs to mark their territories.

These lifestyles, Bourdieu concludes, are the products of what he terms as habitus (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 129).

In other words, habitus means or represents the ability and disposition of individuals and social classes to appropriate objects and practices that differentiate them from others. Knowledge of foreign food, good wine, classic literature or Latin American film, for example, may all assist in differentiating them from others without such knowledge or appreciation. Habitus is, therefore, a cognitive structure (Jackson, 1989), which gives people a sense of their place in the world (King, 1995: 28). In tourism, for instance, the traveller/tourist has always had an important role to play in this process of differentiation, in which ecotourism is better than package tourism (a social element) and the Brazilian rainforest has more of a reputation than a Gambian beach (a spatial element). Habitus therefore represents a certain class culture or the taste of social class in routine social behaviour of differentiation (Zukin, 1987: 131).

Therefore, Mowforth and Munt also argue, the term “ecotourist” has a double meaning, for not only does it signal an interest and focus on this type of tourist on the environment (ecology), it also indicates the ability to pay the high prices that such holidays command (economic capital) (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 133). In other words, ecotourists are the new middle class group, often employed in the service sector with high incomes (economic capital) and seeking authentic ecotourism experiences. This new bourgeoisie was classified by Mowforth and Munt (1998: 133-134) as the “ego-tourists”, who seek to differentiate themselves from the working classes (the mass tourists) and high spending ecotourists. Typical experiences these groups seek are backpacking, overland trucking and experiences to build the curriculum vitae and bank of experiences. They reflect the pursuit of alternative forms of travel and of uniqueness (Page and Dowling, 2002: 90). Thus, this analysis indicates that although the new tourists may underpin the development of ecotourism, they are not necessarily synonymous with it because they could

represent a diversification as the “eco-tourist”/“ego-tourist” distinction that Mowforth and Munt (1998) indicate.

i. Ecotourist Motivation and Satisfaction

In contrast with cultural consumption and class analysis as discussed above, some authors focus on the demand side. It is apparent that motivation is a key element of the individual and group satisfaction experience (Ziffer, 1989; Thomlinson and Getz, 1996; Page and Dowling, 2002: 91). The research question commonly asked to indicate tourist motivation is why tourists go on holiday, and where. Moreover, Wight (2001) indicates that the reasons for the trips are different from motivation. Motivation is associated with the needs of the individual. The reasons for taking a trip however may be fairly broad. The motivation that differentiates ecotourists from the more mass-type travellers include (Wight, 2001: 53):

- less crowded locations,
- remote wilderness areas,
- learning about wildlife and nature,
- learning about natives and cultures,
- community benefits,
- viewing plants and animals,
- physical challenge,

Satisfaction, on the other hand, is strongly related to meeting visitor expectations, which are largely built on destination image. Image is partly connected with the landscape, and partly with many other elements of the experience (Wight, 2001: 53). Table (2.8. p. 63) shows that, in the case of North American tourists, there are some differences between general and specialist ecotourists in the type of experience sought.

Table 2.8: Relative Importance Ratings, North American Ecotourists.

Experienced ecotourist/specialist	General interest ecotourist/generalist	Travel trade
Wilderness setting	Casual walking	Wilderness setting
Wildlife viewing	Wildlife viewing	Guides
Hiking/trekking	Learning about other cultures	Outdoor activities
Visiting national park/other protected area	Visiting national park/other protected area	All-inclusive packages
Rafting/canoeing/kayaking on river/lake	Wilderness setting	Parks/ protected areas
Casual walking	Hiking/trekking	Interpretive/educational programmes
Learning about other cultures	The importance of guides	Cultural experiences
Participating in physically challenging programmes	Interpretive education programmes	Communicate in client's language
The importance of guides	Cycling	
Interpretive education programmes	Participating in physically challenging programmes	

Source: (cited in Wight, 2001: 54).

It is obvious, in the context of ecotourism, that the visitor's motivation and satisfaction are stimulated by undisturbed natural environment phenomena, and combine with hobbies and nature interests. Therefore, Eagles and Higgins (1998) have identified three factors, which have been significant in generating the motivation for people to pursue ecotourism:

- changes in environmental attitudes, which have served as a basis for the development of ecotravel;
- The development of environmental education, which has assisted in the creation of environmentally literate citizens;
- The development of an environmental mass media, which has utilised nature as a powerful force in the media.

iv. Who are ecotourists?

Who are the ecotourists, then? Kusler (1991) has identified three main groups. These are:

- Do-it-yourself ecotourists, who comprise the largest number of visitors. These visitors stay in a variety of accommodation types with a high degree of flexibility to visit a variety of ecotourism environments and settings;
- Ecotourists on tours, where a high degree of organisation characterises their visit, often involving visits to exotic locations such as Antarctica;
- School groups or scientific groups, where expeditions or scientific research accompany the visit and mean visitors have to endure harsher site conditions than other visitors. They generally stay in the same region for long periods of time.

Lindberg (1991), however, suggested that four types of nature tourists exist (although these are not necessarily ecotourists), based solely on the motivation and/or interest level of participants (Lindberg, 1991: 3):

- hard-core nature tourists: this group includes scientific researchers or members of tours specifically designed for education, removal of litter, or similar purposes;
- dedicated nature tourists: These are people who take trips specially to see protected areas and who want to understand local natural and cultural history;
- mainstream nature tourists – people who visit unique natural area destinations just to take an unusual trip;
- causal nature tourists – these are people who partake of nature incidentally as part of a broader trip.

Mowforth (1993) suggested a meaningful framework of the characteristics and typologies of the ecotourist, taking account of the diversity of groups, where the vital distinctions between the traveller and the packaged-holiday tourist, range from individualised through to tour-operated forms of ecotourism experience. Based on the earlier typology by Budowski (1976), Mowforth, (1993) also distinguished between two types of ecotourists: the scientific and the nature tourists of whom the latter were also subdivided into hard, soft and adventure tourists (see Table 2.9).

Table 2.9: Mowforth's Typology of Ecotourists

Feature	Rough ecotourists	Smooth ecotourists	Specialist ecotourists
Age	Young-middle age	Middle-age-old	Young-old
Travelling	Individually or in small groups	In groups	Individually
Organisation	Independent	Tour-operated	Independent + specialist tours
Budget	Low: cheap hotel/ B&B, local/fast food, use buses	High: 3*/5* hotels, luxury cafes, use taxis	Mid-high: cheap or 3* hotels, mid-luxury cafes as necessary
Type of tourism	Sport and adventure	Nature and safari	Scientific investigation/hobby pursuit

Source: adapted from Mowforth, (1993), cited in Page and Dowling (2002: 95).

Thus, different types of ecotourists will have a different impact on nature and the local community. Visits by hard-core ecotourists, for instance, will probably enhance natural and cultural conservation, but those of mainstream ecotourists can possibly create adverse effects on the environment and the socio-cultural aspects of local communities. These visits therefore need to be controlled or managed carefully.

2.8.4. The important of “socio-cultural” aspect in study ecotourism

Butler (1992) used the term "social" instead of "socio-cultural" in his analysis of the types of tourism (conventional and alternative tourism) and the principle agents of change. These principle agents of change are the tourists, the resources, the economy, and politics (Butler, 1992: 37-38). The term “socio-cultural”, however, is significantly relevant for sociological and anthropological research related to ecotourism. In other words, to examine the socio-cultural impact of ecotourism on people in the destination area also means to study social change and how to manage its negative impacts on communities in the marginal preservation areas (Wearing, 2001: 395). Whilst Lanfant and Graburn, (1992) discuss the tension between economic and cultural in tourism, de Kadt (1992) debates the meaning of authenticity in tourism development (see Chapter 3 for further discussion on some perspectives of the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism on the local community). Thus, the question why the socio-cultural aspect becomes an important element in the study of alternative tourism or ecotourism has been discussed in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.1. p. 5)

2.9. Ecotourism, Protected Area and Local Community: Symbiotic or Antagonistic Relationship?

The above discussion significantly shows that to ensure that ecotourism will survive, we must seriously consider a balanced relationship between the conservation effort through national parks or protected areas, the involvement of local communities, and a need for careful planning and management. In an ideal situation, the conservation-tourism relationship can indeed be mutually supportive (Butler and Boyd, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002: 83). In this sense, Ross and Wall (1999: 124) indicate that ecotourism is a complex phenomenon, involving integration of many actors or stakeholders including tourists, residents, suppliers, managers and multiple functions. Therefore, the main issue here is if parks and protected areas are to remain viable for future ecotourism, local communities must be given a greater

role in park management, and the livelihood issues must be adequately addressed in park policies (Nepal, 2000: 73).

IUCN has defined *protected area* as “an area dedicated primarily to the protection and enjoyment of natural or cultural heritage, to the maintenance of biodiversity, and/or to the maintenance of ecological life-support service” (Ceballos-Luscarain, 1996: 2). Under this definition, the IUCN has designated a number of different categories for protected areas as shown (in Table 2.10. p. 68) of which most categories focus on conservation and wilderness protection, with only two categories – the national park and protected landscape/seascape intended for purposes such as tourism or ecotourism (Scheyvens, 2002: 84). It is also the last category – managed resource protected area – which allows for the sustainable use of natural products from the protected area. Although there are almost 7,000 legally protected areas around the globe that are suitable sites for ecotourism (Ceballos-Luscarain, 1996: 32), the main issue now is how these protected areas affect the livelihoods of people living in these areas where national parks and reserves are created.

2.9.1: The Antagonistic Relationship

In Africa for instance, the famous catchphrase of tourism based around protected area is “Wildlife pays, so wildlife stays” (McNeely et al., 1992: 7). This means ecotourism and protected areas have provided sources of income and revenues for both national governments and local communities by conserving natural resources because of their symbiotic relationship. In many cases, in the less developed world however, the case is not always this ideal arrangement. This is because many local people are still relying on natural resource use and extraction for their survival.

The creation of national parks in many African countries, for instance, which has supported tourism initiatives, saw indigenous peoples pushed off land which they traditionally had access to, and their livelihoods undermined (Adams and McShane,

1992; Bonner, 1993). This is because most early conservation authorities adopted exclusionary approaches, in which the creation of conservation spaces for species preservation and recreation was in areas, which held both spiritual, and livelihood value to indigenous Africans. As a result, this approach led to anti-conservation attitudes developing among indigenous communities adjacent to protected areas (Davies, 1997). This is because African peoples were often resettled on marginal land where they found it difficult to survive, thus they resorted to poaching wildlife and other resources such as firewood, from the protected areas where they could access it free.

Table 2.10: Protected Area Management Categories

Category	Title	Description
Category Ia	Strict nature reserve	Protected area managed mainly for science
Category Ib	Wilderness area	Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection
Category II	National park	Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
Category III	Natural Monument	Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
Category IV	Habitat/species management area	Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
Category V	Protected area landscape/seascape	Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation
Category VI	Managed resource protected area	Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of the natural ecosystem

Source: adapted from Ceballos-Luscarain (1996: 40-41).

The situation became worse whenever the conservation authorities were characterised by a law enforcement mentality which saw rangers spending much of their time hunting down and arresting poachers, for crimes as minimal as catching cane rats or chasing a lion from kill, and those illegally harvesting products from protected areas (Carruthers, 1997). Thus, the relationship between people in communities surrounding the parks and parks staff was characterised by hostility and mistrust or *antagonistic relationships*. This is ironic because the previous situation had shown that many tribes had practiced highly effective means of preserving the soil, water, animals and plants upon which their livelihoods depended (Matowanyika et al, 1992). The old notion of conservation, however, was operated on the comfortable belief that Africa is a paradise to be defended, even against the people who have lived there for thousands of years (Adams and McShane, 1992). This is actually the implication of colonial-style conservation for ecotourism development in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which has led to forced, uncompensated resettlement, alienation from resources and sacred sites, and damage to crops, livestock and humans by the animals or humans living within the protected area (Akama, 1996).

Another example is in Kenya. 20 out of 25 national parks could otherwise be used for agricultural or pastoral activities, but local people have to pay a heavy price for supporting wildlife protection areas (Sindiga, 1995: 50). In North Sulawesi, Indonesia, local communities living inside and around three protected areas are reliant on natural resource use for up to 85 per cent of their livelihood activities. There is no great incentive for them to support conservation, however, when the direct economic benefits of ecotourism associated with these protected areas are being captured by outside operators and parks staff who own tourist accommodation and run guided tours (Ross and Wall, 1999). Thus, local people cannot be expected to support conservation under such circumstances. This is the failure of “fortress conservation” or the protectionist approach, which had created

national parks as islands of anti-development, and was not acceptable to Third World countries (Scheyvens, 2002: 89).

2.9.2: The Symbiotic Relationship

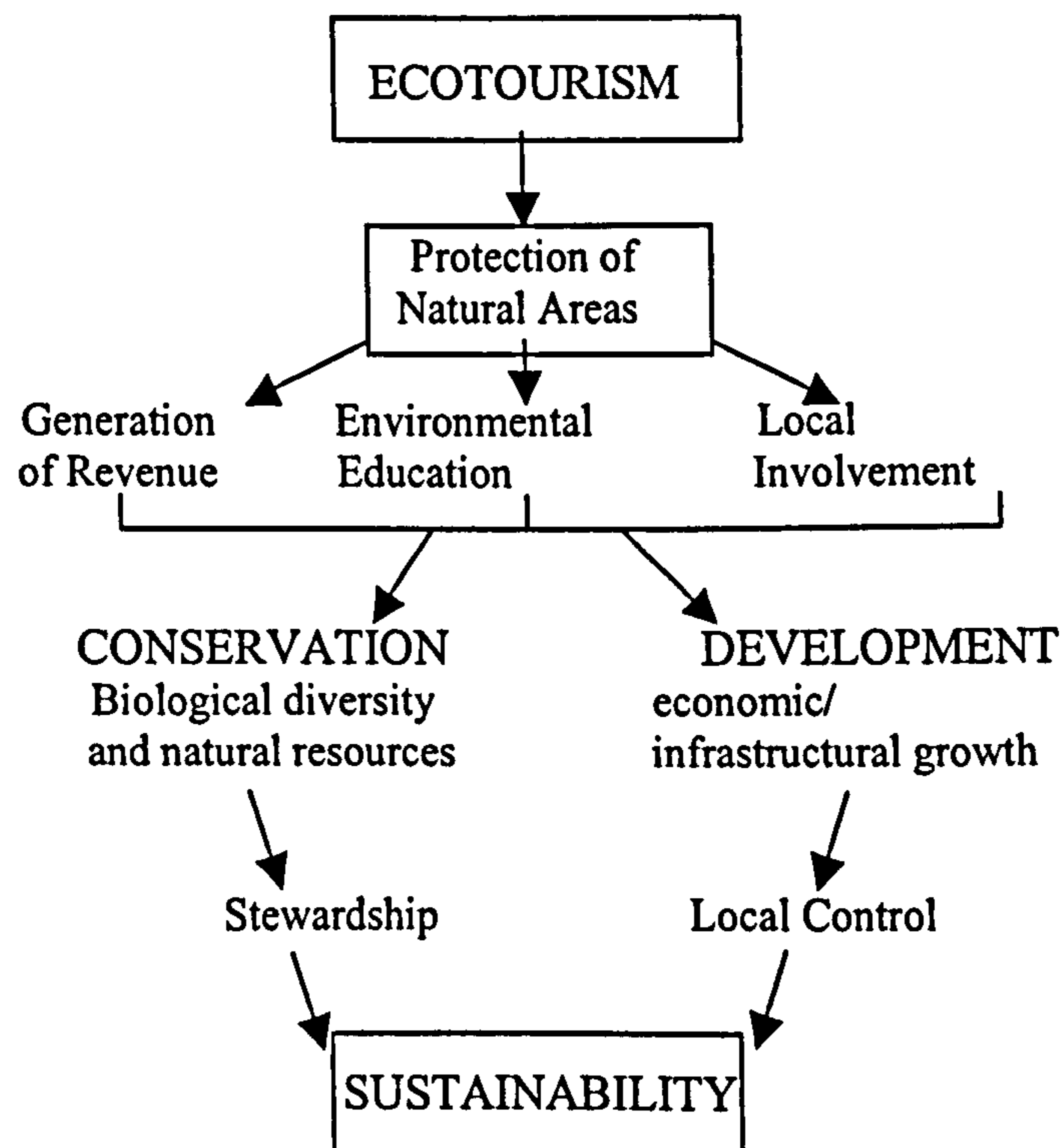
Therefore, under the “community conservation” approach, many development practitioners and conservationists have demanded more participatory approaches to parks management, which aim to improve the livelihoods of communities surrounding protected areas through activities such as ecotourism. This is because, if the local people gain some benefits from the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources on their own or neighbouring land, they will have an incentive to sustainably manage these resources. Thus, ecotourism can be an important component of resource management that can meet these needs (Lindberg and Enriquez, 1994: 91).

A good example of a protected area that has not displaced local residents, and is successfully promoting local conservation and development is the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) (Nepal, 2000: 81-84). Annapurna is the most popular region of Nepal for mountain climbing and trekking activities in the Everest region. The first lodge was opened in 1976 in Ghandruk village. Since then, the number of foreign visitors has risen from 14,332 in 1980 to 33,620 in 1986 and over 49,000 in 1996. The number of lodges also increased dramatically between 1997 and 1996. There were 53 lodges in 1979, increasing to 176 in 1989, and 476 in 1996 (Nepal, 2000: 82). Tourism has become a major economic activity in the region, and has provided local employment to over 50,000 people annually, in addition to the labour engaged in lodging. As a consequence, the Annapurna region has faced various environmental and economic problems such as localised deforestation caused by heavy demand for firewood and timber for the energy used and the construction of over 500 lodges and teashops. This has altered wildlife habitats as well. To overcome all these environmental problems the ACAP was initiated, and established in 1986.

A number of projects were initiated, including recycling, fuel saving devices and solar heating. Trekking fees have help to fund other activities of the ACAP, such as training locals how to provide for the needs of trekkers and holding workshops for them on how to improve their health and hygiene practices. In order to ensure a diversity of livelihood strategies, training has also been provided in carpet weaving and residents have been encouraged to continue with farming activities and handicrafts (Panos, 1995). As a result, the relationships between the conservation area, tourism and local communities have been favourable. Tourism has benefited not only the local communities and conservation authority but also tourists and tourism operators (Nepal, 2000: 84). The real success of the ACAP, however, is due to its conservation philosophy roots, making the needs of local people central to the project's aim (Stevenson, 1997).

According to Ross and Wall (1999), the above example is one where a *symbiotic relationship* worked. When ecotourism is introduced in the destination area, the natural environment and local populations should be united in a symbiotic relationship as shown in (Figure 2.4. p. 72). In the circumstances, ecotourism is viewed as a means of protecting natural areas through the generation of revenues, environmental education and the involvement of local people through decisions regarding appropriate development or ecotourism's benefits. In this way, both conservation and development will be promoted in a sustainable manner (Ross and Wall, 1999: 127).

Figure 2.4: Ecotourism Protects the Environment, Contributing to Socio-Economic Development, and Thus Strives for Sustainability.



Source: Ross and Wall, (1999: 124)

The above conceptual framework suggested by Ross and Wall (1999:25) could be useful for guiding this research because it well demonstrates and emphasises the function of ecotourism and what it is expected to achieve, such as the protection of natural areas, production of revenue, education and local participation. These functions are basic to the overall success of ecotourism because the failure to achieve one objective may influence the success or capacity to achieve another. If all of the objectives are met, then ecotourism will have contributed to the resolution of many of the conflicts associated with tensions between resource exploitation and resource conservation. As a result the benefits gained from natural resources in ecotourism can be sustained because they can continue to be enjoyed and used by future generations.

According to Nepal (2000: 74-76), however, three different scenarios can be anticipated based on the relationships between three main actors: tourism, national parks or protected areas, and local communities, as follows:

- **Win-win-win scenario.**
- **Win-win-lose scenario.**
- **Lose-lose-lose scenario.**

(see detail elaborations these scenarios in Chapter 1 section 1.2.2. p. 6).

2.9.3 The Role of NGOs in the Community-Based Ecotourism

In many situations, the 'community conservation' programme in less developed countries gains great support from the NGOs. There are two strategies commonly used by these NGOs (Scheyvens, 2000: 211):

- Those which actively support involvement of communities in tourism
- Those focusing on minimising the negative impacts of tourism

According to some authors (Brohman, 1996b; Edward and Hulme, 1995), NGOs have been identified as civil society actors, which are placed to effectively promote community development. This is because they are not-for-profit organisations, and they do not directly represent the interests of the state. In this manner they can provide a neutral means of support for communities, and play advocacy and watchdog roles in the destination areas. In the past, some NGOs have provoked negative responses from local communities as they are seen as prioritising the rights of animals or other species over the rights of people such in the case of a biosphere reserve in South Africa. The local communities were more resistant to the idea of biosphere conservation because they felt that the land, which was vital to their livelihood and survival, would be used for animals. This is because conservationists are sometimes referred to as 'the new missionaries' because they are so concerned with pushing their own environmental political agendas, and less attention is given to the integrated community conservation approach, in which local communities can play an active role in the management of protected areas and the monitoring of

ecotourism activities as well (Belsky, 1999; Scheyvens and Purdie, 2000). As critical analysts argue, NGOs can clearly have an important role in building local economies and in advocacy for policies that strengthen local control, although not all NGOs are created equal (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 186). If, however, the NGOs can use their resources, networks and technical expertise to facilitate the empowerment of communities which wish to be, or are, involved in tourism, sustainable tourism development in the destination area can be achieved successfully. This is the main challenge for many NGOs in ecotourism destinations of the Third World because among their primary motives is not only encouraging local communities to be involved in tourism for poverty alleviation, but at the same time to encourage the diversification of local economies, and capacity-building among local people (Ashley and Roe, 1998: 9). This is not an easy task to be implemented because every party (the government, the NGOs and the local communities) have their own interests and agendas, which can cause conflict between parties.

2.10. Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has demonstrated how the relationship between the concepts of tourism, alternative tourism and/or ecotourism has been debated in the perspectives of development theories such as modernisation theory, dependency theory, the neo-liberal paradigm, the sustainable development approach and the critical perspective. The discussion is quite broad, but this is necessary in order to give a holistic view on how the evolution of development theories starting from modernisation theory to the sustainable development phase are actually inter-related with the recent tourism paradigm shift from mass tourism to alternative tourism and/or to ecotourism. In the context of sustainable tourism development, it is argued that sustainable tourism is a subset of sustainable development as a whole. For that reason, ecotourism is understood as a niche form of tourism that could foster sustainable development principles or be the exemplar of the sustainability approach within tourism generally (Fennell and Dowling, 2003). If ecotourism is

sustainable managed, the relationship between the environmental (protected areas), the local communities and the conservation authorities (the government agencies and the NGOs) should be in a balanced or symbiotic state. Local people could gain direct benefits and control over sustainable ecotourism development. This is not always the case, however, because ecotourism development can be also a threat to the socio-cultural life of the local community in the less developed world. Thus, this situation can be a threat to future ecotourism development in the destination areas where this ecotourism is implemented, because a conflict of interests between the stakeholders is likely to occur. This issue will be discussed further in the following chapter (Chapter 3).

End Notes

¹ The term *Developing Countries or Less Developed Countries and Developed Countries* will be widely used in this text because the term describes an actual situation or a more neutral option to the process of development compared with the term *Third World or the South* (Weaver, 1998: 41-44). This means less developed countries, as a concept is not inherently with the meaning of intimidation in global development process.

In some circumstances however, the terms *Third World* and *Developed World* are used in this text where direct or indirect quotes from literature sources are essential, with some authors, particularly the radical and critical analysts, was using this term in relationship to the notion of underdevelopment (Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Scheyvens, 2002). The term *Third World* in this context is used to emphasise the ways in which power, resources and development are unequally and unevenly shared globally (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 6). In addition, inequality is not only obvious on a global scale but it also occurs within and between countries and in relations to variety of characteristics, particularly sex, ethnicity, community group and class.

² The Consumers' Association of Malaysia (CAP) is a voluntary, non-profit organisation, which is very concerned with the rights and interests of all consumers through research, educational and representational activities.

³ The concept of "ecological modernisation" has its roots in the work of the German social scientist Joseph Huber, who observed that from the late 1970s some policy-makers in a few countries such as Germany and the Netherlands had begun to adopt a more strategic and preventive approach to environmental problems (see Janicke, 1991, Weale, 1992, Hajer, 1995).

⁴ The great detailed discussion on the origin of the tourism and national parks (see Boyd and Butler, 2000: 14-27)

Chapter 3

Theoretical Perspectives on Social-Cultural Impacts of (Eco)tourism

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the theoretical debates and/or perspectives of the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism. This chapter is divided into six main sections:

- *First* section is the introduction.
- *Second* is the meaning of the term "socio-cultural" in the study of the impacts of (eco)tourism.
- *Third*, what are the positive aspects of the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism development in the less developed countries, and why was it "panacea" to (eco)tourism policy makers in the developing countries?
- *Fourth*, how the objectivists, constructivists, postmodernists and critical analysts theorised the authenticity, staged authenticity and commercialisation of cultural issues, and why managing the negative socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism at the local community level or at the destinations areas are significant.
- *Fifth*, is there a significant problem in assessing socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism and/or is it difficult to measure them?
- Finally, section *six* is a brief conclusion.

3.1.1. Why Managing Socio-cultural Impacts of (eco)tourism is Reconsidered?

Recently, the development of mass tourism and then the development of a niche market for ecotourism often required communities, cities, regions or countries to rethink their own unique identities and then package and promote them as products which hopefully will attract people from other cultures to "experience" them. Culture is now wrapped and sold to tourists in the shape of ancient sites,

ritual ceremonies and folk customs. Even the everyday life of ordinary people has been turned into a commodity to be sold to tourists (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000: 212-214). In some situations, this can cause conflict between the local communities and the global visitors, but, in other situations, it could contribute to the growth of multicultural understanding and the growing diversity of cultural choice for the both parties (Robinson, 1999: 2-3; Wearing, 2001).

Why should managing social and cultural impacts of (eco)tourism development be taken seriously? *First*, the survival of (eco)tourism depends upon how we manage and negotiate the socio-cultural conflicts in the destination communities effectively. *Second*, the cultural products, "traditions" and "exotic" or "authentic" lifestyles of the host communities are increasingly demanded by tourists of the 21st century (Hashimoto, 2002: 202). Thus, the social and cultural changes brought by (eco)tourism could not be avoided by the host communities of the developing countries as they have accepted and promoted that (eco)tourism as a vehicle for community development or modernisation.

Third is that tourism or ecotourism could become a new form of exposure to different cultures and social practices beside the other globalisation forces such as multinational co-operation (MNC) and international media. It too has not been seriously considered as a means of social and cultural improvement or development. As a result, the positive contribution of tourism to the social and cultural well being of a host community are overshadowed by the attention given to the negative change brought about by tourism (Hashimoto, 2002: 212). We therefore need a balanced view or interpretation of this issue to improve the management of these negative socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism on host communities. Thus, a balanced view of why the social and cultural conflicts of tourism exist and how could we manage them better in the future is important.

3.2. Perspectives of Socio-Cultural Impact of (Eco)tourism

Much of the literatures relating to socio-cultural impacts are found in the general tourism literature (Pearce, 1989; van Doorn, 1989; Craik, 1995; Pearce, 1994, 1995; Sharpley, 1994; Faulkner and Tideswell, 1997). These studies basically focus on negative issues. But, as Wearing (2001) argues, in ecotourism, the overall objective should be a process, which supports local communities basic needs and control. However, to achieve this overall objective may appear simple in theory, but it is complicated in reality by many factors such as conflicting interests among stakeholders and lack of prioritisation of resource allocation to areas where people need it most (Wearing, 2001: 396). If communities can be involved in the planning process from the beginning of ecotourism projects, this can reduce the future socio-cultural conflicts and misinterpretation between ecotourists and host communities.

3.2.1. What is meant by "socio-cultural" in studies of the impact of (eco)tourism?

Bleasdale and Tapsell (1999: 188) suggest that, in the discussion of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism, it is difficult to separate the social from the cultural, and divisions can be largely arbitrary. Therefore, it is common for some researchers or authors to combine and make the terms short such as a "socio-cultural" (Wearing, 2001; Mason, 2003). As Mathieson and Wall (1982) argue;

"The literature which examine the socio-cultural impacts of tourism has usually been directed towards either social or cultural aspects. Using these terms very loosely, the social studies usually consider interpersonal relations, moral conduct, religion, language and health whereas the cultural studies consider both material and non-material forms of culture and processes of cultural change. There is no clear distinction between social and cultural phenomena...[though] this dichotomy has proved useful [but commonly] the discussion of social impacts of tourism will be followed by an examination of its cultural consequences" (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 137).

The concept of “culture” has been debated in anthropological literature for at least two centuries and has acquired almost as many definitions as those who try to define it. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963: 181) cited in Hollinshead (2000: 123-124) have defined “culture” as "a people patterns of behaviour, and their particular achievements inclusive their artefacts, their ideas, and their values". To others, the culture of the population is the peculiar or unique way of life in terms of its mores, its customs, and its explicit and implied design for living. Culture in the anthropological sense, includes patterns, norms, rules and standards which find expression in behaviour, social relations and artefacts (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 158). Therefore, in the context of (eco)tourism research, “culture” has often been loosely defined as the behaviour of the host populations as observed through social relations and material artefacts or non-material forms of culture. Thus, according to Mathieson and Wall (1982: 159), research into the cultural impacts of tourism is centred around three major forms of culture which are susceptible to change as well as attractive to tourists:

- Inanimate forms of culture, for example tourists visiting places with historical buildings, monuments, traditional arts and crafts;
- Reflection of normal day-to-day life and activities of the host community; for instance, observing and understanding host lifestyles, ideologies and customs.
- Forms of culture, which is especially animated and may involve special events or depict historic or famous occurrences. For instance, musical festivals, carnivals, festival reflecting old traditions and behaviour, re-enactments of battles and displays of old machinery.

However, the social and cultural changes on the host communities are not always considered as positive but are commonly seen as negative because of the socio-cultural differences between the host and guests. According to Inskip (1991) these differences include the basic values and logic systems; religious beliefs;

traditions; customs, lifestyle; behavioural patterns; dress codes; sense of time budgeting; and attitudes towards strangers. Moreover, the speed at which tourism has developed and the form that the tourism development takes, can also have negative impact on the rate of the host's socio-cultural change. That is why the modernisation of the host culture and lifestyles are often denounced as 'cultural imperialism', 'demonstration effects' and 'assimilation' through which the host communities have lost their cultural identities and traditions in order to fulfil the tourists' demands (Graburn, 1989; Burns and Holden, 1995). Ironically, in the name of protecting the host traditions and cultures, tourism development prohibits the social and cultural changes that are seen as a precondition for further economic development (Hashimoto, 2002: 213). Consequently, the local communities' participation in ecotourism development is needed because community participation can form the basis for the management of socio-cultural impacts so that these communities can engage in ongoing development and enhancement through ecotourism (Wearing, 2001: 396). In so doing, the main principles or elements of ecotourism can be achieved that a to maximise the social benefits of tourism while minimising the socio-cultural impacts because ecotourism can, in ideal circumstances, provide some benefits to the host's socio-cultural environment.

In other words, the social impacts of tourism refer mainly to the changes in the quality of life of residents of tourist destinations (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 137). The cultural impacts of tourism are thought to be; *first*, promoting intercultural relationship between peoples of different cultures or the quality of the relationship between the hosts and the guests in non-institutionalised forms of tourism; and *secondly* the effects of tourism on material and non-material elements of the host culture. For instance, Mathieson and Wall (1982: 175-176) have argued that the commercialisation of culture as a consequence of tourism could give a positive result helping the survival of traditional culture. At the same time however, the changes in culture could produce negative effects on the host community's arts and crafts products because tourist markets and other

modernisation elements will force a production of "fake culture". These arts and crafts products could be removed from their original historical context and the meaning of the host cultures.

In many cases in the less developed world, the communities in the Pacific, (such as Maori and Sepik), Africa, and in America (such as Inuit, Pueblo, Navaho and Cuna), who are in contact with tourism show that art objects prepared for tourists have lost much of their former meaning. As MacKenzie (1977: 83) argues, cited in Mathieson and Wall (1982: 169), art in the form of pottery, sculpture or painting is an expression of the craftsman's experience, values and meaning of life and is sold as "native symbols of identity". These may be symbols of the age group of the creator, insignias of occupation, or copies of weapons of war. However, most mass tourist purchases are not stimulated by a genuine interest in the host culture, but are acquired as a memento of the visit and as a sign to peers of the extent of the buyer's travel experiences. This is the negative side of commercialisation of the host culture.

Fox (1977) has identified the socio-cultural impacts of tourism as the changes to value systems, individual behaviour, family-relationships, collective lifestyles, safety levels, moral conduct, creative expressions, traditional ceremonies and community organisation (cited in Page and Dowling, 2002: 170). The socio-cultural impact of (eco)tourism is actually "people impact", due to the effect of tourists on host communities and the interaction between these two groups.

3.3. Positive Socio-cultural Impacts of (Eco)tourism Development

In some cases, tourism has provided a positive impact on the arts and crafts of host communities such as the Eastern Canadian Inuit or Eskimo (Graburn, 1976) and the Indians of South-western United States (Deitch, 1977). Before the arrival of Europeans to the Eastern Canadian Eskimo, art, specifically carving activity, did not play an important part in Eskimo life. As a consequence of tourism and

the increasingly tourist demand for souvenirs, it led to an upsurge in Eskimo carving, particularly in soapstone. Graburn (1976: 42) has claimed, this form of art was initiated to meet the demands of the souvenir market as such carvings were made solely for the profit that they generated for the host producer. At the same time it has a number of positive attributes such as:

- The satisfaction gained from the occupation has superseded the initial economic motives for production, especially when this product became a superior quality to most souvenir art.
- The carvings draw upon the traditional, ancestral lifestyle and are not imitations of western products. For instance, the subject matter was a range of "idealised self-portraits" of game animals hunted for food.
- The carvings are a new means by which the Eskimo can express the qualities of their culture, which is slowly disappearing.

For the Indians of South-western United States, as Deitch (1977), noted tourism has greatly increased the demand for Indian arts and crafts. There is now an abundance of Indian rugs, pottery, jewellery and baskets available for purchase. Tourism has provided employment in arts and crafts and induced a renaissance in the production of art forms. It has been accompanied by an improvement in the quality and artistic designs of arts and crafts. In both cases, tourism was a stimulus for the revitalisation of traditional art forms and the impetus for new creations (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 167).

Therefore, in ecotourism development, the relationship between ecotourism and cultural conservation is vital. It seems that the preservation and conservation of these forms of cultures can contribute to the strengthening of the social and cultural identities of the host communities but, at the same time, also to the stimulation of economic activities. As Wearing (2001: 399) has argued, the conservation of cultural integrity will also involve the local people, re-educating and re-establishing a pride, and sometime knowledge of traditional skills and

values amongst the younger generations. Thus, sustaining the well being of the local people is an important part of the definition of ecotourism. The development of cultural attractions can benefit the local people as well as the tourist.

The primary employment opportunities through ecotourism are in jobs such as hotel services, craft making, shop ownership, tour operations, government agency staff, and park rangers. However, a general lack of host community skills and resources has meant that many ecotourism ventures are often owned and operated by expatriates (Weiler and Hall, 1992). It is unfeasible to expect the local population such as a local farmer, fisherman or plantation worker to be changed overnight into a tourist guide or hotel manager (Clark and Banford, 1991: 9). As a result, the planning, staff and management of accommodation and parks by expatriates in developing countries may have direct effects on the local population and culture. This situation can lead to a "homogenisation" of cultures, the overlooking of local and traditional methods of managing natural resources causing host community hostility and anger toward tourism (Wearing, 2001: 401). But, ecotourism still can give benefits to local community as suggested by Wearing (2001) as follows (see Table 3.1. p. 84):

In other words, Mason (2003) has argued that the economic impact of (eco)tourism can be positive as long as it contribute to foreign exchange earnings; to government revenues; and generates employment and regional development. For instance, tourism in Bali became important in the 1960s when a significant number of jobs were created such as hotel workers, bar staff, boat hire, cycle hire and repair, car and motorcycle hire, food and drink selling and souvenir making and selling. Through tourism activities, the arts and craft activities of painting and wood- carving in Bali increased. The introduction of the new arts activities such as batik making, cultural performance and home-stays programmes have benefited local residents rather than outsiders because a majority of local residents were involved directly in these activities (Cukier and Wall, 1994; Wall,

1995; Mason, 2003: 35-36). But, although tourism grew rapidly in Bali in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, there occurred negative impacts on Bali's economy and socio-cultural life of local population. Large project of hotels complexes on the southern coast of Bali contributed little to the local economy and to maintaining local values. The project benefited much more international investors, and the terrorist bombings at Kuta in October 2002, showed that the island was economically over-dependent on tourism (Mason, 2003: 37).

Table 3.1. Ecotourism Benefits to the Socio-Cultural Environment of Local Communities

- Increase demand for accommodation, houses, food and beverage outlets and therefore improve viability for new and established hotels, motels, guesthouses, resorts etc.
- Increase the market for local products and services such as locally souvenir, artefacts and value-added goods, food supply for the restaurants (fish, chicken, eggs, vegetables) and boat services.
- Use local labour and expertise such as eco-tour guides, retail sales assistants, waiters or waitresses.
- Provide a source of funding for the protection and maintenance of natural attractions and symbols of cultural heritage.
- Provide funding and volunteers for field work associated with wildlife research and archaeological studies
 - Create a heightened community awareness of the value of local/indigenous culture and natural environment.

Source: Adapted from Wearing (2001: 396)

3.4. Perspectives on Negative Socio-Cultural Impacts of (Eco)tourism

Mason (2003) has argued that the nature of the interaction between the visitors and host populations is of particularly importance. If there is a large contrast between the culture of the receiving society and the origin culture then it is likely that negative impacts will be greater (Burns and Holden, 1995; Mason, 2003: 43). Negative socio-cultural impacts focus on changes in traditions, customs, festivals,

values, language and family structure (Hashimoto, 2002: 219-220). Tourism can cause overcrowding in resorts or small villages. This overcrowding can cause stress for both tourists and residents. Rapid tourism development may also take over a major employer and traditional activities such as farming and fishing decline. Some local residents may find it difficult to co-exist with tourists who have different values and who are involved in leisure activities, while the residents are involved in working (Mason, 2003: 44). This problem is made worse whenever tourism is a seasonal activity and residents have to modify their way of life for part of the year. In this sense, whether tourism or ecotourism activity is seen by local residents as undesirable and a burden to their routine everyday life especially before the process of tourism development intervenes into their villages.

Generally in the tourism literature, the perspective on negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development can be classified into the following sub-topics or issues (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Hashimoto, 2002; Mason, 2003):

3.4.1. (Eco)tourism and Neo-colonialism

A critique about the negative impacts of tourism development on social and cultural life of local community in the developing countries mostly came from the literatures of the radical or/and critical perspectives (de Kadt, 1979; Krippendorf, 1987; Nash, 1989; Mowforth and Munt, 1998). According to these perspectives, tourism is a new form of colonialism and imperialism because the movement of metropolitan citizens from the developed world to societies of the less developed world has a long related-history of colonial and imperial domination (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 147). This relationship is one of unequal power and unjust control of wealth, erosion of moral values and cultural degradation of the Third World societies. Moreover, the First World ownership of much Third World tourism infrastructure and the origin of tourists from the First World have, for many, become an irresistible analogy of colonial and imperial domination (Mowforth and Munt, 1998:49).

Hashimoto (2002) has observed this situation and says that the majority of tourists come from developed nations. The majority of them tend to expect familiar facilities and conveniences of life in the destination areas such as they have in their home country. For instance most of the tourists expect to have hot water, flushing toilets, air-conditioned rooms, comfortable transportation, familiar food and so forth in the destination areas. Therefore, the tourist industry from developed countries tends to impose their cultural values in the destination area. The host community often has to accept the tourists' culture in order to accommodate the lucrative tourism business (Hashimoto, 2002: 220). There may be no need for the host community to take the position of a weaker culture, but because of power imbalance, the host community is often placed in a subjugating position. Hashimoto (2002) also observed the transformation of "*language*" in many destination areas as part of cultural imperialism and *assimilation* because most international tourists do not learn the language of the host communities. But, the host communities who serve their guests in the tourism industry have to learn at a communicable level, at least, the basic level of English language. In other areas however, such as in American Latin, as a legacy of colonisation, the common foreign language to communicate with tourists may be French or Spanish.

Whereas the mass tourism industry was criticised because of its negative impacts on the community of the developing countries, many tour operators have now introduced green tourism or ecotourism. However this "alternative tourism or ecotourism" is also subject to criticism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 63-65). Ecotourism hopes to change the unequal relationships of mass tourism. Thus it encourages the use of indigenous guides and products, ethical tours and environmental education to help protect local flora and fauna, and provide local people with economic incentives to safeguard the environment. This new form of tourism, however, does not change much the unequal relationship between the hosts and the tourists such as existed in mass tourism, thus maintaining the unequal power relationship. As a consequence, ecotourism is also criticised by

critical environmentalists as "green imperialism" or "eco-colonialism" (Sachs, 1992; Shiva, 1993: 15). As Mowforth and Munt (1998) have argued, alternative tourism or ecotourism "is a romanticism for travel modes of the colonial periods which, unwittingly perhaps, recreates the subordination of Third World peoples in an invidious aura. And it has invoked a nostalgic longing for untouched, primitive and native peoples who are there to meet the demands of the tourists: both in terms of service and as an object to be enjoyed and photographed" (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 69). Native peoples, pristine environments and wildlife have become commodities as part of the global travel experience.

3.4.2. The demonstration effect of the tourists

Bryden (1973: 250) has claimed that the demonstration effect can be categorised as the introduction of foreign ideologies and ways of life into traditional societies that have not been exposed to tourist lifestyles. Demonstration effects do contribute to social and cultural changes in the host communities (William, 1998). Local people will note the superior material possessions of the visitors and aspire to these. The demonstration effect is usually perceived as being negative, but it also can have positive outcomes (Fisher, 2004: 429), but these have not received as much attention. The demonstration effect can encourage local residents to adopt more productive patterns of behaviour. For instance, a growing number of the indigenous population may take jobs in the tourism sector since these appear to offer a greater chance of advancement than traditional agriculture (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 144).

More frequently, it is disruptive in that local peoples become resentful because they are unable to obtain the goods and life style demonstrated by the visitors (Burns and Holden, 1995). What the tourists possess and how they spend money affect the material culture of the host communities. For instances, cameras and video recorders, electronic gadgets, jewellery and fine clothing or fashionable jeans and T-shirts will attract the young generation in the community to hope to achieve their "tourists" aspirations. Young people are particularly susceptible to

demonstration effects and ecotourism may then be blamed for societal divisions between the young and older members of the community (Mason, 2003:44). The ways tourists behave has an influence on the spiritual or cultural norms of the host population.

For example, Balinese communities are becoming more aggressive towards tourists as they start seeing the tourists' culture as a threat to Balinese culture (Karyadi, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002: 220). Moreover the demonstration effect may also encourage the more able younger members of a society to migrate from rural areas in search of the "demonstrated" lifestyle in urban areas or even overseas. The migration of labourers, which draws people from a traditional rural area closer to tourist's urban or semi-urban area, is especially strong among young males and females looking for low-paid unskilled jobs. As a consequence, migration of labour is not only displacing the workforce in the rural and peripheral areas but also destroying family traditional structures as usually one or two family members leave the village to seek jobs in the tourist areas (Hashimoto, 2002: 223). Moreover, losing women to tourism jobs means the family responsibility for domestic chores, which used to be the responsibility of the women, has to be altered. Some tourist activities and behaviour may not suite the local traditional culture and religious values, e.g. alcohol consumption, prostitution and gambling (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 149).

Following these activities are increasing crime rates, especially targeting tourists in the destination areas such as pick-pocketing, mugging, illegal business, trafficking illegal drugs, sexual and physical assaults and, some cases, murders and so forth (Hashimoto, 2002: 224). This is because, as William (1998) argues, the negative demonstration effect is most likely to occur where the contacts between residents and visitors are relatively superficial and short-lived. However, if the contact between the host communities and the tourists is for a long period and is deeper, another process may occur. This process known as "*acculturation*", which is defined by Jary and Jary (2000) as:

"a process in which contacts between different cultural groups leads to the acquisition of new cultural patterns by one, or perhaps both groups, with the adoption of all or parts of the other's culture" (Jary and Jary, 2002: 3).

When a "demonstration effect" combined with a process of acculturation, the relationship between the local population and visitors will not necessarily balance because host culture is likely to be stronger than guest culture or *vice-versa*. As a result, misunderstanding rather than understanding among different people is a more likely outcome of an encounter between visitors from the developed world and residents of the developing world (Mason, 2002: 45) because neither the native nor the tourist knows what their respective worlds are really like (Krippendorf, 1987). Travel, especially to countries with a totally different culture, may not diminish prejudice but may reinforce it (Krippendorf, 1987). In this sense, instead of bringing people from the most distant part together, the tourists despise the "underdeveloped" natives, and natives in their turn despise the unrestrained "foreigners" (Krippendorf, 1987: 61). This is the ugly side of the demonstration effect of tourism development in many developing countries. Tourism may bring in more money to the local population and government and thereby raise living standards but at the same time there can be negative socio-cultural impacts associated with this development. This is the paradox of the demonstration effect in tourism because it is a "double-edged sword" to the local people in the destination areas.

Thus, critical analysts such as Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Scheyvens (2002) have suggested that the analysis of the impacts of "new tourism" or ecotourism, must go beyond the demonstration effect or/and dependency theorists because tourism, as a form of unequal or domination relationships, cannot be fully explained by these notions. But, more studies of the global-local nexus within the wider debate on globalisation have shown that the power relationship is not an unidirectional phenomenon. Tourism in developing countries is inadequate to

interpret as being uniformly exploitative of local people and places. The impact on societies is very much dependent upon the influence of local institutions and actors (Parnwell, 1998: 212). However, the notions of dependency theory remain useful as a "paradigm" of critique, especially at the macro level, in order to understand the impact of (eco)tourism development in many of the developing countries in the globalisation era.

3.4.3. Commoditisation of Culture, Authenticity and Staged Authenticity

MacCannell (1973, 1976) introduced the concepts of authenticity into tourism studies or social sciences as a research programme of tourist motivations and experiences more than two decade ago. Since then, the subject has become an agenda for tourism study (Mascardo and Pearce, 1986; Cohen, 1988a; Hughes, 1995; Wang, 1999). However, critics question its usefulness and validity because many tourist motivations or experiences cannot be explained in terms of authenticity. Phenomena such as beach holidays, ocean cruising, nature tourism, visiting Disneyland, fishing, hunting, shopping or sports have nothing to do with authenticity. This is because Urry (1991: 51) has argued that the search for authenticity is too simple a foundation for explaining contemporary tourism. Thus, the question now is whether the concept of authenticity is relevant to (eco)tourism studies? According to Wang (1999) the concept of authenticity is still relevant to tourism research especially when we relate this concept to forms of new tourism such as ethnic, historical or cultural tourism involving representation of the *Other* or the past (Wang, 1999: 350). Mowforth and Munt (1998: 5) have argued that authenticity is a central issue because it is a fundamental debate about the *content* (real, ethnic, off beaten-track, and so on) and *appropriateness* (eco-, alternative, sustainable) of new forms of tourism in the Third World. For ecotourism, the environment, as a commodity or experience, is no less fantasy than any other image elaborated by the leisure industry as an attraction according to the post-modern quest for authenticity.

Therefore, authenticity must be understood within a broad framework of studies as it reflects the wider global process, which includes the debates over sustainability, environmental and cultural issues (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 56-57). Authenticity in ecotourism is not just about real tribes in Thailand, Kenya or Bolivia; it is about the consumption of real people or lives including poverty, civil struggle, justice and democracy. In this sense, authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique (Trilling, 1972; Handler and Saxton, 1988; Selwyn, 1996; Sharpley, 1994: 130). For the sociology of tourism there are three kinds of questions with respect to authenticity issues such as why tourists quest authenticity? How authenticity is experienced, constructed or produced in tourism? and, what are the consequences of the search for authenticity in tourism?

3.4.4 The Main Approaches to Authenticity in Tourism

There are four major approaches to seeking the answers for these questions or issues: the cognitive objectivism approach; the constructivism approach, the critical approach, and the postmodernism approach.

i. Authenticity is original: The Objectivism Approach

Mass tourism has been criticised by Boorstin (1964: 106) as “pseudo-events”, which have brought about the *commoditisation or commercialisation of culture*. This process is normally associated with homogenisation and standardisation of tourist products and experiences at the host destinations. Cohen (1988b) has defined “commoditisation” as a process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (and services); developed exchange systems in which the exchange value of things (activities) is stated in terms of prices from a market (Cohen, 1988b: 380). In the Third World, the commoditisation of culture for tourist attractions is quite common, especially in an ecotourism context. Thus, local rituals, ceremonies, costumes, feasts, folk and ethnic arts may all be

subjected to commoditisation (Greenwood, 1977) or “staged authenticity” (MacCannell, 1973. Cohen, 1988a; Cohen, 1988b).

MacCannell argues that the modern tourist is seen as the pilgrim of the contemporary secular world while paying homage to "attractions", the symbols of modernity, just as the traditional religious pilgrim paid homage to a sacred centre (MacCannell, 1973: 593). But, this can only be achieved through a journey from *the "front region" to "back region"* (Wang, 1999: 353). As a result, the tourist is always trapped into the "tourist space" or becomes the victim of what MacCannell (1976: 49) call *"staged authenticity"*. This is because the host society and its institutions have become institutionalised where the hosts have created or commercialised their culture and presented this culture as if they were real for tourist consumption (Cohen, 1988a: 34). Thus, the tourists' experiences cannot be counted as authentic even if the tourists themselves might think they have achieved such experiences. However, the authenticity of the objectivism approach has been criticised or/and revised by the constructivism approach.

ii. Authenticity is negotiable: Constructivism Approach

According to this approach authenticity is seen as a product of social or cultural construction rather than an objective attribute of reality out there, waiting to be unearthed and cognised (Wang, 2000: 44). As a consequence, many authors have questioned authenticity in Boorstin's and MacCannell's sense (cited in Cohen, 1988b: 378; Lanfant, 1989: 188; Wood, 1993: 58; Wang, 1999; Bruner, 1986; Schwandt, 1994; Hobsbawn and Rangers, 1983; Bruner, 1994; Littrel et al, 1993).

Therefore, commoditisation of culture in tourism does not necessarily destroy the meaning of cultural products, neither for the locals nor for the tourists, because, as Cohen (1988b) argues, something can initially be "inauthentic" or "artificial" or become a new cultural product. When through length of time, this "emergent authenticity" comes to be accepted as authentic, it can, although changed through

commoditisation, acquire a new meaning for its producers (Cohen, 1988b: 382). This new meaning could be added to the old ones in the new situation. In so doing, commoditisation could preserve the cultural tradition or preserve a meaningful religious ritual. It also enables its bearer to maintain a meaningful local or ethnic identity, which they might otherwise have lost. As McKean (1976) has claimed, in the case of tourism in Bali, Balinese ritual performances have three separate audiences, a divine, a local, and a tourist. Although Balinese performances are staged specifically for tourists, it does not necessarily spoil or diminish the importance of meaning for the villagers and the divine realm (McKean, 1976: 244). In fact, the fund, the increased skills and equipment available have enriched the possibility that the indigenous performances will be done with more elegance, in effect conserving culture. Thus, in this situation, Cohen (1988b: 379) claims that authenticity is not a primitive given but, "negotiable". This is because the tourist appreciates the quest to view a "local culture authenticity", and in turn, the host performer needs a source of income or profit for themselves and their families and gains a source of personal pride and satisfaction through this performance (McKean, 1989: 131).

In other words, for constructivists, tourists are indeed in search of authenticity. However, what they need is not objective authenticity or authenticity as originals but, at least, *symbolic authenticity* which is the result of social construction (Wang, 1999: 356). However, this view has been challenged by the postmodernism approach which sees authenticity in tourism as not only characterised by the construction of authenticity, but also, by the deconstruction of authenticity.

iii. Whether its Original or Fake, it is Authenticity: The Postmodernism Approach

For postmodernists, commercialisation of culture in tourism or "staged authenticity" is not necessarily destructive of the meaning of cultural products.

Instead, this "copied authenticity" can help to protect a fragile local culture and community from being disturbed because it acts as a substitute for the original and hence keeps tourists out of fragile toured cultures and communities (Baudrillard, 1983; Eco, 1986; Cohen, 1995: 16-17). Therefore, the motivation of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990) in the Third World is fuelled by tourism images as presented to tourists by brochures, television, magazines, internet, and through travel writing in the guide books, newspaper articles and novels about the tourist destinations. Hence, seeking out "exotic other" of Third World destinations is becoming much more accessible to Western tourists (Hall, 1998: 140). Thus, the local culture authenticity is not the main issue for postmodernists, but the "images of exotic other" or (though these images can be misleading) could prevent authentic cultures from being lost or destroyed. However, this view has questioned by critical analysts, such as Mowforth and Munt (1998); who argue that tourists who visited Third World destinations are actually nothing to do with, or searching for authenticity. Rather, this middle class of the West is searching for a "neo-colonial aura" in this new form of tourism.

vi. Authenticity as a Consequence of Globalisation: The Critical Approach

According to critical analysts, the new form of tourism in the *globalisation* era, such as cultural tourism or ecotourism in the Third World, was promoted by the tourism industry, through brochures as new "exotica landscape" (Wall, 1998: 61) where "postmodern travellers" can imagine more authentic experiences. All these were presented by many programmes, publications and official government internet sites for less developed countries such as "*the real Africa*" (Zambia); "*Malaysia-truly Asia*" (Malaysia); "*a special place, a special people, a special magic*" (Cook Islands); "*island beyond the ordinary*" (Tahiti), "*paradise live...the last great adventure destination!*" (Papua New Guinea) cited in Scheyvens, (2002: 48). In other words, tourism can be assumed as both *a cause* and *a consequence* of globalisation (Azarya, 2004:949).

Tourism becomes a consequence of globalisation when many negative effects accompany the movement of people from one country to another. These negative effects, for instance, are the displacement of communities, its impact on traditional communities, and the involvement of large business corporations in this process (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 17). These negative impacts occur because of the lack of proper attention paid to the conditions necessary for "sustainable tourism. In other word, with the spread and intervention of capitalism into Third World societies, tourism and/or alternative tourism have also had the effect of turning Third World places, landscape and people into commodities (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 64). These new softer form of tourism products such as *pristine rainforests and wildlife; untouched traditional villages; native people and cultures*; that usually appeal to the notions of "sustainability". These new tourism products have been exposed, promoted and advertised by the environmental organisations (such as WWF), the environmental donor agencies (such as IUCN), international airlines, tour operators and hotel chains. Ironically¹, most of the Third World government agencies also promoted these new tourism products to global tourists to consume or to experience as "authenticity" (Azarya, 2004: 954; Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 66). This type of tourism authenticity is actually a consequence of globalisation.

For instance, the images of "primitive manhood" and the poverty of people are transformed into the picturesque (Marshment, 1997: 28-29). These images are claimed by the tourism industry and/or the tourists as "authentic". However, for critical analysts (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 69), these images of "primitive" and "native" Third World people are actually a nostalgic or romantic wish for travel modes of the colonial periods. These primitive people are there to meet the demands of the tourist: both in terms of service and as an object to be enjoyed and photographed. Azarya (2004) has argued, what the indigenous groups of Maasai of Kajiado, Narok and Sumburu areas in Kenya are selling to the Western tourists is their own "primitive culture" or their own marginality. If they were not marginal to and different from the tourists, they would not have attracted the

latter's attention. In order to sustain such a commodity, to continue attracting customers, they have to maintain their cultural difference or they have to display marginality or primitivism as a condition of such tourism benefits (Azarya, 2004: 961). As Azarya argues:

".... every effort is made, by themselves as well as by the governments and the other agents involved, to keep display as genuine as possible [their primitive culture], though still under tight control, so that it does not lose its commercial value. All join forces in maintaining this marginality, turn it into a saleable commodity and maximise its commercial value for all involved" (Azarya, 2004: 964).

Thus, the commercialisation of the marginality and related primitivism of the everyday life of some indigenous people in the Third World has become an attraction, object or authentic experience to some groups of the Western's tourists. However, the economic opportunities needed by some indigenous groups, reason they depend on continued representation of cultural marginality or primitivism. This type of authenticity that most postmodern tourists are looking for is actually an ultimate paradox or consequence of globalisation. In this sense, the critical analysis is about observing and interpreting the authenticity in tourism as a discourse of the "real life" of the host community in Third World where these communities' everyday life has been effected by globalisation.

3.5. Analysing Socio-Cultural Impact on the Destination.

Page and Dowling (2002) have argued that there has been a recognition by academics and community groups that the development of tourism not only leads to economic impacts but also results in less visible and more intangible effects such as social and cultural impacts (Page and Dowling, 2002: 170). The social and cultural impacts on visitors and host communities are often only considered when tourism development leads to local opposition. This negative impact of (eco)tourism development on host community and visitors actually relates to the

attitude of residents, this being a key component identifying, measuring and analysing the impact of tourism (Ryan and Montgomery, 1994). At the same time, the attitudes of residents are also important in determining local policy, planning and management responses to the development of tourism and in establishing the extent of public support for tourism. Although many different methodologies have been proposed to analyse socio-cultural impacts of tourism, one of the most widely cited in tourism literature is Doxey's Tourist Irritation Index or Irridex (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 138; Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 227; Page and Dowling, 2002: 172; Mason, 2003: 22).

3.5.1. Doxey's Theory of Tourists Irritation Index

Doxey's Irritation Index or Irridex is one of the theories that have been put forward to indicate the socio-cultural impact of tourism. Doxey (1975) developed his "irridex" to show how the interaction of tourists and resident may be converted into different degrees of irritation (Page and Dowling, 2002: 171-172). The resident population or hosts in tourist area modify their attitudes to visitors over time. There are four stages in the modification of resident attitudes. A tourist first visit into destination area, Doxey argued, will be greeted with *euphoria* and then over time as the tourist numbers grow, resident's attitudes will move through stages of *apathy*, *annoyance* and finally to outright *antagonism* or aggression towards the visitors (please see Table 3.2. p. 99):

Although Doxey 's irridex model was applied in the West Indies and Canada in a mass tourism context, it is feasible that the relationship between Third World communities and the new tourists who visit them will follow a similar sequence. This is because tourist motivation may be somewhat different, but the tourism effect is not likely to be dissimilar (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 276). At the first two stages of the irridex level (euphoria and apathy), local people are considered acceptable to a level of change to local lifestyle and social relationships. However, at the last two stages of the irridex (annoyance and antagonism), social

relationships in the destination areas lead to antagonism. This may be as a result of overcrowding, the outside influence of foreign investors or national politicians pursuing goals different from those of local community. Therefore, annoyance and antagonism situations can be avoided through the degree of local control and participation in tourism development. This is because the irridex relates the type of social relationship (euphoria, apathy, annoyance, antagonism) directly to the level of development of tourist facilities and infrastructure in many host destinations of Third World countries (see Table 3.2. p. 99).

Although Doxey's irridex theory was not based on detailed empirical research, the main implication of Doxey's theory is that every tourism destination may not have ability to grow if local people become more hostile to visitors (Mason, 2003: 22). As a consequence, the visitor numbers will not continue to grow at the same rate as previously and may actually decline. Thus, managing the negative impact of host-guest relationship becomes a vital solution to avoid antagonistic attitudes by the host population.

Table 3.2: Doxey's Irridex Model

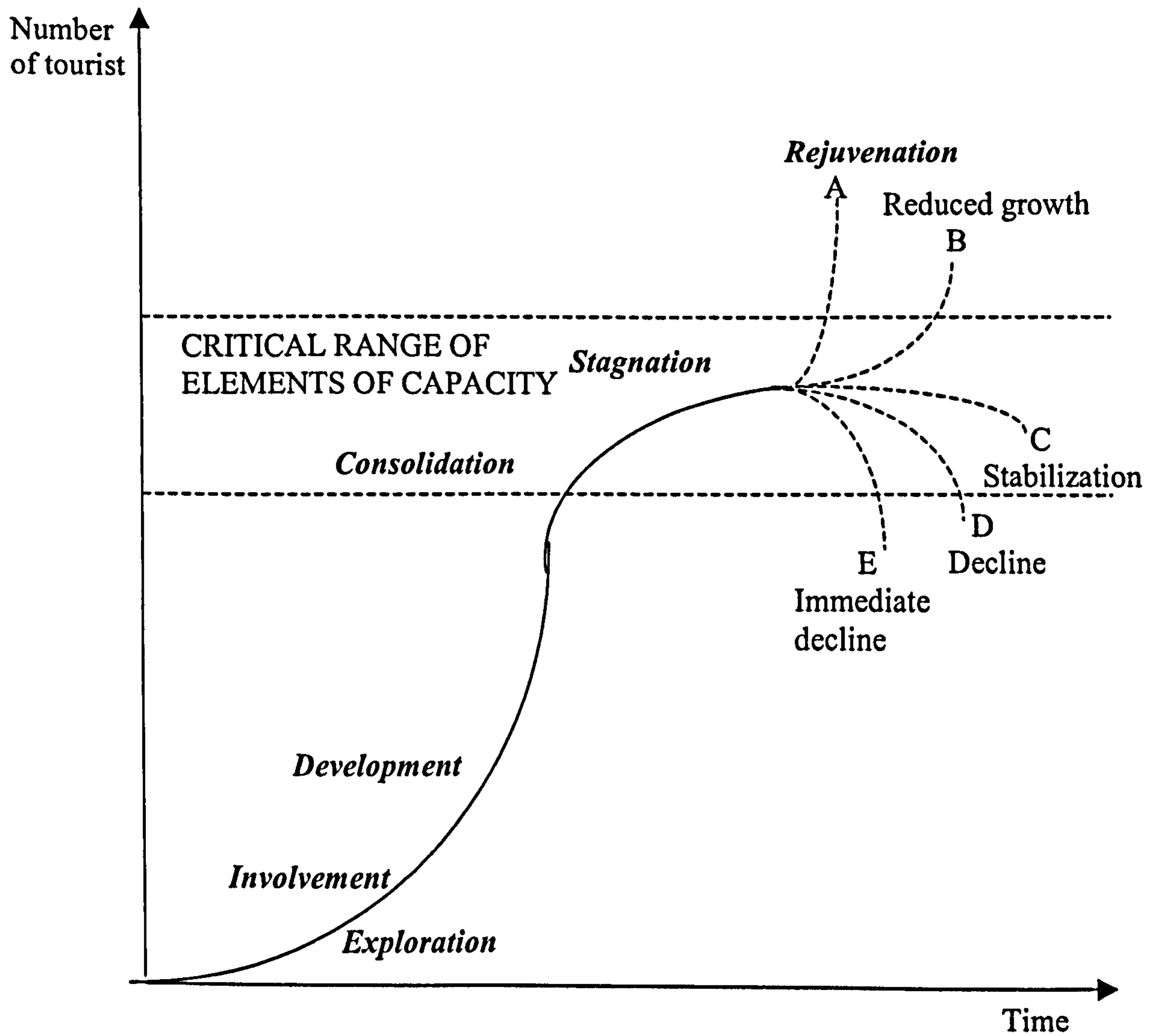
<i>Doxey's Irridex</i>	<i>Social Relationship</i>	<i>Power Relationship</i>
Euphoria ↓	Initial phase development: Visitors and investors are Welcome	Little planning or formalised control mechanism; greater potential control by local individuals and groups
Apathy ↓	Visitors taken for granted: Contacts between residents and outsiders more formal (commercial)	Planning concerned mostly with marketing; tourism industry association begins to assert its interest
Annoyance ↓	Saturation points approached: Residents have misgiving about tourist industry	Planners attempt to control by increasing infrastructure rather than limiting growth; local protest groups begin to assert an interest
Antagonism	Irritations openly expressed: Visitors seen as cause of all Problems	Planning is remedial but promotion is increased to offset deteriorating reputation of destination

Source: adapted from Doxey (1975), Mowforth and Munt (1998: 277)

3.5.2: Butler's Theory: The Resort Cycle of Evolution.

Butler (1980) developed his theory or model based on the business/marketing concept of the product life cycle. The product life cycle is a theory in which sales of a new product are seen to slowly grow and then experience a rapid growth, before stabilising and subsequently declining (Mason, 2003: 23). In tourism destinations development, Butler's theory suggested that resorts/destination development and changes over time follow a number of linked stages: *exploration; involvement; development; consolidation* (see Figure 3.1. p. 101). At these stages, a tourism industry develops and the destination has an increasing number of tourists. After the *consolidation* stage, Butler (1980) assumed there are number of possibilities. The resort/destination could stagnate, without any increase or decrease in numbers of tourist or it could *decline* or *rejuvenate*.

Figure 3.1: Butler's Tourism Resort Life Cycle



Source: Adapted from Butler, (1980); Mason, (2004: 23)

In brief, the characteristic development process occurring during each stage of Butler's model described by Mason (2003: 24) is as follows (see Table 3.3):

Table 3.3: Stages of Tourist Resort/Destination Development and Associated Features.

Stage	Characteristic
Exploration	<p>Few adventurous tourists, visiting sites with no public facilities. Visitors attracted to the resort/destination by a natural physical feature. Specific visitor type of a select nature.</p>
Involvement	<p>Limited interaction between local residents and the developing tourism industry leads to the provision of basic services. Increased advertising induces a definable pattern of seasonal variation. Definite market area begins to emerge.</p>
Development	<p>Development of additional tourist facilities and increased promotional efforts. Greater control of the tourist trade by outsiders Number of tourists at peak periods far outweighs the size of the resident population, including rising antagonism by the latter towards the former.</p>
Consolidation	<p>Tourism has become a major part of the local economy, but growth rates have begun to level off. A well-delineated business district has taken shape. Some of the older deteriorating facilities are perceived as second rate. Local efforts are made to extend the tourist season.</p>
Stagnation	<p>Peak numbers of tourists and capacity level are reached. The resort/destination has well-established image, but it is no longer in fashion. The accommodation stock is gradually eroded and property turnover rates are high.</p>
Post-stagnation	<p>Five possibilities, reflecting a range of options that may be followed, depending partly on the success of local management decisions. At either an extreme rejuvenation or decline.</p>

Source: (adapted from Mason, 2003: 24)

The main criticisms of Butler's theory, however, are because the following reasons (Butler, 1998; cited in Mason, 2003: 25):

- doubts on there being a single model of development;
- limitations on the capacity issue, such as a negative as socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism on local people;
- conceptual limitations of the life-cycle model;
- lack of empirical support for the model;
- limited practical use of the model.

Beside these criticisms, after almost twenty years, however, Butler's theory remains relevant or useful to many tourism researchers especially related management issues or/and to indicate the effect of tourism development on host communities at every stage of his model. As Mason (2003) says, Butler's theory has universal applicability. The model is relevant and can be applied to most tourism destination areas particularly to avoid the "decline" stage of the model and to indicate how the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism could be managed in the long-term of (eco)tourism development (Mason, 2003: 25).

3.6. Conclusion

The above discussion has shown that the theoretical debates or perspectives to study socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism is reasonably broad. Many issues relate to the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism development in the less developed world and could be discussed in a "holistic" manner or holistic approach. Moreover, the commercialisation of local culture of the less developed world in (eco)tourism context is a part of consequences of globalisation. This is a current phenomenon, which we must study and understand in order to decrease its negative impacts. Thus, how to manage this socio-cultural impact of (eco)tourism development is an essential issue because the survival of this industry depends on the survival of the livelihood or socio-culture of the local people or communities where this (eco)tourism landscape is continuing to emerge

in many developing countries. Although they realise there is paradox to implementing this development, many less developed country governments are keen on this type of development, as they hope to gain income and then improve the standard of living of the poor and marginal communities in their countries, which the socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism, is an aspect in (eco)tourism research was given less attention in development studies previously

Endnotes

¹ It is an ironic situation because these Third world government agencies promote wildlife tourism and traditional culture for purposes of economic community development, but at the same time, they actually sustain "remoteness area and people" or "traditional lifestyle" to exhibit tourism as authentic. The questions are development for whom and who needs most this authenticity? see Azarya, (2004: 958) and Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 69).

Chapter 4

Conceptual Debates of ‘Community’ and ‘Local Community Participation’: From Development to (Eco)tourism Perspectives.

4.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to clarify the terms “community” and “participation” in order to guide the conceptual framework of the study. Both ‘community’ and ‘participation’ are terms, which are discussed in the social sciences particularly in sociology, anthropology, geography, development studies, and tourism or ecotourism. This chapter will be divided into sections as follow:

- The *first* section is the introduction.
- The *second* is about theorising community.
- The *third* reviews the definition of the term community in a tourism or ecotourism perspective.
- The *fourth* examines the concept of ‘community participation’.
- The *fifth* section clarifies how the term ‘local community participation’ in (eco)tourism development perspective was developed.
- Finally, the *sixth* section is the conclusion.

4.1.1. The idea of ‘local community participation’: Agenda 21

The source of the commitment to local community participation in the sustainable development process came from the United Nation Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, 1992. It was based on the Brundtland Commission's report known as “Our Common Future” in 1987 (WCED, 1987). When the world leaders signed up to Agenda 21, it confirmed that sustainable development requires community participation in practice as well as in principle. Agenda 21 became the main local agenda for sustainable development for the twenty-first century (Warburton, 1998: 1). In the United

Kingdom, for instance, the practical links between community participation existed in the 1970s through formal participation in town and country planning based on conservation volunteers. There were some financial limitations to establish this networking in the 1980s and 1990s. Thereafter, the links between environmental action and community participation have become stronger in both urban and rural areas, particularly to promote and sustain local action in resource saving and creating better environments for living, especially in the city (Davidson and MacEwen, 1982: 54; Webster, 1998: 186). Agenda 21 contains many references to community participation in sustainable development and some of them were outlined (and italics added) by (Warburton, 1998: 7) are:

- Successful implementation of sustainable development is "*first and foremost the responsibility of governments*", but it also argues that "*the broadest public participation...should also be encouraged*" (Agenda 21, 1.3).
- Chapter 3 of Agenda 21 states, "a specific anti-poverty strategy is...one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable development. An effective strategy for tackling the problems of poverty, development and environment simultaneously should begin by focusing on resources, production and people and should cover demographic issues, enhanced health care and education, the right of women, the role of youth and indigenous people and *local communities and democratic participation process in association with improved governance*" (Agenda 21, 3.2).
- "Activities that will contribute to the integrated promotion of sustainable livelihoods and environmental protection cover a variety of sector interventions involving a range of actors, from local to global, and are essential at every level especially the community and

local levels...In general terms, the programme should...*focus on the empowerment of local and community groups through the principal of delegating authority, accountability and resources*" (Agenda 21, 3.5).

Thus, from the background of the broad ideas of Agenda 21 and community participation in sustainable development, the term local community participation was applied into tourism studies. Sustainable tourism is probably problematic to be achieved because of the dichotomy views between those who consider ecological criteria as the most important element, and those who view "human progress" as of paramount importance in sustainable development (Milne, 1998: 36). It remains an ideal that we must strive to attain because the latter grouping concentrates on the continuity of development and the maximisation of economic benefits on sustainable basis (Pearce, et al, 1987). However, some analysts (dependency theory and the tourism area cycle of evolution) still see tourism to be an *unsustainable* development whether it is mass tourism or ecotourism (Butler, 1992). To overcome this, the "real" and active local community participation in ecotourism development was considered necessary to achieve sustainable ecotourism development, particularly in developing countries like Malaysia.

4.2. Theorising Community: "Community" as Ideologies.

In community studies or sociological research, the concept of "community" has been criticised as an elusive (Warburton, 1998), or a mythical (Stacey, 1974) concept. The concept of community has been of concern to sociologists for more than two hundred years, but even a satisfactory definition of it in sociological terms appears as remote as ever (Bell and Newby, 1974: xliii). The confusion of the meaning of the term deepened when this term was related to the issue of social change in the wider societal context of the nation state,

particularly in its association with the dichotomy of the folk-urban or traditional-modern continuum (Elias, 1974: x; Gusfield, 1975).

The term “community” as used today in a wider sense was influenced by the anthropologist, Robert Redfield in his study of four settlements in Yucatan (Mexico), city, town, peasant village and tribal village (*The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, 1947). At this time, Redfield (1947) used a typology of “folk” and “urban” society” in his analysis (cited in Gusfield, 1975: 17). Earlier than that however, W. Lloyd Warner and his colleagues’ (cited in Konig, 1968: 180) published the study of the social system of the Yankee City 1941 (near Cambridge, Massachusetts) has defined the concept of community such as:

“The word community describes a number of people who share a certain attitude, certain interests, certain feelings and certain things on the basis of the fact that they belong to a social group. The scientific investigator describes the communities of primitive peoples as “tribes”, “villagers” or “clans”; the social scientist who occupies himself with present-day life, describes individual local groups as “large-scale areas”, “towns”, “small towns”, “neighbourhoods”, “villages” and “rural areas”. Now although the various kinds of advanced and primitive groups are superficially very different from each other, they are nevertheless fundamentally similar in kind. All of them are, for example, localised in a particular area, which to some extent they transform in order to maintain the physical and social life of the group; and all individual members of the group have direct or indirect relations to each other. These social relationships are systematic, and their totality represents the social structure of the group. The structure of the group is maintained throughout the subsequent generations born under it, and it suffers only relatively little change. Apart from variations in the degree of autonomy prevailing in this group or that, and apart from the differences which distinguish this community from each other that the individuals living in them are never in any doubt as to which group they belong to, even when the other groups are outwardly only very little different from their own” (cited in Konig, 1968: 180-181).

Though Lloyd Warner has produced a detailed definition of the concept of community, the debates about it continued. After World War II, the theories of social change were elaborated and revised. The theories of modernisation have put the evolution of community-society dichotomy into a “development” framework where the cultural and/or institutional changes become pre-conditions for developing countries to achieve economic development. According to modernisation theory, tribal relationships, kinship ties, and caste loyalties must, and will, diminish and disappear in the processes of achieving economic progress and development. The communal social system must be retreated, if modernity is to be realised (Gusfield, 1975: 19). In its present use, the concept of “community” is again used as an ideological counter to the existing institutions and cultures and/or as way of critically appraising the existing modes of life such as contrast between what is and what could be. Gusfield (1975) argued that modernity has produced “alienation” to the life of rural community groups when that social change requires and is developing conflict between the community and the goals to achieving economic progress and development. At this stage, the concepts have been used as *utopias* because community-society dichotomy is not only concepts of social analysis. Modernity is not just a term of science, but these terms are also as visions or goals of the future toward which people move from underdevelopment (i.e. remote community) to development (.e. urban society) situations. Moreover, one of the prevalent images of contemporary social science is of the small town, the village, and the farm settlement is assumed as the embodiment of lost virtues (Gusfield, 1975: 87) because of the negative effect of the development. In the urbanisation and development process, the decline of the rural and small community is one of the major issues of sociology and tourism. That is why, when many less developed countries promoted ecotourism as a strategy for community development, it does mean and relate with the idea of modernisation. In this sense, the concept of community is not only descriptive, but also normative and ideological (Jary and Jary, 2000:93). Therefore, once the concept of community has been detached from particular ideologies (i.e.

modernisation or dependency), it is much easier to understand the ways in which it can be used. Then, the ranges of spheres of contemporary life that impact upon by local community becomes much clearer whether this community forms of an association, membership or inclusion (Little, 2002: 2) such as in the ecotourism development processes.

Despite the difficulties involved in theorising about “community” or “communities”, Worsley (1987) has suggested that three broad meanings of the term community have been generally accepted within sociological literature:

First, community as locality: here the interpretation of the term come closest to its geographical meaning of a human settlement within a fixed bounded local territory. In this sense, community studies should be locality studies (Jary and Jary, 2000: 94); the study of the inter-relationship of social institutions within a territorially defined area (Bell and Newby, 1975: xliv). The *second* meaning is the community as a network of interrelationships (Stacey, 1969). In this usage, community relationships can be characterised by conflict as well as by mutuality and reciprocity. The *third* usage of the term community refers to a particular type of social relationships in that it infers the existence of a “community spirit” or “community feeling” (Jary and Jary, 2000) or a symbol of community identity. Gusfield (1975) defined this sense of community as the people who see themselves as having a common history and destiny, to ensure the sharing of symbols, legends, names and events that are different from others. They perceive some events and public figures as being involved in their lives, as well as those in face- to- face interaction. Outsiders cannot be assumed to know or to care about such matters (Gusfield, 1975: 35). It also involves shared attitudes toward events, both past and present. For instance in case of tourism development in Belize, the “Mayan” people of Belize have criticised the government and the tourist industry because they have turned the archaeological sites and Indian villages into a giant tourist park, but at the same

time millions of indigenous inhabitants have no part in decision-making (Gunson, 1996 cited in Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 239).

4.3. The Concept of Community in Tourism Studies

The definition of the term community in tourism commonly emphasises the “geographical area” as one of the important characteristics of the concept (Singh, Timothy and Dowling, 2003: 7). For instance, Williams and Lawson, (2001:271) defined community as “a group of people living in the same geographical area who share a common goal or opinions”.

The early community tourism studies emphasised the economic benefits of tourism as non-traditional exports (Brohman, 1996: 51). However, with the rise of international tourists activities, many researchers saw tourism as “an impact” particularly on the socio-cultural and the socio-economic life of the local community in developing countries (Young, 1973; Rosenow and Pulsiper, 1979; Smith, 1989). When the Brundtland Report was published in the 1980s, Murphy (1985) and Krippendorf (1987) had already begun advocating pro-community tourism. Since then there has been a deluge of literature on community-based tourism. Most of the research on this alternative approach currently, has focused on the study of community perceptions (Pearce et al, 1996), structural networks (Stokowski, 1994), cultural conflicts (Robinson and Boniface, 1999), development options (Dahles and Bras, 1999; Scheyvens, 2002; Singh, Timothy and Dowling, 2003) and so on. Although community based-tourism continues to remain an important area in tourism research, researchers are still searching for a solid definition of the term. That is why, in the tourism literature, community has usually been researched and described in the form of case examples (Singh, 1989; Smith, 1989; Butler and Hinch, 1996; Price, 1996; Lew, 1999), rather than being defined. Even the Local Agenda 21, the concept of community is accepted and utilised, but is not defined or used consistently (Singh, Timothy and Dowling, 2003: 7). What constitutes a

community and what gives a community its strength is something still to be clarified.

Murphy (1985), for example, has suggested the "ecological community approach" to understand tourism studies. Murphy observed that tourism fits into an ecosystem because it involves destination areas, where visitors interact with local living (hosts, services) and non-living (landscape) parts to experience (consume) a tourism product. There is interdependence in the system because neither can succeed without the other (Murphy, 1985: 167). The balance relationship between the various components and scales of tourism development, such as natural resources, the local community and the tourism industry is vital because:

- i. The natural resources of the community needs industry involvement to transport and accommodate visitors; the industry needs social support from the destination community to fulfil its hospitality function. If the interaction between these components is properly managed, it can lead to the creation of a renewable resource industry (Murphy, 1985: 167).
- ii. An ecological community is a group or a few or many species living together in a locality. When tourism development takes place in the destination area, positive or negative signs represent situations where a component is undeveloped or over-developed with regard to the community's tourism carrying capacity. Local issues include the site impact of tourism development and the wishes of local residents, and whether they are interested in participating or not become a crucial element to achieve a balanced tourism development. This is because the unbalanced development of a community's major attractions such as public goods like the landscape, cultural heritage, and community facilities can lead to a welcoming euphoria or antagonistic reaction by local community toward the visitors (Murphy, 1985: 169). Thus, the

move from centralised tourism planning (top-down management approach) to community tourism planning (bottom-up management approach) through "public participation" is practical and necessary, particularly in tourism development at a local level.

- iii. Tourism development is a local issue because that is the level where public participation as a form of political action takes place. Past experience with public participation in past tourism planning (emphasis on the business and physical orientation tourism planning) has shown that participation on a mass scale is not practical. Moreover, a political culture with a tradition of elitism dominant is impractical and unnecessary to represent democracy at local level (O'Riordan, 1978: 153). Thus, current public participation in tourism planning has modified existing institutions and planning procedures to effect social change and environmental preservation, so its extension to tourism (an activity so interwoven with community life) becomes inevitable (Murphy, 1985: 172).

Following on from Murphy, tourism academics have generally referred to community or communities as locals, residents, natives, indigenous people and hosts. *Therefore the term "local community or host community or destination community" in this research is taken to mean a group of people living in the specific boundaries of the (eco)tourism destination area, together with natural and cultural elements, where the tourist experience takes place, and its tourist product is produced, and who are potentially affected, both positively and negatively, by the impacts of (eco)tourism development.* Moreover, the host community is heterogeneous not homogeneous: the community is likely to be mixture of individuals and groups of different gender and age with varied political persuasions and attitudes to tourism, and will include those with a vested interest in tourism (Mason, 2003: 118). Tourism and its role in destination communities is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that encompasses

economic, social, cultural, ecological and political forces. The survival of the local people and their cultural values can be achieved, if they were encouraged to participate in the (eco)tourism programme in the local area actively. In so doing, the opportunities to achieve the conservation and sustainable development goals for ecotourism are greater than before. Thus local participation is important.

4.4. Community *Participation* in the Development Perspectives

The World Bank's (1994) Learning Group on Participatory Development defined participatory development as "a process, through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them" (cited in Dalal-Clayton, et al, 2003: 91). This definition opens up the gulf between development planning and ordinary community decision-making. A top-down planning approach is still needed to define and explain the concept of participation for the benefit of development agencies. Conversely, alternative development strategies emphasise more the bottom-up planning approach that is initiated locally and proceeds through the active participation of the community. However, a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches is thought likely to achieve the best result for community development (Mat Som and Baum, 2004: 256). In the following discussion, Stiefel and Wolfe (1994) argued, there are six dimensions to participation in the socio-economic developmental debates recently.

4.4.1. Six Dimensions of Stiefel and Wolfe's *Participation Theory*

UNRISD, as cited in (Stiefel and Wolfe. 1994: 6-11) has suggested and identified six dimensions of participation as follow:

- i. *Participation as 'encounter' between the hitherto excluded and those elements in the society that maintains or enforces exclusion.* From this perspective the excluded groups (such as villagers or the local community) view participation as an encounter or resistance to a real

process of modernisation or development introduced by government agencies, foreign companies, local elites and so on. They are seeking new deals and sets of social arrangements for an access to resources, services, status and power. "Sets of arrangements" may be systems of tenancy, laws introduced to enforce or override custom, the fixing of food prices, existing school and health services, taxation, institutionalised clienteles or corruption, institutionalised ethnic or religious discrimination, etc (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 6).

- ii. *Participation as 'movements' and 'organisations' for would-be participants.* The focus of this perspective is to understand the structure, *modus operandi* and social context of the emerging organised encounters among the poor and powerless groups (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 6-7). Some of the broad ranges of questions are: factors influencing capacity to maintain permanent organisational structures; leadership and member ability to choose and control leaders; class homogeneity or heterogeneity of the organised group; alliances between the excluded organised groups and religious organisations, non governmental organisations, political parties, trade unions and others; forms and tools of struggle and so on.
- iii. *Participation as 'biography'; the individual participatory experience.* The individual's willingness to participate in development programmes or projects can be fully understood only by examining the life experience of the individual. Individual consciousness is the crucial social force, which is translated into human action during a lifetime of the individual experiences in a particular community's location. Therefore, the biographical testimony from the members of these communities about their experience in the development programme should be of great importance to understand the 'encounter' and 'organisation' of participation.

- iv. *Participation as 'programme' or 'project' proposed and implemented by a government agency, voluntary organisation or international body.* This perspective indicates that the development programme or project has been initiated from above (top-down planning) or outside the community. The ideas and the activities of participation in the development process are come from some powerful entity who commands certain human and financial resources and who believes that participation of a 'target group' in the developmental programme can be implemented with the correct methods. However, UNRISD found this kind of participation inadequate and, in some ways, misleading because some of the projects generate major changes for the better in the livelihood of the poor but some others do not. Thus, serious and critical evaluations of the origins of the programme, their sources of support and their functioning in the field should have a place in the inquiry (Stiefel and Wolf, 1994: 7-8).
- v. *Participation as a 'component of national policy'.* Under this sub-heading, there are three different perspectives relevant to this inquiry (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 8-10). The *first* is participation was considered as a 'component' of current development policies and plans undertaken by the state. In this sense, the main government policy is emphasis on industrialisation, target for increases in the national product and expansion of public social services and infrastructural investment. The *second* perspective is concerned with the question of representative democracy and direct democracy. Could the democratic state be a really effective channel for the excluded groups to achieve some control over resources and regulative institutions? The *third* perspective of participation as a component of national policy is the case of governments seeking to mobilize the whole population in the name of development. These governments generally rejected the traditional

instruments of representative democracy but made popular participation an explicit and central feature of policy, expressed in new institutions, laws, mass parties and public ideology.

- vi. *Participation as anti-participatory structures and ideologies.* The characteristics of the contemporary patterns of economic growth, of modernisation and nation building all have strongly anti-participatory traits. The incorporation of rural neighbourhoods and local institutions into larger, more complex urban-centred systems removes whatever capacity for decision-making the local community might have and makes their traditional institutions obsolete (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 10-11).

4.4.2. Community Participation in the Development Planning

Meshack (2004), in his study of Tanzania, defined '*stakeholder participation*' as the voluntary and democratic involvement of beneficiaries in contributing to a future desired state. It means that stakeholder participation involves sharing power and measures that could influence the decision-making process. Participation is also argued to be a means of sharing information, attitudes and interests (Meshack, 2004: 62). In other words, participation in this community-based project is viewed from a 'multi-dimensional approach'.

In this sense, a participatory approach will ensure that elements of transparency, accountability, equity, community and expertise participation are implemented. According to Meshack (2004), '*transparency*' is construed as the availability of information, priorities, strategies and actions to all stakeholders. '*Accountability*' is understood in the sense that, by sharing decisions, stakeholders become accountable to the public and to one-another. '*Equity*' refers to giving groups that are excluded from decision-making the opportunity to present their concerns and defend their interests. '*Community and expertise*

participation’ refers to combining skills and experiences. From a planning point of view, Mishack (2004) defines *stakeholder participation* as:

“a voluntary and democratic process that involves stakeholders in capacity-building and enables them to identify and prioritise issues, draw up strategies to discuss prioritised issues, and complete and manage what has been implemented. It is a process that does not necessarily advocate the equal sharing of power; rather, it entails building the capacity of stakeholders to forego individual or group interests and make rational decisions by taking on board crosscutting interests, to benefit of all stakeholders” (Meshack, 2004: 62).

Thus, the term ‘participation’ or ‘popular participation’ has many faces. Because there are various definitions of the term ‘participation’ or ‘community participation’, it is difficult to establish a universal or working definition of ‘participation’ as an actual social reality. Instead, this research analysis of ‘local community participation’ can take as many forms, as in the different tourism destination areas.

4.5. Community Participation in (Eco)tourism Development Perspectives

In general, the discussion of the concept of community development in tourism is explored in terms of participation, empowerment, partnership, community capacity and community change (Telfer, 2003: 155). The question now, why local community participation or involvement is important in ecotourism? Murphy (1985) has mentioned that public participation in tourism planning and management is essential because whenever development and planning do not fit in with local aspiration and capacities, resistance and hostility can increase the cost of business or destroy the industry’s potential together. Therefore, if tourism is to become successful, it needs to be planned and managed as a renewable resource industry, based on local capacities and community decision-making. To achieve these objectives will require a more balanced approach to planning and management than has existed in the past (Murphy, 1985: 153). Two major authors have developed a participation typology, which

is frequently cited and applied in tourism community participation literature (Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Scheyvens, 2002; Mason, 2003; Telfer, 2003).

These are:

i. Arnstein's participation typology

In a classic, often cited article, Arnstein (1969, and/or 1971) is regarded as one of the most important scholars in participatory studies. Arnstein (1971: 71-73) has developed a ladder or typology of *citizen participation* with eight levels. Starting from the bottom, these levels of participation are:

i. Non-Participation levels: The two rungs of the ladder are: *first, manipulation* and *second, therapy*. Arnstein (1971) and Telfer, (2003) argue, these two levels of non-participation have been contrived by some substitute for genuine participation because their real objective is not to enable people to participate in the development or planning process but to enable those in power to educate or cure the participants.

ii. Tokenism levels: The *third* rung of the ladder is *informing* and the *fourth* is *consultation*. At these two levels the participants have the opportunity to speak and their voice may be heard. However, under this tokenism condition, they lack power to insure that their message will be heeded by the powerful. Commonly in this context, the community just follows the plan and they have no power to change the status quo. The *fifth* level is *placation*, which is a higher level in tokenism because the community is allowed to have ground rules, but the power or right to decide still belongs in the hands of the elites (Arnstein, 1971: 73; Telfer, 2003: 164).

iii. Citizen Power levels: Three levels of the ladder have increasing levels of citizen control. The *sixth* level is *partnership* that allows citizens to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with those in power. At the *seventh* level of *delegated power* and the *eight*, level of *citizen control*, citizens have the majority of the

decision-making seats or they have full managerial control (Arnstein, 1971; Telfer, 2003: 164).

Hence, the main strength of Arnstein's (1969 and 1971) citizen participation typology is that it reflects almost all possible forms of community participation in decision-making and the development process. To some extent, however, Arnstein's approach has been clarified further by Pretty's participation typology.

ii. Pretty's participation typology

Pretty (1994 and 1995) also claims that participation can mean different things to different people. Therefore, Pretty (1995) developed a typology of how people participate in development programmes. He identifies seven levels of participation, with manipulative participation at one end of the spectrum and self-mobilisation at the other. Pretty also included a critique of each form of participation as shown (in Table 4.1.p.121). In other words, participation ranges from passive participation where local people are told what development project is proceeding to self-mobilisation where people take initiatives that are independent of external institutions (Telfer, 2003: 164; Scheyvens, 2002: 56). This typology can be interpreted as a passive versus active participation dichotomy. It begins with manipulative participation to functional participation, all the power and control over development or proposals lie with people or groups outside the local community. However, for local people, involvement in the decision-making process is a feature of only the interactive participation and self-mobilisation types, while in the functional participation type most of the major decisions have been made before they are taken to the local community (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 240). Pretty's typology successfully emphasises the importance of the power relationships involved in any tourism development project.

Table 4.1: Pretty's Typology of Participation

Typology	Characteristic of each type
1. Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply a pretence: 'people' representatives on official boards, but they are unelected and have no power
2. Passive Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened: involves unilateral announcements by project management without any listening to people responses: information shared belongs only to external professionals
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions: external agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis: process does not concede any share in decision-making: professionals under no obligation to account for people's views
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources (e.g. labour) in return for food, cash or other material incentive: farmer may provide fields and labour but are not involved in testing or the process of learning: this is commonly called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end
5. Functional Participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goal, especially reduced costs: people may participate by forming groups to meet project objectives: involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents: at worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals
6. Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and strengthening of local institutions: participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals: the process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and use systematic and structured learning process. As groups take control of local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures and practices
7. Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change system: they develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over resource use: self-mobilisation can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Self-mobilisation may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power

Source: Pretty, 1995 cited in Mason, (2003: 119).

4.5.1. From Local Participation to *Local Empowerment*: Community-based Ecotourism

Although local community participation in ecotourism development is essential in order to achieve the conservation and sustainable development goals of ecotourism (Drumm, 1998: 197), it is meaningless if the members of the local community do not have a high degree of control over the activities taking place (Liu, 1994; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996) or it cannot meet the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards, both in the short and long term (Cater, 1993: 85). Therefore, it is not only active participation, but, the *empowerment of local community* (Friedmann, 1992; Schyevens, 1999: 246) through community-based ecotourism, which matters. Akama (1996) suggests that the 'local community needs to be empowered to decide what forms of tourism facilities and wildlife conservation programmes they want to be developed in their respective communities, and how the tourism cost and benefits are to be shared among different stakeholders' (Akama, 1996: 573).

Community-based ecotourism as local community development approach is inherently from sustainable development perspective, which considers social, environmental and economic goals or how ecotourism can meet the needs or improve the livelihood of the local community. This perspective differs somewhat from those approaching ecotourism predominantly from an environmental perspective (Scheyvens, 1999: 246). *Nature-based ecotourism* can help us to understand how environmental education, supports conservation, and environmental sustainable managed can sustain ecotourism product is through nature (Buckley, 1994). However Buckley's framework fails to consider whether the quality of life of local communities will be enhanced by ecotourism activities. Meanwhile, Lindberg et al, (1996) consider that ecotourism can generate economic benefits for local communities in Belize. However, in their study, they do not account for how communities are being affected socially and culturally by ecotourism ventures (Wilkinson and Pratiwi,

1995). Therefore, community-based ecotourism considers the importance of the social dimensions of the tourism experience, rather than primarily focusing only on environmental or economic impacts. The empowerment framework suggested by Scheyvens (1999: 247) can be used to analyse the actual or potential impacts of various forms of tourism on local communities. The empowerment framework also could be used by communities and development agencies attempting to plan appropriate community participation in ecotourism development, particularly to avoid the traps of many past development projects, which disempowered local communities. Scheyvens (2002) has defined empowerment as 'a process through which individuals, households, local groups, communities, regions and nations shape their own lives and the kind of society in which they live' (Scheyvens, 2002: 59 quoted France, 1997: 147).

There are four levels of empowerment utilised in this framework: economic, psychological, social and political empowerment as shown (in Table 4.2. p. 124). *Economic empowerment* or disempowerment is to indicate how local communities benefit or financially lose from the ecotourism projects. *Psychological empowerment* is critical in developing self-esteem and pride in local cultures, traditional knowledge, and natural resources. *Social empowerment* helps maintain a community's social equilibrium and has the power to lead to cooperation and enhanced initiatives such as health and education. Finally, signs of *political empowerment* include representational democracy wherein residents can voice opinions and raise concerns about development initiatives (Timothy, 2002: 152).

Table 4.2:
Types of Community Empowerment in (Eco)tourism Development

Type	Signs of empowerment	Signs of disempowerment
Economic Empowerment	Ecotourism brings economic gains to a local community. Cash earned is shared between many households in the community. There are visible signs of improvements in local services and infrastructure such as improved water systems and quality of the houses.	Local community only gains small cash from ecotourism. Most profits go to local elites, outside operators, government agencies, etc. Only a few individuals or families gain direct financial benefits from ecotourism, while others cannot gains any benefits because they lack capital and appropriate skill.
Psychological Empowerment	Self-esteem of many community members is enhanced because of outside recognition of the uniqueness and value of their culture, natural resources, and traditional knowledge. Increasing confidence in the community leads members to seek out further education and training opportunities. Access to employment and cash leads to an increase in status for traditionally low-status sectors of society e.g. women and youths	Many people have not shared in the benefits of ecotourism because they may face reduced access to resources of a protected area. They are thus confused, frustrated, disinterested or disillusioned with the initiative.

<p>Social Empowerment</p>	<p>Ecotourism maintains or enhances the local community's equilibrium. Community cohesion is improved as individuals and families work together to build a successful ecotourism ventures. Some fund raised are used for community development purposes, e.g. to build school or improve roads.</p>	<p>Disharmony and social decay because many in the community take on outside values and lose respect fro traditional culture and for elders. Disadvantage groups such as women fail to share equitably in ecotourism benefits because individuals, families, ethnic or socio-economic groups compete with each other for the perceived benefits of ecotourism. Resentment and jealousy are commonplace.</p>
<p>Political Empowerment</p>	<p>The community's political structure provides a representational forum through which people can raise questions relating to the ecotourism initiatives. Agencies initiating or implementing the ecotourism venture seek out the opinions of community groups (e.g. women and youths), and provide chances for them to be represented on decision-making bodies, e.g. Wildlife Park Board.</p>	<p>The community has an autocratic and/or self-interested leadership. Agencies initiating or implementing the ecotourism venture treat communities as passive beneficiaries, failing to involve them in decision-making. Thus majority of community members feel the have little or no to say over whether the ecotourism initiative operates or the way in which it operates.</p>

Source: adapted from Scheyvens, (1999: 247)

Clearly, from the above discussion, the empowerment framework is designed for an analysis of the impacts of ecotourism development on local communities particularly to indicate how local or indigenous people have some control over, and are benefiting from, ecotourism's involvement. Incorporating empowerment and community-based ecotourism can lead a local community to (i) public participation in decision-making: they have opportunities to voice their own hopes, desires and fear for development and contribute to the planning process from local own experience and expertise (Timothy and Tosun,

2003: 186). Then, (ii) involvement in the benefits of ecotourism best resembles Scheyvens' (1999) concepts of economic, social and psychological empowerment, which assume that residents will gain personally from ecotourism. For instance, Baez (1996) suggests that the success of tourism in Monteverde, Costa Rica, is a result of local people being in control and working in groups towards the common good. This results in more harmonious relationships throughout the community, consistency and solidarity. However, there are many barriers to successful community participation particularly in the case of the less developed world.

4.5.2. Community Participation in (Eco)tourism is a Limited Approach,

To some extent, Murphy (1985) has successfully theorised the concept of "local community participation" as a central issue in his analysis of tourism as a community industry. But, traditional, less-developed and indigenous societies usually have more limitations on complete participation and empowerment than has the westernised, developed world (Timothy, Singh and Dowling, 2003:274; Timothy, 2002; Tosun, 2000: 618). Some of the reasons are: *first*, there is "pseudo participation" (Midgley, 1986) where the local community or indigenous people really have little say in planning and policy making in tourism development in their village. According to Scheyvens (2003), the private sector, conservation agencies, and government tourism agencies in less developed countries are generally supportive of a role for communities in the management of tourism through the local community's participation programme. However, this may not always be based on an interest in securing active local participation but, may simply be as rhetoric to justify the other stakeholders' interest such as Scheyvens (2003: 249) argues as:

- A public relations guise (useful in advertising brochures, such as Conservation Corporation Africa's publicity).

- A means of placating the community to ensure they do not jeopardise the venture.
- Politically expedient (e.g. in the present climate in South Africa where reparations are being made for past alienation of black people from their land and their consequent impoverishment).

Second, in tourism, it is likely that there will be increasing conflicts between local communities and other stakeholders, including the government (Wells, 1996: 3). For instance, tourism projects can also be a source of division within communities. Thus, finding effective ways of resolving such conflicts will be critical to the long-term success of such programmes.

Third, Tosun (2000) has identified three main areas in which the community participatory tourism development approach is limited: limitation at the operational level; structural limitations; and cultural limitation (Tosun, 2000: 618). Further elaborations regarding to these issues are as follow:

i. Limitations at the operational level

The *first* is 'centralisation of public administration of tourism'. In many developing countries, planning is a highly centralised activity. However, formulation and implementation of any kind of community participation approach requires decentralisation of the political, administrative and financial powers of central government to local government at least (Tosun, 2000: 618). Under these circumstances, centralisation has stifled popular participation in planning and increased the vertical distance between planners and the community in the destination areas.

The *second* 'lack of co-ordination and co-operation amongst government agencies, is because of the unwillingness of politicians and high-ranking government official to implement decentralisation of powers (Desai, 1995: 40). Thus, this traditional powerful bureaucracy, who dominate legislative and

operational processes, became an obstacle to establishing co-ordination and co-operation amongst them (Jenkins, 1982). In consequence, there is also a lack of co-ordination between the public and the private sector to establish planning for community participation in tourism.

The *third* is 'lack of information'. In many developing countries, the bodies responsible for authorisation of tourism investment and incentives are commonly not accessible for the majority of indigenous people in local tourist destinations. The information or tourism data are accessible for the rich and educated elites (Tosun, 2000: 620). As a result, there is a big communication or knowledge gap between local communities and decision-makers regarding tourism development information. In this situation, it is difficult for a local community to participate in the tourism development process.

ii. Structural Limitation to Community Participation in Tourism

- The attitudes of technocrats (professionals): The attitude of professionals in shaping tourism policies in many developing countries is one of a top-down planning approach. The technocrats have academic and professional qualifications, which they think, give them the right answer to development problems (Wolfe, 1982). The professional groups seldom allow lay people to become involved in the decision making process because it may cost them time and money.
- Lack of expertise: this includes the lack of qualified staff and the working attitudes of professionals who have been trained in traditional planning techniques which do not involve community participation, and who have little idea of how to incorporate this in their planning (Desai, 1995; Tosun, 2000: 621). For that reason, community participation in ecotourism development and planning is limited in many less developed countries. Community participation as a concept of development or planning in ecotourism is seen as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It does not only require tourism planners, but also social anthropologists,

sociologists, economists, political scientists with some prior knowledge of tourism (Tosun, 2000). In the absence of these experts, it appears to be difficult to formulate and implement participatory ecotourism development approaches.

- Lack of an appropriate legal system, which can defend community interests and ensure a community's participatory right in ecotourism.
- Lack of trained and qualified human resources in the tourism or ecotourism sector. Commonly, the members of destination communities who were working on farms or fisherman become just a cheap labour input into the tourism sector. They are normally associated with low status, unskilled jobs, low wages and hard working conditions in the tourism industry. This has not only limited the participation of local people in tourism, it has also created a cultural backlash between local people and seasonal workers and increased the burden on public services (Long, 1991; Tosun and Jenkins, 1996).
- Elite domination: in many less developed countries there is very little democratic experience. The form of political relationship between the state and the people towards democratisation and development often is through "patron-client" relations. Thus, the decision-making formula on any incentive or investment is given on the bases of inner party courtesy or intimacy of friendship rather than entrepreneurial capability (Tosun, 1998). In this situation, if the destination communities are not empowered in a real sense, involvement may be restricted to elites in the community, which often results in their interests being considered rather than the interests of the community (Tosun, 2000: 622). Therefore, many tourist development projects in developing countries are not driven by the community, but driven by local elites in conjunction with international tour operators.
- Lack of financial resources: financial resources are needed for tourism investment but are very scarce and, in most cases, not readily available in less developed countries (Pearce, 1991; Long, 1991; Tosun, 1998). At

local level, community financing for tourism development is not sufficient, and thus must come from outside interests. As a result when financial resources originate from non-local interests, the loss of control over tourist investment to outside capital may happen. This means the residents do not own the tourism infrastructure nor control its growth, and thus this does not encourage a community participation style of tourism development.

iii. Cultural Limitation

The vast majority of the people in the less developed world, particularly people in the remote tourism destinations, are poor. They have difficulty meeting basic and felt needs, which limits their involvement in the programmes of community-based ecotourism. Most of the host communities live at the mercy of government administrators. For that reason, the community has not been given any opportunities to develop their capacity in the participation approach. Therefore, the poor indigenous people who participate in ecotourism programmes are not really active participants, but, limited to a token or manipulative form of participation (UN, 1981; Tosun, 2000: 625).

4.6. Conclusion

These are some of critical problems or “community dilemmas” (Mat Som and Baum, 2004: 254), which, in part, explain the apathy and low level of awareness in host communities in developing countries in relation to the participatory tourism development approach. To overcome these problems is a difficult task that requires considerable time and money, and requires changes in the dominant socio-economic and political structures at the local, national and international level to tackle the problems. Some of these limitations are:

“[The] political instability, patron-client relationship, low level of literacy, unfair and unequal distribution of income, severe macro-economic problems, lack of services of welfare state, lack of democratic institutions, lack of democratic understanding among state elites, unwillingness of elite to share fruits of development with majority of society in the developing world all of which have ushered in these limitations to community participation in the tourism development process” (Tosun, 2000: 626).

Thus, local community participation is a limited approach in tourism or ecotourism planning and development in many less developed countries. Frequently, it is the only flexible choice they have to implement sustainable (eco)tourism development in their areas. To strengthen local community participation in ecotourism, it requires not only active participation, but also some degree of ‘control’ over the tourist activities and finance in the destination areas (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 103-104), the degree of control is generally perceived as being a significant measure of the degree of sustainability.

Therefore, a review of the existing literature in chapter 2, 3 and 4 is an importance guide to formulate conceptual framework, and creates a critical perspective for this study. By examining this literature thoroughly, it gives researcher the ability to understand critically (Hart, 1998: 22) the theoretical debates and perspectives on how the relationship between ecotourism development, protected areas and local community are structured in less developed countries. Therefore, the influence of the literature review for this study can be summarised as follow:

- The discussion of the literature has demonstrated how the concepts of tourism, alternative tourism and ecotourism have been debated in the perspectives of development theories such as modernisation theory, dependency theories, the neo-liberal paradigm, the critical perspective and/or sustainable development perspective. This evolution of

development theories has inter-related with the recent tourism paradigm shift from mass tourism to alternative tourism, and/or to ecotourism. As a result, ecotourism in this study is understood as a niche form of mass tourism. The local community's socio-cultural life and participation is an essential element in this development process. This element is considered seriously in this research because it could foster sustainable tourism development generally.

- The literature has shown that the terms of ecotourism development, the impacts of this development on local people socio-cultural life, and community participation in ecotourism is a complex social phenomenon. Therefore inter-disciplinary approach, particularly reading and understanding through social sciences disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, development studies, management natural resources and tourism, are significantly importance for this research. Thus, through rigorous analysis of a research literature, the assessment of socio-cultural impacts of (eco)tourism for instance, Doxey's Tourist Irritation Index (see Doxey, 1975), and Butler's Tourism Resort Life Cycle (see Butler, 1980) are placed in context. To measure the concept of local community participation, Arstein's Participation Typology (see Arstein, 1971); Pretty's' Typology of Participation (see Pretty, 1995); and Scheyvens' Community Empowerment Typology (see Scheyvens, 1999) are applied in this study.
- The literature review in this study has also strongly influenced the researcher's option on research methodology, and a combination method for collecting data has been employed (Hart, 1998: 22). As a result, case studies approach in qualitative research paradigm is essential, and has applied in this research as demonstrated as in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Research Methodology

5.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to justify how and why the qualitative approach, through the use of case studies, has been chosen for this study. The discussion will be divided into six main sections as described below.

- The *first* section is the introduction.
- The *second* discusses what social research is, how and why social research is related to ontology, epistemology and methodology stances, and to what extent the deduction and induction procedures are important processes in carrying out qualitative research.
- The *third* discusses how and why a qualitative method through case studies from the perspective of critical approach was chosen for this ecotourism research.
- The *fourth* section centres on case studies as a research strategy; why this strategy was chosen; why multiple case study design was chosen; how and why a combination of data collection methods are deployed in this research; how and why simple random sample and purposive sampling are applied in this research.
- The *fifth* section is about data analysis. Two types of data analysis have been used in this research: quantitative and qualitative. It explains how and why these two approaches of data analysis are applied and why analytical generalisation is appropriate for a conclusion of qualitative research or case studies.
- Finally, the *sixth* section is the conclusion.

5.2: What is Social Research?

Social research in general can be characterised as a systematic investigation of a research problem. Williams and May (1996) argue that to “research” means to seek answers that involve *understanding* and *explanation*, where the credibility of its outcome will rest heavily upon the conduct of the investigation. Social researchers are expected to apply systematic methods in their practice. Most social research is conducted through methods of data collection such as social surveys, participant observation, interviews and the use of secondary data (Williams and May, 1996: 7). In other words, the processes of research inquiry has to be carried out diligently, critically, objectively and logically with the desired end to ‘discover new facts that will help us to deal with the problem situation (Sekaran, 1992: 4). The suggestion for the researcher however, that he or she must be “objective” in the research process has become a controversial issue in the philosophical debates and the methodological stances in social research. Therefore, the much broader definition for the concept of research offered by Preece (1994) is:

“Research is conducted within a system of knowledge and that research should be probing or testing that system with the aim of increasing knowledge. The increase in knowledge may be something entirely new and original or, more commonly, it may consist of checking, testing, expanding and refining ideas, which are still provisional. In particular, research should continually question the nature of knowledge itself, what it is and how it is known” (Preece, 1994: 18).

From the above definition, the question of what the nature of knowledge is and how it is known is commonly underpinned by a basic set of beliefs that define the researcher’s worldview. This basic set of beliefs is known as a *paradigm* (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004; Goodson and Phillimore, 2004: 34; Guba and Lincoln, 1998). There are three main elements to an inquiry paradigm: *ontology*, *epistemology* and *methodology*. Ritchie and Lewis (2003, 22-23) describe the meaning of these terms as follows:

i. **Ontology**, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), questions what it is possible to know about the world (or reality). Within social research, key ontological questions concern whether or not social reality exists independently of human conceptions and interpretations; whether there is a common, shared, social reality or just multiple context-specific realities, and whether or not social behaviour is governed by 'law' that can be seen as immutable or universal. A key ontological debate concerns whether there is a captive social reality and how it should be constructed. There are three distinct positions which explain these ontological issues (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Snape and Spencer, 2003: 11-12):

- **Realism** claims that there is an external reality, which exists independently of people's beliefs or understanding about it. In other words there is a distinction between the way the world is and the meaning and interpretation of that world held by individuals.
- **Materialism** (a variant of realism) holds that there is a real world but that only material features, such as economic relations or physical features of that world, hold reality. Individual values, beliefs or experiences can arise from those features but do not shape the material world¹. Subtle realism and/or critical theory (a variant of realism, influenced by idealism) however, accepts that the social world exists independently of individual subjective understanding, but that it is only accessible to researchers via the respondents' interpretation, and then further interpreted by the researcher (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 16 and 19).
- The basic belief of **idealism** asserts that reality is only knowable through the human mind and through socially constructed meanings. Within this position there are also subtle idealism (a variant acknowledging

collective understandings) that also believes in basic idealism but in which the meanings are shared and there is a collective or objective mind, and *relativism* (a variant of idealism), which argues that there is no single shared social reality, only a series of alternative social constructions (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 16).

ii. **Epistemology** focuses on questions such as how we can know about reality or the world, and what the basis of our knowledge is. The main epistemological stances in social research commonly are categorised into two main camps: *positivism* and *interpretivism* (Goodson and Phillimore, 2004, 34-35).

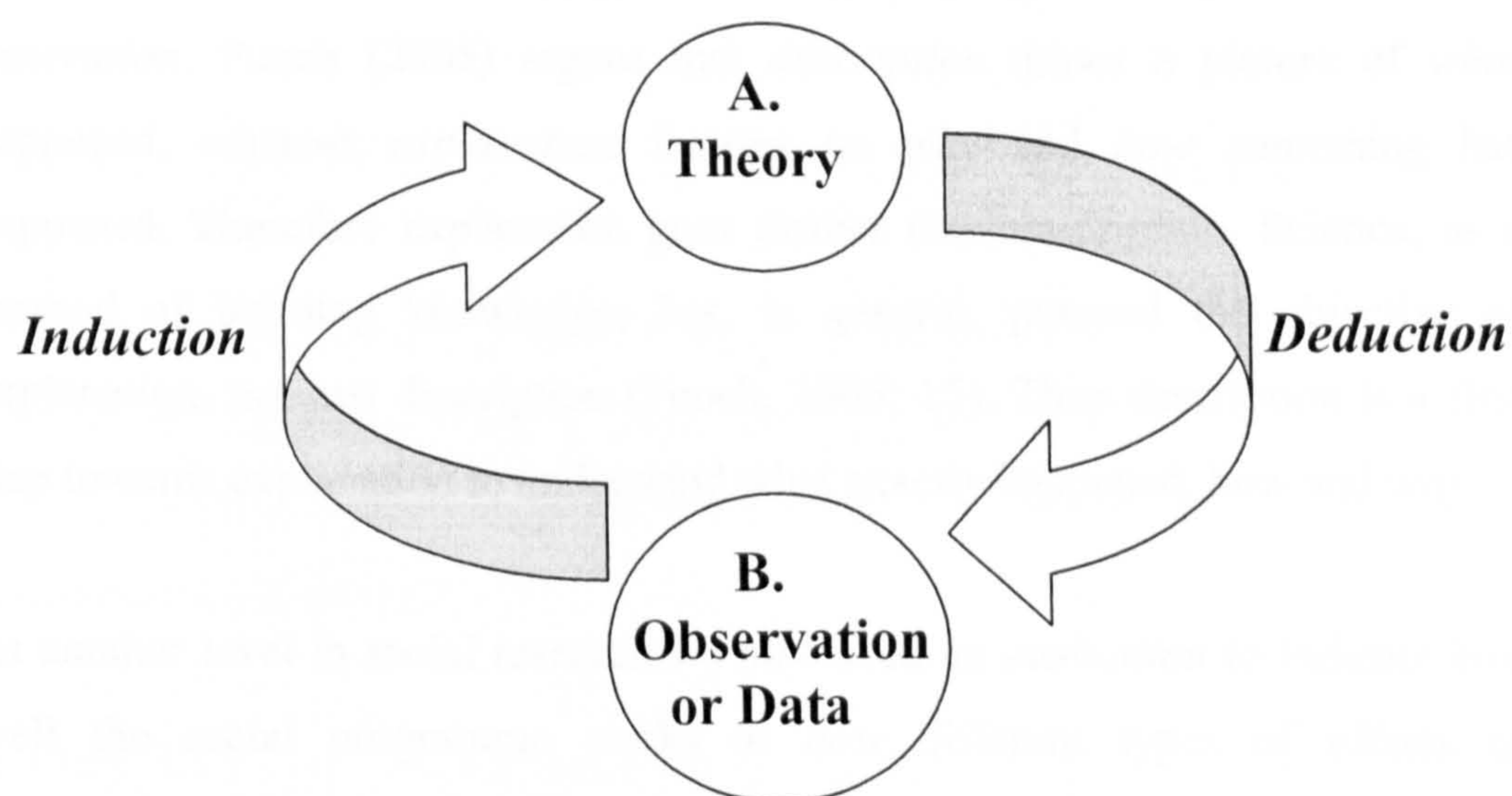
- ***Positivism***. By adopting the natural sciences methods into social enquiry (such as in the disciplines of economics and psychology research) positivism holds that it is possible to carry out independent, objective and value-free social research because human behaviour is governed by law-like regularities (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 23). Therefore the research methods in this paradigm should be objective and impartial as well as immune from the influence of researchers' values and beliefs (value-free). The *quantitative method* commonly deployed by the researchers in this paradigm is the social survey method or experiment (Clark, et al, 1998: 10). The quantitative data are common in *numerical form* or numbers (Punch, 2005: 55). Consequently the research undertaken is claimed to be objective and its findings to be capable of explanatory generalisation.
- The opposing view is ***interpretivism***. It claims that natural science methods are not appropriate for social investigation because the social world is not governed by regularities that hold law-like properties (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 14). Therefore, a social researcher has to explore and understand the social world through the participants' and their own perspectives; and explanations can only be offered at the level

of meaning rather than cause. *Qualitative research and/or method*, largely associated with interpretivism, use participant observation or ethnography, interview, documentary analysis etc. In this paradigm, as Punch (2005) claims, the researcher cannot be absolutely objective or value-free because in the social world the process of being studied affects people, therefore the findings are either mediated through the researcher (value-mediated) or they can be negotiated and agreed between the researcher and the research participants; moreover the researcher should make their assumptions transparent. Qualitative data therefore are not in the form of numbers but could include many different types of things such as interview transcripts, recording and notes, observational records and notes, documents and records of material culture, personal experience materials such as artefacts, diary information and narratives (Punch, 2005 56-57).

iii. **Methodology** concentrates on the issue of how the researcher collects knowledge about the world or reality (Goodson and Phillimore, 2004: 34). In other words methodology indicates a set of rules and procedures to guide research, whose claims can be evaluated. It is therefore fundamental to the construction of all forms of knowledge. Miller and Brewer (2003) argue that these rules and procedures are derived from the logical or philosophical basis of the discipline. Methodology therefore provides the tools whereby understanding is created but does not just depend on techniques for data gathering and analysis. Normally, methodology is claimed to be a *research design*, which includes how we conceptualise, theorise and make abstractions, and suggests the techniques or methods for data gathering and analysis. This research design can be in the form of *deduction and induction* (Miller and Brewer, 2003; Daly, 2003: 192). For some authors deduction and induction issues are discussed under the epistemological debate in which knowledge is acquired (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 14). Deduction research design is commonly associated with positivism, and induction with interpretive design.

Deduction and **Induction** are social research processes (see Figure 5.1). If the research process begins with theory at point A, and moves to observation and/or data analysis (point B), this process is described as *deductive*. If however, the research process starts at point B and moves to A, then it becomes *inductive*.

Figure 5.1: Social Sciences Research Processes of Deduction or Induction



Source: adapted from Punch, (2005: 12)

Clark *et al*, (1998) claim that *deduction* is the process, which begins with theory and proceeds through hypothesis, data collection, and testing of the hypothesis to deduce explanations of the behaviour of particular phenomena. *Induction* is the process whereby the exploration and analysis of related observations leads to the construction of a theory that systematically links such observations in a meaningful way (Clark, *et al*, 1998: 13). In other words, induction is the technique for generating theories and deduction is the technique for applying them (Gilbert, 1993: 23). Although qualitative research is often viewed as a predominantly inductive paradigm, both deduction and induction are involved at different stages of the qualitative process (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 23). In practice there is always an element of *deduction-induction* or *induction-*

deduction in flexible ways in the researcher's mind during the research process. It is impossible for the researcher to collect data straight away without some explanatory model in mind (Veal, 1992). Thus an element of deduction is needed. Then, it is impossible to develop hypotheses and theories without some early information on the subject in hand. So, an element of induction is needed.

In order to understand social phenomena or social problems we also need some different levels of understanding, i.e. *description*, *explanation*, *evaluation* and *generation*. Punch (2005) argues that *description* draws a picture of *what* happened, whereas *explanation* focuses on *why* and *how* something has happened. Therefore explanation goes further than description. Science, as a method of building knowledge, has, in general, pursued the objective of explanation, not just description (Punch, 2005: 15). Thus description is a first step towards explanation to understand what exactly happened, how and why.

At another level in social research we also need an *evaluation* to indicate *how* well the social programme works or *how* different types of effects or consequences arise from it. Then, we also need to *generate* new ideas either as a contribution to the development of social theory or to generate new solutions or determine the actions that are needed to make programmes, policies or services more effective (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 30-31). These different levels of understanding are commonly associated with the qualitative method. Therefore, the role of qualitative methods in contributing to social theory has a well-honoured heritage. Its applications in generating ideas and solutions for developing and reviewing policy and practices are as yet underexploited (Rist, 2000; Weiss, 1988). That is why the enhanced understanding of qualitative methods has taken place over the latter part of the twentieth century, with the increase in public consultation, and with changing review mechanisms for integrating policy and practice through demonstration projects (Ritchie, 2003: 31) such as ecotourism and nature conservation programmes.

To summarise the above discussion Goodson and Phillimore, (2004: 34) says that knowledge production relies heavily upon the *ontology* of the researcher or their definition of the reality. Their *epistemology* or what they count as knowledge depends on what they want knowledge about, while the kind of knowledge that they seek determines their *methodology*. The following discussion will illustrate how the stances of ontology, epistemology and methodology of this research have been made, and why.

5.3. Qualitative Methods Through Case Studies from the Perspective of Critical Ecotourism Research.

The main research strategy used in this research is the inductive or qualitative method through case studies from the perspective of critical ecotourism research (Lewis, 2003:51-52). There are a few main reasons why these choices are made in this research.

i. The research questions which were developed from the research problem as noted in chapter 1 are appropriate to *how* and *why* questions. These questions then became a focus of the study or research. For instance, one of the research questions in this research is:

a. *How* and *why* was ecotourism introduced in the Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah? To what extent did ecotourism development give positive or negative impacts on the socio-cultural life of the local community when it was implemented in this area more than 10 years ago? *How* and *why* did these impacts occur?

Therefore, the nature of data or information related to this type of research question is difficult to capture with quantitative methods because they are so fragile in their manifestation. The nature of the phenomenon is ethereal or unseeable (for example the socio-cultural impact on the local community). This is the *delicate* or *intangible* type of data, which might relate to the elusive nature of people's feelings or thoughts (Patton, 2002; Ritchie, 2003: 33).

Therefore carefully framed and responsive questioning or observation is needed to help participants uncover and relay the delicacy of their perceptions and responses. This is achievable through qualitative research methods.

ii. The objectives of this research lend themselves to qualitative methods. There is general agreement that the factors that determine whether qualitative methods should be the principal or sole method used are centrally related to the objectives of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In this research for example, one of the research objectives was (see Chapter 1 section 1.6. p. 15),

“to examine the host-guest relationship from the local community perspective of those involved in the homestay programme or who have participated in ecotourism activities generally in the village”.

The homestay programme and community participation in ecotourism are new issues in the Malaysian socio-economic development context. There is a lack of previous knowledge to explain and understand these social phenomena. Therefore, the open and generative nature of the qualitative method allows further exploration of these development policy-related issues (Ritchie, 2003: 32). Moreover, the study of ecotourism and community participation is a *complex* subject (Ritchie, 2003: 32), which involves interdisciplinary analysis and conceptual debates in sociology, anthropology, geography, and political dimensions (Belsky, 2004: 274). The complex nature of the subject matter can be appropriate for research using the qualitative method.

iii. The ontological stance of this research is taken from a *critical theory* perspective. This ontological stance actually is appropriate with a combination of the data collection methods and the qualitative case study. Critical theory does not hold that we can simply discover the truth by using the appropriate quantitative or qualitative methods per se. Haralambos and Holborn, (2000) have argued that instead it proposes that ‘knowledge is a process’ in which we move towards understanding the social world. Knowledge is never completed;

it is never finished, because the social world is constantly changing. Knowledge, moreover, can never be separated from values. As members of the social world, researchers are bound to be influenced by their values and those of society. However, their aim should be to try to get beyond the dominant values of society or ideology, to try to see what is going on underneath the surface (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000: 982).

Critical social scientists believe that it is not enough for social research to simply discover and record social behaviour. For it to be useful, the further stage of explaining that behaviour in terms of its socio-economic and cultural context is essential (Miler and Brewer, 2003; Porter, 2003: 60). Thus critical social scientists are not tied to any single research method. Critical researchers have used a full range of methods including questionnaires, interviews, case studies, ethnography and semiology. Unlike positivist and interpretive approaches to methodology, the emphasis is not so much upon the preferred technique, but upon the purpose of the research. Any method is permissible as long as that new knowledge has the potential to help to understand and change society (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000: 984). Certainly, a good deal of qualitative research is now conducted from a '*critical*' perspective. This is published in specialist journals, such as *Critique of Anthropology*, *Discourse and Society*; and *Ethnography* (Travers, 2001:112). But, it has also become part of mainstream work in disciplines like sociology and critical perspective on community based- tourism².

Therefore, this research is based on the premise that qualitative and quantitative methods should not necessarily be seen as competing or contradictory approaches to social research, but as *complementary strategies* appropriate to different types of research information or data rather than focusing too much on the underlying philosophical debates in social research (Seale, 1999; Snape and Spencer, 2003: 15). This complementary strategy is demonstrated in (Table 5.2. p. 143) as follows.

Table 5.1: Complementary Uses of Qualitative and Quantitative Data in Studying Linked Phenomena

Area of Investigation	Qualitative Investigation	Quantitative Measurement
GP consultations	Nature and content of interactions between GPs and patients	Length and frequency of consultations
Environmental conservation	Resistance against conservation practices	Level of participation in different conservation schemes
Child sex abuse	Circumstances in which child sexual abuse had arisen	Characteristics of people reporting child sexual abuse
Friendship	How friendships are gained and sustained	Size and characteristics of friendship networks
Gender roles in household financial system	Origins of female/male roles in household financial systems/how they evolved	Distribution of financial systems across different households

Source: Ritchie, (2003: 42).

iv. Qualitative research moreover is appropriate for the *case study* design in community ecotourism research³ (Belsky, 2004: 278). One of the great strengths of the case study is its flexibility (Robson, 1993: 148). Some authors refer to case studies as a '*strategy*' (Robson, 1993; Hartley, 1994; Eisenhardt, 2002), an '*approach*' (Rose, 1991; Hamel et al., 1993), or a '*method*' (Merriam, 1998; Smith, 1991) of undertaking research. This research then will refer to case studies as a strategy. The discussion on why this position is chosen will be elaborated on in the following section. Lewis (2003: 52), however, has outlined particular features of qualitative research associated with case studies i.e:

- the fact that only one case is selected, although it is also accepted that several may be selected (Bryman, 2001; Stake 2000);
- the study is detailed and intensive (Bryman, 2001; Platt 1988);
- the phenomenon is studied in context (Creswell, 1998; Holloway and Wheeler, 1996; Robson, 2002; Yin 2003);
- multiple data collection methods are used (Creswell, 1998; Hakim, 2000; Holloway and Wheeler, 1996; Robson, 2002; Yin, 2003)

5.4. Case Studies as a Research Strategy

According to Yin (2003) there are three conditions, which need to be satisfied before adopting case study or studies as a research strategy. These three conditions are related to each of the five major research strategies in social research. The *first* is the type of research question being posed. The *second* is the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events. The *third* is the degree of focus on contemporary events as opposed to historical events (Yin, 2003: 5).

In this research, therefore (see Chapter 1, section 1.4. p.12), many *how* and *why* questions are asked about a contemporary set of events, that is ecotourism development, where the investigator has little or no control over actual behavioural events. Thus, *case study* research was considered to be the most relevant strategy for this research (see Table 5.2. p. 145). Robson (1993) defined case study as follows:

“Case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using ‘multiple sources of evidence’⁴” (Robson, 1993: 52).

In this sense, the multiple sources of evidence commonly produce not only quantitative data, as is usual in surveys, but plentiful amounts of qualitative data as well (Robson, 1993: 5). A “case” may refer to a study of an individual, several individuals (as in multiple-case study), an event or an entity (Miller and Brewer, 2003: 22), or a single institution, community or social group (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000: 996). Therefore, in keeping with other approaches in qualitative research, the case study aims to understand the case in-depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case (Punch, 2005: 14). That is why the case study is more a strategy than a method in qualitative social research. In other words, although

the terms ‘qualitative’ and ‘case study’ are often used interchangeably, case study research can involve qualitative data only, quantitative only, or both (Eisenhardt, 2002:12; Huberman and Miles, 2002). This is the ‘flexibility’ feature of the case study.

Table 5.2: Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control of behavioural events?	Focuses on Contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/No
History	How, why?	No	No
Case study	How, why?	No	Yes

Source: Yin, (2003: 5).

5.4.1. The Case Studies Design

In any kind of research, there is always the need to have some kind of plan or *research design*, whether implicit or explicit in nature. This is also applied to the case study (Robson, 1993: 148). In general, a research design can be defined as the logical sequence but one which connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions (Yin, 2003). In other words, a research design is *a logical plan for getting from here to there*, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Between *‘here’* and *‘there’* may be found a number of major steps, including the collection and analysis of relevant data (Yin, 2003: 20). For case studies, there are five components of a research design which are inter-related as follows:

- i. *A study’s questions* as described in the above discussion. The case study strategy is more likely to be appropriate for “how” and “why” questions.

ii. *A study's proposition, if any.* Beside the main research question to guide the focus of this research, there are also three propositions, which have been developed from the literature review in this study particularly to examine the related issues in the case of Sukau village (see in Chapter 8 and 9). They are:

Proposition 1: The local community in Sukau village is heterogeneous. The community has variations in gender, age and ethnicity, and inequality in income and education levels, and is likely to be a mixture of individuals and groups. These mixed characteristics of the socio-economic background of the local community could lead to individuals and groups in the community having varied political perceptions and/or attitudes towards ecotourism development in the area.

Proposition 2: The implementation of ecotourism development in Sukau village has had a negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. This is for several reasons such as the lack of mutual understanding between the local people and the visitors, and the emergence of conflicts of interests between the local people and the other stakeholders in the destination area.

Proposition 3: Ecotourism development in the destination area has increased the participation or involvement of the local community in various types of new jobs opportunities, increased community involvement in the homestay programme, and increased involvement in the conservation programme. This involvement is, however, limited due to factors such as lack of skills and knowledge, lack of financial support and expertise, and they are not gaining “real benefits” from it.

In other words, the reasons why propositions have been used in the case of Sukau village, and not in the case of Batu Puteh are:

- The quantitative method has been adapted as the data collection method where face-to-face survey interviews are used to gain different types of information, particularly data regarding the socio-economic background of the local community of Sukau, the degree of negative and positive impacts, and the level of

community participation in ecotourism development. The resources for these types of data in the case of Sukau are very limited. The main role of the quantitative method here is just as a complementary method to gain the relevant data but it was in fact used for the purpose of *qualitative* research (Ritchie, 2003: 41) or *case study*.

- In the case of Batu Puteh, the data regarding the socio-economic background of the local people, the level of local participation in the homestay programme, and the level of side income from the homestay programme were based on documentary records provided by the Miso Walai Committee. Thus, the survey method was unnecessary because it was considered that time and cost of the research was limited.
- The propositions used in the case of Sukau, besides reflecting an important theoretical issue, also pay direct attention to ascertaining issues that should be examined within the scope of the study, and point to where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 2003: 22).

iii. *Its unit(s) of analysis*. This third component is related to the fundamental issue of defining what the case “is”. In this research therefore, the *case studies* or its units of analysis are “ecotourism development in the two destination areas of Sukau and Batu Puteh villages”. Then, the sub-units of analysis are “local community participation”, and the “impacts of ecotourism development on local communities”. Consequently, the case and sub-units of analysis of this study are defined by the research literature review and not by idiosyncratic statement (Yin, 2003: 26).

iv. *Linking data to propositions*; and (v) *criteria for interpreting the findings*. However, one useful approach to linking data to propositions and/or to interpreting the findings is through “*pattern matching logic*” where several pieces of information from the same case may be related to some theoretical proposition (Yin, 2003: 26). The other strategies to be considered are *explanation building*, *time series analysis*, *logic models*, and *cross-case synthesis*. These fourth and the fifth components of the case studies design are elaborated further in the section of *data analysis* (see section 5.5. p.155).

Therefore, Yin (2003) has subdivided case studies into single or multiple studies, with holistic or embedded units of analysis. There are four types of case study design based on a 2 x 2 matrix, which Yin uses to suggest four types of design (see Figure 5.2. p.149). For this research, the case studies design selected is *Type 4*. As mentioned above, ecotourism development in two villages has been selected as a *multiple case study* or multiple units of analysis, the sub-units of the analysis being “local community participation”, and the “impacts of ecotourism development on the local community”. It is in an *embedded design* because, in the case study of Sukau, a face-to-face interview survey (Yin, 2003: 52) was conducted with 200 villagers. For the case of Batu Puteh, the Miso Walai’s archival records are used to gain quantitative data about the level of villagers’ participation in the homestay programme etc.

The reasons why multiple case studies have been selected in this research, moreover, is because it contains a strong “*replication logic*”, and not “*sampling logic*” as commonly used in surveys. Each case was carefully selected because it either (a) predicts similar results (literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication). Therefore a few cases (2 or 3) would be literal replications, and the importance of these replication procedures is the development of a rich

theoretical framework (Yin, 2003: 47). The replication approach to multiple-case studies for this research is illustrated in (Figure 5.3. p.150).

Figure 5.2: Types of Designs for Case Study

	Single case-designs	Multiple case designs
Holistic (single unit of analysis)	Type 1	Type 3
Embedded (multiple units of analysis)	Type 2	Type 4

Source: adapted from Yin, (2003: 40)

Figure 5.3 shows that there are four stages or phases in designing multiple case studies in this research (Yin, 2003: 49-50). These are:

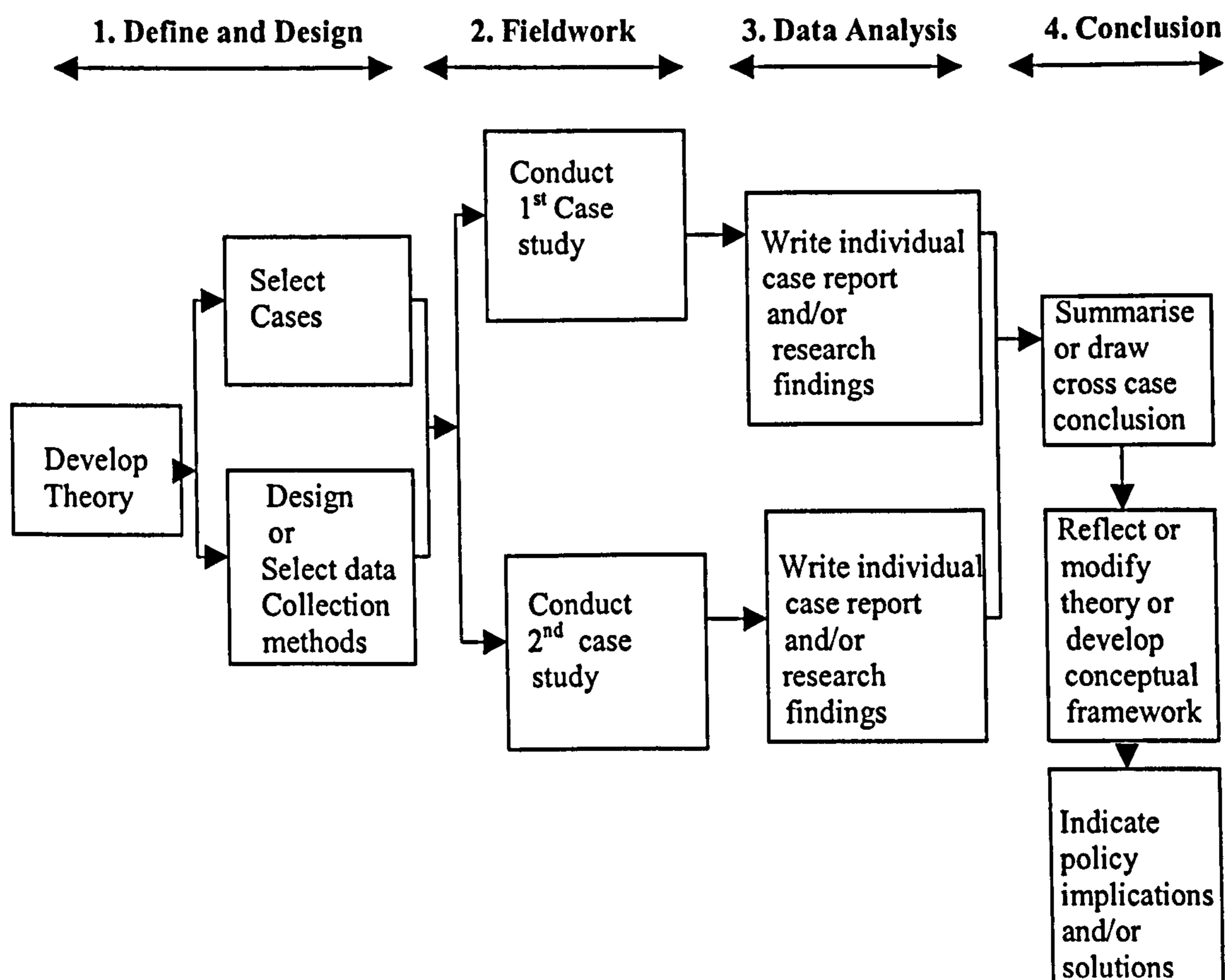
Stage 1 - the define and design phase, in which the initial step in designing the study must consist of theory development case selections, data collection method and process specifically.

Stage 2 - conducting the fieldwork according to each individual case study. Each individual case study is considered as a “whole” study, in which convergent evidence is sought regarding the facts and conclusion for the case.

Stage 3 - data analysis. All the individual case results can and should be the focus of a summary report or research findings. For the individual case, the report should indicate how and why a particular proposition was demonstrated (or not demonstrated). The purpose of this proposition, however, is not to make a complex statistical test or to test the theory with collected data, but as guidance or a focus for this research as mentioned earlier.

Stage 4 - conclusion. Summarises and/or draws cross-case conclusions, which should indicate the extent of replication logic and why certain cases were predicted to have certain results, whereas others, if any, were predicted to have contrasting results.

Figure 5.3: Case Study Method



Source: adapted from Yin, (2003: 50)

5.4.2. A Combination of Data Collection Methods in the Case Studies

There are several data collection methods or techniques deployed in this research. In the case of Batu Puteh, the data collection methods used included the *adapted participant observation method, focused and in-depth interviews,* and *documentary research* (see Chapter, 7 section 7.2. p.191) for further elaborations on how and why these methods were deployed during the fieldwork in Batu Puteh). In Sukau village, the same data collection methods

were deployed but in addition, a *face-to-face interview survey* was used as a complementary method. As mentioned above, this method is used in the case of Sukau because there are different types of data needed where the information on socio-economic background of the villagers of Sukau is particularly limited (see chapter 8 section 8.2.2. (ii). p. 256) for further elaborations on how and why these methods were deployed during fieldwork in Sukau village).

The main reason why this data collection is discussed specifically in the individual case (or Chapter) is because in so doing it could increase the reader's consciousness and feeling about how the process of data collection is implemented at particular times in particular places with particular people in the "real" life context (Robson, 1993: 165). In other words, a combined approach can improve the *validity* of the research where qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the same study, and the findings of one investigation can be checked against the findings from the other type. This is what is usually meant by "triangulation" (Finn, et al, 2000: 9).

5.4.3. The Adapted Stakeholder-based Evaluation Approach

Another reason this combined approach is applied is because this research, to some extent, is also considered and adapted from "the stakeholder-base evaluation approach" (Mark and Shotland, 1985: 606). There are several stakeholders involved in ecotourism-related-conservation development in Sukau Village. There is the Sabah Forest Department, the private lodge investors, the Sabah Wildlife Department, the World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia (WWF), the KOCP (Kinabatangan Orang-utan Conservation Project), the MESCOT (Model of Ecologically Sustainable Community), the local community and the tourists. To indicate the conflict of interests within these multiple stakeholders the evaluation will be limited to their responses to the impact on their interests by the conservation programme of Kinabatangan Area. In other words, this evaluation strategy, as termed by Mark and Shotland

(1985:606), is a “stakeholder-based evaluation” or “participatory evaluation”. Why does this approach make sense in the evaluation process? According to Mark and Shotland (1985) there are three major reasons for pursuing a “participatory evaluation”:

i). In the stakeholder-based evaluation, the evaluator is able to work closely with those various groups who have a vested interest in the programme, but at the same time can also identify the most important issues from the perspectives of the other stakeholders. By consulting different groups in the evaluation process he/she can make those stakeholders feel that they are active participants in the whole process. Then, it seems reasonable to address the relevant issues because they are committed to the exercise.

ii). By adopting this approach, we can provide the views of the participants on conservation project-related tourism. In many cases in Sabah, when it comes to policy decision-making and implementation, the views of local people in the site of the programme are not taken into serious consideration or regarded “objectively”. The decisions made have regularly favoured “those who are in power at the local level but do not represent the true wishes of the people” (Sherlock, 2002:5). Thus, the issue of decision-making is all about conflict and negotiation processes, and will be a very important element of this research.

iii). A stakeholder-based approach can offer an opportunity for a wide range of groups to bring their concerns to the attention of those who have the power to change existing programmes or to review the ways of implementation of the policy. According to Clarke and Dawson, this approach to evaluation research displays a potential for democratising the decision-making process because the least powerful stakeholder groups can make their feelings known, and at the same time can motivate and empower them (Clarke and Dawson, 1999:19). In other words, this evaluation activity will be related to a political dimension which Smith and Cantley (1985) have called “pluralistic evaluation”. In this

manner, qualitative research methods are appropriate when conducting this type of evaluation. In this evaluation research, however, we would like to adopt methods in a “flexible” way because whilst the main evaluation focus is about the views of diverse interest groups on the conservation programme, it is also important to review how the ecotourism policy is implemented.

5.4.4. Sampling Strategies in qualitative research

Whether the research is qualitative or quantitative, sampling is required because the researcher cannot observe or record everything that occurs but, although the study involves very small populations or single case studies, decisions still need to be made about people, life experiences, settings or actions (Burgess, 1982a; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003; Punch, 2005: 101). Thus, in this research the two types of sampling are applied as follows:

- i. *Probability-sampling method.* As mentioned earlier, the face-to-face interview survey method (structured and semi-structured questionnaire) was used in case of Sukau village. According to WWF Malaysia’s statistics the total population of Sukau is approximately 2000. The sample size for this survey is 10% of the total population, i.e. 200. Through this sampling method each respondent in the population has a high probability of being chosen through a *simple random sample*. This meant each respondent in the population had an equal (and non-zero) chance of being selected (Gilbert, 1993: 71-72). Those villagers (male or female) living in Sukau village, and aged between 16 years old and 55 years old or above were chosen as respondents (see Chapter 8 section 8.2.2 (ii). p.256). From this sampling, statistical inferences about the population can be made from the responses of the sample (Robson, 1993: 136), particularly the data or information on age, sex, income level, educational etc (see Appendix III. p.8-26). These data, in qualitative research however, are not intended to generalise the

research findings (statistical generalisation), but rather to strengthen and support the qualitative data and theory generalisation of the qualitative research findings.

- ii. *Non-probability samples.* In this type of sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of, or groups within, the sample population. Once again the sample is not intended to be statistically representative: the chances of selection for each element are unknown but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003: 78). Therefore it is well suited to small-scale sample sizes, and in-depth studies or case studies. In this research, *purposive samplings* were used for the villages of Batu Puteh and Sukau. In purposive sampling, the sample units are chosen with a 'purpose' to represent particular features or characteristics, which enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003: 78). These may be socio-demographic characteristics, or may relate to specific experiences, behaviours, roles, issues etc. This research indirectly adapted a stakeholder-based evaluation approach as mentioned above, and therefore it matches with the purposive sampling because the samples are small in size but the people selected for in-depth interviews purposes have given richly detailed information regarding ecotourism development and community participation-related issues in the specifically in each case.

Consequently, the sample size of this research, type of respondents or key informants, and data collection methods are categorised as shown in (Table 5.3. p.155).

5.5. Data Analysis

There are two types of data analysis in this research: quantitative and qualitative.

i. Quantitative data analysis

These data are gained through 200 sets of interview survey questionnaires, answered by respondents in Sukau village. The SPSS computer programme is used to analyse these data. Every answer for every question in the questionnaire was given a code, for instance the nominal variable for gender was categorised as male=1, female=2. Then, by using the recode procedure in SPSS, these data was entered in the SPSS programme (Finn, et al, 2000: 164).

Table 5.3: The Sampling Strategy of the Research

Number of Respondent or Informant	Type of Respondent or Informant	Data Collection Methods
<i>Probability-sampling method</i>		
200	Local Residents of Sukau village	Face-to-face survey interview (Structured, semi-structured, and Likert scale questions)
<i>Purposive- sampling method</i>		
1 - The Chairman of Village Committee 1 - KOCP Director 1 - Tourist Guide 1 - Community Development Co-ordinator 4 - Boatmen 1 - Fisherman	Local Residents of Sukau Village	Formal, focus and in-depth interviews (used tape recorder)
1 - Sukau Head Village 1 - Police officer as a WARISAN Director 1 - School Head Teachers 4 - Homestay Participants	Local Residents of Sukau Village	Informal Interviews (fieldwork notebook)
1 - MESCOT Director 1 - Miso Walai Homestay Chairman 4 - Participants of Homestay programme	Local Residents of Batu Puteh	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)

4 - Local residents	Local Residents of Batu Puteh	Informal interviews (fieldwork notebook)
3 - Private Tourist Lodge Managers	1- Sukau Rainforest Lodges 1- Wildlife Expeditions Sukau River Lodge 1- Old Ben Kinabatangan Riverside Lodge	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)
1- Oil Palm Estate Manager	Sri Kuang Estate Development Sdn Bhd in Sukau	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)
1 - WWF Officer	WWF Malaysia Office in Kota Kinabalu	Formal, focused and in-dept interview (used tape recorder)
1 – Ministry Officer	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah in Kota Kinabalu	Formal, focus and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)
1 - Government Agency Officer	District Officer of Kinabatangan	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)
1 - Government Agency Officer	Sabah Forestry Department in Kinabatangan	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)
1- Government Agency Officer	Sabah Wildlife Department in Kinabatangan	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)
1- Semi-Government Agency Officer	Sabah Tourism Board	Formal, focused and in-depth interview (used tape recorder)

Total = **36** respondents or informants for purposive sampling method
Source: Data from the Fieldwork, 2003

The data results were then produced in the form of descriptive statistics such as simple *frequency distributions* where *absolute numbers and/or percentages* are produced according to how many respondents achieved each score, or gave each response, or fell into each category (Punch, 2005: 111). Then, the results of this frequency distribution are demonstrated in form of tables, histograms, bar charts and pie charts (see chapter 8 and 9). In the case of Batu Puteh the

descriptive statistic data gained from document or archival records provided by Miso Walai Committee were selected and quoted directly in the analysis.

ii. Qualitative data analysis

In this research, all recorded interviews from every tape had been transcribed, and transformed into individual transcripts. The informal interviews and direct observation information remain in the form of written fieldwork notes. Therefore qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental to the analyst’s role (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002: 309). To facilitate such detection, the data analysis depended on the research questions being addressed in this research. The process of qualitative data analysis commonly falls into three stages (Patton, 1980):

- *Analysis*: the process where the data are organised, categorised, patterns, and bridging.
- *Interpretation* involves giving meanings to data, explaining relationships and linkages among descriptive patterns or dimensions.
- *Evaluation* includes making judgements about and assigning value to what has been analysed and interpreted.

Ritchie and Spencer (2002) have suggested five key stages to analysing qualitative data as shown in (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Stages in qualitative data analysis

Stage of analysis	Data analysis process
1	Familiarisation
2	Identifying a thematic framework
3	Indexing
4	Charting
5	Mapping and interpretation

Source: adapted from Ritchie and Spencer, (2002: 31)

Yin, (2003) has suggested three general strategies for analysing case study data:

- i. *Relying on theoretical propositions.* This is the most preferred strategy because the theoretical propositions will lead or guide one to the original objectives and design of the case study, which in turn are reflected in a set of research questions, and reviews of the literature. Clearly, the proposition helps to focus attention on certain data, and to ignore other data (Yin, 2003: 112).
- ii. *Thinking about rival explanations.* This strategy can be related to the first, in that the original theoretical propositions might have included rival hypotheses. This strategy is especially useful in doing case study evaluations.
- iii. *Developing a case description.* This strategy can serve as an alternative when the original purpose of the case study may have been a descriptive one.

These three strategies underlie the specific analytic techniques or ‘framework’ as suggested by Ritchie and Spencer as mentioned above for conducting case studies or qualitative analysis. Therefore, in this research the techniques of data analysis adapt the framework suggested by Ritchie and Spencer (2002) as follows:

- *Familiarisation:* The recorded interviews are transformed into transcripts. During the transcribing process the researcher listens to the tape repeatedly and writes up the conversation. Transcribing also includes typing up the interviews into transcripts. Then, the transcripts are read repeatedly in order to identify the key issues and emergent themes (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002:312). What is important at this stage is to set these issues and/or themes firmly in context by taking stock and gaining a feel for the materials as a whole.

- *Identifying the themes*: While reviewing the material, the analyst makes notes, of the responses to questions posed by the researcher, and jots down recurrent themes and issues, which emerge as important to the respondents themselves.

In this research for instance, the main themes of the research findings identified by researcher in the case of Sukau (Chapter 8 and 9) are:

- the socio-economic background of the local community in Sukau,
 - the negative impact of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community,
 - the existence of conflicts of interests between the local community and other stakeholders,
 - the positive impact of ecotourism on the local community
 - the limitations of local community participation in ecotourism development.
- *Indexing and charting*: For every main theme, there are sub-themes, identified through the process of sifting, sorting, *indexing* and *charting* from interview transcripts (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002: 316-317). These processes are also involved in the data from survey interviews.
 - *Mapping and interpretations*: When all the data have been sifted and charted according to core themes, the analyst begins to pull together key characteristics of data, and to map and interpret the data set as a whole. The development of themes in this research is illustrated below in (Figure 5.4. p.162) particularly on the theme “ecotourism development impacts on local community”. Then, in the final stage, the researcher interprets and gives meaning to the displayed data in its context. In other words, he/she explains people’s attitudes, experiences and behaviour towards ecotourism development related-issues (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002: 324-325). The

same technique was applied to the main theme and sub-themes in Batu Puteh (Chapter 7).

Most of the transcripts in this research remain in the Malay Language in their original form as they were recorded in the field. In order to interpret the meaning of the findings, any related interview quotations were translated into English by the researcher. The *reliability* of these translation quotations was checked and verified by two other Malay-speaking research students, one from Department of Management, and is the other from the Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow, to ensure that they had been accurately interpreted and do not merely reflect the researcher's idiosyncratic view of the world (Boyatzis, 1998). All the data analysis in this research was done through the "manual method" (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2003: 217), in which computer software, such as CAQDAS packages like Nudist and WinMax, was not used. This is because most of the transcripts were Malay and this qualitative software package was not available in a Malay version.

Generalisation issues in Qualitative Research: Qualitative research findings, through a case studies strategy, has been criticised by quantitative social researchers as lacking in 'generalisation'. The concept of generalisation, however, is related to three linked but separate concepts (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003: 64) as follows:

- *Representational generalisation:* the question is how far the findings from a study can be generalised to the specific population from which the study sample was drawn (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003: 265). Some authors prefer the terms "transferability" or "external validity" of findings to describe this term (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).
- *Inferential generalisation* raises the question of whether the findings from a particular study can be generalised, or inferred, to other settings or contexts beyond the sample one.

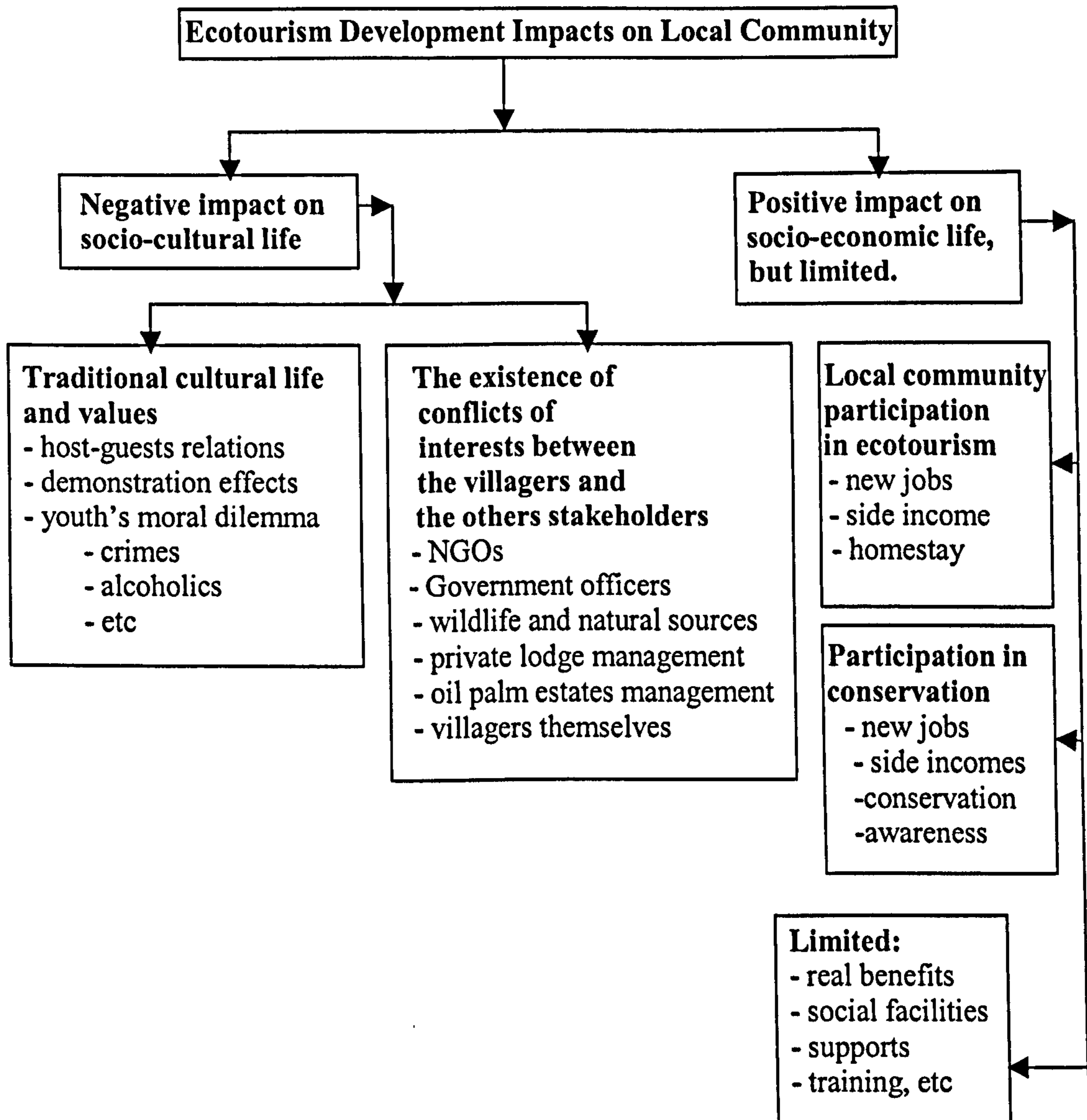
- *Theoretical generalisation* raises the question of whether theoretical propositions, principles or statements from the findings can be drawn from a study for more general application.

The criticisms are generally based on the fact that qualitative research involves relatively small samples, which are not selected to be statistically representative (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Arksey and Knight, 1999), and the use of non-standardised interviewing could expose the study to the risk of bias in research findings (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996). In qualitative or case study research however, the basis for representational generalisation is very different from quantitative research.

Qualitative research cannot be generalised on a statistical basis (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003: 269) (statistical generalisation), rather, it is ‘analytical generalisation’ (Yin, 2003) or a ‘map’ of the range of views, experiences, outcomes or other phenomena under study, and the factors and circumstances that shape and influence them, that can be inferred to the researched population (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003: 269). This is because, although individual variants of circumstances, views or experiences would undoubtedly be found within the parent population, it is at the level of categories, concepts and explanation that generalisation can take place. This is the “credibility” (or internal validity) of findings in qualitative study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Through multiple-case designs (even if only two case studies are done), the contexts of the two cases are likely to differ to some extent. But the analytical conclusions arising from each of these two cases will be more powerful than those coming from a single case because the findings have offered contrasting situations (Yin, 2003:53). Consequently, this type of analytical conclusion expands the external generalisation or strengthens the *external validity* (the term commonly used in quantitative research) of research findings compared to those from a single case alone. Therefore, the term ‘external validity’ in this context is equal to the term

'transferability' or 'generalisability' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of research findings in qualitative research or case studies.

Figure 5.4: Thematic and Mapping Technique for Qualitative Data Analysis of the Research



Source: adapted from Ritchie and Spencer, (2003: 324)

5. 6. Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has justified how and why a qualitative approach through case studies research design was selected for this study. A combination of data collection methods was applied during the fieldwork such as adapted participant observations method, face-to-face survey interviews, focus and in-depth interviews, and documentary research. This approach is considered appropriate because it is capable of linking the research questions, the research propositions, a combination of data collection methods and a combination of data analysis techniques, (thematic analysis and statistic analysis) in systematic ways according to the “social scientific” manner (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3). Then, the research findings produced from the two case studies of Batu Puteh and Sukau village, categorised as “analytical generalisation” as demonstrated in Chapter 7, 8 and 9, are appropriate for qualitative or case-studies social research in the context of ecotourism studies.

Endnotes

¹ Materialism is the most difficult position to sustain within qualitative research because qualitative research focuses directly on meaning and interpretation and is not based on the reality of material world. “Critical theorists” however can be considered as neo-materialists. For instance, Bhasker (1978), Hammersley (1992) believed that social structures based on class, race or gendered are experienced as having an external, immutable reality or subjective reality as well (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 13).

² See Blackstock, K. (2005) A Critical look at community-based tourism. *Community Development Journal*, 40 (1): 39-49).

³ Belsky (2004) “Contribution of qualitative research to understanding the politics of community ecotourism”. pp. 273-291. In, Phillimore and Goodson (eds) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies*. London and New York: Routledge. See section on ‘critical reflections on ecotourism research in Belize’ page 278.

⁴ Researchers tend to use multiple source of evidence, including archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and/or physical artefacts (see Hird, M.J. (2003). pp. 22-24 in Miller and Brewer, 2003).

Chapter 6

Tourism and Ecotourism Development in Malaysia: An Overview

6.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss an overview of how tourism and ecotourism development has taken place in Malaysia since the 1970s until recently. The discussions in this chapter are divided into five main sections as follows:

- The *first* section is introduction.
- The *second* is about tourism development in Malaysia.
- The *third* discusses why there was a decline in tourist arrivals in Malaysia.
- The *fourth* is focused on how and why ecotourism development has been incorporated into Malaysia's national development agenda.
- The *fifth* is about the implementation of ecotourism and the importance of local community participation in this development process. Case studies for this research are Sukau and Batu Puteh village in Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah.
- The *sixth* section is the conclusion.

6.2. Tourism Development in Malaysia

Recently, as predicted by Kajiwara, tourism is the largest industrial sector in the world and it is expected to maintain that distinction until the middle of the 21st century (Kajiwara, 1997:164). The development of tourism in Malaysia has received serious attention from development planners and policymakers in the country as a tool of development from the 1970s. Earlier than that, estimates show that Malaysia received some 25,000 tourists in 1959, and some 36,000 in 1963. In 1972 the government established the Tourism Development Corporations of Malaysia (TDCM) so that tourism products could be developed

and promoted systematically. Tourist arrivals to Malaysia increased at a growth rate of 6.5% from 2.3 million in 1980, to 3.1 million in 1985 (Hamzah, 1986:2). As mentioned by Yahya Ibrahim (2002), the reasons why the tourism sector became more important to Malaysia in those decades are:

- a. The price of most major commodity exports such as rubber, tin and rain forest timber was not stable on the international market, harming Malaysia's economic progress and development.
- b. In 1972, Malaysia conducted the 21st Pacific Asia Tourism Associations Conference (PATA) in Kuala Lumpur. As a result, Malaysia was appointed as a Chair of the PATA Committee for three years (1972-1975). This task to promote the ASEAN region as a tourist destination through various marketing mechanisms and strategies, gave Malaysia the knowledge and skills to develop Malaysia's own tourism industry.
- c. In 1986, once again Malaysia was chosen to host the 35th PATA Conference. As a consequence, Malaysia attained huge international media coverage, especially for its own tourism products and developments. On 19th May 1987, the government introduced the "1st Malaysia Fest" with its major aim to promote Malaysian cultural activities, recreations and sports events, marketing local arts and handicrafts and so on.

At that time, the strategies employed were for mass tourism development in Malaysia. The tourist growth rate continuously expanded to higher levels until it reached its peak height in the year 1990 with an average arrival growth of 55.5 per cent bringing in RM4, 473.00 million in total tourism revenues (see Table 6.1. p.168). As a new comer to tourism, most of the tourism policy makers argued that this growth signalled the potential for a remarkable tourist development.

In 1990s, however, the tourism policy makers in Malaysia began to realise that the growth of “mass tourism” could have some problems in maintaining the tourists arrival rates because of regional competition from ASEAN country neighbours, the emergence of international tourism related-security issues such as terrorism and so forth. The main concern of the Malaysian government towards tourism, nowadays, is about “*sustainable tourism development*” rather than just to achieve high growth rates in tourist arrivals every year. Thus, this chapter intends to explore why this notion has occurred and how does the Malaysian government plan make sense in order to achieve its tourism “niche market” in the future.

6.3. The Decline in Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia

In 1991, the government introduced what has been called “the National Tourism Policy” (NTP). The NTP was enforced by government as an action plan and framework for tourism development in the decade of the 1990s to 2000. The general objectives of the NTP in 1991 were:

- i. To increase foreign currency exchange.
- ii. To stimulate rural economic development.
- iii. To increase new opportunities in domestic trade and businesses.
- iv. To ensure every ethnic group of Malaysia’s population participates in the tourism industry.
- v. To promote positive images of the state at the international level.

In relation to the emergence of NTP, the government has taken various actions and measurements in order to implement the NTP. These include (Hamzah, 1986: 3):

- i. The Formation of the Cabinet Committee on Tourism under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister to formulate and review policies affecting tourism development.

- ii. An introduction of tax incentives for tourism projects, both for accommodation and non-accommodation projects invested by tour operators especially by local investors.
- iii. The reduction of the government Service Tax from 10% to 5% to ensure lower costs in term of room and restaurant charges.
- iv. Reduction of electricity tariff rates for the hotel industry to help hotels in Malaysia to become more price competitive with other regional ASEAN destinations.
- v. The establishment of the New Investment Fund (NIF). Its major aim is to provide attractive financial assistance such as extended loans on approved tourism projects.

As a result, a big jump occurred in 1990 when tourist arrivals increased dramatically by 55.5 per cent. However, after the Visit Malaysia Year promotion in 1990, Malaysian tourism underwent a period of stagnation from 1995-1998. Even earlier than 1991 there was decline in growth rates of tourist arrivals in Malaysia of -21.7 per cent, then it declined again by -4.4 per cent in 1996, by -13.0 per cent in 1997, by -10.6 per cent in 1997. In 1999, the tourist arrival growth rates in Malaysia returned to a positive track with an increase of 42.9 per cent but it then declined by 28.9 per cent in 2000 with a further decline of 25.0 per cent in 2001 (Tourism Malaysia, 2001), and -20.4 per cent in 2003 (see Table 6.1. p. 168).

There are a number of reasons why these declines in tourist arrivals took place in Malaysia:

- i. In the early phase of tourist development in Malaysia, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism of Malaysia established by the government in 1989 commissioned a national tourism policy and study. Thus, the management and coordination of tourism policies within the government bodies and private sector became more effective. For some tourist analysts such as Din (1997b), the establishment of the

Ministry in fact was very useful and good for tourism development in Malaysia. But, the ways the tourism official thinks and works is still restricted: they regularly took for granted that the cultural elements of a plural society are attractive to foreign tourists; in fact they do not conceptualise that a national culture is an attractive tourism product.

Table 6.1: Total Tourist Arrival and Total Tourism Revenue in Malaysia (1980 to September 2005)

Year	Total Tourist Arrival	Average Growth Arrival (%)	Tourism Revenue (RM million)	Average Growth Revenue (%)
1980	2,067,020	1.4	618.9	25.0
1981	2,344,933	13.5	867.3	40.3
1982	2,588,772	10.4	1,019.0	17.5
1983	2,750,397	6.2	1,329.0	19.2
1984	2,779,081	1.0	1,426.0	7.4
1985	2,933,271	5.6	1,543.0	8.2
1986	3,217,462	9.7	1,669.0	8.3
1987	3,358,983	4.4	1,795.0	7.7
1988	3,623,636	7.9	2,012.0	11.3
1989	4,553,392	25.7	2,803.0	39.3
1990	7,079,107	55.5	4,473.0	59.6
1991	5,543,376	-21.7	4,282.6	-43
1992	5,687,247	2.6	4,419.6	3.2
1993	5,503,860	8.1	5,066.0	10.2
1994	7,197,229	10.7	8,298.0	63.8
1995	7,468,749	3.8	9,174.9	10.6
1996	7,138,452	-4.4	1,0354.1	12.9
1997	6,210,921	-13.0	9,699.6	-6.3
1998	5,550,748	-10.6	8,580.4	-11.5
1999	7,931,149	42.9	12,321.3	43.6
2000*	10,221,582	28.9	17,335.4	40.7
2001*	12,775,073	25.0	24,221.5	39.7
2002**	13,292,010	4.0	25,781.1	6.4
2003**	10,576,915	-20.4	21,291.1	-17.4
2004**	15,703,406	48.5	29,651.4	39.3
2005** (From January to September)	12,213,767	4.3	-	-

Source: Adapted from Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) various years.

* Data gathered from Tourism Malaysia, 2000a and 2001

<http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my>

** Data gathered from Tourism Malaysia

http://www.tourism.gov.my/statistic/tourist_receipts.asp

(Accessed on 12.01.2005, and 10.01.2006).

- ii. Malaysia is lacking in image and identity to promote tourism as compared with Thailand or Singapore. It does not have the brash, racy image of Thailand's nightlife, or the modern urban image of Singapore (Yamashita, 2001). It is hard for Malaysia to compete in tourism with its neighbours.
- iii. The Malaysia government introduced the programme "1st Visit Malaysia Year" in 1990. Then the same programme called "2nd Visit Malaysia Year" followed in 1995. The growth of tourist arrival in Malaysia, however, is still on a downward trend. The government explains this negative trend being due to smoke problems from forest burning in the Southeast Asia region (Khan, Toh and Fathima, 2001:225), the spread of Coxsackie's syndromes and Japanese encephalitis viruses in Malaysia. Political economy analysts argue that the negative trends actually relate more to the Asian economic crisis. This was followed by Malaysia's domestic political crisis when the fight between political leaders Anwar Ibrahim and Dr Mahathir received international mass media attention in 1997-1998. All these events, in fact, have given a negative image to Malaysia's tourism industry.
- iv. There is disparity in the tourist arrival distribution rate for a destination in Malaysia (see Table 6.2. p.170) within 1998-1999. For instance peninsular Malaysia received 94.4% of the tourist arrivals, while only 3.3% visited Sarawak, and 1.8% visited Sabah respectively. The official reason is that Sabah and Sarawak are located on Borneo Island, far from the mainland capital, and the Malaysian airfares are expensive (Yamashita,

2001: 2). As a consequence Sabah and Sarawak have been backward in term of mass tourism development in Malaysia.

- v. In 1999, the Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism, introduced a new promotion theme for tourism called “*Malaysia Truly Asia*”. What the theme means is that, if international tourists visit Malaysia, they will actually find it not a single just culture but a variety of Asia’s cultures (Abd Jalil Ali & Ahmad Yani, 2000). In other words the Ministry pushed the diversity of Malaysia’s culture as a new product. In the short term, this strategy was successful, the growth rate of international tourist arrivals to Malaysia were 7.9 million in 1999, compared to were only 5.5 million tourists in 1998 (see Table 6.4). But, the step taken by the Ministry was quite late, because “culture” was not receiving special attention before the year 2000. In the same time, this strategy did not reflect an effective “image” of Malaysia’s traditional culture but more a “mix dance culture” show of the society. Malaysia’s tourism niche product is still not clear.

Table 6.2: The Distribution Tourist Arrival in Main Domestic Area/Region in Malaysia (1998-1999)

Main Domestic Tourist Destination	1998	Tourist Arrival Growth Average (%)	1999	Changes (%)
Peninsular Malaysia	7,483,823	94.4	5,203,355	+ 43.8
Sarawak	264,285	3.3	195,051	+ 35.5
Sabah	142,982	1.8	106,494	+ 34.3
Labuan	40,054	0.5	45,848	- 12.6
Malaysia	7,931,149	100	5,550,748	+ 42.9

Source: Adapted from Malaysia, 1989 and 1999

- vi. Although there is positive impact of tourism industry in Malaysia, for instance, to support the preservation of the traditional cultures such as stage performances and handicraft productions, in general the tourism industry has been criticised because of its negative impact on Malaysian society (Bird 1989, Din 1997b). It is claimed that the tourism industry has inevitably led to a more materialistic lifestyle, which are readily imitated by local populations (Din, 1997b: 112). Accordingly, it is regularly cited that tourism is involved with prostitution, alcoholic consumption, drugs, voyeurism, gambling, and indulgence in recreational clubs and hotel culture, which all encourage a permissive lifestyle which is conflictive with the traditional values of a large section of the Malaysian society. At one stage, all these issues became political with a dispute between the coalition National Front (Barisan Nasional) and the alternative opposition coalition, led by PAS (Malaysia Islamic Party). PAS argued that the tourism industry does not bring positive social benefits, especially to the young: instead it creates social problems.

These criticisms and the negative impacts of tourism in Malaysia, and the realisation that the tourism industry regularly faces uneven tourist arrivals because of competition in the regional tourism market, has forced tourism policy makers to search for a new tourist icon for Malaysia. Finally, in the Eight Malaysia Plan, 2001-2005 (RMK 8) the government announced their future tourism plan to be a “niche” market plan: “ecotourism” development in Malaysia.

6.4. Ecotourism Development in Malaysia

A joint conference organised by the Malaysia Tourism Co-operation (MTC), the State Government of Selangor and Triways Holding (M) Sdn Bhd: “***Sustainable Ecotourism Development: Concept and Approach***” was held on 29th October 2001 to 31st October 2001. This initiative should have been taken by the MTC earlier than that because the country has plenty of attractive natural sites such as tropical rain forests, beaches, rivers, mountains, limestone caves, waterfalls, islands, marine life, wildlife, flora and fauna. These natural assets were not seriously developed as a tourism “niche” products in Malaysia since the 1970s, rather they were developed as protected areas *per se*.

Tourist officials began to promote the “National Parks of Malaysia” in the year 2000 as a new tourism product. The tourist brochure guides produced by Tourism Malaysia; Ministry of Culture, Arts & Tourism promoted products such as:

“Malaysia’s *forests* are indisputably the *oldest* in the world and its National Parks are *showcases* of its *rich natural* heritage”.

and,

“There’s the chance to see and do something different – something beyond the normal tourist sights and pursuits. Experience the tranquillity of being one with nature in all its glory, in our National Parks. Here, within the awesome splendour of our virgin rainforests, beneath the cool shady canopy of trees hundreds of years old, one comes to realise that “conservation” is not a mere concept but a way of life – that “bio-diversity” is here to stay!” (Tourism Malaysia, 2000b: 3-4).

The “National Parks” brochure gave a general description of the parks, the specific location of the parks, *how to get there*, the tourist-related-activities, the accommodation facilities, park regulations and guidelines for visitors and so forth (see Table 6.3. p. 174).

Earlier in 1995, the Malaysia's Ecotourism Master Plan was formulated by the Ministry of Culture, Arts & Tourism and accepted by the government in 1996 (Saat, 2001:1). The main objective of the Ecotourism Master Plan was to assist both the Federal and State Governments in Malaysia to develop their ecotourism potential. The plan also intended to serve both as an appropriate instrument for the overall sustainable development of Malaysia's economy as a whole, and as an effective tool for conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the country. To achieve this aim, Malaysia adopted *the official definition of ecotourism* produced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) of which Malaysia is a member:

“Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations” (Ceballos-Luscurain, 1996 – *Consultant, Malaysia National Ecotourism Plan*)

The Malaysia Ecotourism Master Plan was divided into six major parts:

Part 1: proceeds from policy matters to the identification of broad strategies, which should be utilised in developing ecotourism (Saat, 2001:12-14). The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism is a lead player and co-ordinator, but the 21 Action Plans should be taken together with other related government agencies, private sectors, NGOs, local population etc.

Table 6.3: The National Parks of Malaysia.

Name of the Parks	Location and width (sq km/hectares)	Tourism Related Activities
1.Taman Negara	Kuala Tahan, Pahang (434,340 sq hectares)	Jungle Tracking, Wildlife Observing, Birds watching, river canoeing etc.
2.Kenong Rimba Park	Kenong Valley, Pahang (121 sq km)	Mountains climbing, Caves exploring, jungle trekking
3.Endau Rompin National Park	Johor-Pahang (488 sq km)	Jungle tracking, Birds Watching, Camping, Nature Study
4.Tunku Abdul Rahman Park (the Marines Park-a group of 5 Islands)	Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (4,929 sq hectares)	Beaches trekking, crystal clear water ideal for diving, snorkelling, swimming
5. Crocker Range National Park	Between Beufort and Tenom, Sabah (139,919 sq km)	Mountains rainforests, home to primates such as <i>orang utan</i> and gibbons, and <i>rafflesia pricie</i>
6. Pulau Tiga Park (a group of 3 Islands)	Kimanis Bay, Kuala Penyu, Sabah (15,257 sq hectares)	White beaches, <i>volcanoes</i> , birds watching, snake island
7. Kinabalu Park	Kundasang, Ranau Sabah (754 sq km)	Climbing Mt Kinabalu, hot springs spa, jungle trekking
8. Turtle Islands Park	Pulau Selingan, Sandakan, Sabah (1,740 sq hectares)	The marines park-the sea and surrounding coral reef, the green turtles nesting and hatching
9. Tawau Hill Parks	Tawau, Sabah (27,972 sq hectares)	Hot springs spa, jungle trekking, hill climbing
10. Danum Valley	Lahad Datu, Sabah (438 sq km)	A virgin lowland rainforest, rainforest and ecological research, wildlife observing
11. Kinabatangan Floodplain*	Sandakan, Sabah (27,000 sq heactares)	River boating, wildlife viewing, photography or observational study and research related primates such as proboscis monkeys, orang utans, snakes, lizards, hornbills, elephants, crocodiles etc.
12. Gunung Mulu National Park	Miri and Limbang Division, Sarawak (52,866 sq hectares)	The major sites for caves exploring, river boat trips, jungle trekking
13. Niah National Park	Miri, Sarawak (3,140 sq hectares)	The cave exploring-40, 000 years Southeast Asia human pre-historic site, archaeological site, visit

		to Iban Long house
14. Bako National Park	Kuching, Sarawak (2,728 sq km)	Birds watching, primates observing such as proboscis monkeys, jungle trekking and camping
15. Similaju National Park	Bintulu Division, Sarawak (7,067 sq hectares)	Cool jungle streams and pools, primates observing, beaches, camping, angling
16. Kubah National Park	Batu Kawah, Sarawak (2,230 sq hectares)	Visiting Wildlife Centre, jungle trekking and waterfall picnics
17. Lambir Hills National Park	Miri, Sarawak (6,952 sq hectares)	Birds watching, jungle trekking, waterfall
18. Gunung Gading National Park	Lundu, Sarawak (4,106 sq hectares)	The <i>refflesia</i> site, waterfall, jungle trekking
19. Batang Ai National Park	Lubok Antu, Sarawak (24,040 hectares)	Home to orang utan, jungle trekking, river boating
20. Tanjung Datu National Park	Sematan, Sarawak (1,379 sq hectares)	Marine park, beaches and diverse marine life
21. Loagan Bunut National Park	Miri Division, Sarawak (10,736 hectares)	The largest natural lake in Sarawak, various bird population such as darters, bitterns, egrets, herons, hornbills and kites, primates such as gibbons, participate in the traditional "Selambau" method of fishing

Source: adapted from Tourism Malaysia, 2000b. National Parks Brochure

*It was officially declared a permanent Wildlife Sanctuary on 16 January 2002.

WWF, Malaysia, 2002. <http://www.partnersforwetlands.org/malaysia.html>

Part 2: a list of existing and potential ecotourism areas in each State throughout Malaysia with details of the access, facilities, attraction and activities of each one. It has been said that ecotourism development must be accompanied by reservation of land to conserve the natural assets.

Part 3: is ecotourism practices and guidelines for planners, area managers, private sector and ecotourists.

Part 4: describes some of the perceptions and attitudes of foreign and domestic tour operators, ecotourists and local communities especially on the current sites of ecotourism in Malaysia.

Part 5: describes the tourism and ecotourism situation in countries of the Asia Pacific region, and places Malaysia within this context.

Part 6: databases information regarding ecotourism related material such as bibliography, a list of training institutions and contacts, a list of known nature-based tour operators in Malaysia and other countries etc.

Ideally, the Malaysia Ecotourism Master Plan intended to create awareness at all level of Malaysian society, and to promote the idea of sustainable development. In reality, there still occurred some critically negative impacts on the everyday life of local communities in an area implementing an ecotourism project. Although the Ministry realised that socio-economic participation by local communities in ecotourism sites can enhance sustainable development. In many case studies however, the promotion of ecotourism was more intimately linked to the conservation of biodiversity, especially in the form of national parks or wildlife sanctuaries, and not related much to sustainable livelihood of local community in the ecotourism destination areas (Olwig, 1985; Hitchcock; 1993; Macleod, 2001: 227).

6.5. Ecotourism Development and Local Community Participation in Lower Kinabatangan Area, Sabah

Throughout the previous decade of 1970s, Sabah's economy was strongly dependent on its primary exports from the agricultural and forestry sectors. However, in 1980 Sabah's commercial forest available for logging was reduced to about 2 million hectares, compared to 5.219 million hectares in 1972 (Ti Teow Chuan and Arroyo 1988, Yamashita, 2001:3). In 1985, the Forest Department estimated the remaining virgin forest to be 1.5 million hectares. This means the

reduction of commercial forest from 1972 to 1985 was 3.319 million hectares, which gives an average logging rate of 286,000 hectares per year. As a consequence, the forestry sector is playing a smaller role because Sabah's state government recognised, since the mid-1980s, that "nature-based tourism" should become an alternative means of regional economic development. The government's policy toward the forestry sector now is to ensure a more sustainable management of natural resources (State Government of Sabah, 1996:12). As Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, former Minister of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology, Sabah states:

"...tourism is now second only to the manufacturing sector in foreign exchange earnings and its economic importance has led to tourism being given greater emphasis; the country intends to make it an industry contributing to the new sources of growth required for socio-economic development" (New Sabah Times, May 21, 1998).

The Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Chong Kah Kiat wants local tour operators to step up efforts to increase international tourists coming to Sabah. The Chief Minister said, 775,000 people visited Sabah in 2000, compared with 483,991 in 1999 (Borneo Mail, April 9th, 2001). Sabah, known as the *Land Below the Wind*, had abundant natural attractions like Mount Kinabalu, hills, rain forests, rivers, beaches, and islands, which are important assets and heritage for developing nature-based tourism or ecotourism.

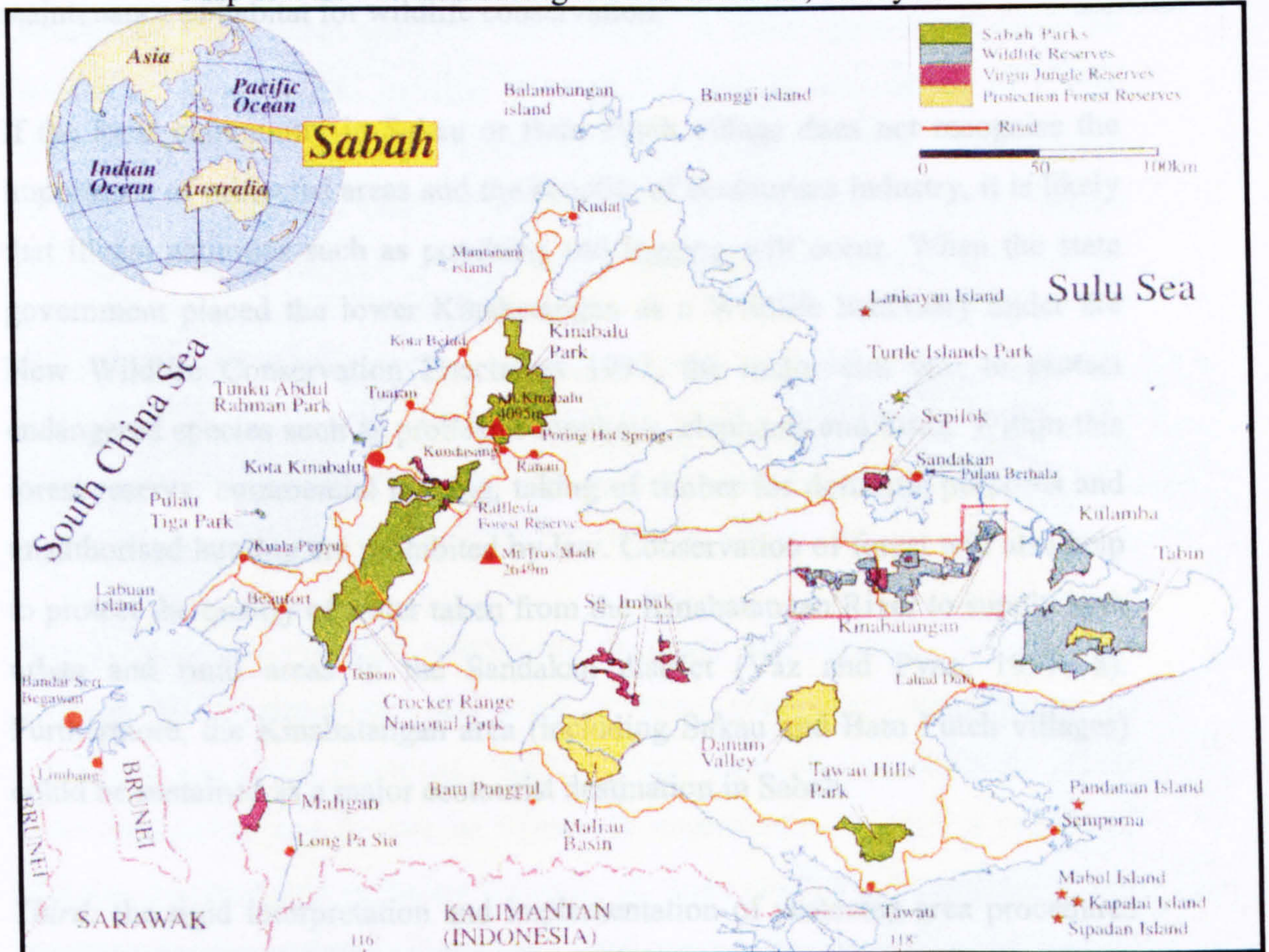
There are more than 30 ethnic groups living in Sabah, potentially a resource for developing "cultural tourism" (Pugh-Kitingan, 2000:2). It is also considered as the most attractive and unique nature and adventure destination in Malaysia. The major market for Sabah nature-based tourism are foreign tourists from Asian countries such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and the European countries such as United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Denmark, and the Northern American market, and the Australasia market such as Australia and New Zealand.

The Sabah State Ministry of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology (currently however known as Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment) adopted the ecotourism definition by the IUCN. Ecotourism development and plans by several stakeholders such as the local lodge investors, Sabah's Wildlife Department, the World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia (WWF Malaysia), the local community and the tourists must follow the Malaysian National Ecotourism, Guidelines for Sabah, 1999, and the *Sabah Tourism Master Plan, 1996* (State Government of Sabah, 1996). The Sabah Government hopes that ecotourism in this sense is based not only on an interest in nature but also concerns for the conservation of nature. Thus, in the Visit Sabah Year 2000 campaign, the project promotes ecotourism with the theme, "*Malaysia's Nature Adventure Destination in the New Millennium*" or "*Sabah Natur(e)ally*" (Yamashita, 2001:7). Although ecotourism development and projects became a popular subject for the tourism policy makers and the local investors in Sabah, the implementation of ecotourism projects in certain areas has created critical problems for those stakeholders involved. One such case is in Lower Kinabatangan area, Sabah (see Map 6.1. p.179). There are 5 main villages located in this area: Abai, Sukau, Bilit, Batu Puteh and Bukit Garam. There are also several controversial issues regarding the ecotourism projects in this area.

First: the shrinking of the forest area by agricultural and logging activities. Ecotourism regularly attempts to link the needs of tourists (visits to natural attractions), the need for conservation (protected biodiversity) and the needs of local communities for instance: improving standards of living (Schulze and Suratman, 1999:5-6). Sukau village for instance, located in the lower Kinabatangan River has been a major ecotourism destination for Sabah since 1991. However, with the rapid pace of development in Sabah, the growth of the timber industry and the expansion of agriculture, particularly the oil palms plantations, the landscape in this area has been dramatically transformed. In consequence, the forested areas are shrinking and many have declined in quality. With the loss of vital habitat has come the loss of wildlife. Vaz and Pyne have

indicated that the Sumatran rhino, elephants and “orang utan” have become endangered as a result of shrinking forest area (Vaz and Pyne, 1997:5).

Map 6.1: Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah, Malaysia



Source: Sabah Tourist Association, (2001: 16)

Second: the conflict of interest between local community and other stakeholders. The local people in this area are generally known as “orang sungai” or “people of the river”, have lived in the Kinabatangan for centuries. Many older riverine settlements have a fascinating history, engaging in the early trade of forest products, such as edible bird nests, rattan, beeswax, camphorwood, hornbill ivory and rhinoceros horn (Vaz and Pyne, 1997: 9). The local community obtains a livelihood by a variety of means: some harvest freshwater prawns and fish, while others are involved in timber cutting, agriculture, or work in local government agencies. Thus the establishment of a Wildlife Sanctuary in the lower

Kinabatangan affects the livelihood of local people. Policy makers in Sabah recognised that ecotourism might be a better solution for conservation and development. Success, however, depends on the ability and willingness of local peoples to adopt forms of resource use that are more compatible with the maintenance of habitat for wildlife conservation.

If the local community in Sukau or Batu Puteh village does not recognise the importance of protected areas and the benefits of ecotourism industry, it is likely that illegal activities such as poaching and logging will occur. When the state government placed the lower Kinabatangan as a Wildlife Sanctuary under the New Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997, the major aim was to protect endangered species such as proboscis monkeys, elephants and birds. Within this forest reserve, commercial logging, taking of timber for domestic purposes and unauthorised hunting are prohibited by law. Conservation of forest will also help to protect the quality of water taken from the Kinabatangan River to supply both urban and rural areas in the Sandakan district (Vaz and Pyne, 1997: 8). Furthermore, the Kinabatangan area (including Sukau and Batu Puteh villages) could be sustained as a major ecotourist destination in Sabah.

Third: the rigid interpretation and implementation of protected area procedures by the Sabah Forestry Department. As Schulze and Suratman (1999) claim, the implementation of Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary programme has much benefited the town-based tour operators. But the costs of establishing the protected area are borne by the villagers. The villagers, however, are prevented and excluded from access (or at least “legal” access) to the natural resources of that area. A villager in the following statement expressed a strong protest towards the newly protected area:

“Why should the tour operators make money at our expense? If we cannot benefit from tourism we will shoot the last proboscis monkey so that the tour operators will have nothing to show their tourists!” (quoted in Schulze and Suratman, 1999:5)

It is important that Sabah State Government implement the Nature Conservation Policy in the wildlife sanctuary area of Lower Kinabatangan, without the emergence of conflicting interests between area managers (the Sabah's Wildlife Department enforcement unit) and the villagers. A fairer approach towards the distribution of costs and benefits is needed. Although ecotourism in Lower Kinabatangan area, has a certain aspects of negative impact (Azmi, 1966; Schulze and Suratman, 1999), it could still benefits local community through "active participation" in the development processes. This is because ecotourism involves:

"...travel to natural attractions that contributes to their conservation, (and has) a minimum impact on soil, water, air, flora, fauna, and biophysical processes; use little energy; cause little pollution; educate the tourist; and contribute to the welfare of local and indigenous population" (Marsh, 1995).

Therefore, to ensure that ecotourism develops successfully, in terms of "*sustainable development*", the level of local community participation in ecotourism has to be evaluated. As the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) states sustainable tourism can be rigorously implemented through a system of effective planning and operating controls, all these studies and regulations will constitute the cornerstones of long term, local management strategies and plans.

"[In the same time] it also requires acceptance of the concepts of validity and co-operation in its implementation from the tourism private sector, as well as the participation of local communities and tourists themselves" (WTO, 1990:47)

According to O'Brien, the Brundtland report 1987 has brought together human activity and the environment in a single concept, that of sustainable development: then it has brought together the ideas of environmental management and participation (O'Brien, 1997: 171). Thus a new spirit of co-operation between the state, private enterprise, NGOs and local community was considered essential

for sustainable development in Less Developed Countries such as in Sukau or Batu Puteh village of Kinabatangan, Sabah.

Fourth: the definition of an ecotourist is not clear to those ecotourism stakeholders in Sukau Village. Although a definitive understanding of the term ecotourist is not internationally agreed, it is important for the Sabah government to categorise the term into two mutual categories such as “hard ecotourists” and “soft ecotourists” (Deng, King and Bauer, 2002:425-426). The candidates for the hard ecotourists are for example ornithologists, botanists and geologists. Whereas sightseers, photographers and those who undertake an ecotourist activity on at least one day during their trip away from home commonly fall under the category of “soft ecotourists”. Both of these ecotourists exist in ecotourism related activities in the villages of Sukau and Batu Puteh. In this manner, according to Deng, King and Bauer (2002), all mass tourism is potentially nature-based and may be categorised as such when spending a period as short as a day or even a few hours in an ecotourism area. This categorising could help managers of protected areas ensure for implementation of nature conservation programmes can avoid conflicts of interest with ecotourists and other stakeholders.

Fifth: a concept of “local community participation” is not well defined by the Sabah government and tourism policy makers. According to Stiefel and Wolfe (1994), the concept of participation has several meanings in rural area development processes especially in Third World Countries (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.1. p.114). The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) has identified six dimension of participation (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994:6). For the purpose implementation of ecotourism project in Lower Kinabatangan area, the Sabah government suggested to use the definition of participation with reference to two main dimensions:

i. Participation as a “biography” or the individual participatory experience.

It's important to examine the life experience of the individual and their perception to the nature conservation programme in Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau and Batu Puteh village. The reason is that “individual consciousness is the crucible in which social forces are translated into human action”(Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994:7). Whether they intend to participate in sustainable ecotourism development through direct or indirect manner, or if they are reluctant to participate at all is based much on individual levels of consciousness.

ii. Participation as a “programme” or “project” proposed by a government agency and non-government organisation (NGO).

This type of participation is referred to as project has initiated from outside the community. This is because the nature conservation programme and ecotourism development in the villages of Lower Kinabatangan area “could be expected to generate major changes for the better in the livelihood of the poor” (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994:7). Thus in this research the following questions have to be asked: how is ecotourism development through nature conservation programmes related to wider national policy and its social and ideological context? Is the programme initiated in a community characterised by gross inequalities of power and wealth? How is this reflected in participatory programmes, its staffing and its aims? Has the implementation of the programme or the legal enforcement been taken in a “rigid” or “flexible” way? Furthermore, questions should take into consideration what levels of participation local communities have achieved? To what extent does the promotion of participation lead to democratic involvement in decision-making processes? Does the local community gain a real voice in the control of resources and regulative institutions? All these questions will be applied in order to measure the definition of participation.

The term “local participation” can be generally defined as “the ability of local communities to influence the outcome of development projects such as ecotourism that have an impact on them” (Drake, 1991:132). The example we will analyse the experience of “orang sungai” in Sukau and Batu Puteh village. It is impossible to maintain ecotourism without the commitment of the local population. Therefore, it is important that Sabah State Government and related agencies review the implementation methods in their conservation policy in Sabah. The enforcement’s method and the programme interpretation of the Wildlife Sanctuary area in Sukau Village need to be reviewed and adjusted. Ecotourism and conservation programmes in Sukau should not avoid the conflicting interests of the protected area managers (the Sabah’s Wildlife Department) and the villagers.

Finally, the emergence of tourism carrying capacity management related problems in both contexts either from *environmental based* or a *community based* perspectives. From the environmental based perspective, the concepts refer to maximum number of tourists or ecotourists that can be accommodated within a specific geographic destination (O’Reilly, 1986, Mathieson and Wall, 1982). This is related to the issue of a specified “limit”, “ceiling” or “threshold” which ecotourism development should not exceed. A community-based perspective claims that the carrying capacity concern within a destination area’s capability to absorb tourism before the local community feels negative effects (Williams and Gill, 1994). This approach requires considerable consensus building among community stakeholders such as the villagers, developers, tour operators and government to determine the desired conditions for the destination area, and how tourism can be managed most effectively toward that end. In Sukau Village for instance, there is a tendency for the growing number of visitors to seriously disturb the evening roosting rituals of troops of the proboscis monkey (Sale and Mahedi, 1994). For the Sabah Wildlife officer in Sukau it is time to consider dispersing the observing activity to other areas rather than be concentrated merely

on the Menanggul River. It is time also to consider seriously the negative socio-cultural effects of ecotourism development on the local community in this area (Schulze and Suratman, 1999: 5; Azmi, 1996).

6.6. Conclusion

The above discussion has shown how tourism and ecotourism development has taken place in Malaysia's socio-economic development agenda from the 1970s to date. The Malaysian government has been criticised because they were not serious in forming the right "image" for the tourism industry in Malaysia compared to her ASEAN neighbours. At the same time, they were also criticised for not taking action on the negative impacts the tourism industry has on culture and society. However, as with other Less developed countries such as Costa Rica, Mexico, Brazil, and Tanzania, Malaysia has plenty of natural areas or "National Parks". This "natural capital" can develop as an "ecotourist industry". Therefore, in order to avoid all the criticism, and to improve the tourism industry in Malaysia, the government has introduced a new policy and strategy toward ecotourism development and sustainability: ecotourism became a "niche" market for Malaysia's tourism industry only recently.

However, the ecotourism project, proposed by the Malaysian government can also be questioned. For instance, in Sabah, the state government has developed a site for ecotourism activities in Lower Kinabatangan area especially Sukau and Batu Puteh village since 1990 for the implementation of the nature conservation and wildlife sanctuary programme. It is obvious that conflicting interests have emerged between the enforcement unit, the local community and the local lodge owners on the interpretation of procedures of the conservation programme (Schulze and Suratman, 1999). Thus, ecotourism development based on the conservation of natural resources in this area needs to be considered and reviewed in order to evaluate and adjust the current policy implementation. The success of the ecotourism development in Lower Kinabatangan area depends on

the participation of the local community in the programme. Therefore, the Malaysian government must ensure that the implementation of the ecotourism programme can give “real benefits” to the local community and the other stakeholders in “sustainability” in the near future.

Chapter 7

Research Findings:

Local Community Participation In Ecotourism in the Case of Batu Puteh

7.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss research findings based on data collected from fieldwork in *Mukim* (sub-district) Batu Puteh (hereafter referred to as Batu Puteh). The discussion of this chapter is divided into sections as follows:

1. Introduction. The discussion focuses on the profile of Mukim Batu Puteh, and how and why this area has become an important site for ecotourism in Malaysia.
2. Data collection methods: a brief discussion on how the combination of various data collection methods was deployed during the fieldwork in Batu Puteh.
3. The historical background of the Lower Kinabatangan area, and the early settlement of orang sungai including Batu Puteh village.
4. The condition of economic activities and the form of land use in the Lower Kinabatangan area including Batu Puteh in the last few years.
5. A brief discussion on why there are different levels of ecotourism development between the 4 main villages in Lower Kinabatangan area: Abai, Sukau, Bilit and Batu Puteh.
6. What the main challenges faced by the ecotourism organisers in Batu Puteh were when they introduced the natural conservation programme and ecotourism in the village area.
7. Local community participation in the Miso Walai homestay programme.
8. The limitation of local community participation in ecotourism through the homestay programme; the limitations faced by the MESCOT, the homestay committee, and the homestay participants when they run the programme?
9. Deals with the extent to which Miso Walai Homestay has benefited the villagers?

10. **The discussion of the findings.** This looks at the link between the empirical findings and the relevant literature in the study of ecotourism development and community participation, and the extent to which the research findings support or contradict the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

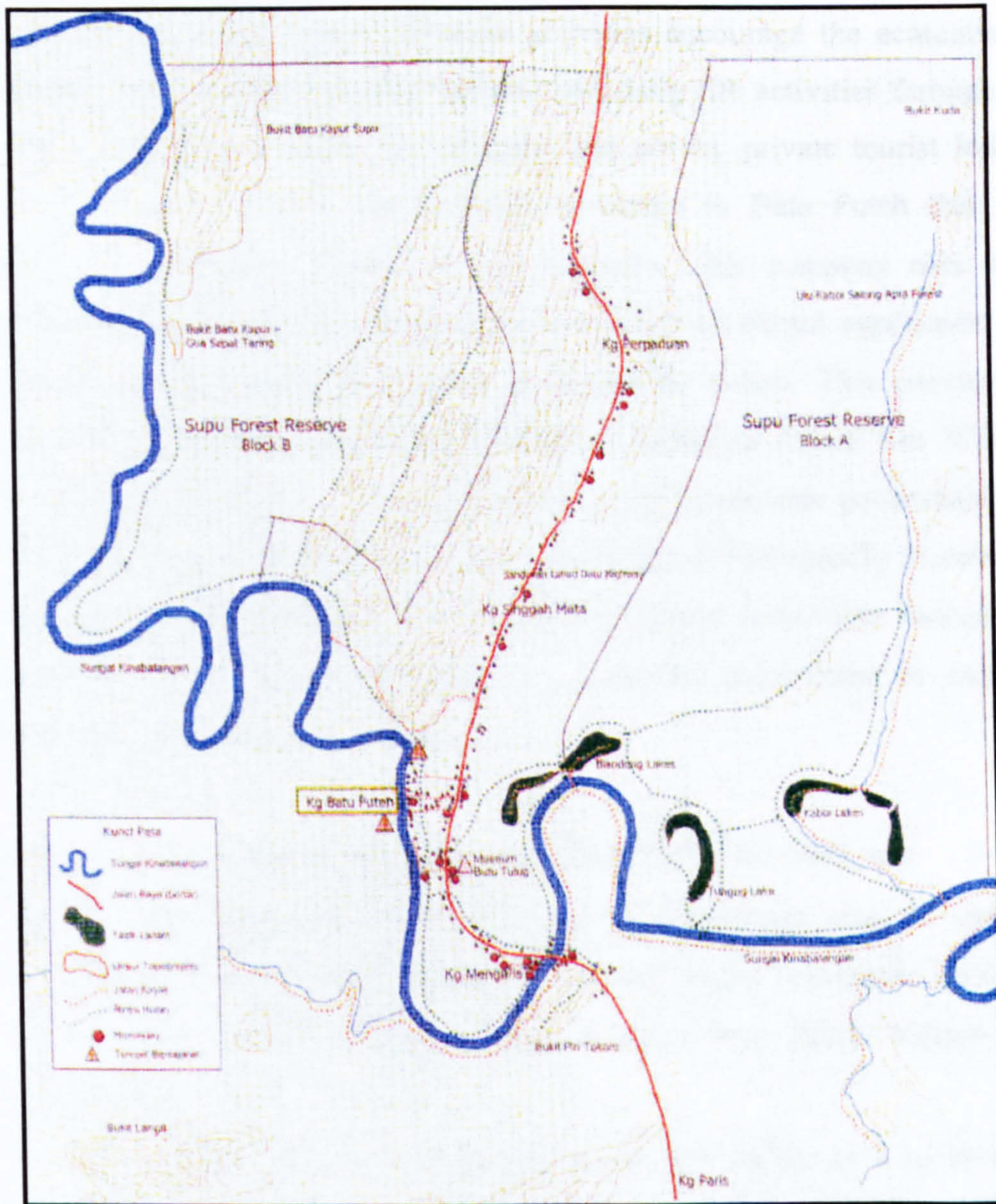
11. Conclusion argues that ecotourism development through the Miso Walai Homestay programme in Batu Puteh has had a positive impact on the socio-cultural life of local community because it has been more dominant than the negative one.

7.1.1. The Profile of Mukim Batu Puteh

The *Mukim* (sub-district) Batu Puteh is located in the heart of the Kinabatangan Floodplain in Sabah. The sub-district covers the four small villages of Batu Puteh, Menggaris, Perpaduan and Paris, which are situated along the main motorway between the Eastern Sabah cities of Sandakan and Lahad Datu. Historically, the local people call this sub-district Batu Puteh only (literally the White Limestone Village). In this research, however, the first three villages were only observed because they are located parallel to the motorway and close to each other, and have active ecotourism-related homestay activities. In comparison, Paris is more isolated and further from the other villages (see Map 7.1. p. 189).

Moreover, the Kinabatangan Bridge has been built across the Kinabatangan River located in Menggaris Village. These village areas can be easily reached by public transport such as minibuses and/or cars. For that reason, Mukim Batu Puteh can be easily accessed, and is not located in a remote area such as Sukau Village. Visitors can reach it in two hours from Sandakan city centre, and one hour from Lahad Datu town centre.

Map: 7.1: Map of Mukim (Sub-District) Batu Puteh



Source: Malaysia, (2003)

The floodplain of the Lower Kinabatangan, including Batu Puteh sub-district, not only functions as a natural water catchment area; it is also extremely rich in wildlife such as mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects. It also includes natural forest types, for instance large areas of swamp, peat swamp forest, and rainforest. As a result the villagers of Batu Puteh are involved in ecotourism activities through a homestay programme. Batu Puteh is an extremely important site for ecotourism in Malaysia especially through activities such as river boating, jungle

trekking, wildlife viewing, and participating in local people's daily lives and activities such as fishing, farming, being involved in traditional culture shows and playing traditional games. All these activities encourage the ecotourist to experience and participate in local cultural and daily life activities through the homestay programme run by the villagers, and not by private tourist lodges. There is only one private tour company operating in Batu Puteh that also practices the homestay concept in their business. This company uses local people's houses as tourist accommodation to provide a cultural experience, and paid local guides to bring the tourists to experience nature. This company is known as Elite Kinabalu Adventure Sendirian Berhad or Uncle Tan Wildlife Camp, established in 1989¹. From this idea then, the Sabah state government and WWF Malaysia have selected Batu Puteh as a Model of Ecologically Sustainable Community Tourism (MESCOT), which has developed ecotourism through the participation of the local community in a homestay programme in order to develop rural areas and communities.

The main issues to be explored in the case of Batu Puteh, however, are:

- How historical background of Lower Kinabatangan area, in general, characterised the early settlement of local people, economic activities, and socio-cultural of orang sungai, including Batu Puteh. Village until recently.
- how to sustain the area as an ecotourism site and/or as a biodiversity conservation area, and why the forest and wildlife conservation programme is still an area of conflict between the villagers, government officers and the NGOs;
- how the villagers can support the ecotourism and conservation programme in the village, and whether they are able to transform their traditional income activities into ecotourism-based income activities successfully;

- to what extent local community participation in ecotourism such as the Miso Walai Homestay Programme has achieved the conservation goal in the area;
- how far the daily lives of the local people could be improved through a programme of MESCOT or sustainable development.

7.2. A Combination of Data Collection Methods

In order to explore the above issues, the research begins with a brief review of the historical background of the lower Kinabatangan Area, and demonstrates how the orang sungai settlement in Batu Puteh was started; how previous economic activities and land use were practiced, and how the profile of the 4 major villages of Abai, Sukau, Bilit and Batu Puteh enables them to take part in ecotourism. In the fieldwork however, a combination of data collection methods was deployed in order to gain a variety of data, and to assess or measure the issues. These are described below.

i. Adapted Participant Observation Method

During this research, the researcher stayed in the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sukau and Batu Puteh for two and a half months, with one of the families at Batu Puteh, which participates in the Miso Walai Homestay programme, for nearly a week. The culture and lifestyle of orang sungai in Batu Puteh is not much different from the culture and life style of the researcher. Thus, the researcher could adapt to the situation easily. The language used by the villagers and the researcher is Malay (the national language of Malaysia). Although, for the rest of the time the researcher stayed at Kinabatangan Orang-Utan Conservation Centre (KOCP) in Sukau, some information about Batu Puteh homestay activities was obtained from WWF representatives when they set up a meeting about mapping wildlife spots and conservation issues in the Lower Kinabatangan area. Moreover, the villagers who also attended this meeting were from Abai, Sukau, Bilit, Batu Puteh and Bukit Garam. This research also discovered a family relationship

between some family members in Abai, Sukau and Bilit with some family members in Batu Puteh because of migration².

During the fieldwork in Batu Puteh, the Miso Walai committee members guided the researcher whenever necessary. I observed and mingled with the villagers in formal and informal events such as observed facilities and the daily activities of the Miso Walai homestay programme. I participated in a briefing session to ecotourists by the Director of MESCOT. I also attended the *kenduri* or feast of Batu Puteh organised by the villagers themselves because the village had been declared the winner of the national level inter-village competition in the year 2003. I visited *Batu Tulog*, an archaeological site, with the Miso Walai homestay committee members; and chatted with the villagers informally whenever I met them in the shop, in the Miso Walai homestay office, on the riverbank and so on. In so doing, the relationship between the villagers and me was gradually established. Field notes and photographs were taken during this observation period in order to increase the reliability of observational evidence (Yin, 2003: 93).

ii. Focused and In-depth Interview

Interviews are one of the most widely used research methods. This method provides a way of generating data by asking people to talk about their everyday lives or experiences (Leonard, 2003: 166 in Miller and Brewer, 2003). There were two types of interviews conducted during the fieldwork in Batu Puteh. The first was *formal interviews* with key informants in the village such as The Director of MESCOT; the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay Committee (see Appendix IV. p. 27-49) and four participants in the homestay programme of the village³.

A set of *semi-structured questionnaires* was devised by the researcher in advance in order to collect information and guide the conversation regarding a specific research question or issue that I wanted to be discussed. During the interview

sessions the informants allowed the researcher to use a tape recorder (Yin, 2003: 90; Leonard, 2003: 166). As a result these focused interviews were transformed into in-depth interviews, then copied as transcripts.

The second was *informal interviews* with six participants of the Miso Walai Homestay programme⁴. The main purpose of these informal interviews was to provide a cross check of some of the information given by the key informants in the formal interview session. These were unstructured interviews, with open-ended questions, where the researcher continually developed, adapted and generated questions and follow-up probes appropriate to the general or specific area of investigation (Leonard, 2003:168). The information gained from these interviews was written down in the field notebook. During the interview most of the informants gave a good response and cooperation.

iii. Documentary Research

There are many forms of document, which were collected during the fieldwork in Batu Puteh. These include, for instance, written reports, tourist feedback and evaluation forms, books, photographs, newsletters and the minutes of meetings. These documents were provided with the permission of the Chairman of the Miso Walai homestay programme and the Director of MESCOT. For case studies, the most important use of documentary information is to support evidence from other sources (Yin, 2003: 87) as mentioned above.

7.3. The Historical Background of the Lower Kinabatangan Area, and the Early Settlement of the Orang Sungai including Batu Puteh village

The Kinabatangan is the largest and the longest river in Sabah, originating in the mountains and hills in the Southwest part of the State. The Kinabatangan drains eastwards towards the Sulu Sea. It has a main channel length of about 560 km. The catchment area of this river is about 16,800 km² and covers almost 23 per

cent of the total land area of Sabah. The upper parts of the Kinabatangan catchments area are rugged, forested hills and mountain ranges. The lower is a great floodplain laden with oxbow lakes, open swamps and distinctive vegetation (Vaz and Pyne, 1997:5). The Kinabatangan floodplain is one of the most productive types of rainforest wetland.

According to WWF (2004), the Kinabatangan area is gaining increasing international fame for its biological diversity because it is one of only two on earth where ten primate species can be found. These include the orang-utan, and several species that are endemic to Borneo, such as the proboscis monkey, the maroon langur and the Bornean gibbon. It is also home to rare and endangered animals such as the wild Asian elephant, estuarine crocodiles and possibly the Sumatran rhino, which is on the verge of extinction and was last recorded in the area in 1993. There are 200 species of birds to be found in the lower Kinabatangan: eight species of hornbills, the rare oriental darter and Bornean bristle head and the threatened Storm's stork are common to the area. The plants, animals, and human life and culture along the river have yet to be fully studied and conserved. Most of the people living in the lower Kinabatangan area are ethnically *Orang Sungai*⁵ (the river people). Within this ethnic group, there are many sub-ethnic groups. For instance the *Idahan*, *Tambanua* and *Dusun* are the original ethnic group of *orang sungai*, but other ethnic groups such as the Suluk, Kagayan, Bugis, and Chinese are of more mixed ancestry. Although all these ethnic groups have their own dialects, in general, they speak the Malay language in their everyday life.

Even though Lower Kinabatangan is located in a remote area of Sabah, historically this region had early contact with Chinese voyages to Borneo from 631 AD. In 406 AD, Cheng Ho, the Muslim Chinese Admiral, visited the southern Philippines, and may have commenced early trade with Sabah. Following this visit the Idahan people are believed to have begun the trade in edible birds' nests with the Chinese (Harrisson and Harrisson, 1971). For this

reason, it is widely known that the name "Kinabatangan" is made of two words joined together. '*Batang*' is a local name for 'Long River', and '*Kina*' alludes to the early Chinese settlers to the area. The river is actually referred to in some records as '*Chinabatangan*'. A Sulu legend recorded by Shim Phyu Soon states how Admiral Ong Sum Peng, together with Chinese adventurers and traders, chose to settle near the village of Batu Puteh after completing a courageous mission for the Chinese emperor. There were many inter-marriages between Chinese immigrants and the local people. As generations went by many of them lost touch with their language and traditions. Historical records of Brunei show that Admiral Ong Sum Peng's own sister eventually married the first Sultan of Brunei and converted to Islam (The British North Borneo Herald, 18th May 1937 quoted in Vaz and Payne, 1997:37). Thus, the Kinabatangan River and its branches were for a long time the primary means of communication and historical events for local people and the foreigners in eastern Sabah.

By the early 1800s the Sulu Empire dominated the region where the Sultan monopolised the trade of forest products coming out from the Kinabatangan area. Besides edible birds' nests, the Kinabatangan forest products included beeswax for making candles, *damar* (a resin from dipterocarp trees), camphorwood, illipe nuts, rattan, elephant ivory, rhinoceros horn, and hornbill casques. During the mid year birds' nest harvesting season, it was calculated that in 1814 alone, more than 23,000 kilograms of edible nests and 35,600 kilograms of beeswax were bought to Sulu for trade with China from Magindora (or Sandakan) district (Warren, 1981). The glorious days of the Sulu Empire, however were in decline by the 1850s.

From 1881-1945 the British North Borneo Chartered Company rule over Sabah included the Sandakan region. At the time, in 1881 for instance, the population in the Lower Kinabatangan was very low. There were only two villages, Melapi and Sabangan, with four to five huts along the Lower Kinabatangan River (Rozita Ibrahim and P.S.Shim, undated: 4). However, at the end of the 1880s many

Idahans from Lahad Datu migrated to Melapi because they were attracted by commercial economic activities such as the harvest of edible birds' nests from the Gomantong Caves and the sale of forest and river products. As a result, Pengiran Samah, Melapi's village headman, opposed the Chartered Company's claim to the Gomantong Caves. However, the Company immediately ended his campaign of resistance when he was shot dead in 1884 (Vaz and Pyne, 1997:42). The Idahans then spread their settlement to a new place known as Sukau village. Many of them had taken up land around Sukau, but 30 families of Sabangans settled in Abai village during the 1920s. The Segama people later joined them, and then some Liwagu people also settled downstream of Sukau.

When the district Office was established at Lamag (currently known as Bukit Garam) in 1905, many villagers from the upper Kinabatangan began trickling down to this new settlement under the supervision of Imam Yusof. At this time, the population around Lamag consisted mainly of ethnic Sukangs with some ethnic Makiangs and Dumpas (Rozita Ibrahim and P.S. Shim, undated: 4). After Japan lost the war in 1945, the British Borneo Timber Company began logging a forest area near Bukit Garam. At that time Lamag villagers under their leader Imam Yusof moved in to Bukit Garam. Then in early 1950s Imam Yusof and his people moved again and founded the current Batu Puteh village. Therefore, before the discussion proceeds to the case study of Batu Puteh village specifically, there follows a brief overview of the four major villages located along Kinabatangan River, i.e. Abai, Sukau, Bilit and Batu Puteh. This is in order to give a picture of how these four main villages of the orang sungai are actually potential destinations for ecotourism in what is nowadays commonly known as Lower Kinabatangan Area.

7.4. The Condition of Economic Activities and Land Use in the Lower Kinabatangan Area Including Batu Puteh Village

As mentioned in Chapter 6, traditionally most of the orang sungai in these four villages are engaged in a subsistence economy, cultivating small amounts of non-irrigated rice, vegetables and fruit trees. These are produced mainly for household consumption, and the surplus produce is sometime sold (Vaz and Pyne, 1997: 42). Fishing is the most important economic activity in Kinabatangan, especially of river prawns and fish from the rivers and lakes. The methods of catching prawns include traps (*bubu*), cast nets (*rambat*) and trawling nets (*pukat tarik*). Hunting wildlife such as deer is done to ensure they have enough wild meat supply, but for religious reasons they do not hunt wild boar or other wildlife such as monkeys (Suratman and Schulze, 1999). Although trade in forest products has declined significantly, the remaining tropical rainforest in this area does provide orang sungai valuable resources such as the supply of a variety of food, medicine and building materials, especially wood. Trees are widely used for a variety of purposes; house construction, boat construction and fuel. *Rattan* is used for the construction of fish and prawn traps (*bubu*). Bamboo is a useful material for constructing temporary shelters and fences, and is also used with rattan to make fish traps. The leaves of the *nipah*-palm are used for making prawn traps, and for the construction of house or hut roofs (*atap*) (Suratman and Schulze, 1999: 7). In other words most orang sungai are really dependent on forest products from the surrounding area near their village in lower Kinabatangan. But this logging or hunting activity for orang sungai is claimed just to fulfil their basic needs in their everyday lives.

The history of land use in the Lower Kinabatangan area began with the tobacco plantations run by a Dutch company when the British North Borneo Chartered Company sub-leased a project to them in 1888. Tobacco was planted in Koyah, Batu Puteh and Lamag where they produced high quality tobacco that was exported to Europe (Vaz and Pyne, 1997: 39). Then, from 1920, the tobacco

plantations declined due to repeated crop failures. In 1935 there were jute plantations by the Japanese planters near Bilit village. This activity was disrupted in 1942 when the Japanese army during the Second World War invaded Sandakan. The first commercial logging was introduced in this area in the 1950s because of the massive stock of virgin rainforest and the area consisted of flat and accessible terrain with a network of waterways through the Kinabatangan River, ideal for the transportation of heavy logs. Until 1975 logging in this region provided the State government with much of its revenue and employment for the local people (Vaz and Pyne, 1997). Some of the villagers, especially from Sukau and Batu Puteh, were involved in this commercial activity. In the 1980s the government reviewed its logging industry policy because there were no more forest reserves for mass scale timber production in Lower Kinabatangan, and the forestry sector was playing a smaller role in providing the state with revenue compared to tourism. At the same time, however, economic activity has shifted to cash crop agriculture where the first oil palm plantations were opened in the lower Kinabatangan.

Today, aside from several small remaining Forest Reserves, large-scale oil palm and cocoa plantations have replaced most of the original dry land forests and thousands of hectares of commercial plantations now cover many undulating lowland hills of the region. Some even fringe the Kinabatangan River. The Sabah government has been criticised by many individuals and environmental organisations because pollution has become a crucial issue for the rivers and lakes, the wildlife and the life of local people. As a result, the state government designated the lower Kinabatangan area as a Wildlife Sanctuary under the New Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997. This enactment states that within the forest reserve, illegal commercial logging, and the cutting of timber for domestic purposes and unauthorised hunting are prohibited by law. The major aim of this new enactment is to protect endangered species of wildlife, and to ensure the Kinabatangan area, including those local communities and cultures, can be sustained as a major ecotourist destination in Sabah (Hussin, 2003: 210). Thus, in

the following discussion, there is a brief overview of the profile of the four main villages in the Lower Kinabatangan Area; Abai, Sukau, Bilit and Batu Puteh in their present state (see Map 7.2. p.201). The purpose is to make a brief comparison between them particularly to indicate their level of development.

7.5. Ecotourism Development in the Lower Kinabatangan Area including Batu Puteh Village

At present, there are 4 major villages of the orang sungai actively engaged in ecotourist activities, located along the lower Kinabatangan riverbank as follows:

i. **Abai** village is the settlement closest to the mouth of the Kinabatangan River. This village, situated 24 km from the Sulu Sea, can be reached only by water transport, boat or ferry, from Sandakan or Sukau village. The river distance between Abai and Sukau village is 40 km. It is primarily a fishing village and most of the population live in conditions of poverty. As reported by WWF Malaysia in 1996, the total population in Abai was only 280 in 47 families. Abai is considered to be one of the most picturesque of the Kinabatangan settlements. Previously, many tourism stakeholders such as local tour operators or the villagers did not develop ecotourism seriously in this area. At present the residents have started hosting tourists through homestay programmes assisted by the WWF and the Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Environment, Science and Technology. The Ministry and the WWF implement this homestay programme through integrated tourism planning where it includes other villages such as Sukau, Bilit and Batu Putih. The most attractive place in Abai is Danau Pitas. This area is a wonderful place to view wildlife such as water birds (oriental darter, egrets, storks and kingfisher), orang utans and elephants (Dawson et al, 1993). However, there is no clean water supply to any of the villages. There is a 24-hour electricity supply to Batu Puteh village but at Sukau village electricity is only available from noon to midnight daily. In both Bilit and Abai, the villagers are still living without electricity. For that reason private electricity generators are

widely used in Sukau, Abai and Bilit by the ecotourist lodge operators and the villagers.

ii. **Sukau** - This village is 40 km upstream of Abai and 134 km by road from Sandakan. It can be reached both by road and by boat. As reported by the Malaysia, Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, (2000) the total population of Sukau village is 1426 in 116 families. The average household income in this village is between RM\$200 and RM\$600 per month. This means most of the villagers are living below the national poverty line formulated by the government. Sukau has become one of the main ecotourism centres in the lower Kinabatangan area since the 1990s. There are five privately owned tourist lodges operated in Sukau. The main attraction of this area is viewing proboscis monkeys through boating upstream to Menanggul River (see **chapter 8 and 9** for the case study of Sukau).

Map 7.2: The Four Main Villages in Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah: Abai, Sukau, Bilit, and Batu Puteh.



Source: WWF Malaysia. (undated)

iii. **Bilit** - is located 25 km upstream from Sukau. This village can be reached by road and by boat. In 1996, the total population in Bilit village was only 296 and today remains approximately the same (Vaz and Payne, 1997). In the past Bilit was well known as the centre of birds'-nest harvesting, and as a harvesters' trail to the Gomantong Caves. One of the main attractions in Bilit is Bukit Belanda (Dutch Hill). The hill is an important historical site, because of its panoramic views. During the Second World War it served as a strategic defence post for British soldiers. Nature-based tourism or ecotourism developed in Bilit in 2002 when the villagers incorporated themselves in the homestay programme organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Technology, Sabah and WWF Malaysia.

iv. Mukim (sub-district) **Batu Puteh** covers four small villages of Batu Puteh, Menggaris, Perpaduan and Paris. Further discussion about ecotourism development and local community participation in the case of Batu Puteh is included in the following section.

7.6. From Conservation Effort to Community Participation in the Development of Ecotourism in Batu Puteh: The Challenges.

Mukim Batu Puteh is currently recognised by local and international visitors as one of the major ecotourism destinations in the lower Kinabatangan area. However, the main challenge for this village is how to sustain local community participation in ecotourism and conservation activities. This is because 85 per cent of the Kinabatangan forested land has been converted to oil palm plantation where it occupies almost 300,000 hectares, including the land of this village. Since the 1980s oil palm cultivation has become a source of revenue for the Sabah State government and the oil palm companies. At the same time however, it is also a major source of income for the villagers who are involved in the small-scale oil palm plantation schemes of FELCRA (Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Agency). Figures obtained from MESCOT⁶

show that the total population of Mukim Batu Puteh is 1266 (Malaysia, Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, 2003: 11). 24 per cent of individuals are involved in small-scale oil palm plantations, 4 per cent as fruit farmers, 1 per cent vegetable farmers, 7 per cent fishermen, 1 per cent small traders, 32 per cent government servants (most of whom work in the village's primary school and health centre) and 15 per cent work in the nearby oil palm companies (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Type of Socio-economic Activities in Batu Puteh
Total Population (N=1266)

Socio-economic Activities	Percent (%)
• Involved in small-scale oil palm plantation schemes	24.0
• Fruit farmers	4.0
• Vegetable farmers	1.0
• Fishermen	7.0
• Small traders	1.0
• Government servants	32.0
• Oil palm estate workers	15.0
• Miso Walai Homestay programme	16.0
Total	100.0

Source: Adapted from Miso Walai Homestay, (2003: 5-6).

At this moment only 208 individuals (16.0 per cent of the population) are involved directly in ecotourism especially through the *Miso Walai Homestay* programme. The trend of land use in this village for oil palm plantations is set to increase in the near future because farmers can earn an average of between RM2,000 and RM2,500 per ton of oil palm nut in every 3 month cultivation season⁷. In fact, some of the farmers are able to produce more than a ton per season. If this trend continues, more forestland owned by the villagers will be opened, more trees will be cleared, and more oil palms will be planted. This is a major challenge for this village because it is seemingly hard to sustain the villagers' participation by ecotourism and conservation projects alone. If more income can be received from oil palm cultivation, more villagers will be involved in order to lift their level of income and the quality of their everyday life.

As the forestlands have been cleared, the wildlife such as elephants and orangutans has suffered (see Plates 7.3 and 7.4. p.241). Moreover, the increase in agricultural and urban development and the severity of annual floods downstream has fragmented the great corridor of the forest that once ran along the river (Global Partnership, 2004). This situation has brought elephants into conflict with the villagers and plantation workers because when these elephants move through farms and oil plantations they frequently damage the oil palm trees. For this reason elephants have been shot⁸. The deforestation not only threatens the wildlife, swamp forest, mangroves, oxbow lakes, and many other species in the lower Kinabatangan area, but annual floods have also made it increasingly difficult for the plantations to grow oil palms along some stretches of the river by damaging the young oil palm trees. Thus, forest restoration in lower Kinabatangan has become the main agenda, especially in the creation of a continuous corridor of forest that will eventually connect coastal mangrove swamps to the rainforest in the uplands in order to avoid all those conflicts and problems (Global Partnership, 2004). This forest conservation, however, can be achieved through ecotourism activities particularly through participation of various stakeholders in this area such as the villagers, oil palm estate managers, tour operators, government officers, NGO officers and ecotourists. To gain consensus or agreement among these stakeholders is another problem because of ecotourism preferences; the conservation partnerships, and the oil palms developers frequently have different goals and objectives for their projects.

Two fundamental principles of ecotourism have not yet been firmly established in order to guide planning and assessment for many parts of the destination areas such as in the lower Kinabatangan: (i) encourage conservation and (ii) provide real benefits to the local people. The main reason is that ecotourism also consumes resources, creates waste and requires certain kinds of infrastructures such as asphalt roads, clean water supply, electricity and telecommunication systems such as telephones and information technology (IT). Although Batu

Puteh village has a 24-hour electricity supply, 1.5 km of asphalt road, a primary school and a health centre (Miso Walai, 2003: 6), the main problem for many *Miso Walai Homestay* participants in Batu Puteh is the shortage of clean water supply to their homes. In an interview, one of the participants expresses his concerns and frustration on this matter because the local government authority is still delaying setting up the clean water reservoir in Batu Puteh which has been demanded by the villagers for more than 10 years.

“During my term as the first Homestay Chairman, there were a WWF officer, Members of Parliament, and the Minister here, who informed us that the clean water supply would be ready here soon. Unfortunately, there is no clean water supply to date. We are not sure when does this problem will be solved”⁹.

According to the current Chairman of the Miso Walai Homestay programme the water problem has reached the level that some of homestay members cannot accept any more tourists. He comments:

“In the drought season (October 2002 to April 2003)...we have had the problem of tourists who have already arrived here, but some members have to refuse them because there is no water...then having to explain to them, to apologise to them, that because we don't have water...water is so vitally important...water that is unclean can cause all kinds of diseases...This is the biggest problem to me, it just doesn't seem right to have to refuse tourists who are already right at our doors, just because we don't have enough water”¹⁰

It is common for local people in the lower Kinabatangan area to collect rainwater as a clean water supply for drinking and cooking. In the drought season, the villagers and the ecotourists do not have many choices, and they have to use the water from Kinabatangan River in their daily life activities. If the government local authority does not provide the infrastructures in Batu Puteh as soon as possible, it is presumed that many homestay participants will switch their involvement in the ecotourism project to less delicate activities such as

agriculture. As they claimed, 'It is not possible to serve your guest well, as there is no clean water supply in your home'¹¹.

7.7. Local Community Participation in the *Miso Walai* Homestay Programme: the Prospects

In Malaysia, the homestay programme was originally launched nationwide in 1995 at Termeloh, Pahang, and in later years was followed by other states including Sabah and Sarawak. The main objectives of the homestay development policy in Malaysia are to utilise the available resources at the "*kampung*" (village) level, to conserve and maintain the local socio-cultural life, arts and customs of the village as well as to highlight the uniqueness of village life. The Sabah State Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment have defined homestay as "accommodation where visitors stay with the host families that have registered in the programme, to experience the daily life of the local community" (Sabah-Homestay.com, 2004). Besides enjoying the experiences of the daily life of local people, the visitors would also be able to participate in other activities such as mountain climbing, jungle trekking, cultural dances, wildlife viewing, historical or archaeological sites visiting and the like.

One of the private tour companies is *Borneo Native Homestay Sendirian Berhad*, which promotes the homestay programme in Sabah, including Miso Walai Homestay. The advertisement on the Internet says:

"Our homestay destinations...are situated far from the busy and hectic life of the city. At our homes you will be experiencing the unique yet peace-of-mind traditional lifestyle of the native village folks of Sabah. That's why there is "social immersion" in the lifestyle of the natives of Sabah, at nature's best. Not only that, our homestay destinations are in the proximity icons of world class tourism sites; which means not only you will you get the experience of staying with native people of Sabah but also explore the wonders of nature's gifts"¹².

The question now is whether the real situation is similar to that which has been promoted. Do the local people really benefit from this programme? Why are the villagers of Mukim Batu Puteh willing to participate in this programme?

7.7.1. The Role of MESCOT in Community Based-Ecotourism

The MESCOT (The Model for Ecologically Sustainable Community Tourism Project), is chaired by Mr Martin Paul Vugel. He set up the homestay programme at Batu Puteh in April 1997. Previously, Mr Martin was a tourist guide for a private tourist company called "Uncle Tan Jungle Camp", which has been operating in the Mukim Batu Puteh area for more than ten years. Since then, Mr Martin has been recognised and has had a close relationship with the local people, especially the villagers who are working with him in the company. As a result, MESCOT realised that crucial issues such as the shrinking of the rainforest, the loss of wildlife, and the threat to the economic activities of the local people in the area by activities such as illegal logging and wildlife poaching, must be stopped to enhance ecotourism development. After he quit his job with the Uncle Tan tourist company, he collaborated with the WWF Malaysia and the Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment in 1997, to act as a facilitator for the local people of Mukim Batu Puteh in the conservation and homestay programmes¹³.

The main objective of MESCOT is developing ecotourism products through the training of village young people in planning the Miso Walai Homestay programme and specifically developing sustainable community-based ecotourism in the Lower Kinabatangan. For MESCOT, it is only through active participation of the local community in the Miso Walai Homestay project that the level of income of the villagers can be increased, and then environmental conservation could become a reality. Miso Walai Homestay needs a pristine natural environment and wildlife as a backdrop for the ecotourist destination. At the

same time, it could preserve and commercialise the unique socio-cultural life, and the everyday life of the orang sungai respectively.

As the Chairman of MESCOT comments about the early stage of his initiative to set up MESCOT members in the village:

“At the early stage, I realised that people and nature are the two fascinating components in this village for tourists. There is an individual who was also interested in setting up nature-based tourism here but he didn’t know how to start the project. Therefore, when I quit Uncle Tan’s company, I started the tourism plan with the MESCOT...at the beginning, many individuals were interested in joining the project; during the planning phase, however, many of them disappeared because they couldn’t see the outcome at that time. Finally, a few of them are still committed and they keep on struggling with the project. This group of villagers, I could classify as the “hardcore” of MESCOT, who could then become the hardcore of the Miso Walai programmes”¹⁴.

As a result, in 1999, after two years of planning, MESCOT produced the idea on paper about the Miso Walai Homestay programme, which was submitted to the Sabah state Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment. In November 2000, the Miso Walai Homestay programme was officially promoted and launched by the Minister in a “One Stop Tourism Fair” in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The main objective of the Miso Walai Programme is:

“To involve the local community in community based-tourism, where the tourist’s experiences will be based on *orang sungai* traditional culture and daily life activities, the pristine condition of nature; and the uniqueness of wildlife in order to sustain the side income of the local community; to sustain the natural environment; and to strengthen social interaction and mutual understanding within the community members and between the local people and the tourists” (Miso Walai, 2003: 20).

In the orang sungai language, the word “*miso*” means “*together*” and “*walai*” means, “*house*”. Therefore, *Miso Walai Homestay* means, “stay together in one house” (WWF, 2004). 208 people of Mukim Batu Puteh were involved directly

and indirectly in this programme, which eventually became a core programme to other related activities. For instance, 48 local people are involved in the Boat Services Association. 33 young people became volunteer environmental protectors, called “*Sukarelawan MESCOT*” by the villagers. 22 young people are involved in the MESCOT Cultural Group (MSG), and more than 60 people are involved in *Tulun Tokou* Handicraft Association. The ecotourism activities attached to the homestay programme are shown in (Table 7.2. p. 210). These activities depend on ecotourist demands.

7.7.2: The Challenges for Ecotourism Development Through the Miso Walai Homestay Programme

The main challenge faced by MESCOT in order to implement forest conservation and ecotourism in Mukin Batu Puteh comes from illegal logging activity. Conflicts of interest occurred between the illegal loggers and the MESCOT regarding forest conservation in the late 1990s. Illegal logging activities have been operated in the area for many years by some of the Mukim Batu Putih villagers. The group has linked with the town based logging industry in their everyday operation. After the Sabah Forestry Department arrested one of the loggers’ leaders, conflict occurred between the group and the MESCOT. The loggers claimed that MESCOT reported them to the government about the activity. They also argued that the activity had been operated for many years in the area, and had traditionally been a source of income for the villagers. The MESCOT members denied the accusation, but the logger did not believe the justification. As a result, the logger beat one of the MESCOT members and the MESCOT Chairman was forced to leave the village¹⁵. The issue was solved, however, when the police and the Head of Village interrupted the conflict. The MESCOT, though, won the case, and since then illegal logging activity has decreased dramatically in the area, although it is impossible to stop it totally.

Table 7.2: Ecotourist Activities at Miso Walai Homestay (MWH)
of Mukim Batu Putih

Activities category	Location	Duration	Who Involved
Wearing Traditional Costumes	House of MWH	1-2 hours	The host
Watching or participate in local cultural dance	At house of MWH or the village hall	2-3 hours	The host or MCG
Hill paddy planting or harvesting	House of MWH	2-3 hours	The host
Fishing	Kinabatangan river	1-3 hours	The host or/and the local tourist guide
Traditional Games	At house of MWH and/or other places in the village	2 hours	The host and/or the local tourist guide
Ethnobotany Interpretation	Menggaris village And/or at house of MWH	2-4 hours	The local tourist Guide and/or the host
Visiting Archaeological site	<i>Agop Batu Tulug</i> Museum, Batu Putih village.	2 hours	The local tourist guide and/or the host
Demonstration of the traditional fish trap (<i>Bubuh Ikan</i>)	Kinabatangan River banks	2-4 hours	The local tourist guide
Demonstration of traditional wildlife traps	Menggaris village	2-4 hours	The local tourist guide
Jungle Trekking	Menggaris village and Danau Bladong	2-4 hours	The local tourist guide
Observation of Birds and Mammals	-Around house of MWH -Menggaris village -Mansuli Hill -Kinabatangan river banks.	2-4 hours	The local tourist guide
Wildlife Viewing River Cruise	Kinabatangan River	2 hours	The local tourist guide and boatman
Demonstration of the Rainforest Conservation and Preservation Programme	Supu Reserve Forest	4-6 hours	The local tourist guides.

Source: adapted from Malaysia, Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, (2003: 29).

7.7.3. The Negative Socio-Cultural Impact of Ecotourism?

During the fieldwork, each respondent was asked: *“To what extent does ecotourism through the Miso Walai Homestay project have a negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community?”* Most of the informants said that there was no major negative impact. The Perpaduan Village Chief, for instance, gives the following reason:

“There is no evidence that major social problems have occurred in this village due to the homestay programme...because whenever the tourists come here they agree to follow our traditional way of life and customs [agree to follow the guideline of Dos and Don'ts for ecotourists in the village]. Therefore, there is no major argument about it. If we eat by using our fingers, they will also do so and follow the same way. The tourists who stay in the homestays commonly have a very good attitude...they never go here or there in the house except to the toilet, bathroom, bedroom, and to the kitchen occasionally if they are invited by the host. Most of them, in fact, during their 2-3 days of visit, are very busy with the tour programme or schedule provided by the MESCOT. Most of them actually do not have much time to walk around in this village except go to a neighbour's house if they are invited for tea or to enjoy the karaoke with the villagers”¹⁶.

For the time being at least, the negative impact of ecotourism development through the Miso Walai homestay programme on the socio-cultural life of the local community has been successfully controlled and monitored by the MESCOT and the homestay committee. The ecotourists' ethical guidelines produced by MESCOT have become an effective way of reducing or preventing the negative impact of the homestay programme (see Table 7.4. p. 224). Moreover, on the question of “Who is more demanding, if you compare the local visitors with the foreign visitors involved in the homestay programme?”, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay responded:

“I’ll tell you straight out, locals are much more demanding. For the foreign tourists, if they’ve already been briefed on what they can and cannot do in a certain place, they will follow. If locals on the other hand, they will have a lot of questions and a lot of comments, a lot of special requests and so on.... the foreign tourists are easier to handle because they will follow the advice. But the locals, they think they know everything already. So, it’s as if it’s nothing new for them...”¹⁷.

He states, accordingly, that the cultural differences between the tourists and the local people are actually not a major problem for Miso Walai Homestay. The problem only occurs when someone who wants to join the homestay programme does not understand the concept of the “homestay”. He continues:

“The only problem which can occur is misunderstanding the true meaning of this project. For example someone who wants to join but doesn’t understand it...this is what limits it to some extent. If we really understand that this is actually a very good programme, any of the villagers who want to get involved in tourism can start with the homestay”¹⁸.

The Chairman of MESCOT also argued about the misunderstanding regarding the concept of homestay among a group of tour operators in comparison with the B&B concept in Sabah. He stressed the homestay concept as follows:

“Our homestay concept is about cultural experience of the daily life of local community. This cultural experience will complement the nature or wildlife experience as a backdrop to the tourists’ activities. Some tour operators (especially in Sabah), however, commonly think it’s similar to the Bed and Breakfast (B&B) concept, where they can come and go easily like staying in a hotel. This is not the case for the homestay here because the tourists will stay in local people’s houses...and it could have any type of effect on the both parties [if not seriously managed]”¹⁹.

Membership of MESCOT is actually open to any person in the village of Mukim Batu Putih interested in joining the homestay project and the other ecotourist-

related activities such as jungle treks, boat rides and wildlife viewing or getting involved in cultural and conservation activities. The Chairman of the Miso Walai Homestay programme is Mr Mohd Hashim Abd Hamid. He is originally a Mukim Batu Puteh resident, graduated in economics with honours from one of the prestigious local universities in Malaysia. For that reason, Mr Hashim has capability to coordinate the co-operation between three entities; the Miso Walai Homestay Committee, the MESCOT with the support from the Development and Security Committee (JKKK) of Batu Puteh, and the villagers in general has led to the successful implementation of the Miso Walai Homestay programme. As mentioned above, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah officially launched this programme in the year 2000. In the year 2003, the Ministry of Rural Development of Malaysia declared Mukim Batu Puteh the winner of the “Malaysian Village Vision” competition because they were impressed by the remarkable Miso Walai Homestay programme achievement and planning.

To some extent however, a few conditions have to be fulfilled by villagers who want to become participants or members of Miso Walai Homestay in order to satisfy the minimum requirement set by the Ministry and MESCOT for the accommodation facilities needs of the ecotourists as follows²⁰:

- i. The facilities of the participant house must be recognised by the MESCOT and the Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment. For instance, the house must have two extra bedrooms and a flush toilet. Both MESCOT and the Ministry representatives will visit and evaluate the condition of the house and a report will be produced as to whether the standards have been met or make suggestions and recommend that time is given to the participant to improve the house facilities.
- ii. The participants will be ordered to attend 3-5 days of homestay training conducted by the Ministry. In this training the participants will be

exposed to modules such as the basic aspects of room and catering services, hygiene and cleaning, the tourists' cultures and attitudes, basic words of the English or Japanese language and so on. The main objective of the training is to ensure that the participants will not face a "culture shock" when they interact with the "guests" in their home. At the end of this training, the successful participants will receive an official qualification certificate from the Ministry.

- iii. The MESCOT distribution of tourists to participants' houses is based on the "flexible rotation system" where every participant will be able at least once to receive their respective guests to stay in the house. Ideally, the system is intended to avoid jealousy between the participants caused by the unequal distribution of tourists. At the same time, the rotation system is also supposed to avoid the socio-economic "pressure" or "burden" on the host family if they have to receive the tourists continuously in close succession. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay comments on this issue:

“There were a lot of misconceptions in the villages of Sukau, Abai, and Bilit; they thought that if there were no tourists, what was the point of them joining the programme?. In fact, you don't need to have tourists every day because that is not the homestay objective, because we have to understand that a family must have time for themselves. Supposing if every day a tourist came, it wouldn't be comfortable would it? So, our members do not always necessarily have more tourists, they also have time for their families; that is the objective of homestay”²¹.

Accordingly, there were also some complaints from the homestay participants if they had to receive guests too frequently. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay commented:

“There was a time last year [2002], when we were too busy and they were too tired to entertain the tourists. Well, you know the village people, the way of life of the Malaysian people; if we have a guest we feel we must really look after them, so it’s difficult to go out, or have company over; we can’t just leave them behind. That’s why we can’t have tourists every day”²².

7.7.4. Who are the Ecotourists in Batu Puteh?

There are two main categories of tourists in the Miso Walai promotional strategy. The *first* is known as GIT (Group Inclusive Tourists). This category commonly makes an advance booking to visit and participate in homestay activities. This is the main target and preferred by MESCOT and the Miso Walai Homestay committee, because the members can control and manage the visitors systematically whenever they provide information and guidelines in advance regarding what tourist should do or not do while staying in the house or visiting the village. For the Miso Walai Homestay committee, the sensitivity of local culture is the major aspect in monitoring in this programme where the tourist must be negotiated with in order to avoid misunderstanding regarding cross-cultural issues.

The *second* is known as FIT (Free Independent Tourists) who may arrive spontaneously in the village. This type of tourist is more difficult for the Miso Walai committee to manage because in some circumstances, many of the homestay participants are not ready to receive guests at short notice. Therefore, the Miso Walai committee has encouraged the local private tour operators to arrange advance booking for the tourists in order to gain "a win-win situation" to benefit all homestay committee participants, tour operators and the villagers in Mukim Batu Puteh. The average number of nights’ stay for GIT and FIT in the village is about 1-2 nights per visit. At present, a visitor will be charged RM\$50 per night to stay in a homestay house²³, full board. However this does not include other charges such as transport, tourist guide and so on.

As a result, the Miso Walai Homestay programmes has successfully attracted a number of ecotourists coming to experience the culture and surrounding nature of the village. The statistic provided by Miso Walai Homestay Association shows that in the year 2000, the total number of ecotourists was 176. The visitor arrival number increased by 425 in 2001 but dropped to 210 in 2002 (see Table 7.3. p.219). According to Miso Walai Chairman Mr Mohd Hashim, the tourist arrival numbers to the village dropped in 2002 because of the SARS issue in the Southeast Asia Region. The Miso Walai homestay total revenue for 2000 was RM17, 933.50. The total revenue increased to RM26, 772.5 in 2001 but in January to July 2002, the total revenue dropped to RM15, 528.50. The total average revenue for the homestay programme over the three years 2000 - 2002 increased by 49%. The total revenue for related service activities such as the boat service, food and beverages, the village bus service, the MESCOT Culture Group and the local tourist guide services was RM38, 868.00 in the 2000. The total revenue increased to RM78, 850.00 in 2001, but dropped to RM39, 573.50 in the 2002 (see Table 7.3. p.218). The trend of total revenue demonstrates to the Malaysia government policy-makers that the Miso Walai Homestay programme of Batu Puteh could become a “model” for ecotourism development in Malaysia.

So, what are the comments made by the visitors who have experienced the Miso Walai Homestay programme in Batu Puteh? Some of the comments are quoted as follows:

“Wonderful experience, best way to take part of (sic)and discover a new culture natural (sic). So very kind people, they behave like a big family. They showed us the best they can give their way of living (sic)and their fantastic nature. It’s very (sic) ambitious programme. It’s something to remember for the rest of my life. We brought our children to this place and they have really experienced something different and they have got new friends in less than 2 days. Thank you for all. This project is a good way of ecotourism” (Inge Forchhammer, Denmark, 03.01.2001)²⁴.

“The whole family was really warm, hospitable and friendly. Although (sic) the obvious language barrier, there was good communication established! Overall, it is a very educative and stimulating experience. I hope to return to this type of ecotourism in the near future and hope the traditional Malay life continues to exist” (Anil Stocker, 25.03.2001)²⁵.

“Everything about my stay here has been excellent! The welcome introduction was very good as were all the activities. The guides and MESCOT members were professional, very friendly and made our visit the highlight of my trip to Borneo! Special mention must go to Anisa, Ghani and their family who were so welcoming. They took us into their home as part of their family and did everything imaginable to show us how they live. I am extremely grateful to the MESCOT community for this amazing opportunity! (Hannah James, 25.07.2001)²⁶

“A truly wonderful experience! Thank you for allowing us to stay in your village. The homestay with Marianna and Ali was fantastic, a very lovely family who made us feel part of their family. The activities were a brilliant experience. All round a most heart warming and emotion stirring experience. Well done! (Tom King, 11.08.2001)²⁷.

“Incredible!! Fatima and Mustapha and the rest of the family worked so hard for us and made us feel very welcome. Very kind. The MESCOT project seems to be going from strength to strength and I notice big forward moving differences in the year since I was last here. The homestay programme was very full and busy and enjoyable. I would have liked to revisit the rainforest ridge adjacent to the village but time didn't allow. Keep up the good work and I look forward to coming back in the future”(Paul Allison, 11.08.2001)²⁸.

“*Terima Kasih* (thank you)!! *Sangat Bagus* (very good)!! It is a very special experience to share in your home for 5 days. Everything was “bagus” (good) especially your hospitality. “*Makanan sedap*”(The food was very delicious). I think the best cook in the village (sic). I will remember always my stay with you all here, and I will be coming back to visit. *Terima kasih*” (Natasha Yelland, 18.10.2001)²⁹.

“Fantastic!! Everyone very friendly and helpful. The food was great!! It was a great experience for us to learn and see how people live in Batu Puteh. I am looking forward to coming back many more times. I hope I can come back and stay in Nilam Awang homestay again. *Terima kasih*” (Jo Edgley, 19.10.2001)³⁰.

“This family is amazing. All of the children were so friendly, helpful and informative. Food was delicious. It was a wonderful experience. MESCOT was very informative. The boat ride was especially beautiful. Enjoy “Hari Raya” (Eid Mubarak Festival) and going around to everyones (sic) house. Thank you to everyone in the Rahman house” (Robbie Brockhurst, Australia, 29.12.2001)³¹.

From the above comments therefore, it is evident that many visitors were satisfied with the Miso Walai programme in Batu Puteh. This programme is not absolutely perfect, but the visitors experienced an authentic “local culture and daily life activities” (Cohen, 1988b; McKean, 1989: 131) experience of *orang sungai*. Scheyvens (2002) and Wall (1998) state that “postmodern travellers” in the globalisation era are looking for more authentic experiences such as in cultural tourism or ecotourism in the many new “exotica landscapes” of the Third World. The case of Batu Puteh is one of them, and the local community of Sabah, in Malaysia, presented it.

Although the implementation of ecotourism development in Batu Puteh has just begun (launched in the year 2000), the Miso Walai programme and local community of Batu Puteh have successfully demonstrated that natural environment, the uniqueness of wildlife, and the “exotic local culture” can stimulate ecotourism development if the other factors such as deforestation, illegal hunting and the negative impact on the socio-cultural life of local community can be controlled and managed by the ecotourism providers at the village level efficiently. The reason is that tourism or ecotourism are actually not bad, but simply bad for Third World communities because they are simply badly planned and managed (Singh, Timothy and Dowling, 2003: 4). In the case of Batu Puteh, the MESCOT and Miso Walai Committee have successfully planned, implemented and managed ecotourism in terms of “sustainable tourism”. There is no doubt why this village won the village vision competition in 2003 because the government were impressed with their ecotourism plan and management, and the involvement of local people.

Table 7.3: The Statistics of Ecotourist Arrivals in Mukim Batu Puteh and a Brief Annual Account of the Miso Walai Homestay Programme (2000 - 2002)

	2000	2001	January-July 2002	Trend
The Number of the Ecotourist Arrivals				
GITs	134	378	173	
FITs	69	114	76	
Total Tourist Arrivals	176	425	210	^ 141%
Miso Walai Homestay Revenue				
Total Homestay Income	RM 17,933.50	RM 26,772.25	RM 15,528.50	^ 49%
MWH Total Saving	RM 4,420.00	RM 5,706.00	RM 2,084.00	
Number of the families involved	14	20	19	
Average Total Income Per Host Family	RM 1,280.96	RM 1,3338.61	RM, 1,120.60	
The Other Services Related to Homestay Activities				
Boat Service	RM 5,714.00	RM 14,628.00	RM 7,511.00	
MESCOT F&B	RM 3,390.00	RM 9,696.15	RM 4, 854.00	
The Village Bus Service	RM 3, 760.00	RM 7,413.50	RM 2, 441.00	
MESCOT Culture Group	RM 2,050.00	RM 3, 905.00	RM 1,780.00	
Local Tourist Guides	RM 1,600.00	RM 3, 274.50	RM 1, 995.00	
Other Payments	-	RM 1, 455.00	RM 1, 860.00	
Local Community Fund	-	RM 1, 000.00	RM 1, 520.00	
Total Sub-Revenue	RM 16,514.50	RM 41, 372.15	RM 21, 961.00	
Total Revenue	RM 38, 868.00	RM 73, 850.40	RM 39, 573.50	^ 90%

Source: Adapted from Malaysia, Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, (Malaysia, Ministry of Rural Development, (2003: 35).

7.8. The Limitations of Local Community Participation in the Ecotourism's Homestay Programme.

Miso Walai Homestay was implemented in the year 2000. At a certain level, it has achieved remarkable success. There are, however a few major factors that could limit the success of Miso Walai Homestay programme or could challenge the sustainability of the projects in the near future, for example:

i. *Resistance of the older generation.* Membership of MESCOT and Miso Walai related projects is open to any person of the village interested in participating. However, many of the participants are from the younger generations. In the early phase of the homestay development in Mukim Batu Puteh, many elderly people of the village opposed the project. They argued that the project would have a negative impact on the younger generation and the orang sungai values, culture and tradition that have been preserved from dramatic change in the past decades. From their perspective, aspects of tourist culture such as leisure life style, alcohol and the exposure of certain parts of the male or female body are a strong negative element on the community. It could destroy the next generation's good behaviour and attitude, as the young will adopt the modern life style of the tourist. The chairman of Miso Walai programme has argued about this issue as follows:

“[First reaction of the villagers to the homestay idea] were those people who are concerned about our culture, our way of life, and worried what the effects of having tourists here would have on our families, our children, our way of life...that is negative effects on our culture, unhealthy aspects... but, we have already prepared Do's and Don'ts whereby before tourists come we give them a briefing to ensure that these kinds of things won't occur...³².”

The Chairman of MESCOT has also commented on the reaction of the villagers to the homestay programme as follows:

“At the beginning, many of them were suspicious about the homestay programme. For instance, they were worried about the negative impact on their culture or interruptions to their daily life; they are worried about social interaction and communication with the tourists because they could not speak English; they worry because they do not know how to serve the tourists...in fact [with laugh]...they are the best hosts in the world”³³.

Although the Miso Walai Homestay committee has overcome this issue by providing the tourist "do's" and "don'ts" ethical guidelines (see Table 7.4. p. 224), this does not guarantee that the resistance of the elderly is over. The ecotourism-related programme has actually divided village opinion into “a generation gap” of disagreement between the elderly and the young. In some circumstances, if a negative event happens during the tourist visit, the resistance of the elderly will re-emerge because in the orang sungai tradition the community respects most of the elders views. If the resistance is very strong or becomes a regional political issue then the Miso Walai project will come under scrutiny or be stopped immediately by the Village Security and Development Committee. That is why the main priority for the Miso Walai Homestay committee is to inform or to negotiate with the tourists in advance, to persuade them to agree to follow local cultural guidelines in order to experience ecotourism through the Miso Walai homestay programme. As the Chairman of Miso Walai homestay comments:

“There was one case previously [about host-guest relationships and cultural misunderstanding in the homestay], when we were really strict about these dos and don'ts, and called the tourists in Kota Kinabalu and asked them what they were going to wear during the homestay. If they were still wearing short pants, we told them to change, not to come until they had changed their clothes... [As a result] there might be 1 or 2 tourists complaining about the guideline because not everyone agreed... but we have to be quite strict... if they want to come here, they must follow our rules, never mind if we lose a few customers, we still have to follow our own rules. Thank God, over these last two years those who have come here have followed our ways... that is why we [commonly] don't accept FITs [unless] they understand first the dos and don'ts guideline”³⁴.

ii. *Lack of financial capital resources.* Many of the homestay participants lack financial capital resources such as personal or family savings because the majority of them earn their daily income from a subsistence economy, fishing, and working in the nearby oil palm estates. The average family total income for the majority of the villagers is below RM600.00 per month, below the poverty line of Sabah. The Miso Walai participants' houses have to be modified with two additional bedrooms, a flush toilet and general equipment such as beds, mattresses and so on in order to fulfil the pre-conditions of the homestay certification awarded by the Ministry and the Miso Walai Committee. Before being involved in the programme, they were never concerned about all these matters. The Ministry of Rural Development has provided some assistance to the participants in the form of toilet bowls, cement and so on through the channel of the Security and Development Village Committee. This, in the circumstances, is limited because not all participants can get capital resources. As one of the villager says, sometimes the way capital resources are distributed by the village committee is not accurate, unjust and biased toward few individuals with whom they have close relationships³⁵. This has limited the active participation of the other villagers not yet involved in the homestay programme.

The Miso Walai Homestay Committee, however, has argued that homestay membership essentially is open to everyone in the village interested in joining the project. Accordingly, homestay can be started with a small amount of capital, and seemed the most appropriate at the village level because the villagers already have the houses. What they have to do in addition is to renovate the house before being able to receive visitors. If the villagers are Miso Walai Homestay members, commonly, the Miso Walai committee will help them to upgrade their homes, and provide them with small loans. The complaints however, always come from individuals who are not registered with the homestay association, and whose homes did not fully meet the required criteria³⁶.

iii. *Participants do not understand and/or not satisfied with the rotation system.* Some of the participants do not fully understand the rotation system introduced by the Miso Walai Homestay. The confusion occurs whenever the homestay committee distribute more tourists to stay in the house of two main villages, Menggaris and Batu Puteh, rather than Perpaduan. Some of the participants were not satisfied with this situation and criticised the committee as biased³⁷. That is why the less satisfied participants often view the rotation system as a “repeat system” because the same village and the same hosts always receive the “guests”.

The Miso Walai Committee, however, argues that they do that kind of rotation because the number of Miso Walai Homestay's participants is higher in Menggaris and Batu Puteh than in Perpaduan. Moreover, the Miso Walai committee, in the circumstances, were also faced with a low number of tourists and had to share them fairly between all participants as in the case of the Free Independent Tourists (FITs). This type of tourist commonly arrives in the village spontaneously. Therefore, to avoid delays in accommodating them, the homestay participants who are actually willing and ready to receive them will be offered first. Accordingly, many participants, unaware of the situation, simply criticise the homestay committee as biased or unjust. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay explained this rotation system as follows:

“Yes, it’s like this. We will start with Perpaduan village, one to 24. Say that house number 1 gets 2 tourists and there are 6 tourists, they will be divided into 2, 2, 2., not counting how long the tourists will stay; and as long as he gets his quota the other tourists will go to the other houses...This has been agreed on during a meeting, which is why a meeting is important and considered as an agreement. We cannot divide the tourists’ length of stay to different houses. We have tried but it’s impossible”³⁸.

Table 7.4: The Guideline of Do's and Don'ts For Ecotourists in the Village

Dress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Shirt is a minimum and all clothing should respectfully cover knees and shoulders. • Skirts that expose the legs while sitting are not appropriate. • Shorts are not appropriate - however long Bermuda shorts would be acceptable. • Local dress (costume) is favourable and should be tried by visitors if given the chance. • Wearing a Sarong (wrap-around cloth) while bathing is a unique experience and a must. • Walking to-and-fro while bathing should be done clothed (short wrap-around or towels are not acceptable).
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding hands, morning hugs, hello and goodbye kisses, over touching, or arm around shoulders, between partners is not appropriate. • Eating is done with the right hand (left hand is for cleaning private parts after ablutions). • Right hand is used to accept money (change), pass things, when shaking hands, and waving, • Sitting with legs in front is very inappropriate (good to practice sitting cross-legged before coming to the village). • Village of "Miso Walai" is "dry" (no alcohol) so inappropriate to suggest (or bring) alcoholic beverage during homestay. • Shoe laces are best left untied to ease taking them on and off before entering the houses. Shoes should never be worn in a house (and rarely even on the verendah). • Always greet the head of the house (homestay) and tell them if you are going out at all (and before leaving). • Handshake is held in high regard so greetings are most appropriate with a handshake (also in farewell) - however male-female handshakes are not appropriate. • Bathing is taken with women and males separately. • At meal times one should never rush to take the dishes served or to help yourself to food without being offered first. • Sweets should never be given to children, and medicine should never be given to people who claim to be ill. • Visitors should never enter a mosque. • Inappropriate to discuss religion, sex or politics, and any misunderstandings or questions in this regard should be ignored politely. <p>Money (tips) should never be given and gift giving is not encouraged as it causes inequality, it can embarrass the receiver, as it is difficult to share some thing around.</p>

Source: Adapted from Miso Walai Homestay (2000)

iv. *The language barrier.* The communication between the homestay host and the visitor is quite limited due to the language barrier. Most of the tourists, whether they are GITs or FITs, come from developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, the United States, Germany and Switzerland. Many of the hosts' leaders are between 30 and 50 years old. Most of them were educated to secondary level. The orang sungai has their own ethnic dialect but at the same time they can speak Malay (the national language of Malaysia) fluently. Unfortunately, the majority of them are not able to speak or understand basic conversation in English. This situation limits the interaction between the host and guest in the house. One of the homestay's participants has commented on this situation:

"On some occasions we communicate through "sign language" to invite them to breakfast, lunch or dinner because we cannot speak English. Sometimes we feel funny about it. One of my daughters can speak a little English. If she is at home there is no problem anymore"³⁹.

For this reason, the elderly commonly greets the guests. The other members of the family just smile from a distance, especially on the first day of the visit. The Miso Walai Homestay committee confirms this situation by arguing that the language barrier is not a problem during the following days when the visitor is taking part in homestay activities whether organised by the host or by the MESCOT. At the later stage, the Miso Walai homestay events give the interaction between host and guest more mutual understanding and a friendly tone. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay has confirmed this situation. He said:

“The most frequent complaint that we hear from the tourists is that their host family are too shy...what they mean is, the tourists feel it’s a bit difficult to mix socially with them. We tend to be a bit shy. They come here to get to know us. If they are here 2 or 3 days, then with each day there is more socialising. That’s the most common remark that the host is very shy. Secondly, there’s the communication barrier that still exists. This is probably why they don’t socialise that much, because they can’t speak English that well. If there is a child who can speak, he or she will mix a bit with the guests but very often the children are away at work, the wife may speak a bit but only a few words”⁴⁰.

v. *Inadequate food or meals to visitors.* Another major limitation faced by the homestay participants in providing a good service is inadequate food or meals to visitors. Although the Miso Walai committee has briefed the visitor to eat whatever the orang sungai cuisine served to them during overnight stays, in some instances, some of the guests demand the type of food suitable to their taste. According to the homestay participants some of the guests are vegetarian; some prefer only chicken, others beef and so on. The hosts cannot fulfill this variety of the visitors’ tastes because on the everyday meals menu they serve very simple and small meals. If the host tries to fulfil the guests’ high demands this could increase their family budget suddenly. Thus, the host will feel burdened because of their involvement in the homestay programme, especially for the low-income category of participants. Thus, the hosts and visitors were encouraged by the Miso Walai committee to tolerate the situation. However, this toleration sometime is hard to achieve because the visitors commonly looked for the best value for money. The chairman of Miso Walai Homestay explained this situation as follows:

“Some of the tourists were said to be too demanding, too fussy...saying they wouldn’t eat this or eat that, so the head of household felt a little bit disappointed; that’s to be expected. It’s normal. So we as members of the homestay committee just to try to explain to them that there are all kinds of tourists, tourists like this, tourists like that...however, the foreign tourists are easier to handle than the locals...”⁴¹.

vi. *A short training programme.* The Sabah state Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment conducted a week's homestay training programme or workshop for interested villagers. This training was conducted by INFRA (Institute for Rural Advancement of Malaysia). The main objective is to expose the participant to modules of the basic aspects of room and catering services, hygiene and cleaning methods, information on tourist culture and attitudes, introduction to basic English or Japanese and other related issues. Many of the participants, however, claim that the training programme is very short, and there is no follow up session offered to them in order to increase further their skills and knowledge in ecotourism hospitality. According to the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay however, there are a few courses offered to the participants by the committee:

“Regarding running homestays, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah is the facilitator. Besides this, we have English courses to improve the communication skills of our members. There are in-house courses from our committee, such as English. We also developed a course called Tourism Culture, where we explained tourist management. This includes how to look more friendly when looking at tourists, sweet smiling, even when we are in no mood to do it or feel fed up, how to maintain our poise...”⁴².

Although there were limitations for local community participation in the homestay programme as discussed above, there are also some benefits gained by the village in general. This issue will be discussed in the following section.

7.9. The Benefits of Miso Walai Homestay on Local Community

In general, there are some benefits of the Miso Walai Homestay programme on local community. These are:

i. *The economic benefits.* The villagers who are involved in the homestay programme have opportunities to gain extra income rather than only depending on the main income from fishing and/or agricultural activities. This side income is gained directly or indirectly through involvement in ecotourist activities such

as boat services, bus services, handicrafts, tourist guides, catering services, local cultural shows, and the reforestation programme. These activities actually offer new job opportunities for the villagers. Table (7.3. p. 219) shows a breakdown of total income gained by the community from these tourist activities. Although this is still relatively small we can term it as a “real economic benefit” gained by the local community because of their involvement in the homestay programme.

Moreover, through the House Renovation Scheme provided by Miso Walai Homestay Association, the villagers can improve their living conditions without too much dependence on government subsidies. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay describes the benefit gained by the participants as follows:

“As to their quality of life, take for example their houses, they can improve them, because they have certain criteria that they are required to meet. They need to repair and improve them and if they are one of our members, we have a fund; we assist them and help them beautify their homes a bit”⁴³.

ii. *Social benefits*. The implementation of the Miso Walai Homestay programme in Batu Puteh has increased the cooperation among the villagers particularly because of the ecotourist activities, which have been planned and implemented. This is because during the research the majority of the villagers felt that many of the homestay related programmes run by the committee are actually their programmes too. Consequently, the homestay programme has increased the awareness of the villagers of the need to improve their English, to keep their homes clean and tidy. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay comments:

“Indirectly [the homestay programme can bring] educational benefits; for example, [the participants] have the motivation to learn more about the English language [to ensure that they can] interact well with their guest, and talk on current events or things that they can talk to their guest about. Indirectly their children will be exposed to English”⁴⁴

“In addition to that, it can help in maintaining the cleanliness of the *kampung* (village) or the compound around the house, because if they want to follow this programme, they must make sure their house is clean and that the food is clean. Not only in preparing clean wholesome food, but they themselves must keep their lifestyles clean. Our food, we take care of it, the cleanliness of our kitchens, the house itself, and soon this idea spreads throughout the whole village. This is the advantage of this programme, from small beginnings the benefits spread”⁴⁵.

iii. *Preservation of local culture.* Miso Walai homestay has increased the interest of the young to learn more in depth about *orang sungai* customs, foods, traditional music and dances, local history, myths and legends, and traditional costumes from the old generations in order to reproduce these cultural elements as unique or authentic local cultural products for the tourists. For instance, the local cultural dance show performed by the village young people through MCG (MESCOT Culture Group)) has successfully become an attractive culture product to the visitors who are involved in the Miso Walai Homestay. Before the homestay programme was introduced, local culture shows or exhibitions had declined and been dumped by the local people. The Miso Walai homestay programme, however, has successfully changed this situation, and has increased the awareness of the villagers in preserving their unique cultural heritage particularly to reproduce them as tourist products.

The Director of Sabah’s Homestay has put her views about the cultural benefits of the homestay programme gained by the village as follows:

“In Batu Puteh, the homestay programme has successfully increased the quantity and quality of local culture as tourist products. The traditional dance shows for instance, have increased in quality. As for handicrafts, the quantity of this product also increased because there are some buyers [tourists] interested in buying this product. In relation to local myths, legends, and history, the villagers are starting to appreciate or preserve them seriously, and to reproduce them in the form of written works or tape recordings. In other words, we will continue to support this good effort ...”⁴⁶.

iv. *Increased local awareness of the nature conservation programme.* There is a relationship between the Miso Walai Homestay programme and the nature conservation programme in Batu Puteh. As mentioned earlier, the homestay programme needs a pristine environment and wildlife as the backdrop to the tourists' activities. The MESCOT has successfully drawn the attention of villagers to the importance of sustaining or conserving the natural environment in this area, particularly for ecotourism activities. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay comments:

“Yes, concerning outdoor activities, if tourists come we may prepare a forestry programme or wildlife viewing, then our tourists will be involved. So they may go off in the morning and then return in the late afternoon. This is one of the forestry programme activities. [Moreover] up until now I can say that almost 200 of our community members are indirectly involved with the forest rehabilitation programme. So, yes there is some connection with the homestay programme...”⁴⁷

The Miso Walai homestay programme has successfully been implemented in the village, has successfully given benefits to the local people, and made efforts to conserve the natural environment. These successes, however, are short-term. The local community participation in the homestay programme is still at an early stage. In the longer term, sustainable local participation in the homestay programme is still in question. This is actually the main challenge, which will be faced, by the MESCOT and the Miso Walai Homestay Committee in the near future. This is because the economic benefits from this programme, classified, as “side income” for the participants are not fundamentally strong enough to sustain local community involvement in the programme in the longer term. The main income from oil palm agricultural activities seems more attractive than income from Miso Walai Homestay programme. The Sabah government, however, can switch ecotourism to become the main income for the villagers, if they seriously intend to do it, and act as a community developer. During this research, the

Sabah government acted only as a community facilitator in the ecotourism project and nothing more. At village level, the ecotourism development process was run by the NGOs and the private sector. That is why the sustainability of Miso Walai Homestay programme in the longer term is uncertain.

v) *The setting-up of KOPEL (the Tourists' Cooperative of Batu Puteh).* To overcome this uncertain future as mentioned above, the Miso Walai Homestay Committee and the MESCOT set up the *Koperasi Pelancongan Batu Puteh* or KOPEL (Batu Puteh's Tourists Cooperative)⁴⁸ in May 2003. The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay has given the reasons why they set up the KOPEL:

“If there was no KOPEL, only homestays, we would have difficulty in getting any tour operator's licence...we might get a licence to carry on tourism activity but it would be difficult if we wanted to expand our activity. If there was no KOPEL, the other associations would not be able to come together. But with the existence of KOPEL, they can come together. If we are united, we can combine our energy, our ideas, our money, and administration into one”⁴⁹.

Moreover, the existence of KOPEL enables the Miso Walai Homestay Committee to involve more members of the village community in the programme. It not only involves local people in the homestay projects or boat services; Others, even those who are not involved in homestay, can become members of KOPEL. The connection of KOPEL with homestay is that the homestay bureau is under KOPEL⁵⁰. KOPEL has a lot of bureaus such as a homestay, a bureau of boat services, a bureau of handicrafts, a bureau of tourist guides, a bureau of MESCOT, a bureau of transport etc. In order to run this tourist cooperative the committee formed a subsidiary company called Trek Sendirian Berhad. It is already registered and operating. The main project of this subsidiary company is set up an eco-lodge in Batu Puteh of which the KOPEL will become the umbrella for those programmes and related projects. The giant petroleum company, SHELL already supports the MESCOT to the level of

RM220,000.00⁵¹. As a result, KOPEL can sustain the Miso Walai Homestay programme, ecotourism related activities, and the active participation of the local community continuously in the immediate future.

7.10. Discussion of the findings

There are two sub-themes to the discussion of the findings of the research and related literature in ecotourism development and community participation as follows:

7.10.1. The positive impact of ecotourism through Miso Walai Homestay programme.

i. *Economic Benefits.* The findings of the research reveal that the involvement of local people in the ecotourism and conservation projects in Mukim Batu Puteh through the Miso Walai Homestay programme have brought some economic advantages to the villagers particularly in generating income to supplement the income earned from subsistence, agricultural and fishing activities (see section 7.9(i). p. 227). More jobs and extra income have been created for the young of the village, especially jobs related to ecotourism activities, for instance the extra income from boat services, tourist guides, intra-village bus service, handicrafts, catering and reforestation. (see Table 7.3. p.219). Scheyvens describes this positive impact as *economic empowerment* where ecotourism brings economic gains to a local community. Cash gained is shared between many households in the community (Scheyvens, 1999: 247). This is because the economic benefits of ecotourism usually generate employment and contribute to the regional development of the less developed countries (Mason, 2003).

ii. *Social benefits.* The young generation have begun to show an interest in learning more about orang sungai culture and tradition especially in folklore stories, traditional costume and music, which were ignored before the Miso

Walai project implementation (see Section 7.9(iii). p. 229). This is what Wearing (2001: 396) stated as the benefits of ecotourism to the socio-cultural environment of local communities. This is aside from the economic benefits of ecotourism, which usually generate employment and contribute to regional development (Mason, 2003). The positive impact of ecotourism would also mean that the commercialisation of culture could give local people an incentive to *preserve* their traditional culture (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 175). This is actually what happened in the case of the Miso Walai homestay in Batu Puteh, where the conservation of local culture will also mean the active involvement of local people, re-educating them and re-establishing pride and a knowledge of traditional skills and values amongst the younger generations (Wearing, 2001:399). As a consequence, this effort will continue to sustain the well being of the local people as highlighted in the definition of ecotourism. Thus, the development of the ecotourism through the Miso Walai Homestay programme can be seen to benefit local people as well as tourists. The other aspects of social benefits gained by the village are:

- *Cultural understanding between the host and guests is increased.* The research findings also disclosed that to date, the "introduction phase" of the Miso Walai Homestay project has been successfully implemented and guided by the MESCOT. The orang sungai religion has not become the main barrier for the visitors to take part in many Miso Walai homestay activities because the project only seeks the "responsible tourist". The feedback given by the visitors about the Miso Walai Programme are very encouraging. As one New Zealand visitor says:

“The homestay was an excellent opportunity to savour Malay homelife and hospitality. Our host Cyril and Gis family (sic) were extremely welcoming and engaged us in fascinating conversation, which provided a unique insight into the attitudes and culture of the people here. All in all an invaluable experience. Thank you!” (Source: Miso Walai Homestay, feedback form: 6.10.2001)

- *Increased level of active community participation.* MESCOT has successfully developed the homestay programme (culture) as a niche product of ecotourism. Besides that it also offers the main products of ecotourism, such as a pristine natural environment and wildlife, to the visitors. The level of community participation in the case of Batu Puteh has increased from the *consultation tokenism* level, where the participants have the opportunity to voice their demands but they lack power to ensure that their message will be heeded by the authorities, to the *placation level*. The placation level is a higher level in tokenism because the community is allowed to have ground rules, but the power to decide still belongs to the ecotourism authorities (Arnstein, 1971: 73; Telfer, 2003: 164). More importantly, the case of Batu Puteh revealed that ecotourism development through the homestay programme has resulted in the features of “*social empowerment*” (Scheyvens, 1999: 247). This means that ecotourism enhances the local community’s equilibrium of participation in the homestay project. Community cohesion is improved as individuals and families work together to build successful ecotourism ventures. Some funds raised by the homestay committee are used, for instance, to renovate participants’ houses and to support village projects such as the village festive day etc.
- *Local awareness of nature environment conservation programme increased.* The research findings disclose that the MESCOT has successfully increased local awareness of the natural environment conservation programme, particularly among the younger generation in the village. The decline of illegal logging and hunting activities in the village is a good sign of how the villagers of Batu Puteh are beginning to appreciate the forest and the wildlife as part of the homestay product. This situation is described by Scheyvens as having features of “*psychological empowerment*” when the self-esteem of many community members is

enhanced because of visitor recognition of the uniqueness and value of their culture, natural resources, and traditional knowledge (Scheyvens, 1999: 247). This situation has increased confidence in the community, leading members to seek out further education and training opportunities for traditionally low-status sectors of society e.g. women and young people.

7.10.2. The Main Challenges for the Homestay and Conservation Programmes in Batu Puteh.

The research findings indicate that in terms of sustainability, the development of ecotourism through the Miso Walai homestay programme in Batu Puteh can be classified as *shallow ecotourism* or *weak sustainability* (Accot and La Trobe, 1998). Therefore, a major challenge faced by the MESCOT, the Miso Walai Homestay Committee, the WWF officers, and the related government agencies of Sabah is how to sustain local community participation in the Miso Walai project in the near future. This is because ecotourism could bring forward social change to the life style of the orang sungai in Mukim Batu Puteh. The commercialisation of the traditional life style by the Miso Walai project has increased the attitude and demands of the villager to be more materialistic than before. The Miso Walai operator not only needs two extra bedrooms and a flush toilet in the house but in future also a car, refrigerator, washing machine, computer, and so on. An increased standard of living is a necessity. This is the real meaning of the development to most of the villagers in lower Kinabatangan, including the villagers in Batu Puteh.

Unfortunately at this stage the research findings reveal that the Miso Walai project is only performing as a second income generator (see section 7.9(i). p.227). There is, therefore, a high possibility that the villagers' land will be sold and/or converted to oil palm estates in order to make much quicker profits (Fletcher, 2004: 5) compared with those from the ecotourism project. This is the

dilemma faced by the ecotourism policy makers because the poverty issue among the rural communities in Sabah remains a critical factor in sustainable (eco)tourism development (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 64).

Moreover, the research findings also demonstrate that there are some limitations to local participation in the Miso Walai Homestay Programme (see section 7.8. p.220). These are:

- *The continuing resistance of the older generation.* The ecotourism-related programme has actually divided village opinion along generational lines between the elderly and the young. Although the Miso Walai Homestay committee provides tourists with the “do’s” and “don’ts” ethical guidelines, these do not guarantee that the resistance of the elderly can be overcome. This is because the authenticity of culture in the homestay programme is only “negotiable” (Cohen, 1998b). Fortunately at this moment, this cultural negotiation between the host and guest in the homestay programme is working.
- *The lack of clean water supply in the village.* This is the main problem faced by a majority of homestay participants in the village. The villagers have been demanding a clean water supply into their houses for more than 10 years, but the local government authority is still delaying setting up a clean water reservoir in Batu Puteh for “unclear” reasons. Tosun, (2000) and Jenkins, (1982) describe this situation as a “limitation at the operational level” where there is lack of co-ordination and cooperation between government agencies to speed up the process of infrastructure development in the ecotourism area because of the unwillingness of politicians and high ranking government officials to implement decentralisation of powers (Desai, 1995: 40). As a consequence, there can also be lack of co-ordination between the public and the private sector to establish a clean water supply project in the village. For this reason, local

community participation in ecotourism and Miso Walai homestay programmes is limited.

- *Lack of financial support and resources particularly from the government agencies.* The research findings indicate that many of the homestay participants lack financial capital resources because the majority of them live in poor conditions. Moreover, many of the relevant government agencies do not adequately support the villagers with special financial support or schemes that could ease the financial burden of upgrading homestay facilities and services (see section 7.8(ii). p. 222).
- *Lack of training.* The research findings indicate that the duration of training programmes conducted by INFRA and/or the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah was too short (see section 7.8(vi). p. 227). There was also a lack of continued support from the government agencies to improve basic conversational English or Japanese. The government agencies depend heavily on the role of NGOs such as MESCOT to overcome this problem (see section 7.8(vi). p. 227). The MESCOT, however, is overstretched in supporting the ecotourism development process of the village. As a result, the barriers to language communication among the homestay participants remain a limiting factor to quick mutual understanding between the host and guest in the programme (see section 7.8(iv). p. 225). Moreover, the homestay participants also have difficulty in meeting basic needs because the majority of them are poor. This situation, sometimes, has resulted in inadequate meals being served to the visitors (see section 7.8(v). p.226). The Miso Walai committee advise the host and guest to be tolerant about this, but this is sometimes hard to achieve because the visitor has commonly looked for the best value for money. The relative poverty of many local people limits the level of active participation in the programme, and tends to confine them to manipulated or passive

participation (Pretty, 1995). Tosun, (2000: 625) called this phenomenon the “cultural limitation” of local people in community-based ecotourism.

7.11. Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between ecotourism development, nature conservation and local community participation in the case of Miso Walai Homestay of Batu Puteh. The findings of the research have revealed that the positive impact of ecotourism development through the homestay programme in Batu Puteh is more dominant than its negative impact. This is because the MESCOT and Miso Walai homestay committee realised from the beginning that socio-cultural aspect of the local community had to be given top priority and serious attention in the village’s ecotourism agenda. The socio-cultural guidelines on Dos and Don’ts (see Table 7.4.p.224) give the local community the ability to reduce the negative demonstration effect that the tourists’ presence could cause. Although there is limited participation in the homestay programme, Nepal (2000) describes the relationship between ecotourism, protected areas, and local communities as in the case of Batu Puteh as a “*win-win-win scenario*”. This is because all three players mutually benefit. The local community benefits from the ecotourism activity of Miso Walai homestay, and local attitudes toward the tourist are favourable, which means that prospects for inter-cultural exchange are good (Nepal, 2000: 74-76), and they are thereby encouraged to support conservation activities.

Moreover, most of the villagers still control or own the land in the village. However, the success of ecotourism development will change the circumstances very soon. At this moment, there are no state government laws that could prevent the villager selling or developing their land as oil palm estates if they want to do so. Consequently, this trend will affect and challenge the conservation programme and potential ecotourism values in the area. For this reason the role of MESCOT and the government officers as local village facilitator’s educators are

vital. The continuous education programmes regarding the importance of linkages between the values of the villagers' socio-cultural daily life, the values of natural conservation, and the values of ecotourist activities must be informed or created in terms of sustainable development. This is not an easy task or a shortcut for the villagers to achieve the benefit of the programme. It can only be achieved through the continuous "sustainable participation" of the local people in the Miso Walai Homestay.

Currently, however, the ecotourism benefits received by the villagers are still limited. The main challenge now is how to sustain local participation in the homestay programme, or how to increase the "real economic benefit" to the village in the near future. MESCOT and the Miso Walai Homestay committee have institutionalised the KOPEL (The Tourists Cooperative of Batu Puteh). Furthermore, Shell Malaysia, Raleigh International and WWF Malaysia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on the development of an eco-lodge as part of MESCOT project. The institutionalisation of KOPEL is a remarkable achievement by MESCOT and Miso Walai homestay to ensure that local community participation in the ecotourism-related project can be maintained and sustained in the future.

Therefore, the government and the NGOs must take serious consideration, strategically plan and take immediate action to ensure that the participation of the villagers in the ecotourism development is maintained in order to increase the "real benefits". The government must also provide the village with an adequate social infrastructure and facilities such as a clean water supply without any further delay. If not the *win-win-win scenario* (the sign of positive impact) of the relationship between the villagers' active participation, conservation effort and ecotourism development achieved so far will change to a *win-win-lose scenario* (the sign of negative impact) because currently they receive limited benefits from the ecotourism and conservation projects. In the next chapters (chapter 8 and 9), therefore, the research findings and discussion will focus on the scenario of the

relationship between ecotourism development, the conservation programme and the villagers, but this time in the case of Sukau village.

Template 7.1: Menggaris Village



Source: Contributed by Miso Walai Homestay, 2003

Template 7.2: Batu Puteh Village



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 7.3: Elephants: Attraction or Problem?



Source: Contributed by Miso Walai Homestay, 2003

Template 7.4: The Orang-utan: Abandoned or Preserved?



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template: 7.5: The Tourists in Traditional Costume



Source: Contributed by Miso Walai Homestay, 2003

Template 7.6: MESCOT's Volunteers



Source: Contributed by Miso Walai Homestay, 2003

Template 7.7: Briefing Session For Ecotourists



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 7.8: Miso Walai Homestay in Batu Puteh



Source: Photograph from the Fieldwork, 2003

Template 7.9: The Guest's Lounge in Homestay Participant's House



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 7.10: The Guest's Bedroom in Batu Puteh



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Endnotes

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- ¹ Interview with Mr Martin Vugel, the MESCOT's consultant and Chairman of Batu Puteh, 13.05.2003.
- ² Interview with Haji Jukrana, Batu Puteh resident and homestay participant, 13.05.2003
- ³ The four Miso Walai participants are Mr Yahya, Mr Kahar Albi, Haji Jukrana, Mr Rahman Hamid; interviews were conducted between 11.05.2003 and 13.05.2003
- ⁴ These informal interviews were conducted with Mr Rosli, Mr Harun Awang, Miss Robiah, Ms Asiah, Mr Kahar Albi, Ms Fatimah, Mr Aziz Normin etc.
- ⁵ The 'Orang Sungai' are named as specific group among the 30 ethnic communities of inland Sabah, and the majority of 'Orang Sungai' are Muslim.
- ⁶ Mr Martin Paul Vugel founded MESCOT (Model Ecologically Sustainable Community Tourism) in Batu Puteh in April 1997. The main objective is to raise concerns (awareness?) among the villagers of Batu Puteh regarding essential ecotourism through local community participation in the homestay and environmental conservation projects. He is an Australian citizen but he has decided to settle down in Sabah, and currently married to a Sabahan lady. He is the consultant for the *Miso Walai* Homestay programme in Batu Puteh.
- ⁷ Informal Interview with Haji Jukrana's son-in-law, 15.05.2003
- ⁸ Interview with Mr Martin, the Chairman of MESCOT, 13.05.2003
- ⁹ Interview with Mr Rahman Amit, homestay participant, 13.05.2003
- ¹⁰ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim Abdul Hamid, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay of Batu Puteh, 14.05.2003
- ¹¹ Interview with Mr Rosli, homestay participant, 15.03.2003
- ¹² Source: <http://www.borneonativehomestay.com/Homestay/index.htm> (access on 28.09.2005)
- ¹³ Interview with Mr Martin, the MESCOT's consultant and Chairman, 13.05.2003
- ¹⁴ Interview with Mr Martin, the MESCOT's consultant and Chairman, 13.05.2003
- ¹⁵ Interview with Mr Yahya, the Assistant Chairman of Batu Puteh Boat Services, 13.05.2003
- ¹⁶ Interview with Mr Kahar Albi, the Village Chief of Perpaduan village, 15.05.2003
- ¹⁷ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.05.2003
- ¹⁸ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003
- ¹⁹ Interview with Mr Martin, The Chairman of MESCOT, 15.05.2003
- ²⁰ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim Abdul Hamid, Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay Programme of Batu Puteh, 14.05.2003

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- ²¹ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003
- ²² Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003
- ²³ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003
- ²⁴ Source: Miso Walai feedback form. It was obtained from the Miso Walai Committee during fieldwork in Batu Puteh, May 2003.
- ²⁵ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ²⁶ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ²⁷ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ²⁸ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ²⁹ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ³⁰ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ³¹ Source: Miso Walai feedback form, 2003
- ³² Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.05.2003
- ³³ Interview with Mr Martin, The Chairman of MESCOT, 13.05.2003
- ³⁴ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.05.2003
- ³⁵ Anonymous, Batu Puteh resident, and also Miso Walai Homestay participant, 15.05.2003
- ³⁶ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, The Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.05.2003
- ³⁷ Anonymous, Batu Puteh resident, and also Miso Walai Homestay participant, 15.05.2003
- ³⁸ Interview with the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, Mr Hashim, 14.05.2003
- ³⁹ Interview with Haji Jukrana, Batu Puteh resident and homestay participant, 13.05.2003
- ⁴⁰ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.05.2003
- ⁴¹ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.05.2003
- ⁴² Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, 14.10.2003
- ⁴³ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.10.2003
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.10.2003
- ⁴⁵ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.10.2003
- ⁴⁶ Interview with the Director of Homestay Programme of Sabah, the Sabah State Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Ms Joanna Kiskey, 16.06.2003
- ⁴⁷ Interview with the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay, Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003

⁴⁸ According to Mr Mohd Hashim, the Tourist Cooperative of Batu Puteh is the first kind of cooperative related to tourism to be set up in Malaysia, 14.05.2003

⁴⁹ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003

⁵⁰ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003

⁵¹ Interview with Mr Mohd Hashim, 14.05.2003

Chapter 8

Findings of the Research: Local Community Participation in Ecotourism in the Case of Sukau Village

8.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the research, the data of which were obtained from fieldwork in Sukau Village. The discussion of the findings, however, is divided into two chapters: Chapter 8 and 9. Therefore, the discussions for Chapter 8 and 9 are divided into four main parts as follows:

Part I: is focused on the pattern or characteristics of the socio-economic background of local community of Sukau Village; the sampling of this study, will include the gender proportion and the marital status of respondents, respondents' age categories, the size of respondents' families, types of respondent occupations, total family incomes, the respondents' levels of education, house ownership among the respondents, land and property ownership and how they gained and developed their land etc.

Part II: the research findings will focus on the issues of the **negative impacts** of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community. Why did these impacts occur? How do they perceive these impacts? Why do conflicting interests exist between the stakeholders in Sukau village? How do local people perceive these? To what extent does the implementation of the conservation programme through gazetted sanctuary area have an effect on the *orang sungai* traditional way of life? To what extent did the rapid development of oil palm plantations affect the everyday life of the local community and ecotourism in Sukau village?

Part III is in the following chapter (**Chapter 9**). It will focus however on the issue of the **positive impact** of ecotourism development in Sukau village and its **limitations**. To what extent would this development give socio-economic advantages or benefits to the local community? To what extent does the level of local community participation in ecotourism contribute to improving the standard of living of the villagers? Has this development increased the involvement of local community in ecotourism related activities and/or the conservation programme? How do they perceive the ecotourism development and conservation programme in the village? How and why did the participation or involvement of the local community in ecotourism development actually have certain limitations?

Then, **Part IV** in Chapter 9 is specifically on the sub-theme of *discussion of findings* (see section 9.4. p. 364). The discussions for this sub-theme are based on the findings of the research in both Chapters 8 and 9 in order to link the empirical findings with the relevant literature.

The discussion for this chapter (Chapter 8), however, will be divided into 5 main sections as follows:

The *first* section is the introduction to this chapter.

The *second* is a brief overview of the profile of Mukim Sukau and the villagers; how actually from that conservation effort, initiated by NGOs, the ecotourism development was implemented in Sukau village. Then, a brief discussion on how the combination data collection methods were deployed during the fieldwork in Sukau.

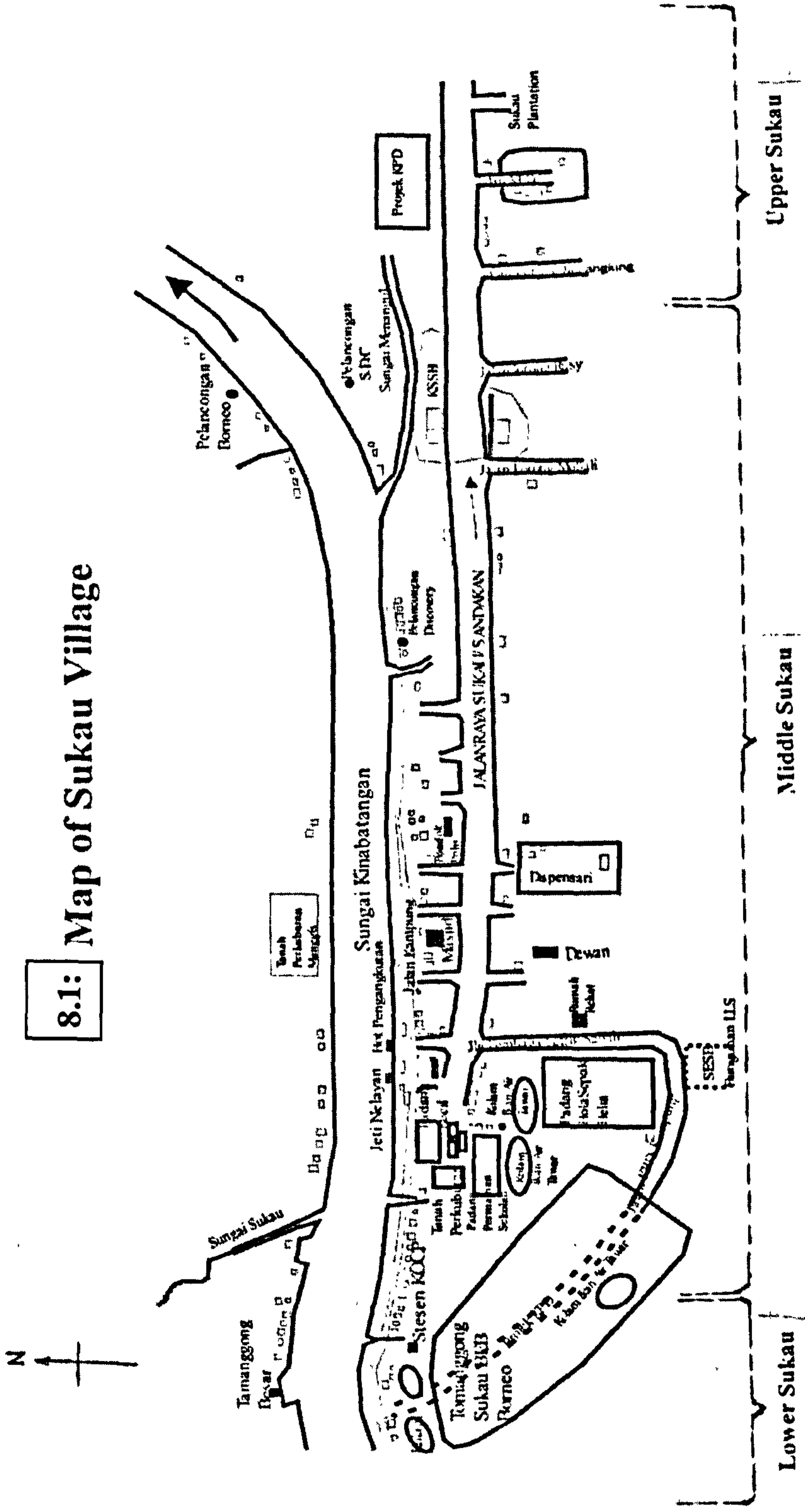
The *third is Part I*: The findings of the research on the socio-economic background of the local community of Sukau. The sub-themes discussed in the findings are:-

- the gender and marital status of the respondents, and migration;
- the respondents' place of birth and ethnic origins;
- the respondents' length of residence in Sukau;
- the age of the respondents and the village administration,;
- the respondents' level of education;
- the respondents' occupations and estimated total family incomes;
- house holding and land ownership among the respondents;
- types of land development carried out by the respondents;
- future land development intended by the respondents.

The *fourth is Part II*: the negative impact of ecotourism development on the local community. There are two major themes discussed in the findings of the research:

- the negative impact of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community;
- the conflict of interests between the local community and other stakeholders.

The *fifth* section of this chapter is the conclusion.



8.1: Map of Sukau Village

Source: the JKKK Committee of Sukau, (2003).
 Note: The map without standard scale

8.2. A Profile of *Mukim* Sukau and the Villagers: A Brief Overview

The *Mukim* or sub-district of Sukau (commonly known as Sukau village) is located on Kinabatangan river 40 km upstream from Abai village, 134 km by road from the city of Sandakan and 50 km from Kota Kinabatangan town centre. This meant the visitors, on riverboats or by car from Sandakan town, can reach the village. There is a 40 km gravel road from the Sukau junction of the Sandakan-Lahad Datu motorway. The area of the village is 5.5 square km (Malaysia, 2000: 1). *Mukim* Sukau geographically can be divided into three main parts; Upper Sukau, Middle Sukau and Lower Sukau¹ (see Map 8.1. p. 251). The main economic activities for the villagers of the upper Sukau are small-scale oil palm plantations, and subsistence farming. Most of the villagers actually originated from the middle and lower Sukau, but migrated to upper Sukau to concentrate in the new scheme of cash crop agriculture from the 1980s. The local residents in the middle and lower Sukau traditionally are fisherman, subsistence farmers, hunters and gatherers. Compared with the residents from the upper Sukau, however, the majority of the local residents in these parts (middle and lower Sukau) have been actively involved in ecotourism activities in this area. Thus, the observation part of the study is focused more on these parts of Sukau Village but for face-to-face interviews with local residents, the sample covered the entire village including upper Sukau.

The population of Sukau village, according to WWF statistics is about 2000, of which the majority of young people have migrated to the main towns and cities in Sabah such as Sandakan, Tawau and Kota Kinabalu. The Ministry of Rural Development (Malaysia, 2000), however, estimates that the population of Sukau village is less than that, only about 1426 people of whom the number of houses is 103, and the number of families 116². Recently, the majority of the villagers still sustain themselves through subsistence farming (e.g. tending home gardens or hill rice cultivation), hunting and fishing, cash crop agriculture, short term work (e.g.

forest clearing, building village infrastructure, contracted rattan collections, boat hire to tourists, oil palm plantation work, and contracted work for conservation projects of NGOs), small scale trading and businesses and so on (Payne, 1989; Azmi, 1996: 5).

8.2.1. From Conservation Effort to Ecotourism Development in Sukau Village

As mentioned in an earlier chapter (Chapter 6), the ecotourism project was introduced in Sukau village in 1991 when several private tour operators set up tourist lodges along Kinabatangan riverbank. Since then, some local people have begun to participate in tourism activities and services. For instance, some of the lodges are employing a few people from local communities as housekeepers, waiters, waitresses, and gardeners. Other involvement of the local community in ecotourism in Sukau village is as tour boat operators and/or as boatbuilders. Earlier than that, in 1980s, scientific research conducted into biodiversity by WWF Malaysia claimed that the Lower Kinabatangan area, including Sukau Village, is an important area for wildlife conservation (Malim, 2002: 4). This is because many forest areas in Lower Kinabatangan were converted into oil palm plantations. This situation has threatened to cause loss of biodiversity in the area. In fact the WWF's study also revealed that the Lower Kinabatangan Floodplain had very good potential for nature-based tourism or ecotourism because it is home to many rare and endangered species such as the Orang-utan, Proboscis monkeys, Bornean elephants and the Sumatran rhinoceros (Malim, 2002: 3). Therefore ecotourism may be one way that conservation strategies could contribute to raising the standard of living of the local people who are being affected by the decrease in these natural resources.

As a result, the Sabah state government began to recognise the high value of the Kinabatangan floodplain and the need to modify policy on land development in the area. In 1992 it approved, in principle, the need to establish conservation areas in Lower Kinabatangan. The Lower Kinabatangan area potentially became a "protected area" for wildlife when a new Wildlife Conservation Enactment

established in December 1997 (Vaz and Pyne, 1997: 8) and, the sanctuary is protected under the State Land Ordinance (1930). In the early 1990s, WWF Malaysia in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Environment, Science and Technology, produced the National Ecotourism Plan. In, this plan, the Lower Kinabatangan area was highlighted as 'an ecotourism hotspot' in Malaysia. In mid 1998, the *Partners for Wetlands programme* was set up by WWF Malaysia and the Sabah Wildlife Department to actively seize opportunities for wetland management, conservation and restoration (Prudente and Balamurugan, 1999: 41). In principle, the stakeholders, from the local community, oil palm plantations, the tourism industry, NGOs and relevant government agencies work together as partners to identify the wise use of the wetland towards a common purpose for economic development and conservation. Among the Partners for Wetland's activities tree-planting, the development of community-based ecotourism models and elephant research are being implemented. Furthermore, a vision, "Kinabatangan, A Corridor of Life" formulated by WWF in the year 2002 is intended to provide a guideline to stakeholders and industries in order to maintain the sustainable development of Kinabatangan, especially through ecotourism development. Subsequently, on January 15th, 2002, the Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Chong Kah Kiat, officially announced that Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary had been gazetted (Malim, 2002: 5). From this background series of events, Sukau village has emerged as one of the best-known ecotourism destinations in the lower Kinabatangan area alongside Abai, Bilit and Batu Puteh village.

8.2.2. A Combination of Data Collection Methods

There was a *combination of data collection methods* has been deployed during the fieldwork in this village, such as:

i. Adapted participant observation method

The researcher stayed in Sukau village for two and half months in order to do field work. Within that period he also spent some time in Batu Puteh village. At the early stage of fieldwork in Sukau village, the researcher stayed for a week with one of the families who ran the homestay programme. Thus, starting from there, the researcher established a relationship with the villagers and strengthened his network with the other respondents or informants in the village. For the rest of the time the researcher was provided with accommodation at Kinabatangan Orang-Utan Conservation Centre (KOCP) in Sukau. During this fieldwork the researcher observed and mingled with the villagers in many formal and informal events in their everyday lives. For instance, the researcher observed types and forms of facilities, and the daily activities of the homestay programme participants. He also joined the fishermen catching fish on a fishing boat and stayed overnight at the Tenagang Oxbow Lake fishing camp to experience the activity and the venue.

At another event, the researcher joined the KOCP volunteers in spotting Orang-utan in the Sanctuary area of Pangi Forest. Here, he observed how the KOCP volunteers were observing and collecting the data regarding Orang-utan daily behaviour and habits in their natural habitat. He attended and observed the WWF meeting with the villagers from Abai, Sukau, Bilit, Batu Puteh and Bukit Garam village related to mapping wildlife spots and conservation issues. The main objective of this meeting was to ensure those villagers realised that there are many types of wildlife in their areas, which are actually the main tourist attractions in ecotourism. Then, the researcher attended the Parent-Teacher Association's Board Meeting of Sukau Secondary School. It was evident that private lodge representatives, the oil palm estate managers, the village committee members, the parents, and the pupils attended this meeting. It was shown that the relationship between the ecotourist industry, the oil palm companies surrounding Sukau village, and the villagers is very important in developing and supporting

successfully the school infrastructures and facilities through private sector financial donations and contributions.

In other words, the Sukau Village Chief, the JKKK Committee, the informants and the villagers in general gave strong support and cooperation to the researcher during the observation. Although at the early stages of the observation, some villagers seemed sceptical about the researcher's presence in the area, eventually and gradually this sceptical behaviour disappeared when the relation between researcher and the local people became established. The researcher, at the same time also developed informal relationships with the villagers by mingling and chatting with them in the mosque and the coffee shops, and visiting some houses. The field notes and photographs were taken in those related events during direct observation. The main purpose of these field notes is for researcher revision or critical reassessment in the fieldwork analysis and findings (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004: 9)

ii. Face to face interview survey

Face to face survey interviews were conducted with 200 respondents in the village. Four volunteers, students from the University Malaysia Sabah, supported this work. A short course was given (two days) to these volunteers to ensure they were familiar with the questionnaire. Then, a pilot interview survey was conducted with 20 respondents within these two days to ensure the reliability of the research questions in the questionnaire. There was a variety of research questions in this set of questionnaires. Some were created in close-ended forms, and others were open-ended and Likert Scale questions. As a result, some research questions were amended such as question number 16, 36(a), 36(b) and 36(c), and 40 (see Appendix III, p. 8-26). Question number 37 was also lifted out because it repeated question 38.

The type of sampling for this survey is the *probability-sampling* method where each respondent in the population has a high probability of being chosen through

a simple random sample. This meant each respondent in the population had an equal (and non zero chance) of being selected (Gilbert, 1993: 71-72). Thus, those villagers (male or female) living in Sukau village, and aged between 16 years old and 55 years old or above were chosen as respondents. In general, many respondents gave a great response to this survey. In some occasions, the researcher had to replace a particular respondent with another where he or she was not available or busy at the time of the appointment. The fieldwork for this survey was completed within two weeks.

iii. Focused and In-depth Interviews

The main reason why focused interviews were used in this research was because it allows people's views and feelings to emerge, but at the same time the interviewer has some control over the issues being discussed (Robson, 1993, 240-241), particularly by framing the questions so as to focus on them. There were two types of interviews conducted in this research. The first was *formal interviews* with the key informants in the village, in which they could express their views and feelings, and their involvement in particular situations, phenomena or events regarding ecotourism development in Sukau. These key informants were not only limited to certain individuals such as the JKKK committee members, but also included the NGO officers, the tourist lodge managers, an oil palm estate manager, the homestay coordinator and participants (see Table 5.3. p.155). During the interview session a tape recorder was used. As a result, these focused interviews finally became *in-depth interviews*. Most of these were transformed into transcripts.

Second were *informal interviews* with a variety of informants such as some village youths, a boatman, the conservation volunteers, the homestay participants etc. The main purpose of these was to cross check particular issues mentioned by the key informants in the formal interview session. There was no specific list to the research questions, and no tape recorder was used in this interview, but the

focused issue was still maintained. Finally, all the main information gained from these interviews was written down in the field notes book.

iii. Documentary Research

Many types of documents were collected during the fieldwork in Sukau, for instance the minutes of meetings, written reports, newsletters, the guest books in the lodges, and newspaper cuttings. All these documents were gained from the Chairman of JKKK, the Homestay Committee members, the KOCP mini library, and the WWF officer. The main objective of the use of these documents is to corroborate evidence and arguments from other sources (Yin, 2003: 87). As a result, all the information obtained has been used to strengthen the evidence in the data analysis of the research findings.

8.3. PART I: The Socio-economic Background or Characteristics of the Local Community.

Proposition 1: The local community in Sukau Village is heterogeneous. The community has variations in gender, age and ethnicity, and inequality in income and education levels, and is likely to be a mixture of individuals and groups. These mixed characteristics of the socio-economic background of the local community could lead to individuals and groups in the community having varied political perceptions and/or attitudes toward ecotourism development in the area.

8.3.1. Gender and Marital Status of the Respondents and Migration

The study showed that the majority of the respondents taking part in these face-to-face survey interviews are male (n=130) 65% compared to female (n=70) 35% (see Figure 8.1. p. 258). The majority, 58.7%, were married compared to 36.5% who were single; and 3.0% divorced (see Figure 8.2. p. 259). The proportion of male and female residents in Sukau village is always unbalanced because many of the female residents migrated from Sukau when they married or came looking for new jobs or to attend secondary school in the major city and towns in Sabah

such as Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Tawau and Lahad Datu. As a consequence, some of the private tourist lodges operating in Sukau employed female workers originating from outside Sukau village as kitchen helpers, housekeepers, and waitresses³.

Figure 8.1: Gender of the Respondents

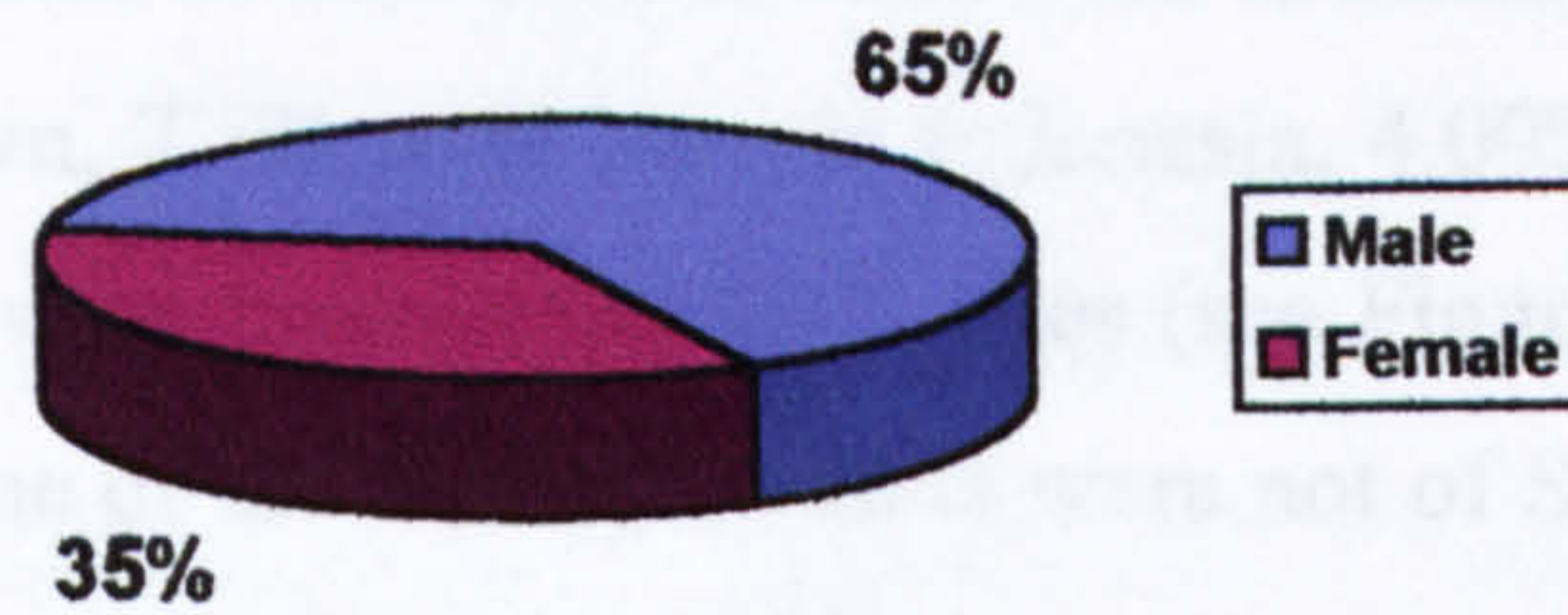
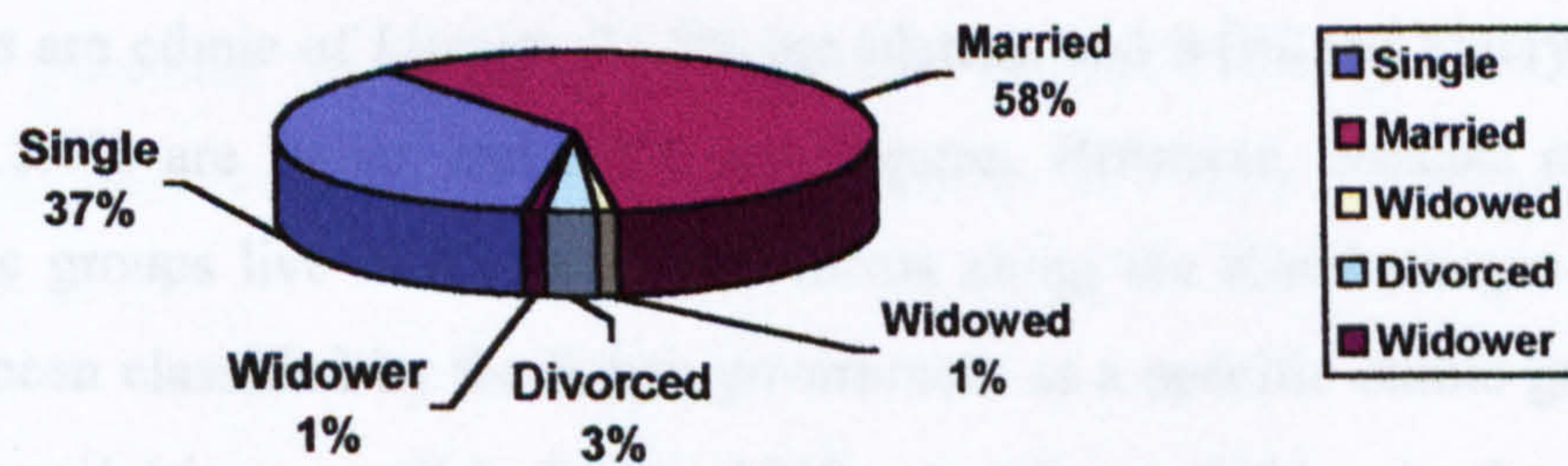


Figure 8.2: Respondents Marital Status



At the same time, some of the male villagers were married to outsiders, for instance females from Sandakan, whom they brought home to settle with them in Sukau village. A majority of the single respondents in this research are also male. Similar to other indigenous communities in Africa and Latin America, most adult males in Sukau village are the breadwinners of their family. The husband is the

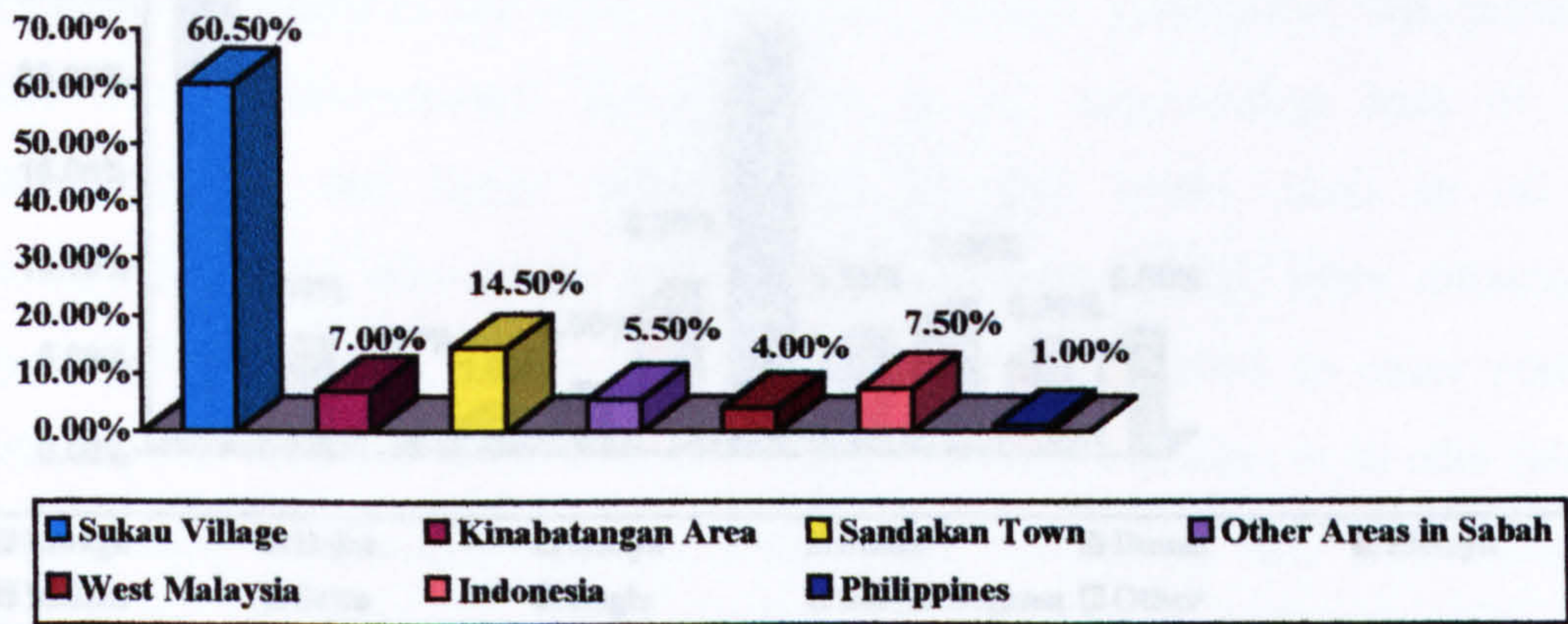
decision-maker in the family in every aspect of the everyday life of Orang Sungai community. Commonly, wives and children just follow the husband's orders or wishes.

8.3.2. The Respondents Place of Birth and Ethnic Origin

The trend of migration of Sukau's population can also be traced through the results in relation to respondents' places of birth and ethnic origin. For instance, 60.5% of the respondents in this research were born in Sukau village, 14.5% were born in Sandakan town, 7.5% were born in Indonesia, 4.00% were born in West Malaysia and 1.00% were born in the Phillipines (see Figure 8.3. p. 261). These figures show that some of the Sukau residents were not of Sukau origin but have moved into Sukau for several reasons such as *push* and *pull* factors. In the early historical past, Lower Kinabatangan area attracted many other ethnic groups in the region who moved into the area looking for forest sources such as timber, birds' nests, rattan, freshwater prawns and fish, and to hunt wild animals such as deer and so on. (Figure 8.4. p. 262) therefore, has shown that there is a mixed pattern of the ethnic origin of respondents settled in Sukau village until to date. In other words, Sukau is a heterogeneous community. For instance, 36.5% of the respondents are ethnic of Liwagu, 21.5% are Idahan, and 8.0% are Malay. 7.0% are Bugis, 5.0% are Bajau, and 5.0% are Segama. However, because most of these ethnic groups live in scattered settlements along the Kinabatangan River, they have been classified by the Sabah government as a specific ethnic group of '*orang sungai*' (river people). In the 1950s, logging activities in the Lower Kinabatangan area, including Sukau village, attracted a number of migrant workers, many of who have settled in this area (Azmi, 1996: 16). Since the early 1970s, the development of oil palm plantations and agriculture has provided job opportunities to many Sukau residents and foreign immigrants, particularly workers from Indonesia. Then, from the 1990s to date, Sukau village has become the main ecotourism destination in Sabah. As a result, the size of the village

population and settlements has risen, and with it, an increased demand for basic needs such as land, food and shelter.

Figure 8.3: Respondents Place of Birth



With the increase of population in the surrounding area of Sukau village, there is a growing fear in the government agencies that forested areas, freshwater resources and wildlife animal population will receive pressure from several uncontrolled activities such as the uncontrolled harvesting of timber and rattan for domestic purposes, the over harvesting of water resources (e.g. *ikan ubi* and freshwater prawns), and increased hunting pressure on deer, for food or sale (Azmi, 1996: 17).

Figure 8.4: The Respondents Ethnic Origin

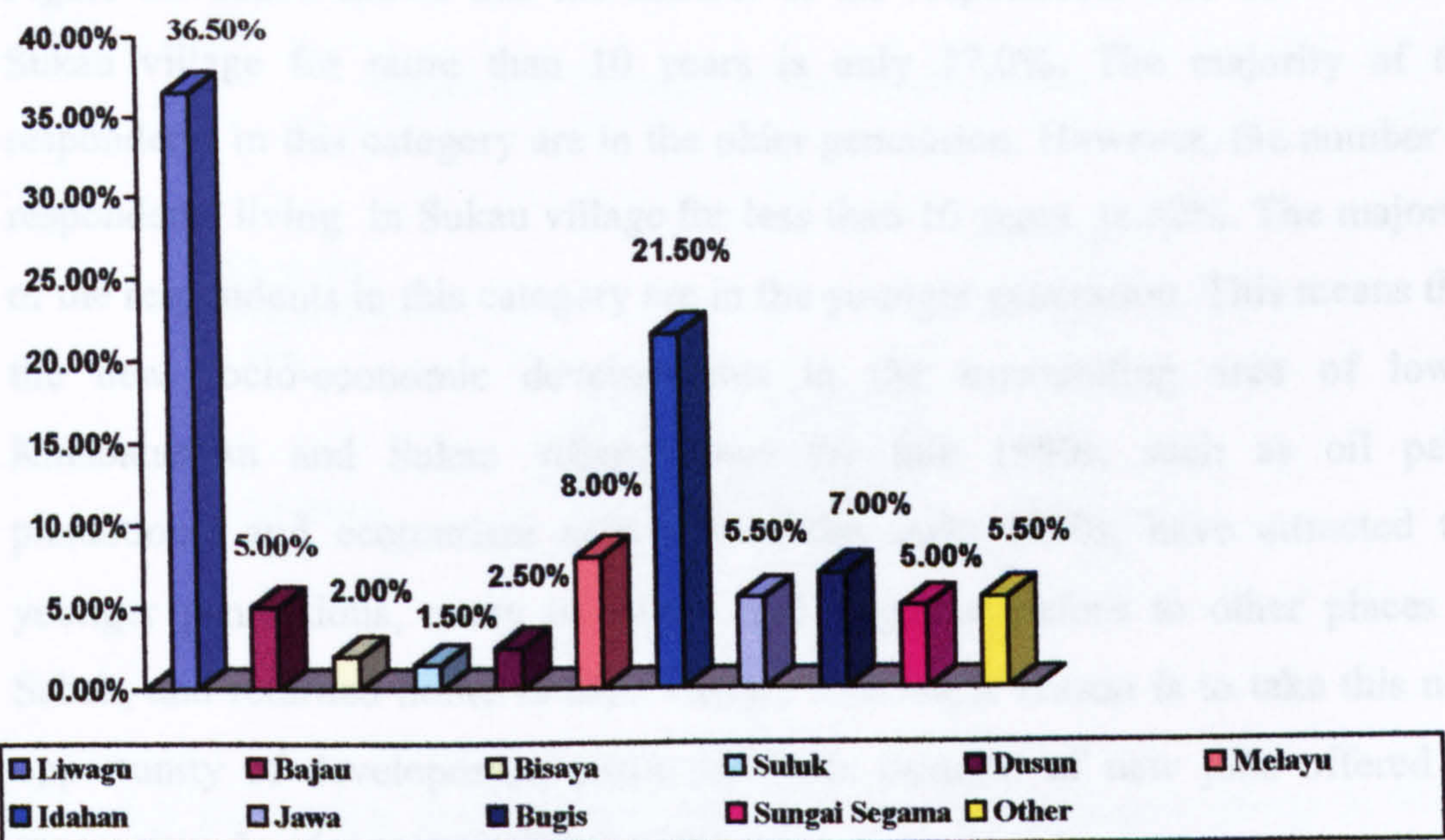
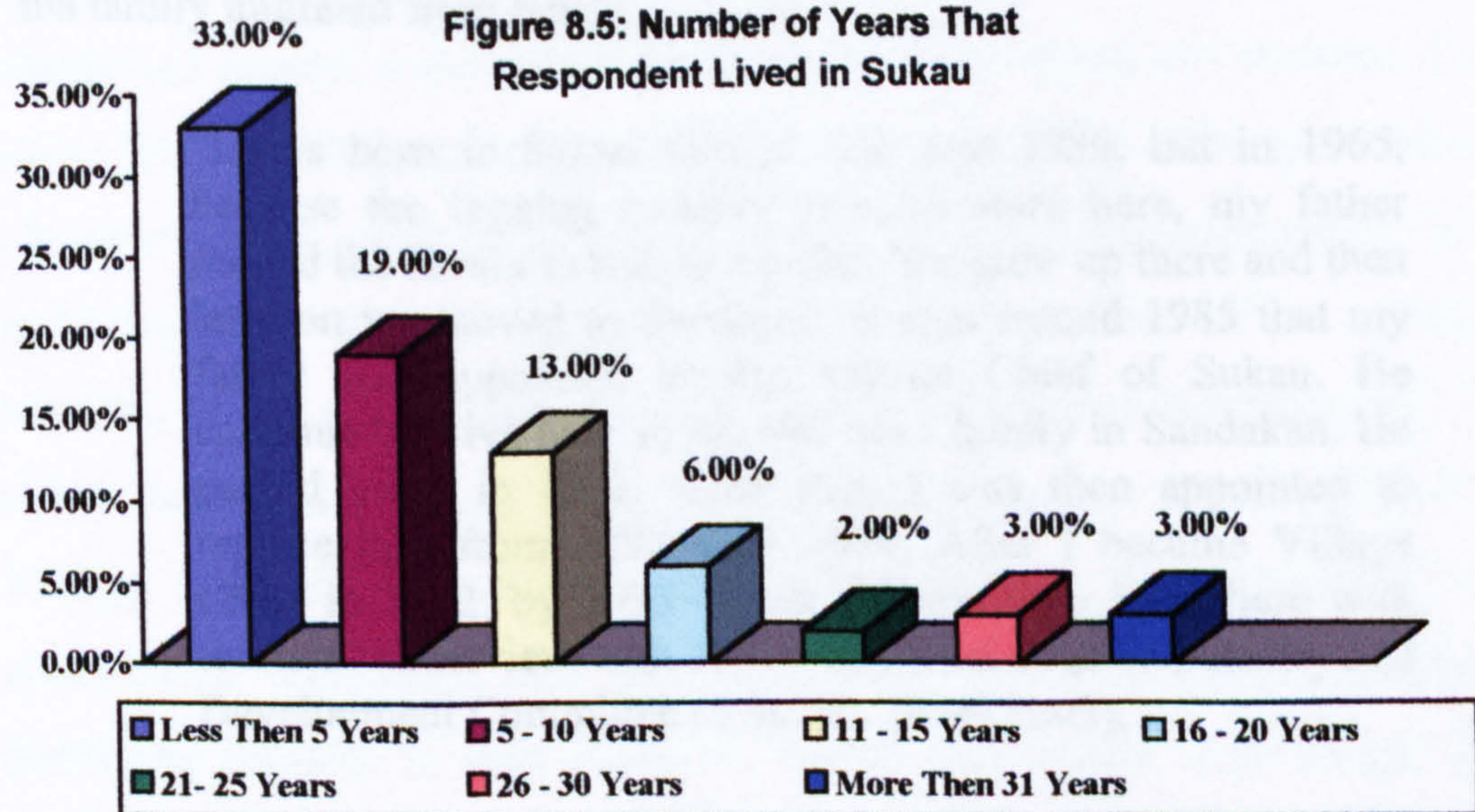


Figure 8.5: Number of Years That Respondent Lived in Sukau



8.3.3. The Duration of Residence in Sukau

Figure 8.5 above shows that the number of the respondents who have lived in Sukau village for more than 10 years is only 27.0%. The majority of the respondents in this category are in the older generation. However, the number of respondents living in Sukau village for less than 10 years is 52%. The majority of the respondents in this category are in the younger generation. This means that the new socio-economic developments in the surrounding area of lower Kinabatangan and Sukau village since the late 1980s, such as oil palm plantations, and ecotourism activities in the early 1990s, have attracted the younger generations, many of whom had migrated before to other places in Sabah, and returned home to their village. The major reason is to take this new opportunity of development, particularly the creation of new jobs offered by ecotourism development in Sukau village.

There are several reasons why the villagers migrated from the village in the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, one of the informants mentioned his reason why his family migrated from Sukau:

“I was born in Sukau village, that was 1955, but in 1965, because the logging industry was no more here, my father moved the family to Sungai Lamba. We grew up there and then later on we moved to Sandakan. It was around 1985 that my father was appointed as the Village Chief of Sukau. He continued to live here so we still have family in Sandakan. He passed away in 1991. After that, I was then appointed to replace him from 1992 until 1994. After I became Village Chief in 1992, by 1993 it had become very busy here with tourists” (Interview with Mr Pastor, Chairman of Security and Development Committee of Sukau, 18.04.2003).

8.3.4. The age of the respondents and the village administration

Figure 8.6: The Age of the Respondents

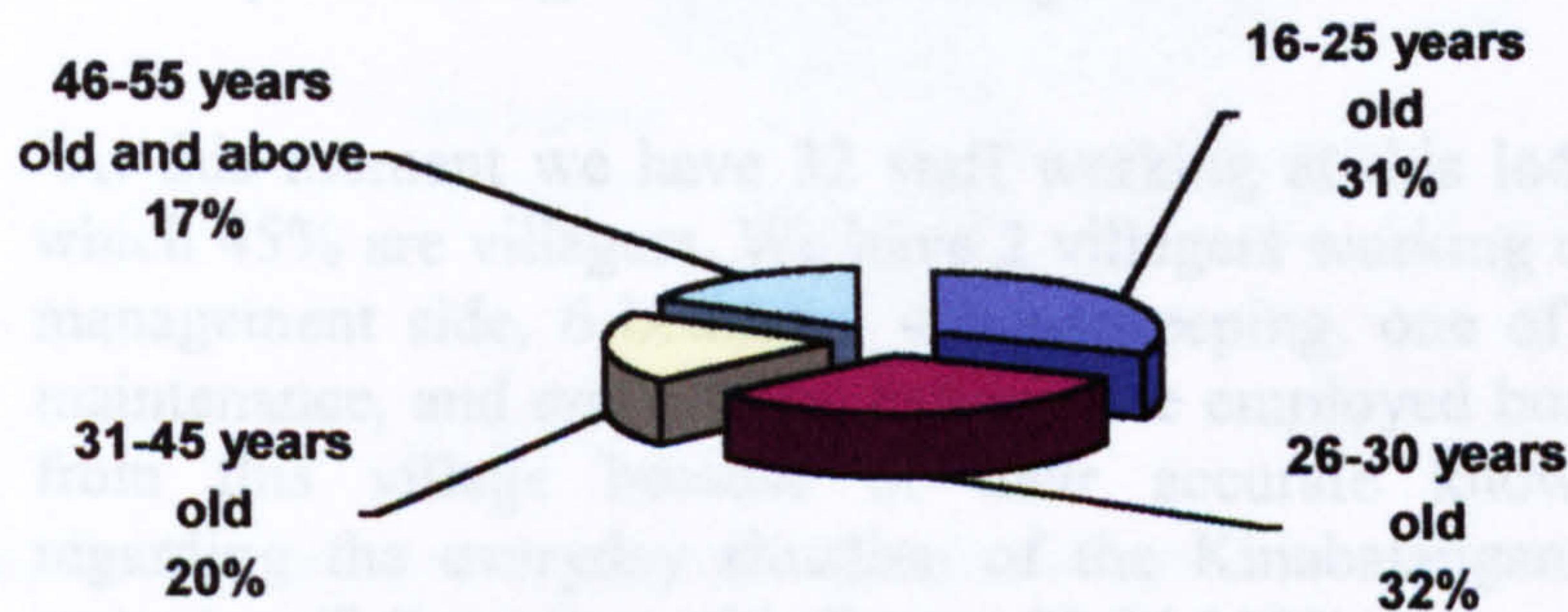


Figure 8.6 shows that the younger generation are the dominant group in Sukau village, where the age group between 16 to 25 years old is 31.0%, and 26-30 years old 32%. The middle age of 31 to 45 years old represents 20.0%, and the older group, aged from 46 to 55 years old and above, is only 17.0%. Although the number of the older group of residents is small, in many situations they are in charge and control many of the traditional cultural values and customs. Political power at the village level is still in the hands of the older generation. The villagers' oldest group is commonly responsible for decision-making in many traditional and religious activities, and the administration of the village. For instance, at the village level of administration, the *Ketua Kampung* (the village chief) and *Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung-JKKK* (the Village Security and Development Committee) were appointed by the government. Generally, they are responsible for monitoring, controlling and instituting changes in land allocation within and around their village area. In practice, the Rural District Administration Committee (*Jawatankuasa Pentadbiran Daerah Luar Bandar*) ensures that village-level administration functions correctly and efficiently. The local State Legislative Assembly Member chairs these committees, with the District officer as Deputy, and the Assistant District Officer as Secretary; membership includes the JKKK and the Native

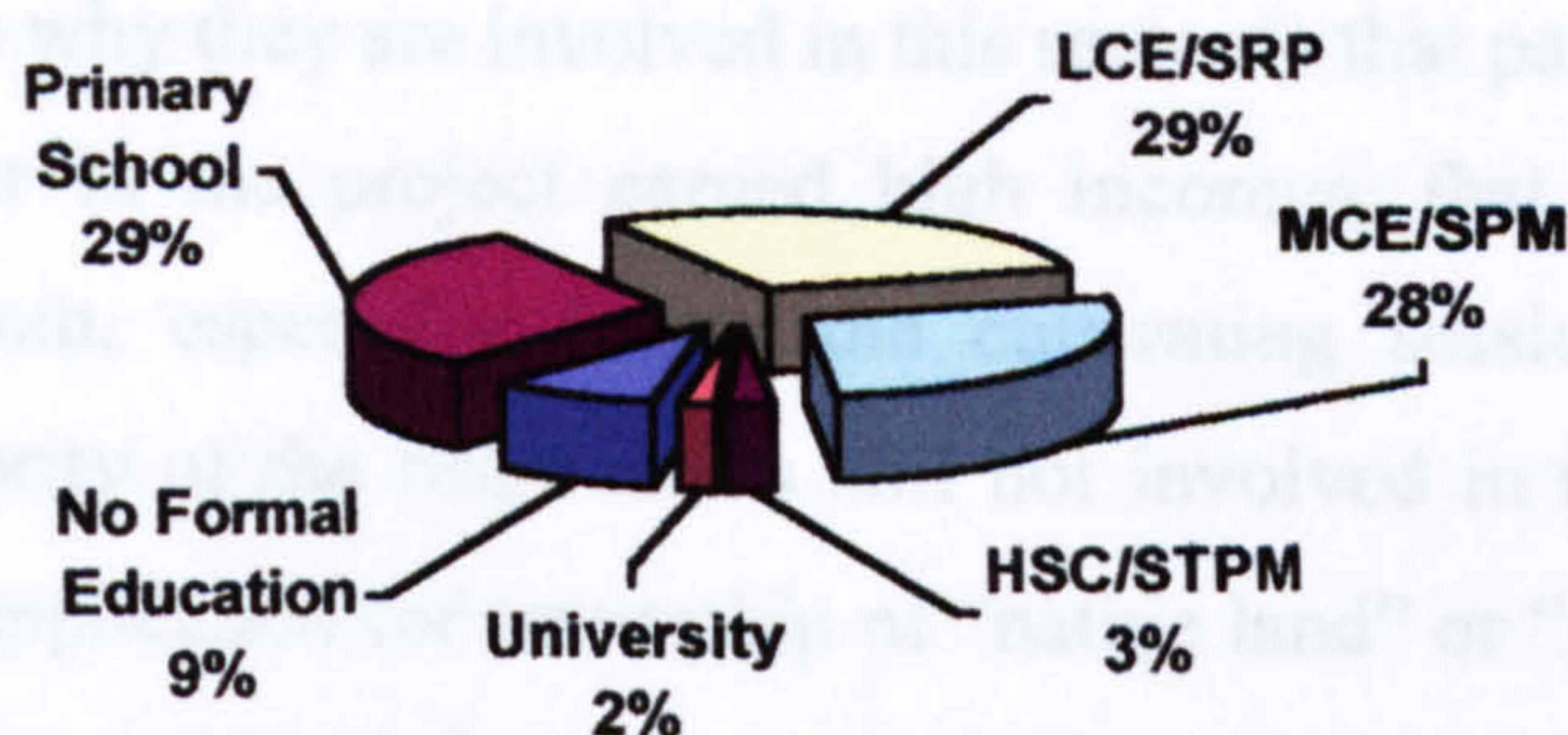
Chief (WWF, 1992: 46). On the other hand, the high youth population in Sukau village could supply the ecotourism activity with a young, energetic and dedicated workforce, as long as the related government agencies and private sectors provide them with appropriate skills and training in this sector. According to the one of the private lodge Assistant Managers:

“At this moment we have 32 staff working at this lodge of which 45% are villagers. We have 2 villagers working on the management side, 6 boatmen, 4 housekeeping, one of them maintenance, and one kitchen helper...we employed boatmen from this village because of their accurate knowledge regarding the everyday situation of the Kinabatangan river water level” (Interview with Jimmy, 22.04.2003).

8.3.5. The Respondents' Level of Education

Sukau Primary School was set up by the British colonial government in 1952 to ensure the children from this remote area have appropriate levels of education. After 1963, the Sabah government continued supporting the development of this primary school and still does. However, the children from this village have to go to Sandakan and Bukit Garam and live at boarding school if they intend to continue studying up to secondary level. In other words, the children around Sukau village can gain primary school education level easily, but they and their parents have to struggle in terms of financial support and distant location for them to attend secondary school. Many of the families in Sukau village live in poverty and below minimum income levels. In many situations, parents are not able to send their sons or daughters to have further education at secondary level. (Figure 8.7. p. 266) shows that 9.0% of respondents have no formal education at all, 29.0% completed only primary school level, 29.0% achieved *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran-SRP* (Lower Certificate of Education-LCE), 28.0% achieved *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia-SPM* (Malaysia Certificate of Education-MCE); 3.0% achieved *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia-STPM* (Higher School Certificate - HSC); only 2.0% achieved education at University level.

Figure 8.7: Respondents' Level of Education



Therefore, the higher rate of respondents who achieve low education levels could affect the ability of individuals or groups to be involved in the ecotourism development process, particularly to fulfil new types of job demands in the village. With limited achievements in education, they may be able to obtain only low skill jobs offered by the private tourist lodges in the village and not beyond that.

8.3.6. The respondent's occupations and estimated total family income.

It is obvious that the villagers in Sukau village currently hold various types of jobs or occupations. For instance, (Table 8.1. p. 269) shows that 12.8% of the respondents are fishermen, 13.4% are resort employees, 8.1% are government servants such as teachers at secondary and primary schools, nurses and medical assistants at the Sukau Health Centre, staff of the Forestry Department and so on. 9.7% are subsistence crop farmers, 9.4% are boatmen, 7.7% are small-scale oil palm cultivators, 5.0% conservation research assistants, 4.4% small shopkeepers and 20.8% others. These proportions show that the majority of the villagers in Sukau village are still doing traditional types of jobs. However, the implementation of ecotourism and conservation activities in the village has increased the number of respondents working in the tourist resorts. Some of them have started becoming involved in conservation and research-related jobs such as research assistants.

The number of respondents involved in small-scale oil palm plantations has increased. The reason why they are involved in this sector is that participants who were involved earlier in the project earned high incomes, that is more than RM2000.00 per month, especially during the cultivating session. The main obstacle for the majority of the respondents still not involved in this scheme is that their land grant application for ownership of “native land” or “new land” has been delayed or not approved by the government. This is related to the declaration of the Lower Kinabatangan area as a Wildlife Sanctuary or protected area. During this research, many respondents expressed frustration with the government regarding land policy and ownership. As mentioned by the Chairman of the Village Security and Development Committee:

“At first the villagers found it difficult to accept tourism and especially gazetting of the sanctuary for wildlife. Even though there weren’t any open protests against it, whenever the subject came up in conversation among the villagers it was certainly heated. This is because they felt that the government was putting a higher priority on the wildlife than on them. For example those residents, who had already applied for the land grant over 10 years ago, still had not been able to get it. Then suddenly the land is declared as a sanctuary. But I have seen that, over time, the thinking of the village residents has started to change. Especially when the tourists started to come and the boat operators managed to get some income from that.”(Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003)

It is clear that the land and the type of occupation are very sensitive issues among the villagers in the Lower Kinabatangan area, including Sukau village. The reason is the land is the main source of income for individuals and families in the community to survive in their everyday life, whether by self-employed farming or employee’s wage. There are four categories of total family income indicated in this research; very low, low, medium and high.

- The first is a *very low level* of total family income. For this category, representing 17.0% of the total, most of the respondent families live below the poverty line of the Malaysia national income for Sabah,

RM500.00 per month (see Table 8.2. p. 270). Most are still involved with traditional types of occupations such as fisherman, subsistence crop farmers, boatmen and housewives. It is common for this category solely to depend on one occupation for their source of income.

- The second is the *low-level* family income category (20.5% of the total). This is the biggest group, who earn a total family income from RM501.00 to RM1000.00 per month. Most of the respondents are still involved with traditional types of occupations, but some family members are also doing more than one job, such as working as resort employees, research assistants, and private van/lorry/minibus/taxi drivers.
- The third category is the *medium level* income group, representing the 14.0% of respondents receiving total family incomes of between RM1001.00 and RM2000.00 per month. The main jobs in this category are government servants such as teachers at primary and secondary school, nurses, and shopkeepers. At the same time, however, others have traditional jobs or jobs related to ecotourism activities.
- Finally, there is the *high-level* income category, which is the 4.0% receiving between RM3001.00 and RM4000.00 per month, and the 3.5% receiving RM4, 000.00 and above per month. The majority of the families in this category are involved in the small-scale oil palm farmers' scheme, and others are also government servants, research assistants, resort employee, tourist guides, at the same time continuing to do those traditional jobs and activities part-time.

Table 8.1: Respondents Current Occupations
 (The Respondents Chose more than one option)
 (N=200)

Occupation Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Fisherman	38	12.8
Subsistence Crop Farmer	29	9.7
Small-scale palm oil cultivator	23	7.7
Small-scale cocoa farmer	-	-
Boatman	28	9.4
Resort Employee	40	13.4
Shopkeeper	13	4.4
Van/lorry/bus/taxi driver	5	1.7
Government Servant	24	8.1
Research Assistant	15	5.0
Other	62	20.8
Housewife	21	7.0
Total	298	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.
 (Note: percentage, e.g. $38/298 \times 100 = 12.8$)

This finding means that the level of family income of the respondents depends on how the family members were involved in related jobs, and how successfully the family developed their land. If the members of the respondent's family depended on one occupation, particularly traditional jobs or activities, commonly they fell into the very low-income category. Those doing more than one job received higher incomes. However, it is not easy for this very low income category to change their position because most of them are not educated, without any land, without the capability to develop land, lacking financial resources and so on. This very low-income category is the majority population in Sukau village.

Table 8.2: The Estimated Total Family Income of the Respondents
(N=200)

Level of Family Income* Per Month	Frequency	Percent (%)
Married Respondents:	127	63.5
RM 500 and below	34	17.0
RM 501 – RM 1000	41	20.5
RM 1,001 – RM 2000	28	14.0
RM 2,001 – RM 3000	9	4.5
RM 3,001 – RM 4000	8	4.0
RM 4,001 and above	7	3.5
Single Respondents	73	36.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

* Total family income includes all type of incomes received by family members; husband, wife, sons and/or daughters and those living together in the same house. Therefore this question was only responded to by the head of household (wife or husband) or married respondents.

8.3.7. House holding and land ownership among the respondents, and competition for land use

The demand for houses and land by the villagers increased dramatically in recent decades in the Lower Kinabatangan area, including Sukau village, because of the growing population. Individual members of the local community need the land for housing settlement and agriculture. However, at the same time most issues relating to natural resource conservation and management are tied, either directly or indirectly, to land use and tenure (WWF, 1992: 88). Ecotourism development in Sukau village also depends much on land for tourist lodge development, and to maintain natural resource conservation continuously. As a result, there was a conflict of interest between the villagers and the government agencies on how they should develop the land in the Sukau area.

Table 8.3. p. 272, shows that 42.0% of the respondents say that they are householders and 58.0% say they are not. From that 42.0%, 17.0% say they inherited the house, 13.0% privately rented, 5.0% say that they bought the house, 1.0% say the house is still owned by their family, 1.0% live in the house given by the government, and 5.0% built the house with permission on land belonging to their relatives. This means that the majority of the villagers are still struggling to have their own house for their family. Many single, and some married respondents interviewed during this research are still living with their parents because they cannot afford to buy or rent their own house. As a result, the form of the extended family for Sukau community is common. Respondents living in upper Sukau built houses scattered along both sides of the road to Sandakan, but respondents living in the middle and lower part of Sukau, built houses along both sides of the Kinabatangan riverbank.

Table 8.3: House holding Among The Respondents

Type of House holding	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes:	84	42.0
Inherited	34	17.0
Bought	10	5.0
Privately Rented	26	13.0
Family Owned (Wife, Husband, and Relatives)	2	1.0
Given by The Government	2	1.0
Other	10	5.0
No	116	58.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

This means that the boat remains the major means of transport for respondents living along both sides of the Kinabatangan riverbank. What is significant about the respondent being a householder is the capability of the family to be involved in the homestay programme, which was implemented in the village in 2002 officially. Householding families are more likely to be involved in the programme compared to those who not own their houses. This issue will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

Land ownership by the respondents in Sukau village is shown in (Table 8.4. p. 273). 31.5% of the respondents state that they are the owners of land around the Sukau and Lower Kinabatangan area. 68.5% do not have any land around Sukau and/or the Lower Kinabatangan area. The area of land they have varies from one individual to another. the majority of respondents (18.0%) hold land ranging from 11-15 acres, followed by 11.5% who have from 1-5 acres; those with 6-10 acres represent 7.5%; 2.0% have from 16-20 acres, and only 1.5% have more than 21 acres. The type of land held by the respondents was also varied; the

majority, 23.0%, hold agriculture land⁴; 6.0% hold traditional land⁵; 4.0% have housing lots; and only 1.0% of the respondents have logging lots. In this manner, the majority of the respondents who still do not have any land around the village feel they have become victims of Wildlife Sanctuary regime because it prevents them from holding any type of land in future.

Table 8.4: Land Ownership of Respondents in Sukau Village and Lower Kinabatangan Area (N=200)

Type of Land	Acres					Total
	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 - 20	21 and Above	
YES:	23 (11.5%)	15 (7.5)	18 (9.0%)	4 (2.0%)	3 (1.5%)	63 (31.5%)
Traditional Land	9 (4.5%)	-	3 (1.5%)	-	-	12 (6.0%)
Agricultural Land	13 (6.5%)	12 (6.0%)	14 (7.0%)	4 (2.0%)	3 (1.5%)	46 (23.0%)
Logging Lot	-	1 (0.5%)	-	-	-	1 (0.5%)
Housing Lot	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.0%)	1 (0.5%)	-	-	4 (2.0%)
No	-	-	-	-	-	137 (68.5%)
Total						200 (100.0%)

Source: Data from fieldwork, 2003.

Moreover, there were a few ways in which the respondents gained ownership of the land in Sukau area. Table (8.5. p. 274) shows that 16.5% of the respondents inherited the land; 7.0% had the land approved or given by the government, 2.5%

stated that the land was family-owned and only 1.0% of the respondents were able to buy the land. This meant most of the land holding by the respondents in Sukau village was inherited from the previous generation, and that local government is unlikely to approve new applications for land in this area.

Table 8.5: How the Respondents Gained Ownership of the Land (N=200)

The Ownership Category	Frequency	Percent
Inherited	33	16.5
Bought	2	1.0
Family (Wife, Husband, and Relatives)	5	2.5
Given by The Government	14	7.0
Other	9	4.5
Did Not Own Any Land	137	68.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

8.3.8. Types of land development by the Respondents

Another issue raised is whether the 31.5% of respondents who own land developed it recently. Table (8.6. p. 275) shows that 26.0% of the respondents confirm that they have developed the land. From this group of landowners, 15.0% developed their land as part of the oil palm plantation scheme, 9.0% as subsistence farming, 1.5% to build a private house, and only 0.5% as tourist resorts. Clearly, the main development is in agriculture, and very little for tourism development.

8.3.9. Future land development by the respondents

Every respondent who had not yet developed his or her land was asked what their main purpose for the land in future was Table (8.6. p. 275) shows that 5.5% of the respondents are landowners, but they have not yet developed their land. 2.5%

of the respondents intend to develop their land for subsistence farming, and 1.5% for oil palm planting; only 0.5% will develop the land as a tourist resort, and 1.0% don't know. It is obvious that the trend of land development by the individual landowners in Sukau village is in agricultural rather than ecotourism activity.

Table 8.6: Land Development by the Respondents (N=200)

Type of Land Development	Frequency	Percent (%)
Developed as:	52	26.0
Subsistence Farming	18	9.0
Palm Oil Planting	30	15.0
Tourist Resort	1	0.5
Private House	3	1.5
Not Yet Developed:	11	5.5
Will Develop for Subsistence Farming	5	2.5
Will Develop for Palm Oil Planting	3	1.5
Will Develop As a Tourist Resort	1	0.5
Not Sure	2	1.0
Did Not Own Any Land	137	68.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the Fieldwork, 2003

A few individuals, who have land on the both sides of Kinabatangan riverbank, rented their land to the private tourist lodge companies to set up the lodge buildings and landscape for ecotourism activity. An interview with one of the Village Security and Development Committee revealed that some individuals

made agreements with those private companies for periods of 5 to 10 years land rental⁶. When making these agreements, the landowners did not consult the village committee because the landowner has absolute control of his/her individual land. What makes the village committee not satisfied with this agreement was that some of the landowners rented their land at a very low price. For instance land was rented for just RM300.00 per month in the early stages of the lodge operation in the 1990s, whereas now it might command RM600.00 per month. This rate of land rental was still cheap compared to the current market value of land. In some circumstances, unfortunately, a few of the landowners immediately sold the land to the lodge company secretly. Thus, this research has discovered that land ownership in Sukau village became a very sensitive issue within individual families or among the villagers generally.

The above discussion has shown the empirical evidence of the respondents' background and their circumstances. Therefore, in the next section, the discussion of the research findings will be based on the following main sub-themes.

8.4. PART II: The Negative Impact of Ecotourism Development on the Local Community.

Proposition 2: The implementation of ecotourism development in Sukau village has had a negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. This is for several reasons such as the lack of mutual understanding between the local people and the visitors, and the emergence of conflicts of interests between the local people and the other stakeholders in the destination area.

8.4.1. The negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community.

As mentioned earlier, ecotourism has been established in Sukau village since 1991. During this research, there were 6 private tourist lodges in Sukau. They are Sukau Rainforest Lodge, Proboscis Lodge Sukau, Discovery Tour Sri Menanggul

Sukau Rainforest Lodge, Proboscis Lodge Sukau, Discovery Tour Sri Menanggul Cabin, Wildlife Expeditions Sukau River Lodge, Old Ben Kinabatangan Riverside Lodge, and Sukau Tomanggong Riverview Lodge. Thus, the research question to be answered is to what extent ecotourism development has an impact on the socio-cultural life of the local people, and how local people perceived or reacted to this impact. The findings of this research showed that at the initial stage, when the government announced the ecotourism development plan in Sukau area, many local people were happy about it. ‘They were hoping that their young ones would able to get work when the lodges started opening up, and they themselves would able to carry the tourists in their boats. This was at the beginning⁷’. The survey results in this research support a similar trend to this opinion (see Figure 8.8 and 8.9).

Figure 8.8: Respondents First Reaction on Ecotourism Project in Sukau

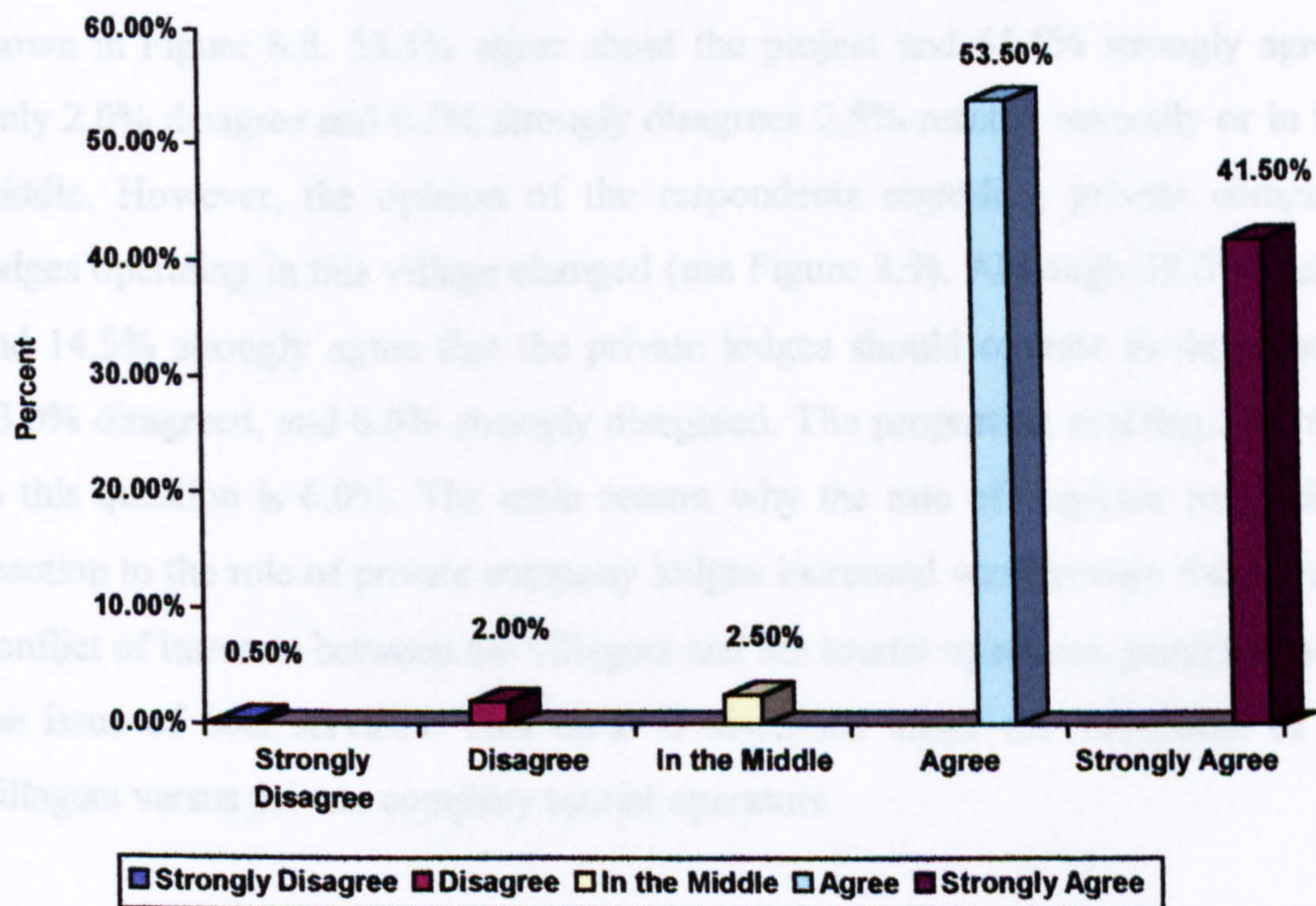
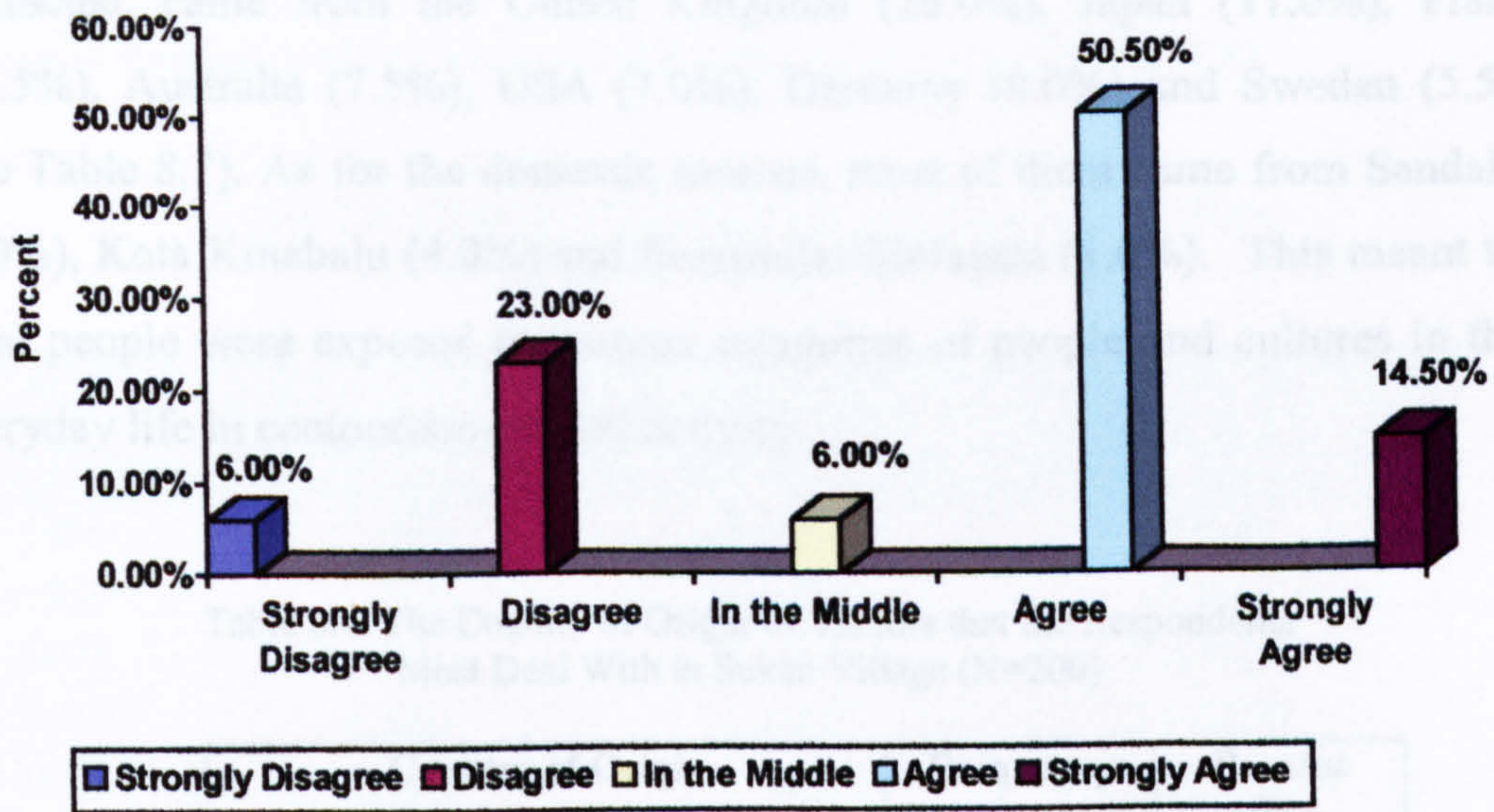


Figure 8.9: Respondents Opinion on Private Company Lodges in Sukau



The respondents' first reaction to the ecotourism project in Sukau was positive as shown in Figure 8.8. 53.5% agree about the project and 41.5% strongly agree. Only 2.0% disagree and 0.5% strongly disagrees 2.5% reacted neutrally or in the middle. However, the opinion of the respondents regarding private company lodges operating in this village changed (see Figure 8.9). Although 50.5% agree, and 14.5% strongly agree that the private lodges should operate in the village, 23.0% disagreed, and 6.0% strongly disagreed. The proportion reacting neutrally to this question is 6.0%. The main reason why the rate of negative respondent reaction to the role of private company lodges increased was because there was a conflict of interests between the villagers and the tourist operators, particularly on the issue of boat services. This issue is discussed under the sub-theme of the villagers versus private company tourist operators.

i. Who are the visitors in Sukau village?

There are two types of visitors or tourists that the majority of the respondents or villagers most deal or interact with in Sukau village: international tourists

(93.0%) and domestic tourists (7.0%) (see Table 8.7) According to the respondents, most of the international tourists, with whom they commonly interacted, came from the United Kingdom (26.0%), Japan (11.0%), France (10.5%), Australia (7.5%), USA (7.0%), Germany (6.0%) and Sweden (5.5%) (see Table 8.7). As for the domestic tourists, most of them came from Sandakan (2.0%), Kota Kinabalu (4.0%) and Peninsular Malaysia (1.0%). This meant that local people were exposed to various categories of people and cultures in their everyday life in ecotourism-related-activity.

Table 8.7: The Country of Origin of Visitors that the Respondents Most Deal With in Sukau Village (N=200)

Country of Origin	Frequency	Percent (%)
International:	186	93.0
United Kingdom	52	26.0
France	21	10.5
United States of America	14	7.0
Japan	22	11.0
Germany	12	6.0
Taiwan	6	3.0
Sweden	11	5.5
Canada	4	2.0
Australia	15	7.5
Denmark	5	2.5
Holland	3	1.5
China	1	0.5
Not Sure	20	10.0
Domestic:	14	7.0
Sandakan	4	2.0
Kota Kinabalu	8	4.0
West Malaysia	2	1.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data From the Fieldwork, 2003

There are no systematic data or precise figures that have been documented regarding the total number of international and domestic tourists visiting Sukau village from 1991 to date⁸. However, *Malaysia, Kementerian Pembangunan Luar*

Bandar (Malaysia, Ministry of Rural Development) (2001: 66) quoted an estimated figure provided by WWF about the total number of international and domestic tourists visiting the Lower Kinabatangan area (Table 8.8).

Table 8.8: Number of International and Domestic Visitors in the Lower Kinabatangan Area, 1996-2000

Year	Number of Domestic Visitors (Estimates only)	Number of Foreign Visitors (Estimates only)	Total
1996	1,000	4,000	5,000
1997	2,000	6,000	8,000
1998	800	4,000	4,800
1999	1,800	8,200	10,800
2000	1,900	12,100	14,000

Source: Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, (Malaysia, 2001: 66).

The number of foreign visitors visiting the Lower Kinabatangan area, including Sukau village, increased dramatically between years 1996 to 2000. In 1996, the total number of both categories of the visitors was 5,000. This number increased to 10,800 in 1999, and to 14,000 in 2000. Many people involved in the conservation programme in Lower Kinabatangan were very concerned about this trend because the increased number of tourists arriving in this remote area could affect the wildlife habitat and the socio-cultural life of the local people.

The majority of the visitors visiting the Sukau area specifically were independent holidaymakers, inclusive or package holidaymakers, foreign, day-trippers on holiday in Sabah, and Malaysian day-trippers from outside the Sukau area⁹. Most of these visitors stayed overnight (1 to 3 days) in the six tourist lodges. During this research a variety of room prices per night/per person were charged by these tourist lodges depending on types of room (double or single) and type of facilities provided by the lodges (air-conditioning or not). For instance, the rate at Wildlife Expedition Sukau River Lodge for international visitors is RM380 per night/per

person including lunch, evening tea and dinner, and the boat fare for wildlife viewing. Sukau Rainforest Lodges charge RM500.00 for a one day and two night package¹⁰. These private tourist lodges have their own space or territory, separate from the vast majority of villagers' accommodation in the village centre. Thus, the mutual social interaction between the visitors and the villagers did not take place except with the villagers working with the lodges such as boatmen, tourist guides, waiters, waitresses and so on.

Moreover, the main motivation for these visitors to come to Sukau is to experience the rainforest and/or to view wild animals rather than to experience indigenous culture. The statements and comments by the visitors about their experience in Sukau between 1995 and now indicated this situation:

“A very special place to be! It is not easy to say what we like most: the food, the care, the guides, and the knowledge of our guide. During our afternoon river cruise, we saw many monkeys and even an orang-utan. What a surprise! Far away from our European hectic world, we enjoyed nature so much!” (Yuehe and Yic van Esland/ Holland, 29th June 1995)¹¹.

“Simply superb! A fabulous experience, truly a day of National Geographic! The guides were excellent and the hospitality outstanding. We will return with very favourite memories of Sukau and Borneo. We will certainly return” (Sandra Lindsay, California, USA, 22nd October 1995)¹².

“We thoroughly enjoyed our stay at the lodge – it was a unique experience! Good for the soul and recharging the batteries. Please look after your rainforest and the Proboscis monkeys – we need them. Back at the lodge, the food was fantastic- well done and keeps it up. Staffs are friendly which is really appreciated” (David Parry and Liz Cotton, Cape Town South Africa, 25th July 1996)¹³.

“The experience of a life time and this is such an important place – a great example to the rest of the world” (Timothy M. Davey, Bristol, England, 20th December 1997)¹⁴.

“A superb place – everyone kind, helpful, our guide really enthusiastic and committed to give us a great two days” (Brenda Newman, Bale Tours, UK, 30th October 1997)¹⁵.

“Very good resort. Should be congratulated in pioneering ecotourism in this region and proving there is an alternative economic activity to logging and palm oil. Keep it up” (Phillip Clarkson, San Michelle, Sydney, Australia, 17th October, 1998)¹⁶.

“48 years as a Malaysian and I wore a sarong for the first time yesterday! Lovely place. Will definitely recommend local travel to my friends” (Suheele Sham, Kota Kinabalu, 7th August 1999)¹⁷.

“An Orang-utan the first morning, a 4 metre python the last night, 5 species of hornbills sandwiched in between. A wonderful 3 days. On top of all the birds and wildlife, we made new friends, ate well and laughed a lot. You have done a wonderful job, and we wish you well with your mission to bring ECOTOURISM to Borneo and benefit local people. This is such a fragile environment. We know you will steward it well. Best of luck” (Tom and Jaenne Joseph, Asia Transpacific, USA, April 3rd, 2000)¹⁸.

“Since returning, we have been singing Borneo and your praises. In fact, just today, we gave your contact details to a friend who now plans to visit, saying, “You must contact Agnes! Borneo wouldn’t have been the same without her” (Tyra Smude, United Kingdom, March 2004)¹⁹.

After visiting Sukau, Professor Ross K. Dowling of Edith Cowan University (EDU) Australia pointed out that Sukau is one of the State’s attractions and has good potential for ecotourism. There are, however, some good points and bad points to its potential:

“The good points are that you have a diverse wildlife and rainforest experience, and it is very a genuine experience. The lodges operated by the tour operators are low keyed and small scaled which is good. Some of the guides were extremely good and would stand out anywhere in the world” (Dowling, 2005 in The Borneo Post, 13th April 2005)²⁰.

On the negative points, he pointed out, “the downside of Sukau, I saw lots and lots of boatloads of tourists going to the same spot (to see the proboscis monkeys) and this affects the carrying capacity issue there” (Dowling, 2005 in *The Borneo Post*, 13th April 2005)²¹.

Therefore, from these visitors’ statements and comments, this research indicates that the main attraction for visitors to Sukau is because the pristine rainforest environment and the uniqueness of its wildlife, and not because of the local people’s culture and identity motivated them. The uniqueness of local culture and daily life activities were not in the promotion list of the private lodges in Sukau. As a result, local culture and nature have become separate items as ecotourism products in Sukau. Whilst the nature products were developed and promoted well by these private tourist lodges to domestic and international ecotourists, local culture as a unique ecotourism product was not developed, and was alienated from the promotion strategy. Thus, this situation has had a negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. The main findings of this research related to the negative impact of ecotourism on the socio-cultural life of the local community are discussed below.

8.4.2. The villagers and the visitors: the contradiction of cultural values and norms

According to the key informants in this research, in the early stages of the ecotourism development process in the 1990s, the presence of international tourists in the village created some awkward incidents. The incidents happened because many of the tourist guides at that time lacked experience. Moreover, as the key informant says:

“One of the problems with the guides is that they are not local people. Actually they don’t really know the history of this village. Most of them give inaccurate information about the villagers and their customs”. [Because of that] the tourists would just enter the houses of the village residents as they pleased, without asking permission of the owner...and take photographs. [As a result] one resident pelted some tourists with glass”²².

Then, there was another similar incident, which happened when some visitors entered the house of one of the villagers. The informant reported;

“There was elderly woman was lying down resting in her home when a bunch of tourists suddenly barged in and started taking photographs. When we discussed this with them, finally they understood that this kind of behaviour was not appropriate”²³

In one isolated case, the presence of foreign tourists was also claimed by one of the female respondents as the cause of chaos to her family relationship²⁴. According to this informant, at one time, there was a group of tourists from Holland visiting Sukau village. During this visit, the visitors were accommodated in one of the orang-utan research centres just near her family house. Because her husband was working with this research centre, he simultaneously became a tourist guide for this group. The group stayed at the research centre more than a month. This respondent claimed that one of the female tourists had a very close relationship with her husband. Thus, when this group returned to Holland, her husband ran away altogether from Sukau village with his foreign lover. Until now, this female respondent, and five of her children have continued hoping and waiting for her husband to come back home to his family. Although this female respondent did not totally blame the foreign tourist for her broken marriage, she still felt regret that the tourist presence and activity in Sukau village affected her family life. For local people in general, this incident was a tragedy because of the “demonstration effect” (Bryden, 1973: 250; Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 149) of the tourists on individual life in the village.

At this early stage of ecotourism development, it is obvious that the relationship between foreign tourists and the villagers in Sukau village was antagonistic (Butler, 1980; Mason, 2003: 24) (see Table 3.3. p. 102). This is because outsiders controlled most of the tourist trade and activity and the local people felt the tourist operators manipulated them. Moreover, the relationship between the local population and visitors was not balanced because of the “demonstration effect”,

whereby one culture is likely to be stronger than the other (Mason, 2003: 45). The negative demonstration effect is most likely to occur where the contacts between residents and visitors are relatively superficial and short-lived. Now however, these kinds of incidents do not occur obviously any more. This is because many of the youth of the village are working in the lodges and have informed the lodge management of these situations²⁵.

In the face-to-face survey interview, the respondents were asked; “Do you think the presence of tourists in this village has had an impact on the traditional values of your community?” The results of this survey are shown in (Figure 8.10a. p. 287) and Figure (8.10b. p. 288). The discussion of the results is elaborated in the following sections.

8.4.3. Visitor Presence and the Individual Crime Rate

A majority of the respondents, that is 63.0%, perceived that the visitor or tourist presence in the village had not made any difference to the increasing cases of individual crime in the village. However, 22.5% of the respondents perceived that the visitors' presence had increased individual crime, and 4.0% claimed this problem had become significantly worse. Only 4.5% of the respondents claimed that cases of individual crime had improved a little because of the visitors' presence in their village. This meant that cases of the individual crime in the village such as poaching, illegal hunting, theft, robbery, and stealing previously did not reach the limit as a major problem for the local community. This is because “*orang sungai*” in Sukau is a small population, and has been identified as closed-relationship community. All these problems however, were perceived to have gradually increased by some respondents because it was claimed they were related to the increasing number of visitors to the village, in the previous period. If more visitors come into the village more forest wood is needed to improve the houses, the boats, and the tourist lodges. More wildlife meat such as deer, and water hens, pigeons and egrets are demanded by the villagers for

consumption and sale. More animals are commercially trapped or hunted, including estuarine crocodile, hanging parrot and pig tail and long tail macaques (Prudente and Balamurugan, 1999: 49). The data regarding individual crime was hard to access during this research. However, there was a tendency towards increasing rates of individual crime in the village whether by the outsiders and plantation workers surrounding Sukau village or by the villagers because of ecotourism-related-activities or development.

8.4.4. The Use Of Alcohol and the Morality of the Village Youth

Significantly, Figure (8.10a. p. 287) shows that 35.0% of the respondents claimed that the use of alcohol had worsened a little, particularly among the village youth. 22.5% claimed the problem had now reached a significantly worse level, and only 30.0% of the respondents believed that the use of alcohol had not made any difference to their traditional values because of the presence of the visitors in the village. 8.5% of the respondents did not know what the real situation regarding this issue was. In other words, a drinking culture is seen to be becoming widespread among the village youth. As mentioned earlier, most of the *orang sungai* are Muslim. According to their religious values, Muslims are prohibited from drinking alcohol. Thus, the increasing uses of alcohol among the youth, to some extent, have been related to the visitor's presence in the village because the youth were influenced by the leisure lifestyle of the tourists. However, the widespread moral dilemma of the youth is not caused by the tourists, but is more due to other factors such as television and their surrounding working-place environment.

Figure: 8.10a The Presence of the Visitors has had an Impact on the Traditional Values of the Respondents

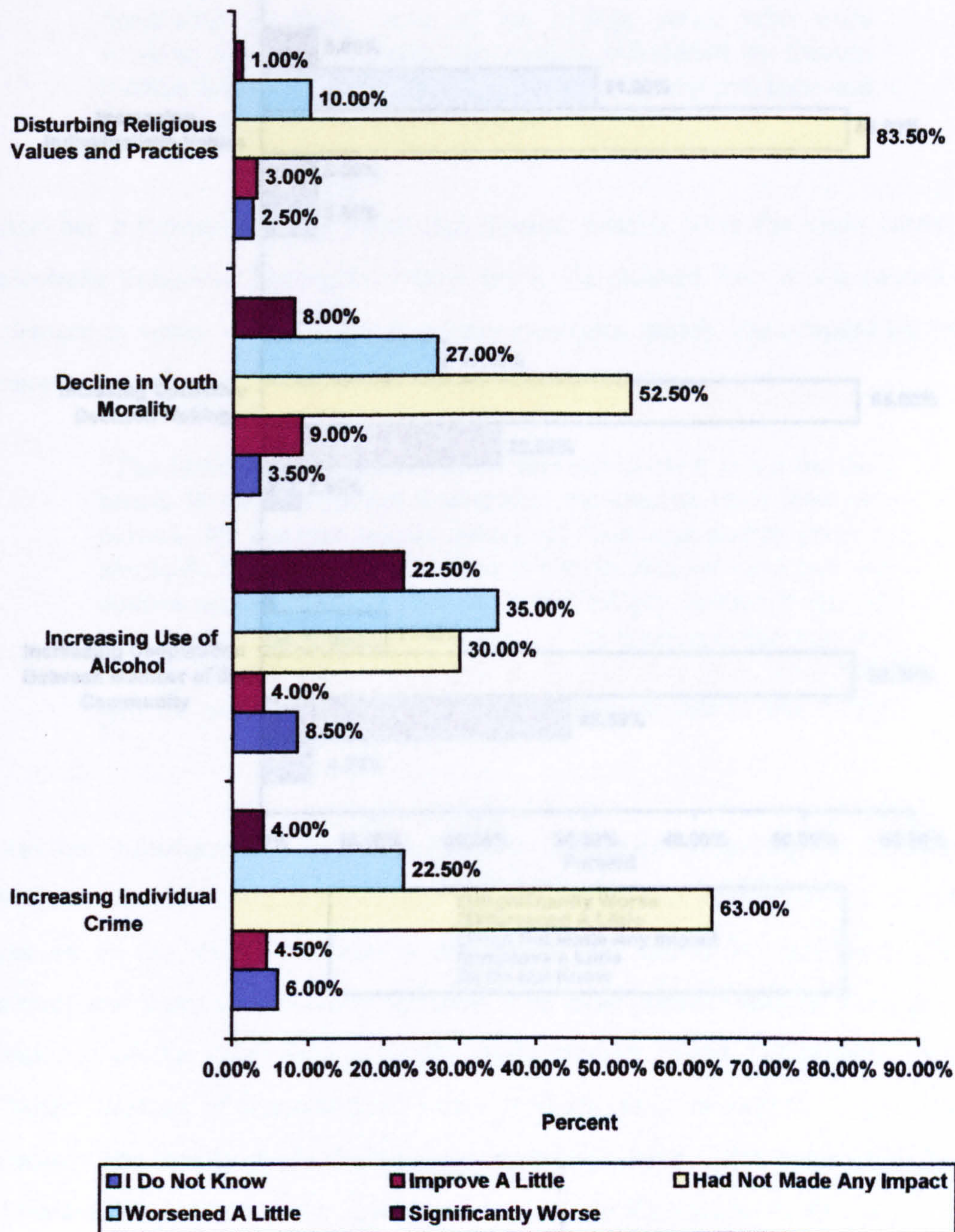
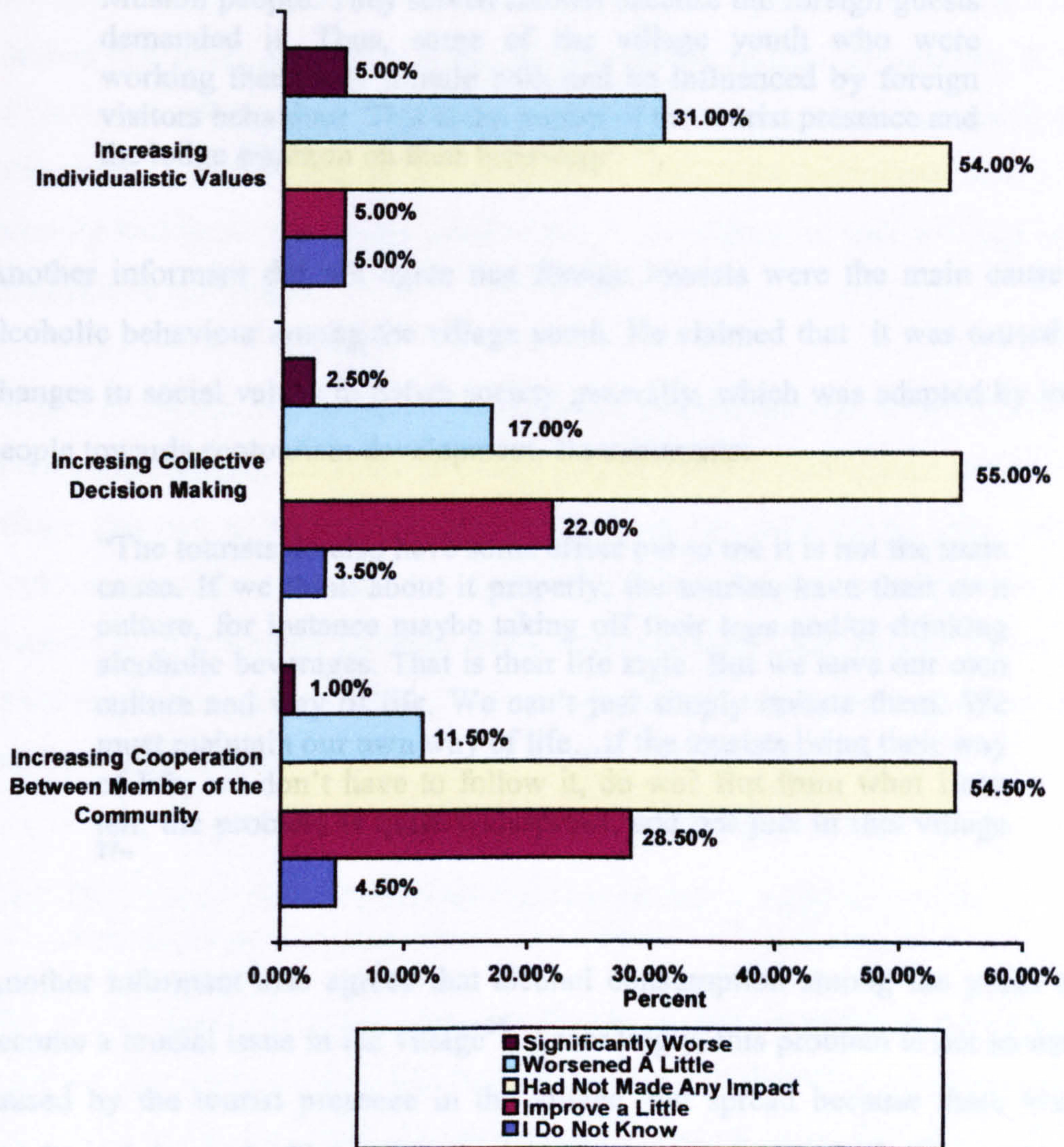


Figure 8.10b: The Presence of the Visitors has had an Impact on the Traditional Values of the Respondents



One of the informants commented on this issue as follows:

“Most of the private company tourist lodges are owned by non-Muslim people. They served alcohol because the foreign guests demanded it. Thus, some of the village youth who were working there may mingle with and be influenced by foreign visitors behaviour. This is the impact of the tourist presence and the lodge situation on their behaviour”²⁶.

Another informant did not agree that foreign tourists were the main cause of alcoholic behaviour among the village youth. He claimed that it was caused by changes in social values in Sabah society generally, which was adapted by local people towards ecotourism development. He comments:

“The tourists do also have some effect but to me it is not the main cause. If we think about it properly, the tourists have their own culture, for instance maybe taking off their tops and/or drinking alcoholic beverages. That is their life style. But we have our own culture and way of life. We can't just simply imitate them. We must maintain our own way of life...if the tourists bring their way of life; we don't have to follow it, do we? But from what I can tell, the problem is quite widespread, and not just in this village²⁷”.

Another informant also agreed that alcohol consumption among the youth had become a crucial issue in the village²⁸. Accordingly, this problem is not so much caused by the tourist presence in the village, but spread because there was a supply and demand efficiently operated. The most popular alcohol amongst the majority of the youth was a locally made product called “*montakuk*” and/or “*talak*” instead of manufactured brand products such as canned “Tiger beer”, because the locally made product was relatively cheap. The local shopkeeper supplied this product to the customers, particularly the visitors in the village. His main customer, however, was actually not the tourist but instead the local youth. This is the dilemma or problem, which was not considered seriously or tackled by the leadership and/or by the village committee of Sukau village.

Overall, 27.0% of the respondents claimed that the presence of the visitors in to the village is indirectly responsible for the decline in youth morality because of alcohol-related attitudes (see Table 8.10a. p. 287). 8.0% of the respondents claimed that youth morality was significantly worse. In general however, 52.5% of the respondents perceived that the visitors' presence had not made any difference to the decline in youth morality, and 9.0% perceived that youth morality had improved a little, particularly in the aspect of their willingness to interact with the visitors.

Thus, it is obvious that the increasing use of alcohol has become a new behaviour phenomenon among the youth in Sukau village. For the older generations of the village, this type of behaviour is opposed to the traditional religious values of the local community. Although the majority of the respondents perceived this situation as only a minor problem within members of the local people, a minority of the respondents claimed that the problems were significantly widespread and had increased recently.

8.4.5 The visitors' presence and the local community's religious values and practices

One of the questions put to the respondents in this research is whether the presence of visitors (particularly foreign visitors) has disturbed religious values and practices in the local community. The answer was that most of the respondents in this research, 83.5%, agreed that the presence of the visitors in the village had not disturbed their religious values and practices. The most common reason given by the respondents was that those visitors stayed at the private tourist lodges, which were separated from the vast majority of the local people²⁹. In contrast, only 10.0% of the respondents perceived that the visitors' presence has worsened a little their religious values and practices. The reason for this claim was based on development of a drinking culture among the youth, and in some cases the use of drugs (*syabu*) by some of them³⁰.

8.4.6. Cooperation between members of the community, collective decision-making, and individualistic values

Cooperation Between Members of the Community: 54.5% of the respondents claimed that the presence of the visitors in the village had not made any difference to the issue of cooperation between members of the community of Sukau village (see Figure 8.10b. p. 288). Moreover, 28.5% agreed that the presence of the visitors had increased it, particularly when they organised a village meeting with government tourism officers and the representative of the NGOs regarding ecotourism and conservation-related activities, when they organised a staged cultural show, and when the villagers received a group of homestay, guests from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah. However, 11.5% of the respondent did not agree about the above situation. They claimed the presence of the visitors had worsened a little the cooperation between members of the local community; 1.0% claimed the cooperation between the villagers became significantly worse; and 4.5% claimed they did not know what was going on. The main reason why this situation occurred was because there was a conflict of interests between the villagers and the other stakeholders regarding natural environment or wildlife conservation issues and the ecotourism related-projects. These issues will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

Collective Decision Making: 55.0% of the respondents believed the presence of the visitors in the village had not make any difference to the increasing level of collective decision making among the villagers. Whilst 22.0% of the respondents thought collective decision-making had improved a little, the other 17.0% claimed that collective decision-making among the villagers had worsened a little. 2.5% of them claimed this issue had become significantly worse, and 3.5% confessed that they did not know about this issue.

Increasing Individualistic values: the visitors' presence in Sukau village was also related to the increasing level of individualistic values among the members of the

local community. Though 54.0% of the respondents felt that the presence of the visitors had not made any difference, 31.0% of the respondents claimed there was an increasing number of individualistic values held by the individual members of the village, and had worsened a little, and 5.00% of the respondents claimed this situation had become significantly worse. It was clear that the presence of the visitors in the village had gradually significantly increased individualistic values. For instance, the chief of the village described one of the incidents as:

“This morning there was an accident in a nearby oil palm estate, when a man was killed by a falling tree. None of the villagers or volunteers from Sukau attended to prepare his body for burial or attended at the graveyard...except Pak Karim, Hasbullah and myself, who I know have this expertise. For me this is a sign of the declining spirit of *gotong-royong* (cooperation) among the villagers, particularly the younger generation, who used to assumed responsibility, but now pass these voluntary jobs to the older generation ”³¹

8.5. The Existence of a Conflict of Interests Between the Local Community and the Other Stakeholders

Another negative impact of ecotourism development in Sukau village recently has been the existence of a conflict of interests between the villagers and the other stakeholders. This issue will be discussed under sub-themes as follows:

8.5.1. The villagers and the private tourist lodge operators

Although the presence of six private tourist lodges in Sukau village was welcomed by the local people because their young generation would be able to get work, the boat issue became the dominant disagreement between them. At the early stage, when the lodges started their operation in Sukau village, the village boatmen were promised by the lodge managements that they would able to carry

the tourists from the lodges in their boats, particularly in the peak season. However, it did not quite work out that way because, according to one informant,

“Most of the lodge owners preferred to use their own boats rather than local people’s boats. The village people’s boats could carry 7 people whereas the lodge’s boats could carry up to 30 or 40 passengers at one time. If they could give the boat rotation to us to transport the tourists, that would be much better”³².

Another informant also expressed his dissatisfaction regarding this issue;

“The majority of these tourist lodges were never really concerned about the village boatmen. Their boat size was much bigger than our boats. If 40 tourists needed a boat trip, they never gave a chance to the local boat operators to carry the tourists. If 60 tourists arrived, then they give us only one boat to carry them with the pre-condition that our boat could carry eight people. If the boat can carry only 6 people, the lodge management will turn its back on you. Moreover, the payment they charge for our boat services is cheaper than what they charge for their own boat. Normally they gave us only RM50.00 if we carry the tourists into the Menanggul river. The price should be RM60.00 per boat. For me this is really painful because they did discriminate the price”³³

This boat issue has not yet been solved. One of the informants comments;

“I think this local boatmen dissatisfaction was acknowledged by the District Officer. Once he invited all these private lodge owners to his office to discuss the problems. The main purpose of this meeting was to ensure the relationship between the tourist lodge owners and the local people in a mutual understanding. But the lodge companies just pay no attention to this issue. Until now the unpleasant situation is continuing”.

On the other hand, the tourist lodge owners have their own reasons why they did not normally use the local boatmen’s services. The lodges’ tourist guide expressed one of the main reasons:

“The tourist lodges commonly have enough boats and employees to carry the tourists. If they used the local boatmen services, this would mean denying jobs to their own staff. Therefore our boatmen should accept the situation?”³⁴

Thus, the relationship between the tourist lodge owners and the local people is always tense because of this boat issue. The boats are particularly used to carry tourists viewing wildlife around Menanggul river for both parties, for which this ecotourism activity can generate income. At the same time however, it was also a source of conflict between them.

8.5.2. The villagers and the NGOs

The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) are widely known as important players in supporting local community participation in tourism or ecotourism development in much of the less developed world. This is because they have the resources, networks and technical expertise to facilitate the empowerment of communities to be involved or not involved in tourism or ecotourism development (Scheyvens, 2002: 211). However in practice a conflict of interest occurred, particularly regarding the dispute over environmental conservation and the traditional use of the forest sources or wildlife, the dispute over the land lease issue, and the struggle for political power at the village level, all of which could increase the tension in the relationship between the NGOs and the local community. This is actually what was going on in case of Sukau village as demonstrated in the following discussion.

i. The dispute over the environmental conservation programme and the traditional use of the forest and/or wildlife resources.

Two main NGOs operate in Sukau. The *first* is the World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia (WWF). This is a well-established NGO, not only in Malaysia but also all over the world. In the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah, the main role

played by WWF staff is to work together with various government agencies for forest and wildlife conservation, to ensure that the vision of “Partners For Wetland” is achieved. The visions includes (New Sabah Times, December 3rd, 2001: 8):

- creating a forest corridor along the Kinabatangan, connecting the coastal mangrove swamps with the upland forests, where people, wildlife, nature-based tourism or ecotourism and local forest industries thrive and support each other;
- supporting a thriving and diverse economy that offers opportunity and choice to local people and businesses.
- Ensuring good environmental management of the natural capital on which all partners depend.
- monitoring a landscape in which agriculture, people and nature conservation are united by their common source of vitality – water.

In other words, the WWF’s role was most likely as a monitoring agency for a long-term strategy for forest and wildlife conservation in lower Kinabatangan. This is because, as Caroline Pang³⁵ elaborates,

“If there is no common vision among those stakeholders in Lower Kinabatangan, further loss of forest and fragmentation into smaller patches could result. This is likely to increase the vulnerability of the forest to outside disturbances such as drought and fire [because much of the forest area was cleared for oil palm plantation], and to increase conflicts between humans and wildlife” (cited in New Sabah Times, December 10th, 2001: 8).

That is why, from the WWF perspective, loss of forest areas could lead to loss of wildlife and tourism opportunities, and increased monoculture cropping such as oil palm plantations could decrease economic diversity in this area. Therefore local residents are advised not to concentrate many job opportunities in commercial agriculture but to change and diversify land use or restrict their employment to other sectors such as ecotourism.

Therefore, the vision of WWF's Partners for Wetland is a vision for rainforest and wildlife conservation in the Lower Kinabatangan area including the Sukau area. In some circumstances, this vision is not parallel with the vision or life struggle of the local community. Although Sukau community saw that the WWF vision is a good thing for future development of Sukau and Lower Kinabatangan, currently it cannot overcome the major problem faced by this remote community, that is a poverty of life conditions and/or underdevelopment. To ensure they become developed and progress they have to clear the forest on their land to plant the oil palm trees for better income in the near future. This is the main conflict of interests between the WWF and the local community of Sukau. It is a conflict between the land used for oil palm plantation and the conservation programme in the area. As the Project Manager of Partners for Wetland has argued,

“There were so many people wanting to develop the land around Lower Kinabatangan area [for agricultural activities] but less of them were interested in the conservation programme, particularly the older generations. The WWF would approach the young generation in this area because they have more sympathy with the conservation issue”³⁶.

As a result, WWF representatives have concluded that the villagers in Sukau find it very hard to fully support and cooperate with them towards a vision of conservation through Partners for Wetland in Lower Kinabatangan. On the other side were the villagers of Sukau. They perceived that the WWF had made too many promises but they never did what they promised. A few village committee members claimed, for example, the WWF never took serious initiatives towards the involvement of the local community in ecotourism development, and they never showed how to overcome the problem created by wild elephants³⁷. Thus this conflict of interest between them continued.

The *second* NGO involved actively in the community conservation programme in Sukau village is *HUTAN* or KOCP (Kinabatangan Orang-utan Conservation Project). The KOCP was set up in 1998 by two French primatologists³⁸. The project objectives and activities are³⁹:

- to study orang-utan etho-ecology in disturbed habitat or secondary forest. The main research activity is observation of habituated wild orang-utan at an intensive study site in secondary forest. These observations include diet composition, daily activity, ranging patterns and social behaviour. Detailed vegetation studies are also conducted with the project botany team;
- to achieve long-term conservation of the orang-utan population in the Lower Kinabatangan area. This will include a survey of orang-utan abundance and distribution (nest counts by helicopter and from the ground), the assessment and mitigation of orang-utan or human conflicts and a plant nursery for those fruit tree species most eaten by orang-utan;
- to develop public awareness of orang-utan preservation needs. This includes the production of education materials and development of awareness activities, such as village participatory workshops and nature education programmes for school children, within the Kinabatangan area;
- to initiate a process of technical assistance to build up and reinforce the capabilities of Sabahan conservation professionals: for instance, the development of a training platform at the KOCP Headquarters to train local research assistants, the personnel of relevant government agencies and Malaysian university students in wildlife research and conservation techniques;
- to involve the local community in the management of the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife sanctuary: the development of a model programme where members of the local community are entrusted with the status of “Honorary Wildlife Warden” under the Sabah Wildlife Department;

- to initiate local community development activities compatible with habitat and wildlife preservation: encourage alternative and sustainable ways for local communities to use local natural resources, for instance to develop a community-based “Orang-utan Tourism Model Project” in collaboration with the Sabah Wildlife Department and DANCED (Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development);
- to assist Malaysian research institutions, government agencies and NGOs in projects related to habitat and wildlife preservation: to participate in the design and implementation phases of conservation-oriented projects by other agencies or institutions in Sabah (such as WWF, University Malaysia Sabah, Sabah Forestry Department etc).

In other words, KOCP has collaborated with many related government agencies, NGOs, education institutions, and the local community to achieve their objectives. During this research, KOCP employed 30 staff, the majority of whom are from Sukau village, with a small number from Bilit and Abai villages. Most of them are the village youth, mostly between 20 and 30 years old. In terms of the daily research operation, KOCP was separated from the WWF Partners for Wetland project. KOCP, however, have received sponsorship from the United Kingdom and Holland WWFs. The WWF United Kingdom for example, sends its funding through WWF Malaysia, so KOCP cooperate with WWF Malaysia to put this funding to use in carrying out their projects⁴⁰. The Director of KOCP elaborates,

“For all our projects roughly we need around RM800,000.00 per year. Of this the majority goes to paying the salaries of our staff here and the other 20% goes to Sukau... we are paying the salaries of 30 people, so our budget is of course much higher. Staff salaries including for management take up RM300,000.00 per year... So, most of the money goes to staff salaries, also boats, transport, the rest...the fuel for boats is expensive”⁴¹.

The disputes however, occurred between the KOCP and the villagers because of a few issues. For instance, the first was the dispute on the land leasing agreement; the second that JKKK misunderstood or mistrust KOCP roles in the village. The following discussion will elaborate these issues.

ii. Disputes over the land leasing agreement

In the early stage, KOCP set up their headquarters building on a piece of land belonging to one of the villagers in the lower Sukau area. The agreement was made with the family who owned the land but then a few problems arose because the conditions of the agreement were claimed by the family owner to be blurred. For instance, the Director of KOCP explained how the rent agreement was made with the landowner as follows:

“We didn’t lease it by the month, but in total I believed we paid more than RM45,000.00 for ten years, but with 3 conditions attached. The first one was the amount of money. The second was that we had to rebuild their house, pay the carpenters, and paint it and beautify it. Thirdly, we had to employ their family members, so at one time we had 8 of them working for us. Now it’s a bit less because some of them went to West Malaysia”⁴².

After the head of the family passed away, one of the sons led his family members to force KOCP to review the previous land rental agreement because they felt the payment that they had received was only RM20,000.00. In the early negotiations, KOCP agreed to make a new agreement every 5 years to occupy the land, but when written agreement was produced, it stated that the KOCP was allowed to stay on this land for 30 years. Thus, the member of this family felt they had been cheated by the KOCP. Finally, the relationship between the members of this family and the KOCP reached a maximum point of conflict where the Director of KOCP and her family were forced to leave the place, and the police had to intervene in the disputes for security reasons⁴³.

As a result KOCP daily operation and activities have been stopped for nearly three months, and the Director of KOCP and her family have moved to a new office where the site and the building belong to Sabah Wildlife Department in Sukau. During this research, KOCP activities operated as usual, but at this time there were only two landowner family members still working with the KOCP. The disputes regarding the land rental agreement between these two parties were still unsolved recently.

*iii. The Struggle for Political Power at the Village Level:
JKKK mistrust the role of KOCP in the village*

In general, most of the villagers were satisfied with the role of the NGOs such as WWF and KOCP in Sukau village. Some of the Security and Development Village Committee (JKKK) members, however, were suspicious of the role of KOCP in the village for a few reasons. One of the JKKK members claimed:

“We can’t deny that in many ways having them here has really helped us a lot. However there are still some issues that the villagers are not particularly happy about. For instance, the KOCP came here originally as researchers on the orang-utans, but we know that every researcher has a time frame in which to do his research. We see that KOCP has already been here a long time [six years]. When we ask them how much longer they are going to be here, they find it difficult to answer the question.

The real reason however, why some of the JKKK members are suspicious of the KOCP activities in the village is to do with the political power struggle at village level between them. One of the members of JKKK argued that the KOCP were sincerely doing work for the good of the community. However, day-by-day it has demolished the traditional role of JKKK in the village. This effect, however, has been not realised by the Director of KOCP. As she mentioned, “the situation is always changing. It’s sometimes difficult to see what the effects are”.

For KOCP however, the main reason why this conflict of interests occurred is because in the early years the KOCP held a workshop among the kampong leaders because one or two of them felt that their positions were a bit threatened. To overcome this problem KOCP called a special workshop between the village leaders and KOCP. The main topic of this workshop was how to settle any conflicts or communication problems⁴⁴. Dr Isabelle commented,

“There was one case when UMS sent an expedition of 60 people, all arranged by UMS. The press and Datuk Karim Bujang, the Deputy Minister for Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment accompanied them. They went straight away to the place where the UMS project was organised. A couple of the kampong residents saw Datuk Karim Bujang go to that place, and felt a bit unhappy about it because they weren't involved at all in the programme...in the village it can be a bit difficult to explain this. So, from these situations, problems can sometimes arise, but not major ones”⁴⁵.

Although for KOCP the above incident was not a major issue, some educated local community members such as a group of school teachers and the JKKK, still believed that the KOCP management had denied the role of the JKKK of Sukau. In many circumstances, they have argued, the government agency officers, education institutions, much prefer to make contact directly with the KOCP and not with the JKKK⁴⁶. Thus, many JKKK members are not really satisfied with the roles and the ethics of the KOCP management since they have been operating in the village because they are less respectful of the traditional role of the JKKK.

At one time, many researchers stayed at the KOCP headquarters. The private lodge managements in Sukau viewed this situation as a new competitor in ecotourism businesses. Some of the villagers were also suspicious about the role of KOCP. They started asking whether the KOCP's main objective in the orang-utan research had been diverted to the ecotourism businesses. This issue was really heated at that time⁴⁷. The KOCP management, however, have argued that this new project, called community-based ecotourism, was launched because it

was initiated by the kampong people themselves (particularly run by a group of KOCP staff under the Committee for Tourism and Development). According to Dr Isabelle,

“There are actually a lot of people involved in this project. For instance, there has already been a group of 10 people from Denmark; in 4 days they spent a total of RM10,000.00. With that RM10,000.00 we have done studies on how the money went into the village. Nearly 50 families got some share of it. For instance the tourist guides, the boatmen and food and accommodation providers. That is the purpose of this project. There are benefits for the village people⁴⁸ .

As a result, the conflict of interests between the JKKK committee members and KOCP is continuing. According to one of the main respondents, the KOCP management should cooperate seriously with the Sukau residents to develop ecotourism in the village, to avoid any misunderstanding between them, and to benefit both parties. This, however, has not been done by the KOCP⁴⁹ . At the same time, however, the majority of the villagers have realised that at the beginning of the conservation project in Lower Kinabatangan, WWF and KOCP had ceased cooperating with them. Finally, these NGOs were also arguing with each other, particularly on the issues of who should lead a certain project or programme, and who should receive, the funding from the international donors⁵⁰ . The conflict of interests between these two NGOs tacitly increased day by day.

One of the JKKK committee members expressed his views regarding the role of the WWF in Sukau village thus:

I am fairly satisfied. I especially appreciate the workshops they have conducted to raise the awareness of the village residents. Even though they have not been continued, at least it helped a bit to make them understand the situation. I feel that recently [however] a lot of their work has been suspended or left incomplete. [This is because] I would guess it has something to do with the officer that has been appointed... but I don't know why their project has become this way [suspended or left incomplete]⁵¹ .

8.5.3. The villagers and wildlife

The struggle for a living between the villagers and the wildlife in the Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau village has a long history because this area was a natural treasure of many plants and wildlife species such as the fascinating proboscis monkeys, elephants and orang-utans for centuries. During this research, the conflict between human and wildlife occurring in this area was a result of man's encroachment into the habitat space of wildlife animals. There are six main species of animals which have always been in conflict with the villagers and the oil palm estate management around Sukau village; the elephants, orang-utans, wild boars, porcupines, pig tailed macaques and long tailed macaques (WWF, 2002)⁵². All six of these species eat and damage oil palms, fruit and crop trees, causing loss to plantations, and also threatening the everyday life of local residents.

The data from the face-to-face interview survey has revealed a similar pattern, to that claimed by the WWF. 37.9% of the respondents believed that the wild animal which affects most of the villagers' crops are the elephants, followed by wild boars, 27.9 %, monkeys, 23.8%, orang-utans, 5.4%, bats, 3.0% and civet-cats, 2.0% (see Table 8.9. p. 305). 38.3 % of the respondents also felt that the wild animals affecting the villagers reared animals most are civets-cats, followed by snakes, 29.9%, and monitor lizards, 18.5%. 25.5% of the respondents felt that crocodiles are the wild animals that effect the villagers daily life activities most, particularly related to the river of Kinabatangan. They were followed by elephants, 21.5%, monkeys, 9.8%, and others, 3.7%. This means that the conservation effort in the wildlife sanctuary area has increased the numbers of certain types of wild animals such as crocodiles in this area. This situation was not really pleasant for the villagers because crocodiles have recently bitten fishermen coming from the nearby oil palm estate at Tenagang ox-bow lake on a few occasions. According to the villagers, these dangerous events had previously not happened for a long time.

The conflict of interests between the local people and the elephants (conservation efforts), however, has become a major issue in Lower Kinabatangan area. The question is why and how did this situation happen? Many forest areas and riverside forests in Lower Kinabatangan were rapidly being developed into oil palm plantations, a major public road (for instance at Batu Puteh) and human settlement areas. As a result many forest areas have become fragmented, and cut off from the remaining extensive forest blocks such as forests of Pin-Supu, Gomantong-Pangi and Keruak Forest Reserves and the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary area. There are currently about 95-115 elephants ranging in the Lower Kinabatangan river area (WWF, 2002). These fragmented patches of forest have restricted the elephants' movement from one location to another because the routes are too small for them. Having no other choice, these elephants have to bulldoze their way through oil palms plantations and village areas to get to the next patch of forest to look for food. Consequently they consume anything suitable for eating along the way.

These elephant's activities have damaged a lot of oil palms trees particularly, belonging to local people and the oil palm estate companies surrounding Sukau village . For instance, the Sukau Village Chief comments that at one time, a group of elephants entered his oil palm plantation and damaged 80 oil palm trees in a night. After that, the elephants frequently entered his 20 acre oil palm plantation. To overcome this problem, he has built electric fences around his farm. This action was not very effective, however, because on April 2003, for instance, they entered his farm again and damaged 8 of his oil palm trees⁵³. What makes him feel so much regret is that his oil palm plantation was no longer productive because of that damage. He has to plant new oil palm trees to replace the damaged one. New oil palm trees are only available to cultivate in three years time. He funded all this losses. The government agencies and NGOs did nothing in terms of compensation for the losses, and they have not really taken any effective action to overcome elephant-related problems to date. For that reason, many villagers make their own effort to overcome these problems including the

last option such as shooting them if they put the villagers' lives and property in real danger.

Table 8.9: The respondent's opinions regarding wild animals in the Kinabatangan Sanctuary area that most affect their crops, domestic animals, and daily life activities (N=200)

(Respondents can choose more than one option)

Wildlife Animals	Effect most the villagers agricultures crops (n=499) (%)	Effect most the villagers domestic animals (n=308) (%)	Effect most the villagers daily life activities (n=265) (%)
• Primates such as monkeys	23.8	2.0	9.8
• Elephants	37.9		21.5
• Civet-cats	2.0	38.3	0.8
• Bats	3.0		0.4
• Wild boars	27.9		
• Orang-utans	5.4		
• Crocodiles		36.0	25.3
• Jungle cats		0.9	0.8
• Snakes		29.9	
• Monitor lizards		18.5	
• Other			3.7
• No effect at all			37.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

The Sabah Wildlife Department Officer has commented on this compensation issue as follows:

“Frankly speaking, there was no compensation act under the state government [Sabah Wildlife Department]...what is the priority at this moment is to monitor and control the movement of these elephants...there was a plan to relocate these elephants to another area, however we have to consider the cost... one more thing about these animals...if we send them to another place, for instance 500 km from here, they are able to return here, which it happened at the National Park in Pahang... I think what the villagers can do is ask for compensation through other channels; for instance the JKKK can forward the damage reports to the Sabah Agriculture Department and/or FELCRA and ask for the replacement of the seed trees of the oil palms”⁵⁴.

According to the villagers, however, the above suggestion was never practiced by those government agencies. The burdens of all losses had to be borne by the villagers themselves. The elephants, moreover, also damaged the oil palm trees belonging to the oil palm company plantations or estates. One of the estate managers expressed his views regarding this problem:

“The elephants are the main enemy for the oil palm seeds and trees of our oil palm plantation because a group of elephants can damage hundreds of trees a day. Other animals such as wild boars and orang-utans would not be able to damage the oil palm trees on a huge scale as the elephants did. At one time, there were 60 elephants in our estate. They damaged 300 oil palm trees within two hours where the age of these trees was mostly below one year So to prevent these elephants entering our estate we built electric fences around our plantation...our workers will make 24 hour patrols to watch these elephants”⁵⁵.

The orang-utans, on the other hand, also have the capability of damaging the oil palm trees. The estate manager describes this situation,

“In the early period of our oil palm plantation work in the year 1997 we had a big problem with orang-utan, particularly in the area of nearby Menanggol River and Tenegang Kecil. These orang-utan, for instance have the capability of damaging around 50 to 100 of the young oil palms trees, aged below six months old, in a day. Therefore, our workers patrolled 12 hours a day because the orang-utans never look for food at night. When all these oil palms trees were more than one year old, then the orang-utan became less of a threat for these crops”⁵⁶.

What became a conflict between estate managers and the NGOs regarding these wildlife related problems was the resulting illegal killing of the elephant population or the orang-utans by some of the estate workers⁵⁷. There was no concrete solution to overcome this problem between all the stakeholders in the Lower Kinabatangan area. This situation puts the survival of the wildlife frequently in danger. Because most of the oil palm plantations are privately owned, the owners (whether they are the villagers or oil palm private companies) have an authority to protect their property or their lives from the threat of this wildlife⁵⁸. NGOs, however, want to see that the local community kill all these protected animals such as elephants when there is “really no other alternative” to protect themselves from danger, and not to take for granted that they can kill, because killing these animals is a tragedy for the wildlife conservation effort in the area. This is the dilemma faced by all the stakeholders in Lower Kinabatangan, and it remains unresolved.

8.5.5. The villagers and government agencies

The role of a few government agencies in ecotourism development and conservation projects in the Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau village is significantly important. They are Sabah Wildlife Department, Sabah Forestry Department, Kinabatangan District Office, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah. All these government agencies have further collaborated with the NGOs such as WWF and KOCP, particularly to maintain the forest and wildlife conservation project around the village. The disputes, however, which

occurred between the villagers and these government agencies commonly related to specific issues such as elephant related-problems, illegal hunting, illegal logging, the homestay programme and the social, economic and political development issue at the village level in general.

i. Collecting Forest resources and hunting wildlife animal activities

Although 51.0% of the respondents in the face-to-face interview survey strongly agree, and 40.0% agree, with the declaration of Lower Kinabatangan area as a protected area, 89.5% believe that wildlife hunting and gathering activities are still carried out by the villagers. Furthermore, 86.5% of the respondents agree that the government should allow them to continue these activities but in a controlled way (see Table 8.10).

Table 8.10: The Respondents Opinion Regarding Protected Area And Hunting Activity (N=200)

Opinion Category	Frequency	%
The declaration of Lower Kinabatangan as a protected area:		
• Strongly disagree	3	1.5
• Disagree	9	4.5
• In the middle	5	2.5
• Agree	80	40.0
• Strongly Agree	103	51.5
Hunting and gathering activities are still carried out by the villagers:		
• Yes	179	89.5
• No	21	10.5
Hunting activities should be allowed in a controlled way:		
• Yes	173	86.5
• No	27	13.5

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

The main reason why the villagers still carry out hunting activities was expressed by one of the village committee members as follows:

“Actually, we can’t deny that this kind of thing [hunting activity] does occur. This because hunting was always been the tradition of the Orang Sungai. If there is to be any kind of large social gathering or feast, they will go hunting for their own use; if there is a wedding it’s the same. One of the earliest points of discussion was to allow the hunting to continue as long as there was approval from the wildlife department”⁵⁹

The Wildlife Conservation Enactment, Number 6 of 1997 Section 29 has categorised hunting licences into the following categories⁶⁰:

- sporting licence;
- commercial hunting licence;
- animal kampong licence; and
- such other licences as may be prescribed

The types of wild animals, which these licences entitle the holder to hunt is listed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 of the Enactment. Commonly, the villagers are entitled to hunting licences under the special category of animal kampong (village) licence. Section 32 (1) states;

“an animal kampong licence may be granted to a suitable person to hold on behalf of and for the benefit of the kampong to which that person belongs” (Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment, 1997, p. 231).

Moreover, in the section 32(3) the enactment states:

“the Director shall also specify in the licence the weapons and methods of hunting that may used for hunting under the licence and the maximum number of animals of each species that may be hunted and he may at any time reduce such number if he is satisfied that an animal or animals of any species specified in the licence or of any other species have been illegally captured, wounded or killed in the area to which the licence applies” (Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment, 1997, p. 231).

Besides hunting activity, the majority of the local community of Sukau still depends on the forest resources for their everyday life-related activities. The figure from the face-to-face interview survey shows that 19.5% of the respondents believed that majority of the villagers were still collecting herbs from the forest in the protected area for traditional medicinal purposes. Hunting for wildlife meats is 16.9%, collecting rattans/bamboo/resins, 14.3%, collecting firewood, 14.5%, collecting leaves or seeds for food, 12.6%, logging activity, 10.7%, collecting jungle fruits 8.3%, and only 2.9% of the respondents believed that they were not dependent at all on forest resources in the protected area (see Table 8.11).

Table 8.11: The Respondents opinion regarding types of activities, which still depend on forest resources in protected area (N=200)
(The respondent can choose more than one option)

Type of activity	Frequency	Percent
Hunting for wildlife meats	118	16.9
Collecting rattans/bamboo/resins	100	14.3
Collecting firewood	101	14.5
Collecting herbs for traditional medicine	136	19.5
Collecting jungle fruit	58	8.3
Collecting leaves or seeds for food	88	12.6
Logging	75	10.7
Other	2	0.3
Not dependent at all on the forest resources	20	2.9
Total	698	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

This means that the relationship between forest resources and the everyday life of the local community is significantly important. The local people, however, frequently argued that the way some government agency officers enforce the

Sabah Conservation Enactment 1997 on them was “unfair” in comparison to the private companies. One of the village committee members argued this as follows:

“[About the role of Sabah Wildlife Department]... I think they give more priority to those things that can bring them some benefits... like Gomantong⁶¹ that is profitable. Areas of the sanctuary which have timber trees, they control. It has been like that since I have lived here. For instance, if elephants have destroyed 15 acres of oil palm and we call them for help, they never come. But if the sound of chainsaw cutting timber is heard, they’re guaranteed to be here quickly (laughs)”⁶².

He continues about the role of Sabah Forestry Department in conservation enforcement as follows:

“They’re the same. If the local people go into the forest and just take one piece of wood to make a small boat, they will complain. When the timber companies go in, they don’t do anything”⁶³.

The Sabah Forestry Department officer in Kinabatangan however, has claimed that their role is to ensure that the ecotourist areas such as the reserved forest and the wildlife animal habitats are sustained [monitoring and control], and not damaged by illegal loggers or illegal hunters, which in the end could destroy the wild animal habitat. He stated that:

“Our department never totally prohibited the villagers from using forest resources, but they must not overuse all these resources to ensure that there are still forest areas whenever they wake up the next morning. If we do not visit a certain area at two or three-month intervals, intruders will take advantage and cut down the trees in the sanctuary area. They were also logging illegally, and collecting the other forest resources such as rattans and woods for their houses without a permit. This type of action is prohibited because they will damage the forest habitat”⁶⁴.

The villagers, however, are never concerned about whether to apply for a permit or not because the forest area surrounding the village is traditionally their habitat. It is common practice among the villagers to get verbal approval from the Sabah Wildlife Department to hunt. For instance, they just meet the officer in charge

and inform him they are going into the forest to hunt⁶⁵. This type of practice however, confused the NGOs and the tourist industry who categorised this hunting activity as illegal. Thus, the conflicts of interest between all these stakeholders continue.

Although 52.0% of the respondents in the survey claimed that there was no conflict of interest between the villagers and the conservation programme managers/workers (see Table 8.12), 19.5% of the respondents were not satisfied with how these government agencies and/or NGOs tackled the elephant issues; 3.5% were not satisfied with how these agencies overcame the problem of oil palm agriculture damage by the elephants; 5.5% were not satisfied with the style of decision making of these agencies regarding illegal logging by the villagers and outsiders; 7.5% were not satisfied with the hunting issues between the villagers and the outsiders; and 12.0% were not satisfied with other issues such as the lack of improvement in clean water supply, electricity, local handicraft training centre, roads and so on.

Table 8.12: the conflicts of interest between the respondents and the conservation programme managers/officers (N=200).

Issue of Conflicts	Frequency	Percent (%)
No conflict of interests occurred	104	52.0
Conflict of interests occurred regarding:	96	48.0
• not satisfied about how government agencies and/or NGOs tackle the elephant issue	39	19.5
• oil palm agriculture damaged by elephants	7	3.5
• logging issue by the villagers or outsiders	11	5.5
• hunting issue between the villagers and outsiders	15	7.5
• Other	24	12.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

The Kinabatangan District Office reported that all the plans for social infrastructure development in Sukau have been discussed in the District Development Committee. It is just a matter of time and the green light from the top authority for the take-off of all the projects such as asphalt roads, clean water supply, 24-hour electricity supply, shops etc⁶⁶. Accordingly, most of these social infrastructure projects will be implemented parallel to the development of “the Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP)” of Sukau. This project is to develop a new settlement area for the local people. Kinabatangan’s District Officer mentioned this situation as follows:

“It is just a matter of time before the asphalt road project to Sukau takes off because according to the Public Works Department (JKR), they have not confirmed yet who is actually the contractor or the developer who will be responsible for this project (sic) ...electricity is coming...clean water supply is in the development process by the Ministry of Rural Development...in fact everything is on the way...”⁶⁷

The villagers, however, are still not satisfied with all these promises because they have been waiting for a decade to gain all these social facilities. Nowadays they have to wait again because most of the projects are actually still on the lips of many political leaders and government officers or just on paper rather than a reality.

The result of the face-to-face interview survey shows that 58.0% of the respondents had never heard about the plan of the IRDP compared to only 42.0% who had heard about the project (see Table 8.13.p.314). 35.0% of the respondents agreed with the IRDP plan, and 14.0% strongly agreed, but 19.0% strongly disagree, 17.5% disagree, and 14.5% put their opinion in the middle. This means that the majority of the villagers are still not very clear about the IRDP and how this project will affect their traditional housing settlement along the Kinabatangan riverbank in the near future. For instance, 73.5% of the respondents were

interested in participating in the IRDP plan in the future, 19.5% of them were not sure, and 7.0% were not interested. Furthermore, 62.5% of the respondents claimed that they were not aware of the impact of IRDP on traditional housing, and only 37.5% stated that they were aware of the impact in the near future. Therefore, the dispute between the government agencies and the local community regarding moving from the current traditional housing settlement and the issue of compensation, and the other related issue i.e. the new housing scheme is likely to occur when the IRDP project is implemented in the near future.

Table 8.13: The respondent's opinion regarding the "Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP)" of Sukau (N=200)

Opinion Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
1. Heard about the "Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP):		
• Yes	84	42.0
• No	116	58.0
2. Opinion about the IRDP plan:		
• Strongly disagree	38	19.0
• Disagree	35	17.5
• In the middle	29	14.5
• Agree	70	35.0
• Strongly agree	28	14.0
3. Interested in participating in the IRDP plan in future:		
• Interested	147	73.5
• Not sure	39	19.5
• Not interested	14	7.0
4. Awareness of IRDP impact on traditional housing:		
• Yes	75	37.5
• No	125	62.5

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

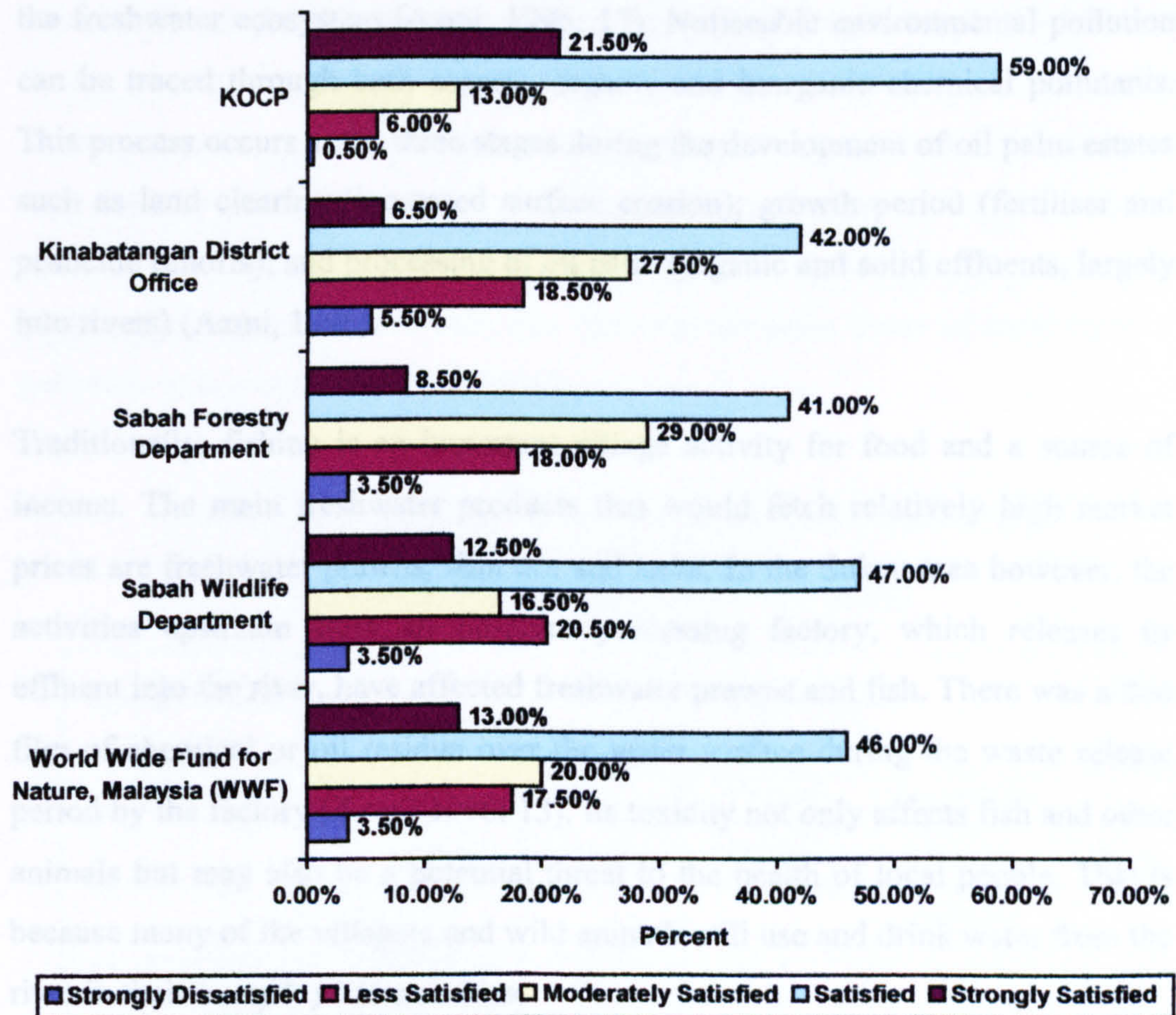
Moreover, the villagers have given their views regarding the role of the government related agencies and the NGOs in managing wildlife or rainforest conservation policy in the Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau village, as shown in (Figure 8.11.p.316). The organisation that most satisfied the respondents in terms of managing wildlife or rainforest conservation effort was HUTAN or KOCP, where 59.0% of the respondents felt that they were satisfied with the KOCP. This was followed by Sabah Wildlife Department 47.0%, WWF, 46.0%, Kinabatangan District Office, 42%, and Sabah Forestry Department 41.0%. The organisation that least satisfied the respondents was Sabah Wildlife Department, on 20.5%, followed by the Kinabatangan District office, 18.5%, Sabah Forestry Department, 18.0%, WWF, 17.5%, and KOCP only 6.0%. The reason for this trend was because the majority of the respondents felt that government agency workers and/or managers were not performing their job effectively in managing the wild-animal-related problem, and ecotourism-related issues compared to the NGOs like KOCP and WWF. Although there was also a conflict of interests between the villagers and NGO representatives regarding certain issues as mentioned above, in the eyes of the villagers, these two NGOs' officers and workers are more friendly, closer to the local people, and more understanding of what is actually going on and/or what the problems are at the ground level faced by the local people of Sukau. As mentioned by one of the villagers:

“The villagers “trust” Dr. Issabelle [the Director of KOCP] because she is able to sit together and listen to different views expressed by the local people...it was not for money reasons all the time that the villagers seek from her because without Dr Issabelle I think the villagers still can get some money in various ways...at this moment, moreover, Dr Issabelle is the homestay coordinator of Sukau village”⁶⁸.

The NGOs also claimed to have limited resources to overcome most of the problems faced by the villagers. Thus, the lack of coordination between all the government agencies has put their effectiveness in question, particularly to solve

the problem of the local community versus wildlife in the Lower Kinabatangan area⁶⁹. Moreover, the lack of coordination between these government agencies has left the question of social infrastructure and facilities in Sukau Village unsolved to date⁷⁰.

Figure 8.11: The respondent's perceptions on the role of the government agencies and NGOs in managing wildlife and rainforest (N=200)



Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

8.5.6. The Villagers and the Environmental Pollution Issue

The conflicts of interest also occurred between the villagers and the oil palm company management regarding river pollution. In general, the decline of natural resources in the Lower Kinabatangan was closely related to logging activities in the 1950s, and later the oil palm estate development. The conversion of large

forest areas to oil palm plantation has seen a dramatic rise since the early 1970s and represents the major land use change in recent times (McMorrow et al., 1994: Azmi, 1996: 16). There are 102 oil palm estates in Lower Kinabatangan. About 27 oil palm factories are operated in this area⁷¹. Thus the oil palm plantations and their development pose large scale and direct threats to natural ecosystems; in particular loss of biological diversity, elimination of rare species and pollution of the freshwater ecosystem (Azmi, 1996: 17). Noticeable environmental pollution can be traced through both aspects, organic and inorganic chemical pollutants. This process occurs at the three stages during the development of oil palm estates such as land clearing (increased surface erosion); growth period (fertiliser and pesticide runoffs); and processing of oil palm (organic and solid effluents, largely into rivers) (Azmi, 1996).

Traditionally, fishing is an important village activity for food and a source of income. The main freshwater products that would fetch relatively high market prices are freshwater prawns, *ikan ubi* and *kalo*. In the Sukau area however, the activities upstream from an oil-palm processing factory, which releases its effluent into the river, have affected freshwater prawns and fish. There was a thin film of chemical or oil residue over the water surface during the waste release period by the factory (Azmi, 1996: 13). Its toxicity not only affects fish and other animals but may also be a potential threat to the health of local people. This is because many of the villagers and wild animals still use and drink water from the river in their everyday life activities.

The face-to-face interview survey results show that 63.9% of the respondents believed that private company and semi-government agency-owned oil-palm estates were the major cause of environmental pollution, particularly *the pollution of the river and lake* of Sukau village (see Table 8. 14. p. 318). In comparison, 21.4% of the respondents believed that logging activity can cause river and lake pollution, and only 5.7% believed the ecotourism project and daily ecotourist activities cause it.

For *the destruction to rainforest, flora and fauna*, 49.5% of the respondents believed that this was done by private company and government agency oil palm estates activity. 39.5% believed logging activity did it, and 8.9% believed the villagers who owned small oil palm plantations did it. For *the extermination of wild animals*, 55.8% of the respondents believed it was done by the oil palm estates belonging to private companies and government agencies, 27.2% believed it was done by logging activity, 8.1% believed it was done by other activities such as illegal hunting, and commercial and sports hunting, and 6.4% believed it was done by the villagers who own oil palm plantations. In contrast with the other activities mentioned above, the villagers believed that the ecotourism project and daily ecotourist activities were not the main cause of most types of pollution in Lower Kinabatangan area.

Table 8.14: Major Causes of Pollution in the Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village (N=200)
(Respondents can choose more than one option)

Type of Pollution	Type of Activity					
	Private Company & Government Agency Owned Palm-Oil Estates	Logging	Villager-Owned Small Oil Palm Plantations	Eco-tourism Project & Daily Eco-tourists Activities	Other	Total
River / Lake Pollution	191 (63.9%)	64 (21.4%)	6 (2.0%)	17 (5.7%)	21 (7.0%)	299 (100.0%)
Destruction to Rainforest, Flora & Fauna	151 (49.5%)	121 (39.7%)	27 (8.9%)	5 (1.6%)	1 (0.3%)	305 (100.0%)
Extermination of Wild Animals	158 (55.8%)	77 (27.2%)	18 (6.4%)	7 (2.5%)	23 (8.1%)	283 (100.0%)

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

Sukau's Village Security and Development Committee stressed its view about the main causes of pollution as follows:

"[For the river pollution] I feel it's because of the plantation people. Because they make factories and their factories discharge their waste into the rivers. Yes [the JKKK have discussed this matter with the estate owners]. But they couldn't care less. Sometimes the District Officers calls them but they don't even show up"⁷².

In other words, river pollution caused by oil palm factory waste is a very serious problem for the lives of the majority Sukau population but the government cannot do much about it. What the local people can do is just complain about the matter to the media but the problem is still unresolved. One informant stressed his view about this situation as,

"I don't know for sure [about what the government has done on the river's pollution issue). Previously we cooperated with one of the NGOs, we called TV3, and there was some response but only up to a point. We can see in the *Rasang river*, many of the fish seem to have died..."⁷³.

On the other hand, one of the oil palm estate managers has argued that some of the factories were set up legally because the government approved them. In the past, the mistake might have been related to weaknesses in the implementation of environmental procedures, for instance, in finding a suitable location for the factories. He continued his comments on this issue:

"I think because they wanted to reduce the operational cost some of the factories used short-cut ways to filter the waste. Some of the factory's machines sometime did not function and the waste could no longer be filtered... thus they just discharge the waste into the river. This is the moral dilemma of the estate. There are very strong procedures and enactments regarding environmental pollution but serious environmental enforcement is usually very weak..."⁷⁴.

8.5.7. Division among the villagers

In general, the development of ecotourism in Sukau village was not the main factor that created division in the relationship between the members of the local community. The results of the face-to-face interview survey shows that 91.5% of the respondents claimed that the presence of international tourists had not created division within the local people (see Table 8.15). Only 8.5% of the respondents felt there was a division between the villagers of which 7.5% claimed that this division had worsened a little, and 1.00% claimed it was significantly worse.

Table 8.15: The Presence of International Tourists Creates Division Within Local community (N=200)

Divide the villagers	Frequency	Percent (%)
No	183	91.5
Yes:	17	8.5
• Significantly worse	2	1.0
• Worsen a little	15	7.5
• No difference	-	-
• Improve a little	-	-
• I do not know	-	-
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

The argument, however, occurred between a group of village youths who were working with the KOCP and the JKKK committee members. As mentioned above, there are about 30 village youths working with the KOCP. The majority of the KOCP's workers were not satisfied with some of the JKKK members because of their conflict of interest with the director of KOCP in the village. On one occasion of the village meeting, one of the JKKK members criticised the role of KOCP as "neo-colonialism" because KOCP had succeeded in influencing the minds of the villagers, particularly the village youths, to cooperate with them⁷⁵.

The village youths, however, viewed this conflict as threatening their jobs with the KOCP. Thus they warned the JKKK committee with the following statement:

“...if the KOCP no longer exists in this village...we will bring our rice bowls to your home....”⁷⁶.

From that moment, there was obviously a gap in the relationship between some of the KOCP volunteers and the JKKK committee members in the village. The JKKK committee members viewed the village youths' attitude as drastically changed, and said critically that this situation had occurred because they became “fanatic” and that this owed much to the role of the KOCP management. This is because some of the village youths had been sent abroad to India, Thailand, China and Europe to attend short courses related to wildlife conservation by the director of KOCP⁷⁷. In other words, the different worldviews between the village youths and the JKKK committee members regarding the role of KOCP in the village continue.

8.6. Conclusion

The evidence, from the findings of the research in this chapter, demonstrates that there was a negative impact of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community in Sukau village. A few factors indicate why this negative impact occurred. These include the existence of six private tourist lodge companies operating in Sukau, the difference in cultures and values between the villagers and the foreign visitors, and the existence of conflicts of interest between the local community and the other stakeholders in this area (see section 9.4.2. p. 365 for detail elaboration on sub-theme “the discussion of findings” regarding the negative impact of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community of Sukau). Therefore, if every stakeholder in Sukau village does not properly manage this negative impact, the prospect of achieving sustainable ecotourism development in this area is blurred. Thus, active participation by the majority of local people in ecotourism development is fundamental for future sustainable development. So, the following chapter

(Chapter 9) will discuss the findings of the research regarding the positive impact of local community participation in ecotourism and its limitation specifically.

Template 8.1: Sukau Village



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.2: Adventurous Gravel Road to Sukau?



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.3: A Villager's Oil Palm Plantation in Sukau



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.4: Oil Palm Nuts: Main Source of Income or Conflict?



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.5: One of the Private Tourist Lodges in Sukau



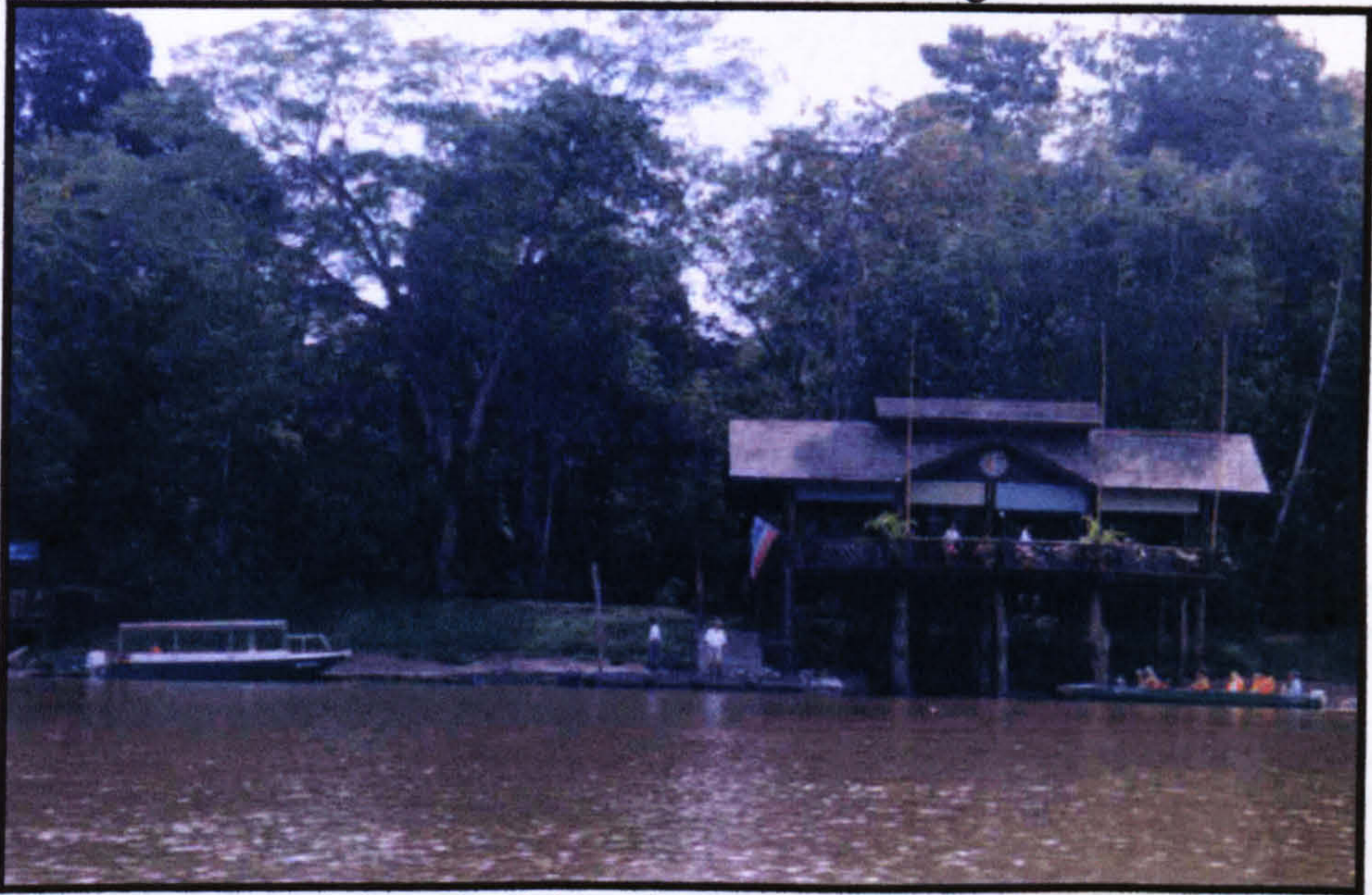
Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.6: Ecotourists and, an Evening River Cruise



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.7: Sukau Rainforest Lodge



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 8.8: Villagers' Houses in Sukau



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Endnotes

- ¹ Interview with *Pak Cik* Indal, homestay participants, 20.4.2003.
- ² *Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, Malaysia*, (Malaysia, Ministry of Rural Development), 2000
- ³ Interview with Mr Johdi, Wildlife Expedition Lodge tourist guide, 19.5.2003; and researcher's direct observation at the lodges.
- ⁴ The value of agricultural land is based on its potential for cultivation and some additional values such as whether there are wild trees on the land regarded as a potential wood farm or for logging. The value may increase by hundreds or even thousand of Ringgit/ha (WWF, 1992: 101).
- ⁵ Traditional land or native land refers to land alienated? allocated? to a native of Sabah as defined in Ordinance 1952 (3.7.2. [8]). Native titles are commonly granted on the basis of claims to native customary rights (4.2.4) of which Native land may be transferred to other natives or repossessed by the government if the land has not been cultivated within three years of issuance of title. If the land is acquired by the government, payment of compensation will be made under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Ordinance 1950. Native titles are normally issued to individuals and have a maximum area of 15 acres (WWF, 1992: 94).
- ⁶ Interview with Mr Nasrah, the Village Security and Development Committee, 23.05.2003
- ⁷ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003.
- ⁸ During the fieldwork, the researcher asked private lodge companies, the police, and the government district office about this data. However, not all of them can provide this study with official figures because they do not have data on total tourist arrivals in Sukau village since 1991 until to date.
- ⁹ Interview with Mr Jimmy Motalib, Assistant Manager Wildlife Expedition Lodge, 22.04.2003
- ¹⁰ Interview with Mr Adrian Trevor Migi, The Manager of Sukau Rainforest Lodge, 22.04.2003
- ¹¹ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003).
- ¹² Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003).
- ¹³ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003).
- ¹⁴ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003).
- ¹⁵ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003)
- ¹⁶ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003)
- ¹⁷ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003)
- ¹⁸ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com> (access on 17.01.2003)
- ¹⁹ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com/public/feedback/> (access on 07.09.2005)

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- ²⁰ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com/news/> (access on 07.09.2005).
- ²¹ Source: <http://www.borneoecotours.com/news/> (access on 07.09.2005)
- ²² Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003
- ²³ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003
- ²⁴ Informal interview with Ms Wati @ Elok, the KOCP's employee, 3.5.2003
- ²⁵ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003.
- ²⁶ Interview with Mr Nasrah, 23.05.2003.
- ²⁷ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003.
- ²⁸ Informal interview with Mr Rosman, the KOCP's employee, 28.04.2003
- ²⁹ Interview with Mr Nasrah, 23.05.2005.
- ³⁰ Informal interview with Mr Rosman, 28.04.2003
- ³¹ Informal interview with the Village Chief of Sukau, Pak Sharon Ahmad, 03.05.2003
- ³² Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003.
- ³³ Interview with Focus Group (Mr Bahrin), 27.04.2003
- ³⁴ Interview with Mr Johdi, the Tourist Guide for the Wildlife Expedition Lodge, 03.05.2003
- ³⁵ Caroline Pang is Senior Communications Officer of WWF Partner for Wetland, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.
- ³⁶ Informal interview with Datuk Rajah Indran, Project Manager for Partners for Wetland, Kota Kinabalu on 10.06.2003
- ³⁷ Interview with a few of the village committee members, 20.04.2003
- ³⁸ They are Dr Isabelle Lackman-Acrenaz and her husband, Dr Marc Ancrenaz.
- ³⁹ The information gained from HUTAN executive report, undated.
- ⁴⁰ Interview with Dr Isabelle, Director of KOCP, 19.04.2003
- ⁴¹ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
- ⁴² Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
- ⁴³ Informal interview with one of the land owner family members, 28.04.2003
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
- ⁴⁵ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003

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- ⁴⁶ Interview with Che gu Mohd Noor, 18.04.2003
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Che gu Mohd Noor, 18.04.2003
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
- ⁴⁹ Interview with Pak Karim, 17.04.2003
- ⁵⁰ Interview with a few of the village committee members (JKKK), 20.04.2003
- ⁵¹ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003
- ⁵² WWF, (2002), Kinabatangan, newsletter June-August.
- ⁵³ Interview with Sukau Village Head, Pak Sharon Ahmad, 03.05.2003
- ⁵⁴ Interview with Mr Titol Peter Malim, Sabah Wildlife Officer of Kinabatangan, 21.05.2003
- ⁵⁵ Interview with the Manager of Sri Kuang Estate Development, Mr Awang Ismail, 05.05.2003
- ⁵⁶ Interview with Mr Awang Ismail, 05.05.2003
- ⁵⁷ There have been reports where this indiscriminate killing of animals (i.e., not for meat, such as orang-utans) were done by illegal hunters. These illegal hunters are not actually villagers but workers of the oil palm estate companies. They were responsible for many cases of this illegal killing. See Azmi, R (1996), "Protected Areas and Rural Communities in the Lower Kinabatangan region of Sabah". p.15. Sabah Society Journal, Vol 13: 1-32
- ⁵⁸ see Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment, 1997. Number 6, Section 39 (3), p. 237 stated, "the use of a firearm for defending persons or property in accordance with subsection (2) [from a direct or immediate attack by any protected animal] shall only be resorted to where no other alternative is possible".
- ⁵⁹ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003
- ⁶⁰ see details in Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment, 1997. Number 6 section 29-31 p, 230-231.
- ⁶¹ Gomantong cave is of the Sabah government properties in which the main activity is collecting edible birds' nests for export to Taiwan and China. It also as one of the tourist attraction sites in Sukau area.
- ⁶² Interview with one of the Village Development and Security Committee members (JKKK), 18.04.2003
- ⁶³ Interview with the same informant, 18.04.2003
- ⁶⁴ Interview with the Sabah Forestry Department Officer of Kinabatangan, Mr Patin, 21.05.2003
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.4.2003.
- ⁶⁶ Interview with Kinabatangan District Officer, Mr Abdul Latif Kandok, 21.05.2003
- ⁶⁷ Interview with Kinabatangan District Officer. En: Latif Kanduk, 21.05.2005

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- ⁶⁸ Informal interview with Pak Karim and Che gu Mohd Noor, 17.04.2003
- ⁶⁹ Interview with Mr Awang Ismail, the Estates' Manager of Sri Kuang Development, 05.05.2003
- ⁷⁰ Researcher observation during the fieldwork in Sukau Village, April – June 2003
- ⁷¹ Interview with Kinabatangan District Officer, Mr Abdul Latif Kandok, 21.05.2003
- ⁷² Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003
- ⁷³ Interview with Mr pastor, 18.04.2003
- ⁷⁴ Interview with Mr Awang Ismail Pengeran Ibrahim, the Manager of Sri Kuang Estate Development, 05.05.2003
- ⁷⁵ Informal interview with the JKKK committee members of Sukau village, 20.04.2003
- ⁷⁶ It was reported by one of the JKKK committee members, 20.04.2003
- ⁷⁷ Informal interview with the JKKK committee members of Sukau village, 20.04.2003

Chapter 9

Findings of the Research: The Limitations of Local Community Participation in the Case of Sukau

9.1. Introduction

This chapter continues the discussion on the research findings of Chapter 8 about local community participation in ecotourism in the case of Sukau village. The main aim of this chapter, however, is to discuss further *the positive impact of ecotourism on local community, and its limitations*. Therefore, the discussion in Chapter 9 will be divided into five main sections as follows:

The first is the introduction.

The second is **Part III**: the research findings on the issue of the positive impact of ecotourism on the local community of Sukau. There are five sub-themes discussed as follows:

- community involvement in various types of new job opportunities;
- community involvement in the homestay programme;
- the limitations of local community participation in the homestay programme;
- community involvement in the conservation programme;
- community involvement in other areas of the development process in general.

The third is a discussion of research findings on the issue of whether local community get “real benefits” or “limited benefits” in socio-economic development, through participation in ecotourism. The sub-themes elaborated further in these findings are:

- the economic benefits and jobs opportunities;
- social facilities and infrastructures for the village;
- social relations, social facilities and services;
- improving the local people's culture, knowledge and skills.
- improving local public transport and services.

The fourth is **Part IV: Discussion of findings (Combining chapter 8 and 9)**.

The main purpose of this part is to link the empirical findings with the relevant literature in the study of ecotourism development and community participation. It also evaluates whether the research findings support or contradict the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study and/or the suggestion proposition. The sub-themes, which are discussed in the findings in this section, are:

- the socio-economic background and characteristics of local community;
- the negative impact of ecotourism development on the local community;
- the positive impact of ecotourism development on the local community;
- the limitations of local community participation in ecotourism development.

The fifth is the conclusion of this chapter. It argues that ecotourism development in Sukau village can be classified as providing *weak sustainability* or *weak community participation* because the negative impacts are more dominant than the positive, and were not expected by the Sabah state government, the conservation officers (NGOs and related government agencies), or the villagers of Sukau.

9.2. Part III: The Positive Impact of Ecotourism on the Local Community

As mentioned earlier, besides the negative impact there was also a positive impact brought about by ecotourism development that could be beneficial to the community of Sukau. Thus the next proposition to examine is proposition 3.

Proposition 3: Ecotourism development in the destination area has increased the participation or involvement of the local community in various types of new job opportunities, increased community involvement in the homestay programme, and increased involvement in the conservation programme. This involvement is, however, limited due to factors such as lack of skills and knowledge, lack of financial support and expertise, and they are not gaining “real benefits” from it.

9.2.1 Community Involvement in Various Types of New Job Opportunities

Traditionally, the villagers of Sukau sustain themselves by subsistence farming, hill rice cultivation, hunting and fishing. Though these traditional socio-economic activities are still carried on, the recent introduction of ecotourism development has changed this scenario. As mentioned earlier, (see Figure 8.8 p. 278), 53.5% of the respondents agreed, and 41.5% strongly agreed when the government proposed the nature-based tourism or ecotourism project in lower Kiabatangan area which includes Sukau village. The majority of the respondents (50.5%) also supported private company lodges operating in the village (see Figure 8.9 p. 278). As a result there are two types of involvement of local people in ecotourism; *direct* and *indirect* (see Table 9. 1. p. 333).

The data from a face-to-face interview survey shows that 63.0% of the respondents were involved in ecotourism activities. From that proportion, 40.5% were involved directly and 22.5% indirectly (see Table 9.1. p. 333). 37.0% of the respondents, however, were not involved at all. This means that the number of the respondents involved, whether directly or indirectly, in ecotourism activities, is high.

Table 9.1: Types of Respondent Involvement in Ecotourism Activities in Sukau Village (N=200)

Involvement category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Involved	126	63.0
<i>Direct Involvement:</i>	81	40.5
• Full-time employee at tourist lodges	46	23.0
• Full time tourist guides	4	2.0
• Self employed boatmen	3	1.5
• Tourist car/van drivers	-	-
• B&B lodge owners	-	-
• Traditional stage dancers	1	0.5
• Homestay providers	7	3.5
• Research assistants	15	7.5
• Other	5	2.5
<i>Indirect Involvement</i>	45	22.5
Not Involved	74	37.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

Direct Involvement: During this research, six private tourist lodges operated in Sukau village. They employed 23.0% of the respondents full-time, for instance as boatmen, waitresses, cooks and kitchen helpers, and tourist guides. 7.5% of the respondents were involved directly as wildlife and/or rainforest research assistants, and 3.5% as homestay providers. This showed that ecotourism has changed the traditional jobs from fisherman to ecotourist lodge workers, environmental research assistants, and homestay providers. These are new job opportunities gained by the villagers because of ecotourism development, none of which existed before the implementation of ecotourism. Thus direct involvement can be categorised also as *active participation* of the local people in ecotourism. Active participation however, has not automatically meant that the local community gained ecotourism benefits or profits equally with the other stakeholders in this development process. This issue will be discussed further in the next part of this chapter.

Indirect Involvement: indirect involvement also refers to part-time jobs for members of local community in ecotourism. For instance 31.9% of the respondents were involved indirectly as part-time boatmen, and 19.5% in other activities such as part-time tourist accommodation providers, and part-time traditional stage dancers. 13.9% became part-time suppliers of freshwater fish and prawns to lodge operators, 8.3% were involved part-time as tourist guides, 8.3% as part-time carpenters and repair workers, 6.9% as part-time shopkeepers, 5.6% as part-time boat makers, 4.2% as part-time taxi/van/bus drivers, and 1.4% as a part-time restaurant owner (see Table 9.2. p. 335). This means that ecotourism has created new part-time job opportunities for the villagers, reducing their dependence on traditional fishing and agricultural activities. Before ecotourism development existed, most of these part-time jobs represented the total economic activity. In other words the economic activity of the villagers has diversified since ecotourism was introduced.

Respondents not involved in ecotourism activities: (see Table 9.3. p. 335). 37.0% of the respondents were not involved in ecotourism-related activities in Sukau village. This is because, at the early stage of development, some of them felt that ecotourism activities were urban-oriented, and different from their village-based economy, particularly agricultural activity. They also have no expertise with which to develop ecotourism. All this mix of factors or “other” factors was perceived by 15.0% of the respondents as not encouraging them to participate in ecotourism (see Table 9.3. p. 335). 8.0% of the respondents felt they had no interest in ecotourism; 3.5% felt they had no skill and experience to become involved; 4.5% felt they could see the opportunities in ecotourism but were not permitted by the government agencies or NGOs to become involved because they had not achieved the minimum standards set by these ecotourism consultants, for instance to become accommodation providers.

Table 9.2: Respondents' Indirect Involvement in Ecotourism Activities in Sukau Village (n=45)

(The respondents can choose more than one option)

Indirect Involvement Category (n=45)	Frequency	Percent (%)
• Part-time boatmen	23	31.9
• Boat builder	4	5.6
• Part-time tourist guides	6	8.3
• Part-time taxi/van/bus drivers	3	4.2
• Fresh water fish and prawns suppliers to lodge operators	10	13.9
• Vegetable and fruit suppliers to lodge operators	-	-
• Part-time carpenters and repair workers	6	8.3
• Shopkeepers	5	6.9
• Restaurant owners	1	1.4
• Other	14	19.5
Total	72	100.00

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

Table 9.3: Reasons Why Respondents Were Not Involved in Ecotourism Activities in Sukau Village (N=200)

Reason not involved	Frequency	Percent (%)
Not involved because:	74	37.0
• Not interested	16	8.0
• No capital to invest	3	1.5
• No skills and experience	7	3.5
• Risky	4	2.0
• Cannot see opportunities	5	2.5
• Can see opportunities but not permitted	9	4.5
• Other	30	15.0
Involved in ecotourism activities	126	63.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

2.5% could not see any future opportunities in becoming involved in ecotourism because the outside investors, who are more capable and commonly dominated this sector, had advantages in many aspects of business strategy and networks. Thus, 2.0% of respondents felt that this sector was really risky to become involved in.

9.2.2. Community Involvement in the Homestay Programme

The homestay programme was launched officially by the Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment¹ on 9 September 2000 in order to promote ecotourism and support for rural community development. The programme was also introduced in Sukau village in the same year but the participants were only active and ready to receive visitors in 2002. In the beginning, there were only five families involved. The Homestay Coordinator of Sukau comments on this development:

“At the earliest stage, only five families became involved. Within a month, we received five more participants. There would have been even more, but to be eligible for certification, there had to be suitable toilet facilities. This was an expense for the residents because the cost of installing [flush] toilets is high”².

This is the same programme as was introduced by the Sabah government in Batu Puteh village (see Chapter 7, section 7.7. p. 206) and later also implemented in Sukau. The homestay coordinator of Sukau has elaborated the fundamental requirement for the villager to be able to join the homestay programme as follows:

“It must be a family; they won’t accept those living alone. There must be a special room set aside for visitors. The house must have at least two rooms. In one room, there must be two mattresses. The toilet must be standard, and “toilet” in the river is not acceptable. There must be a flush toilet with tank and proper plumbing. There must be an enclosed bathroom. The house must be clean; it can’t look dirty. That’s all”³.

During this research, there was no commercial promotion of this programme because the homestay management and participants do not have any cooperation with tour operators in Sabah. Most of the participants received the visitors from the Ministry directly or from other specific sources such as local university students. In year 2002, the homestay participants of Sukau had a large group of students from Japan. The Ministry also fixed the homestay package in Sukau. For instance the price for one night, and three meals is RM\$40.00. From that, RM\$5.00 goes into the village homestay fund. Thus, the family will gain RM\$35.00 whereas fares for boat transport, wildlife viewing, fishing and other activities provided by the homestay participants are charged separately⁴. Similarly to Batu Puteh, all the homestay participants of Sukau village were also obliged to attend homestay courses conducted by the Ministry before they began the programme.

In principle, visitors, who want to stay in a homestay, must follow the lifestyle and culture of the village. For instance, the visitors must take off their shoes when entering a house, and have no alcoholic drinks while they are there. The head of each household, however, only gives these guidelines orally. Every family gets only four visitors. It is stipulated that homestay participants receive visitors only twice a month. Visitor statistics provided by the homestay committee show that 34 international and 15 domestic visitors stayed at Sukau's homestay facilities in 2002, providing a total revenue of RM5, 810 (see Table 9.4. p. 338). In the following year, 15 domestic visitors stayed in participant houses, and were charged for boat services with a total revenue of RM2,710 (see Table 9.5. p. 338).

Table 9.4: Number of Visitors and Total Revenue Received by Homestay Participants in Sukau, 2002.

Homestay Participant	Number of Domestic Visitors	Total Income (RMS)	Number of International Visitors	Total Revenue (RMS)
1. Muhimah	7	530.00	9	1,090.00
2. Indal	3	210.00	5	550.00
3. Sh Fatimah	3	210.00	4	560.00
4. Awang Damit	3	210.00	4	440.00
5. Arijah	3	210.00	4	500.00
6. Suhaili	3	210.00	4	440.00
7. Sharifah	3	210.00	4	440.00
Total	25	1,790.00	34	4,020.00
Total Revenue		1,790.00 + 4,020.00 = 5,810.00		

Source: Data provided by the Homestay Committee of Sukau, 2003

Table 9.5: Number of Visitors and Total Revenue Received by Homestay Participants of Sukau until 29.5.2003.

Homestay Participant	Number of Domestic Visitors	Total Income (RMS)	Boat Service Providers	Total Revenue (RMS)
1. Muhimah	4	480.00	Muhimah	110.00
	1	70.00		
2. Maria	4	480.00	Indal	250.00
3. Sarina	4	480.00	Sh Fatimah	190.00
4. Sh Fatimah	3	360.00	Arijah	250.00
			Sariha	40.00
Total	16	1870.00		840.00
Total Revenue		1,870.00 + 840.00 = 2,710.00		

Source: Data provided by the Homestay Committee of Sukau, 2003

Although the homestay participants claimed that they gained benefits from the programme, it represented only a small proportion of side incomes. This, however, is the main motivation for some of the villagers to be involved in this programme.

“For me, the homestay programme is an opportunity for the villagers to have a side income together with fishing. Moreover, I feel proud if the tourists come into the village to experience our traditional way of life...”⁵

“The homestay concept is of course like that [homestay is not a full time income]..... If there were a large number of tourists, who knows, maybe it would be enough. The concept is that a family must carry on with their usual way of life, so that the tourists can experience this and even become involved in their activities. It’s not supposed to be like a hotel”⁶.

“In principle, the aim of this programme is to involve the local community in the tourism industry where they can get an opportunity for side income. In the past, the villagers just watched the tourist buses enter their village; for instance in Sukau, the villagers don’t get anything, but the outsiders who built the resorts get the benefits... I think at this moment, the villagers are ready. This is only about changing their mindset. Of course it takes time to succeed because they need guidance. But once you do it, the homestay programme can increase their level of income, uplift their status of life and preserve their culture, for instance handicrafts, because the tourists appreciate it, and they are motivated to do it again...So, it was not only homestay participants who were involved and benefited but the whole village”⁷.

9.2.3. The Limitations of Local Community Participation in the Homestay Programme of Sukau Village

At the same time however, there were also the “limitations” or challenges, which could become barriers to implementing smoothly the homestay programme in Sukau village. The problems actually were quite similar to those

faced by the villagers of Batu Puteh when they participated in the homestay programme as described below:

i. Lack of capital resources and financial assistants: Many of the participants lacked the financial resources necessary to set up homestay facilities such as renovating houses, building new toilets, bathrooms and bedrooms, buying new mattresses and so on, in order to fulfil the minimum requirement set by the Ministry. The Ministry actually did not have any special budget or allocation to support the participants financially but relied on the State Homestay Committee. The membership of this committee included the Kinabatangan District Office, the Ministry of Rural Development of Malaysia, and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah⁸. Red tape and bureaucracy, which limits the power of individual members, reduces the effectiveness of the committee, which functions poorly in providing financial assistance. Moreover, they have also given less priority to the homestay programme because it was an “experimental programme” in the state rural development agenda. This means that the financial problems faced by the participants continue and have not been resolved systematically. The Sukau homestay coordinator has commented on this situation:

“It is difficult for the programme to run smoothly because there has been no proper supervision [at the Ministry level]. When WWF and the Ministry launched this programme, they appointed someone to head it. But after that, it has been a bit confused. For instance, at the grand launch of the programme in Kota Kinabalu, it was mistakenly announced that someone else would head it. This has led to conflict. The original person said, “it wasn’t my name so I don’t want it”. So there was no one to run the programme and it became “stuck”. So, recently, when we called back the originally intended person to head it, he said he wasn’t interested anymore. However, his wife then became involved and this has made things easier...”⁹.

ii. Ineffectiveness of homestay management at the village level. The homestay programme in Sukau village only began in 2002. Thus, the management is not yet totally effective because it is still in the process of development. Moreover, the role of individual committee members is not very well structured. Among the members themselves there has not been much cooperation. For instance, at one meeting, the researcher observed that the filing system of the committee was not in order, and it became a subject of jokes by one of the members present¹⁰. Moreover,, there were always long arguments between some members of the committee and the chairwoman, particularly regarding the distribution of visitors between the participants. At other times, gender issues, such as exploitation, also arose whenever female participants felt that male participants gave them more tasks, workload and responsibility for running this programme.

iii. Lack of marketing. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah claimed that there were 14 private tour operators interested in promoting the homestay programme in Sabah. But none of them, including Sabah Tourism Board, were ready to promote the programme because most of them were still doubtful about its quality or as an ecotourist product in the lower Kinabatangan area. As a Sabah Tourism Board officer comments:

“...homestay programme introduced by the Ministry and we are one of the homestay committee members... [but] before homestay in Batu Puteh is launched officially, we won't say we are going to have it...we won't promote it because at that moment I think they will have a problem in getting a licence from the federal government. We don't want to take a risk by promoting products that have no licence. We are a government agency; we must take care of it...last year [2002] however, we officially launched and produced a list of homestays in the brochures and directories... we contributed this as a sharing committee member of homestay... we cannot promote for one specific place instantly... If they want some help...they will have to write in...and we will see what their purpose is, and their product...”¹¹.

For that reason, many homestay participants depend much on the contribution and initiatives of the Ministry Officer or their coordinator to promote the programme or to get a group of tourists to occupy their homestays. This is because the participants have no idea about how to promote or market their product whether at national or global level. The villagers who have participated in the homestay programme in Sukau village actually were passive participants.

iv. Barrier to language communication. Similarly to the homestay programme in Batu Puteh, the language barrier was the main problem faced by the homestay participants of Sukau. Most of the visitors want to know more about participants' families and cultural information, but many homestay participants do not know how to communicate, either in basic English or Japanese. Thus, the interaction between the host and guest in the house is very limited. In many circumstances, it was done through "sign language". The Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment did not provide any assistance or language courses for homestay participants to minimise this language communication problem. The responsibility was given to the NGOs like KOCP to initiate English courses. As the homestay coordinator of Sukau comments about this issue:

"At the moment communication is still mostly in Malay. But we have arranged classes... we are not all that proficient, but of course we use English only in our classes" ¹².

v. Lack of continued support and consultation from government agencies: The homestay programme in Sukau village was considered to be a top-down approach to development planning. The tourism policy maker introduced this programme at the early stage, but unfortunately there was no continuing support whether in relation to financial assistance, development consultation, or advance training. The data from the face-to-face interview survey showed that only 4.5% of the respondents claimed that the Ministry consulted the villagers before and after ecotourism was implemented (see Table 9.6. p.343). In

comparison, 50.5% of the respondents claimed that the WWF consulted the villagers before and after, 7.5% of the respondent claimed that they were consulted by KOCP, 6.5% claimed they were consulted by the resort owners, 4.5% claimed that other tourism agencies consulted the villagers, and 26.5% of the respondents claimed that they did not know who actually consulted the villagers.

Table 9.6: Official Agencies Consulting Local Community Before and After Ecotourism Project Implemented (N=200)

Official Agency	Frequency	Percent (%)
• WWF	101	50.5
• KOCP	15	7.5
• Ministry of Tourism	9	4.5
• Tourism-related agency	9	4.5
• Resort owner and management	13	6.5
• I do not know	53	26.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

The above result, significantly, means that the villagers of Sukau perceived that the NGOs, particularly WWF, played an important role as major consultant agencies from the beginning of ecotourism development. This role, however, was only intended to increase the level of consciousness of local people regarding wildlife or nature environmental conservation through ecotourism and nothing more. As a result, WWF could not take further effective action, for instance in providing financial assistance to the community to improve their participation in the homestay programme. For that reason, the villagers saw WWF as an official body that made many promises in the early phase of ecotourism development, but after they introduced ecotourism in the village, “a lot of their work has been suspended or left incomplete”¹³.

Therefore, the related question was asked of the respondents in this research: “Who should lead the ecotourism development process in Sukau village and

Lower Kinabatangan area?”. The result showed that 35.0% of the respondents thought that a joint venture between local people and the government agency should lead ecotourism development in this area (see Table 9.7). 17.5% preferred only the government institutions to lead the ecotourism development process in the village. 15.8% of the respondents said that a local people and private company joint venture should lead the development process, and 13.9% wanted a local people and NGO joint venture. This means the intention of the villagers to involve and support ecotourism development in the village is high, but unfortunately it was not very clear in the villagers’ minds which official bodies could lead this ecotourism development process the most effectively. Thus, many local participation-related problems remain unsolved, which could mean that “sustainable local community participation” in ecotourism or the homestay project is will be an uncertain condition in the near future.

Table 9.7: The Institution that Should Lead the Ecotourism Development Process in Sukau Village (N=200)
(Respondents can choose more than one option)

Type of Institution	Frequency	Percent (%)
Government institutions	64	17.8
Private tour operators	11	3.1
Government and private joint venture	30	8.3
Local people and government joint venture	126	35.0
Local people and private company joint venture	57	15.8
Local people and NGO joint venture	50	13.9
Local people only	9	2.5
Don't know	13	3.6
Total	360	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork 2003

Moreover, there was also *a lack of relevant continuing training* for the local community. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah provided a week-long homestay course for interested participants, particularly for certification purposes. After that, there was no follow-up training conducted by this Ministry. The majority of the respondents in this research, however, were very interested in having further training in order to increase their skills

and knowledge in ecotourism or homestay related-activities. (see Table 9.8). The research shows that 12.9% of the respondents were interested in attending courses or a training programme related to small business management. 11.4% were interested in tourist-guide related courses, and 11.3% in attending further courses or a training programme related to homestay management. Other courses needed by the respondents included agriculture (11.3%), handicrafts (11.1%), cooking (9.6%), aquaculture (7.8%), farm breeding (7.1%), traditional art and culture performance (6.8%), sewing (6.5%) etc. The problem, however, was that none of these courses were offered by any government agency in order to improve local community skills and knowledge, which later on could be used in ecotourism or homestay-related activities, particularly for the younger generation in the village.

Table 9.8: Types of Course or Training Programme Preferred by the Respondents (N=200)
(Respondents can choose more than one option)

Type of courses/training programmes	Frequency	Percent (%)
Handicraft	79	11.1
Sewing	46	6.5
Cooking	68	9.6
Small business	92	12.9
Homestay management	80	11.3
Tourist guide	81	11.4
Agriculture	80	11.3
Farm breeding	50	7.1
Aquaculture	55	7.8
Traditional art and culture performance	48	6.8
English language	5	0.7
Computer skills	2	0.3
Conservation awareness	5	0.7
Other	18	2.5
Total	709	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

9.2.4. Community Involvement in the Conservation Programme

As mentioned above, there were about 30 youths of Sukau village, working as wildlife conservation volunteers for KOCP. The main reasons why the local community has been involved in the conservation programme in this area are set out below.

First, the Lower Kinabatangan area has a large orang-utan population as well as lots of other wildlife. Then, viewing wildlife is a very important activity in the ecotourism development of this village. For a long time, the villagers have been exploiting the resources of the forest, for example the wood. Now with the forest area reduced it's not big enough for man or wildlife to depend on. Moreover, there has been a proposal to gazette this area into a sanctuary. In this case, the villagers would not be able to enter the forest to take wood or to hunt the wildlife. Thus the villagers would have to find other ways to make a living, for their own economic well-being. They would have to find activities that are consistent with the rehabilitation or conservation programme. Thus, ecotourism is one of the more suitable ways to gain economic benefits and to conserve the natural resources simultaneously.

Second, NGOs such as WWF and KOCP have realised that the conservation programme can only be a success if the local community involvement is seriously high. As the Director of KOCP stressed:

“We quickly realised that if we really wanted to ensure that the rehabilitation programme was to be a success, we had to have the involvement of the local community. If it was only in the form of giving talks or conducting awareness programmes, yes the people were interested in listening, but it wouldn't be enough. So in order that the villagers would get involved and support this rehabilitation programme, and understand its purpose, they also had to be made to see the benefits they could enjoy, whether economically, or to their quality of life”¹⁴.

As a result, nowadays KOCP has the highest number of staff who are involved and have initiated their own conservation-related projects. For instance, recently, at the village level, they started a Bureau for the Rehabilitation of the Environment, which they initiated under the auspices of the JKKK. But the Kinabatangan District Office has not approved this Bureau yet. The idea actually was to form a committee under the JKKK. The Village Chief, the JKKK itself, and the police would be involved. This would be a “tool” which would be very effective in carrying out any rehabilitation or conservation programme in the village. At the same time, it could also work on the problems of pollution, illegal hunting, and illegal logging. Thus, it could solve many of the conservation-related problems¹⁵.

Third, There has always been a conflict between the local people and the wildlife, for example the elephants or the orang-utan, which damage their oil palm trees. This has been a huge problem in Sukau. The KOCP has assisted the local people, particularly the younger generations, to solve these problems through a special unit called Wildlife Control Unit (WCU). According to the Director of KOCP the Head of this unit has already been sent to India twice for training as India has a great deal of experience with these kinds of conflicts with elephants. For instance, in the aspect of practical control, the volunteers of this unit will stand by 24 hours on watch for elephants if there is a sign that a group of elephants has entered a farmer’s field. If the elephants are already getting close to the village, they will inform the owners of the farms straight away¹⁶. In other words, this unit has already had a lot of experience with the elephants. In this way the villagers manage to overcome the elephant problem, where the KOCP helped and assisted them to find sponsors or with providing technical assistance.

Fourth, There was also a project called “Community Participation in Forest Restoration in the Lower Kinabatangan Area” organised by the District Office of Kinabatangan, WWF Malaysia - Partners for Wetland Programme, Sabah

Wildlife Department, and the private lodge owners. The villagers, however, did not respond well to this project. The result of the face-to-face interview survey shows that 75.5% of the respondents had not been involved in the tree-planting project run by the private lodge operators or other organisation in Sukau village in the last five years. In comparison only 24.5% of the respondents claimed they were involved in this type of project (see Table 9.9). The main reason many respondents were not involved in this project was that they were not informed about it by the organiser(s). 13.0% claimed they were not interested in it. 1.0% claimed it did not benefit their family or themselves. Finally, 19.5% claimed they had other reasons such as lack of time, busy with ordinary work etc.

Table 9.9: Reasons for Non-involvement in the Tree-Planting Project in Sukau Village (N=200)

Type of Involvement	Frequency	Percent (%)
Involved	49	24.5
Not Involved	151	75.5
Why?		
• Not interested	26	13.0
• No benefit to my family and me	2	1.0
• Not informed about the project	84	42.0
• Other	39	19.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003.

9.2.5. Community Involvement in Other Related Events in the Development Process.

In general, many of the villagers have been involved in other events, related to the involvement of the local community in the ecotourism development process in general. For instance, in the last 5 years, the proportion of respondents who have attended a general village community meeting was 16.8% (see Table 9.10. p. 349). The discussions in these meetings were commonly related to the

village's security and development issues in general but ecotourism development and conservation issues were also in the meeting agendas. Specifically, moreover, 10.0% of the respondents have attended a meeting regarding sports activity; 8.8% have attended a meeting on security issues; 8.5% of the respondents have attended a meeting regarding local cultural activity; 8.4% have attended a meeting regarding wildlife conservation issues; 8.3% have attended a meeting regarding ecotourism activity and so on (see Table 9.10). In other words, there was active participation and strong support by a majority of the villagers in the ecotourism development process generally. The question, however, of whether the villagers or the "outsiders" gained the "real benefits" through all this participation or involvement in those events, remains controversial.

Table 9.10: Respondent Involvement in
Other Related Events in the Last 5 Years (N=200)
(Respondents can choose more than one options)

Type of Other Involvement	Frequency	%
Attended a general village community meeting	159	16.8
Attended a meeting on village security issues	84	8.8
Attended a meeting on rural development issues	72	7.6
Attended a meeting regarding wildlife conservation issues	80	8.4
Attended a meeting regarding health issues	79	8.3
Attended a meeting of a political party	54	5.7
Attended a meeting regarding local cultural activity	81	8.5
Attended a meeting regarding sports activity	92	10.0
Attended a meeting regarding tourist activity	79	8.3
Attended a work course or training	77	8.1
Responding to research survey	73	7.7
No participation	-	-
Other	17	1.8
Total	947	100.0

Source: Data from the fieldwork, 2003

9.3. Ecotourism Development and Local Community Participation: Perception of “Real Benefits” or “Limited Benefits”

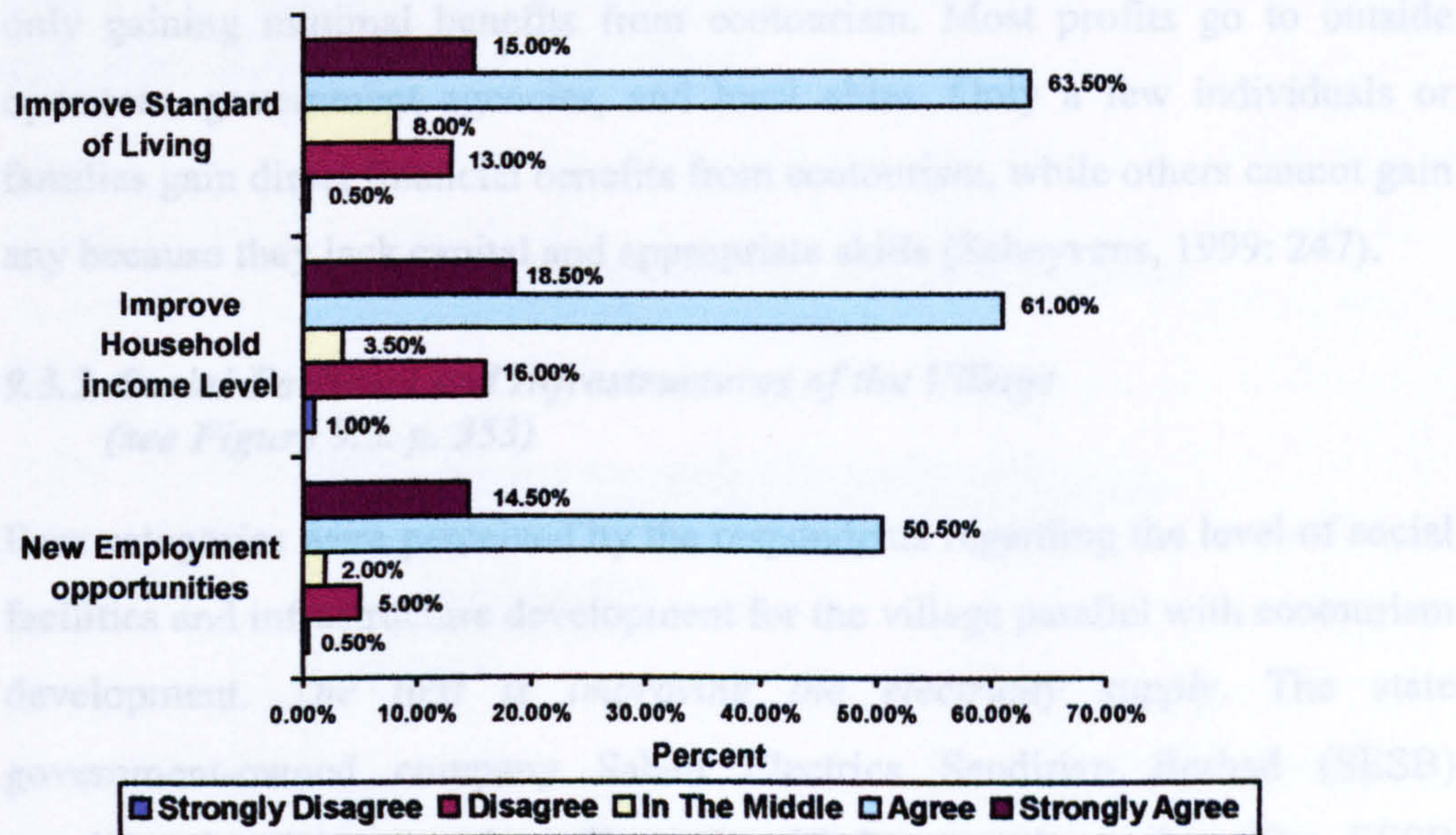
Ecotourism development was implemented in Sukau village in the early 1990s and continues to date. Thus, the question has been asked to what extent this development could benefit the villagers in general. What types of benefits have the villagers most gained or most lost? The results of the survey indicating the perception of the respondents regarding this issue as follow:

9.3.1. Economic Benefits and Job Opportunities (see Figure 9.1. p. 351)

There were three categories of economic benefits and job opportunities perceived by the respondents in this research. *First, new employment opportunities:* 14.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 50.5% of the respondents agreed that ecotourism development has offered the villagers new forms of employment opportunities. As discussed above, the development of 6 private tourist lodges in the village created new forms of jobs such as tourist guides, boatmen, waiters, waitresses, kitchen helpers, conservation volunteers and so on, none of which existed before ecotourism development took place. Although traditional economic activities such as fishing, subsistence farming, and cash crop planting were still important to the villagers, ecotourism has successfully diversified job opportunities in the village. Only 5.0% of the respondents disagree that the villagers have gained economic benefits from ecotourism development. This dissenting view was expressed by one of the villagers as follows:

“There was a small proportion of the villagers involved actively in ecotourism activities such as homestay participants and the tourist lodge workers. The majority of the villagers however, are still living as fishermen, and small scale oil palm farmers”¹⁷.

Figure 9.1: Economic Benefits and Jobs Opportunities



Second, improving household income levels. 61.0% of the respondents agreed, and 18.5% strongly agreed that ecotourism development in the village could improve the villagers' household income level, particularly through indirect involvement or part-time jobs in this sector. Only 16.0% of the respondents disagreed that ecotourism improved the villagers' household income level.

Third, improving the standard of living. 63.5% of the respondents agreed, and 15.0% strongly agreed that ecotourism could improve their standard of living. 13.0% , however, disagreed.

In other words, the majority of the respondents perceived positively that economic benefits and jobs opportunities could be gained through participation in ecotourism development. All these economic benefits and job opportunities, however, were actually limited. This situation has been conceptualised by Tosun (2000) as a limitation of community participation in tourism development in the less developed world because of limitations at the operational level, structural limitations to community participation, and cultural limitations (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2. p.126). The signs of economic

disempowerment, according to Scheyvens (1999) were in local communities only gaining minimal benefits from ecotourism. Most profits go to outside operators, government agencies, and local elites. Only a few individuals or families gain direct financial benefits from ecotourism, while others cannot gain any because they lack capital and appropriate skills (Scheyvens, 1999: 247).

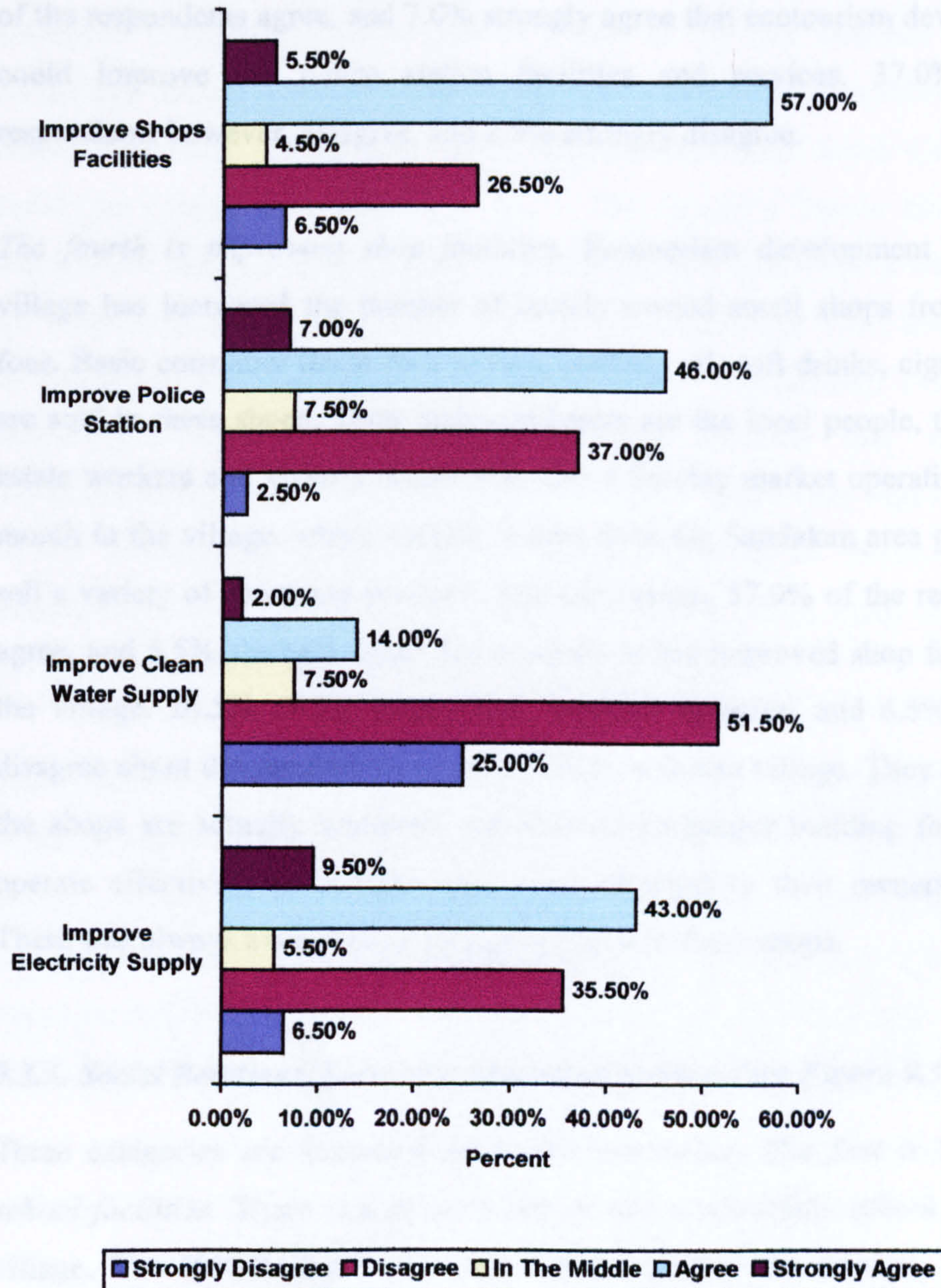
9.3.2. Social Facilities and Infrastructures of the Village ***(see Figure 9.2. p. 353)***

Four categories were perceived by the respondents regarding the level of social facilities and infrastructure development for the village parallel with ecotourism development. *The first is improving the electricity supply.* The state government-owned company Sabah Electrics Sendirian Berhad (SESB) supplies electricity for the village for 12 hours only a day. The SESB commonly supplies the electric power to the village starting at 10.00 am and switching off at 10.00 pm. Most of the villagers, and the private lodge owners demand 24 hours supply. Thus, 43.0% of the respondents agreed that ecotourism development in the village could improve the electricity supply, and 9.5% also strongly agreed about improving this situation. During the fieldwork in the village, the researcher observed mains electricity cable fitting work being intensively done by some of the electrical contractors and their workers along the roadside of the village. 35.5% of the respondents, however, disagreed, and 6.5% strongly disagreed that ecotourism could improve the electricity supply in the village, particularly in the short term. Although the cable was fitted, and the electric bars stood side by side along the village road, the researcher was informed by one of the villagers that there was still no power supply for the village at that time¹⁸.

The second is improving the clean water supply. 51.5% of the respondents disagree, and 25.0% strongly disagree that ecotourism development could improve the clean water supply in the village. The villagers have been demanding a clean water supply for 15 years but there is no immediate action

anticipated by any related government agency to overcome this problem. In comparison, only 14.0% of the respondents agree, and 2.0% strongly agree that ecotourism could improve this situation.

Figure 9.2: Social Facilities and Infrastructures for the Village



The third is improving the police station. The area covered by the police station in Sukau village is 400 sq km. There are only two police officers on standby for duty. During the research, the main challenge faced by the police was to overcome illegal hunting activity. In year 2002, there was only one policeman on duty in the office. In year 2003 however, there were two. Therefore, 46.0% of the respondents agree, and 7.0% strongly agree that ecotourism development could improve the police station facilities and services. 37.0% of the respondents however, disagree, and 2.5% strongly disagree.

The fourth is improving shop facilities. Ecotourism development in Sukau village has increased the number of locally owned small shops from one to four. Basic consumer items such as rice, cooking oil, soft drinks, cigarettes etc are sold in these shops. Their main customers are the local people, the nearby estate workers and visitors. There was also a Sunday market operating once a month in the village, where outside traders from the Sandakan area gather and sell a variety of consumer products. For that reason, 57.0% of the respondents agree, and 5.5% strongly agree that ecotourism has improved shop facilities in the village. 26.5% of the respondents however disagree, and 6.5% strongly disagree about the standard of shops facilities in Sukau village. They argue that the shops are actually scattered, and there is no proper building for them to operate effectively in because most were attached to their owners' houses. There was always a scarcity of consumer goods in these shops.

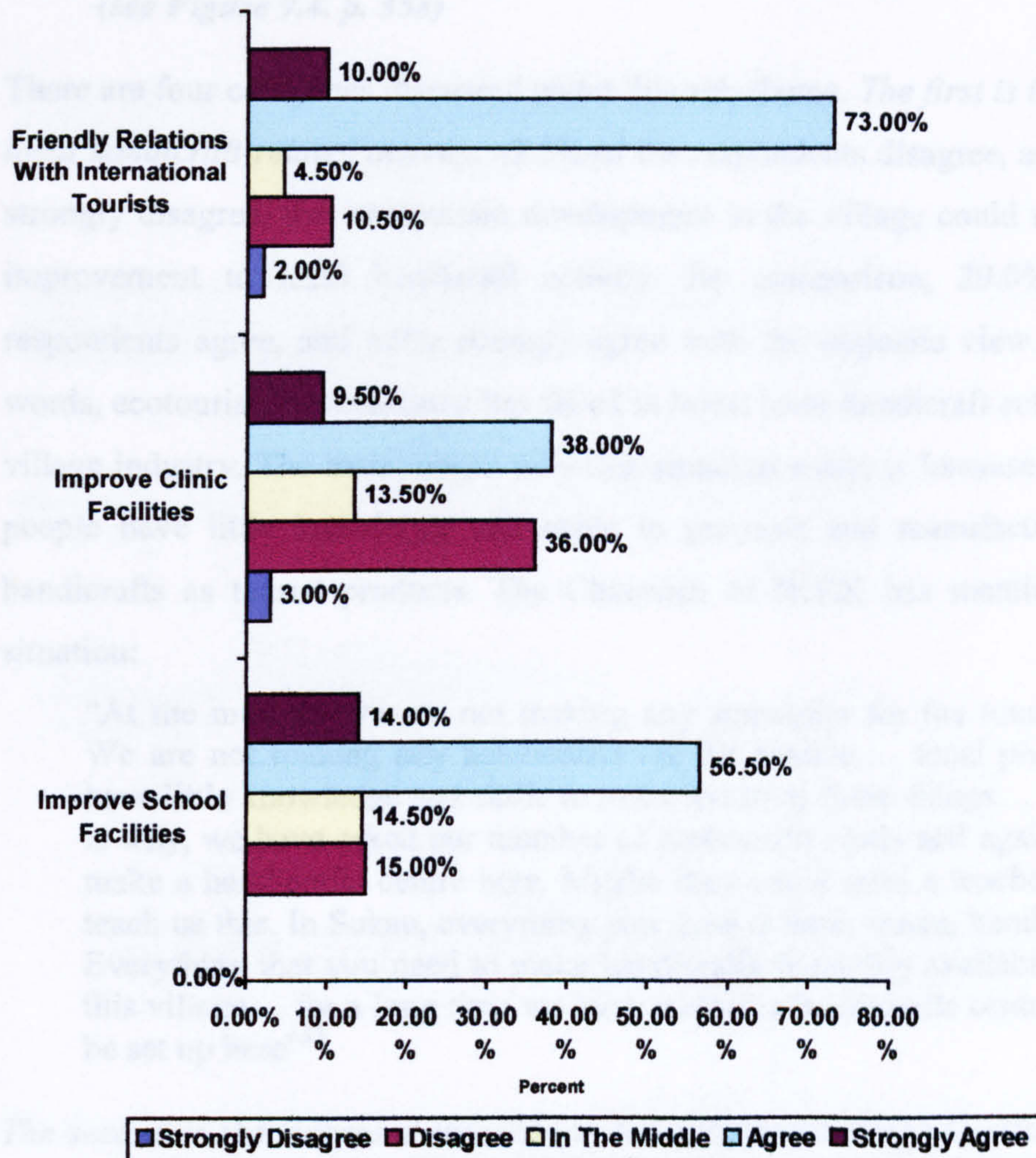
9.3.3. Social Relations, Social Facilities and Services (see Figure 9.3. p. 356)

Three categories are discussed under this sub-theme. *The first is improving school facilities.* There is a primary school and a secondary school in Sukau village. The British Borneo Government established the primary school in 1952. Then, Sukau Secondary School officially opened in 1999. Before that, most of the Sukau youth had to have their secondary education at Bukit Garam or Sandakan town secondary schools. 56.5% of the respondents agree, and

14.0% strongly agree that ecotourism could improve and support the school facilities in the village. According to the Head Teacher of Sukau Primary School, there was a group of tourists from Australia who visited the school and contributed everyday school materials to the pupils such as pens, pencils and exercise books. This primary school was also equipped with computers and a telephone network¹⁹. Moreover, private tour operators such as S.I Tours Company contributed scholarships to a few of the best students of Sukau Secondary School in 2003²⁰. The Parents and School Teachers Association of Sukau Secondary School have asked Wildlife Expedition Tours Company to build the school a hostel-dining hall²¹. The School's Parent and Teacher Association also asked Discovery Tours Company to contribute a water pump, 10 water tanks (each 400 gallons), and ten sets of polymer water tubes for use by the Sukau Secondary School student hostel. By comparison, 14.5% of the respondents disagree, and 15.0% strongly disagree that ecotourism development has improved school facilities in the village. They argue that most of the promises to equip and facilitate the schools of Sukau were not implemented by these private company contributors. Even some of the local people's requests for small donations have been rejected.

The second is improving clinic facilities. 38.0% of the respondents agree, and 9.5% strongly agree that ecotourism could improve clinic facilities in the village. However, 36.0% of the respondents disagree, and 3.0% strongly disagree that ecotourism has improved clinic facilities because since part of the clinic building was destroyed by fire in year 2002, there has been no further action taken by the government to rebuild the clinic infrastructures²².

Figure 9.3: Social Relations, Social Facilities and Services



The third is friendly relations with international tourists. 73.0% of the respondents agree, and 10.0% strongly agree that the local people have friendly relations with international tourists. By comparison, only 10.5% of the respondents disagree, and 2.0% strongly disagree that relationship between Sukau's residents and international tourists are friendly. This means ecotourism related activities have changed the villagers' mindset about the presence of international tourists positively. In the early phase of ecotourism development, by contrast, the attitudes of the majority of the villagers were more negative towards them.

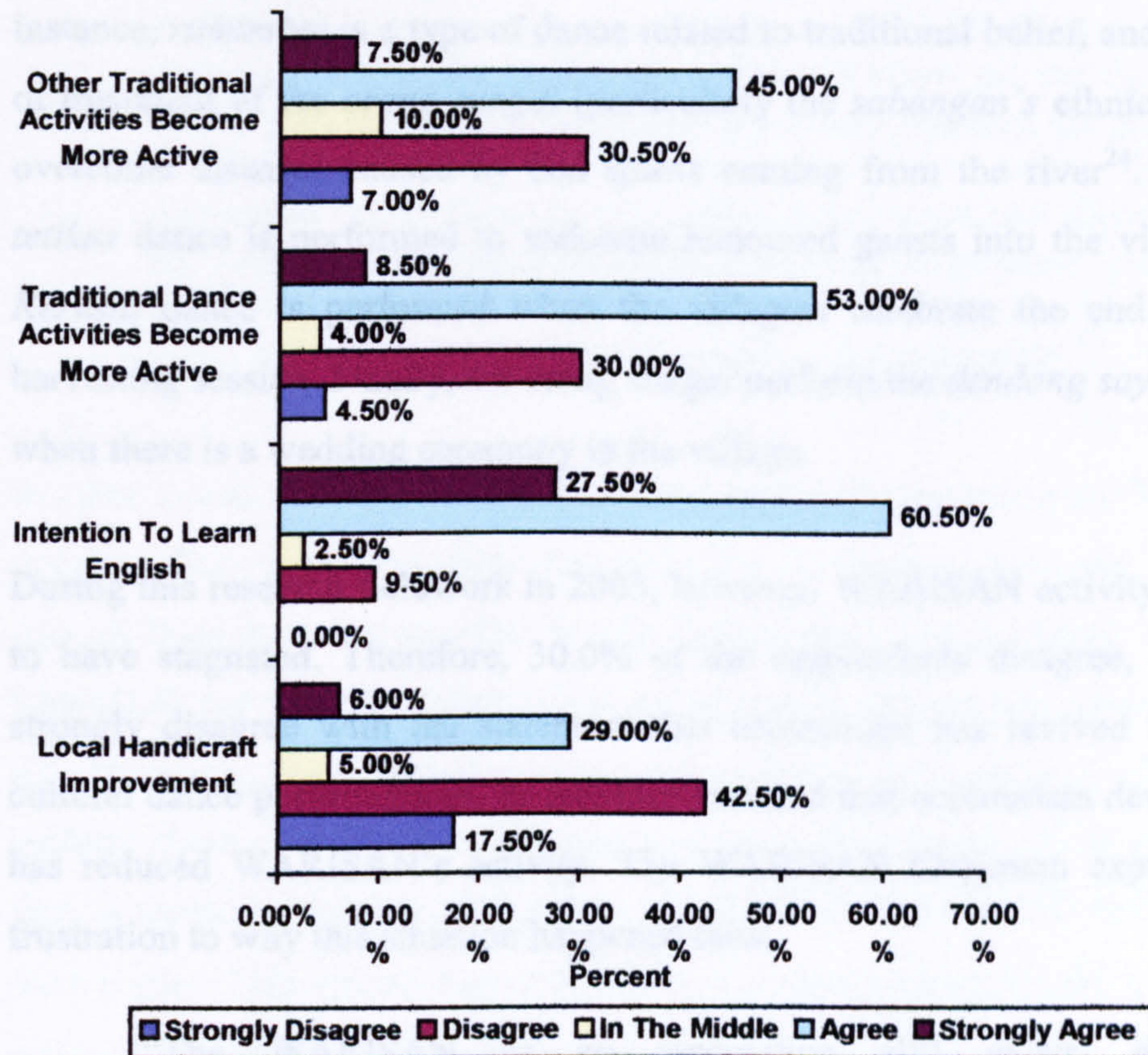
9.3. 4. Improve Local People Culture, Knowledge and Skill
(see Figure 9.4. p. 358)

There are four categories discussed under this sub-theme. *The first is improving local handicraft-related activity.* 42.5% of the respondents disagree, and 17.5% strongly disagree, that ecotourism development in the village could make any improvement to local handicraft activity. By comparison, 29.0% of the respondents agree, and 6.0% strongly agree with the opposite view. In other words, ecotourism development has failed to boost local handicraft activity as a village industry. The main reason why this situation exists is because the local people have little knowledge and skills to promote and manufacture these handicrafts as tourist products. The Chairman of JKKK has mentioned this situation:

“At the moment we are not making any souvenirs for the tourists. We are not making any handicrafts for the tourists... local people have little knowledge and skills in manufacturing these things... that is why, we have asked our member of parliament again and again to make a handicrafts centre here. Maybe they could send a teacher to teach us this. In Sukau, everything you need is here, rattan, bamboo. Everything that you need to make handicrafts is readily available in this village... for a long time we have wanted a handicrafts centre to be set up here”²³.

The second is the increased intention to learn Conversational English. In this research the majority of the respondents, 60.5%, agree, and 27.5% strongly agree that ecotourism has stimulated their intention to learn conversational English, at least at the basic level. Only 2.5% of the respondents disagree, and 9.5% strongly disagree, that ecotourism has increased local interest in English. To teach local people English, however, is another problem, as there was no special budget or programme provided by government agencies or NGOs to fulfil this demand.

Figure 9.4: Improve Local People's Culture, Knowledge and Skill



The third is traditional dance activity becoming more active. There is an Orang Sungai Heritage Art and Culture Association or WARISAN (*Warisan Seni Anak Sungai*) in Sukau Village. WARISAN was set up by WWF Malaysia in 1999. The main objective is to establish WARISAN to preserve the heritage, art and culture of *orang sungai* particularly among the young generations of the village of which some have become traditional musicians and dancers. As a result, 20 to 25 of the village youths became regular member of WARISAN in 2000. WARISAN had successfully geared up their activity in that year; for instance, there were a few times when they performed traditional dance culture shows in the lobbies of the tourist lodges in Sukau. All the payment received from this culture performance was spent by WARISAN on dancers' clothes and musical instruments. For this reason, 53.0% of the respondents agree, and 8.5%

strongly agree that ecotourism has made traditional dance activity become more active. There are a few types of cultural dances performed by WARISAN. For instance, *rumimbai* is a type of dance related to traditional belief, and a method of treatment of the *orang sungai* (particularly the *sabangan's* ethnic group) to overcome diseases caused by bad spirits coming from the river²⁴. Then, the *tetikas* dance is performed to welcome honoured guests into the village. The *Kerusai* dance is performed when the villagers celebrate the end of padi's harvesting session. Finally, the *orang sungai* perform the *dendang sayang* dance when there is a wedding ceremony in the village.

During this research fieldwork in 2003, however, WARISAN activity was seen to have stagnated. Therefore, 30.0% of the respondents disagree, and 4.5% strongly disagree with the statement that ecotourism has revived traditional cultural dance performances. In fact they claimed that ecotourism development has reduced WARISAN's activity. The WARISAN Chairman expressed his frustration to why this situation happened thus:

“The WARISAN as an association still exists, but unfortunately it's not active at this moment. We actually have shortages of female dancers because many of them have migrated to town and some of them have become oil palm estate workers. As a consequence, we have rejected one request from S.I. Tours to perform cultural dance shows at their place. Most of the tourist lodge management, however, do not support seriously WARISAN activity without giving us any reason, whereas there are a lot of tourists coming into their lodges who are interested in watching our performance. WARISAN has also discussed this problem with the Kinabatangan District Officer but there has been no further action about it”²⁵.

According to the Homestay Coordinator of Sukau the main reason why the WARISAN activity has stagnated is because the tourist lodge management never call them to perform. They claim that the fees charged by the WARISAN are too high whereas in fact they are quite low.

“In the early phase, all the planning was done with the WWF. They contacted all the lodges and WARISAN and made an arrangement, which was accepted by all parties, to charge RM500.00 per show... At that time, WARISAN had 25 members, musicians and dancers. I don't know all the facts, whether all agreed, but the lodges eventually lowered the price to RM200.00 plus. There were a few times when they performed there. Some of the lodges didn't even pay them at all. After that, they stopped calling them and complained that it was still too expensive. If less than RM200.00, the petrol to go there, the costumes, food for 25 people... it's not viable”²⁶

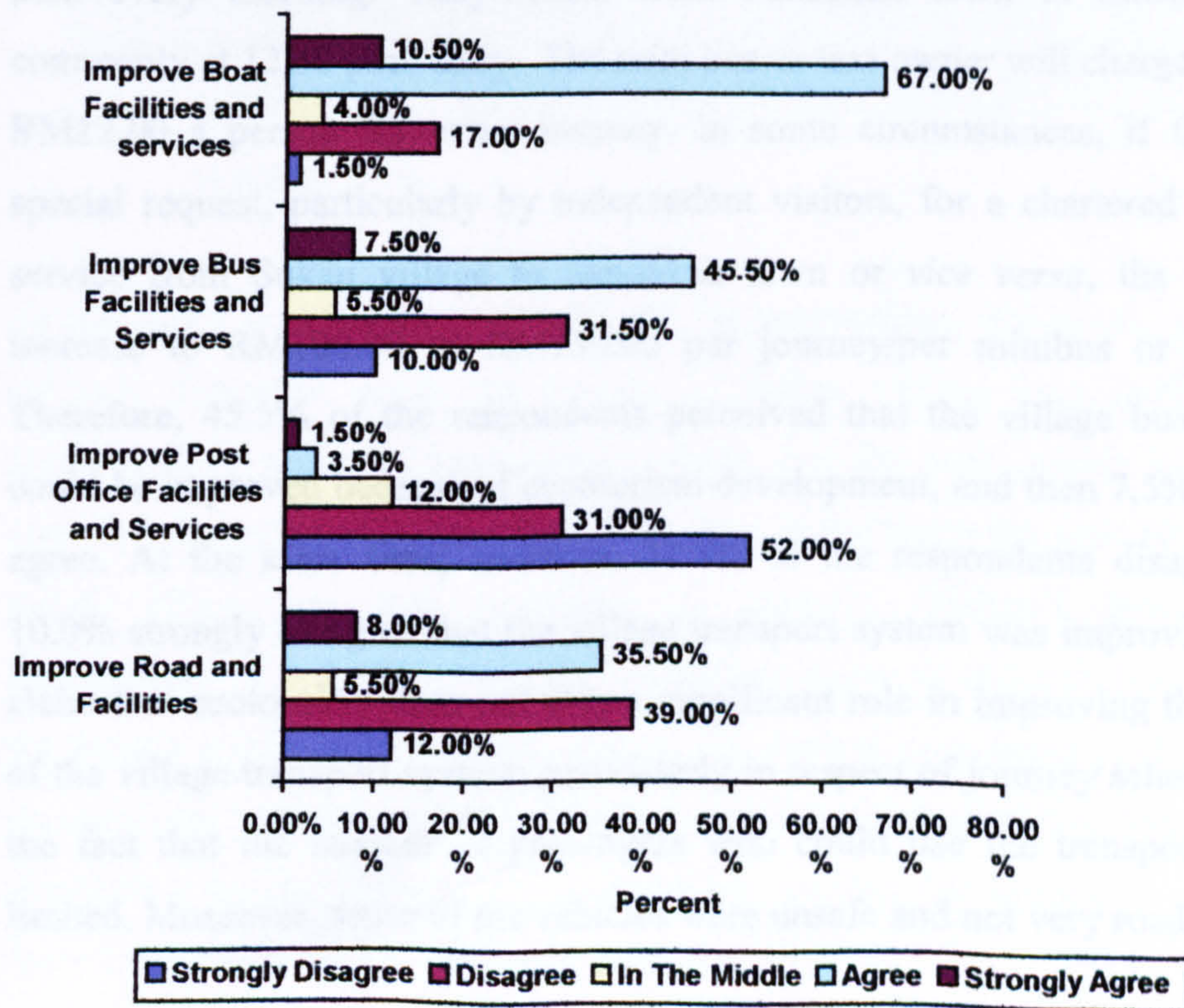
In other words, the lodge owners were not seriously supporting the WARISAN activity. This is because they felt that they themselves were not benefiting enough from it. It was possible that the lodges could try to charge the tourists RM600.00 per show but when it was so expensive, the tourists would not want it²⁷. Moreover, there was not enough promotion of the existence of this local cultural show or a dance performance group to the tourists. Their dancing, in fact, is certainly excellent. Moreover, the WARISAN paid their members just once a year. This system was seen as not very encouraging for the members to be involved longer in WARISAN activity.

The fourth is other traditional activities such as fishing and hunting becoming more active. Although 45.0% of the respondents agree, and 7.5% strongly agree that these activities have increased because of commercial demand boosted by ecotourism activity, 30.5% disagree, and 7.0% strongly disagree. Ecotourism in fact has reduced these traditional activities because much of the natural resources such as fish, wildlife, and wood are diminishing or have become protected endangered species under the Wildlife Sanctuary Enactment, 1997. As a result, local involvement in these traditional activities has become a part-time instead of a major activity.

9.3.5. The Improvement of Local Public Transport and Services
(see Figure 9.5)

There are four categories of the improvement of local public transport and services of the village. *The first is the improvement of roads and related facilities.* As mentioned earlier, there is a gravel road for about 40 km from the junction of Sandakan-Lahad Datu motorway to Sukau village. Nearly 15 years ago the villagers asked the government to build an asphalt road in order to accelerate the region's socio-economic development. To date, however, the asphalt road has not become a reality. In the village, the government has built only 2.1 km of asphalt road. Therefore, 39.0% of the respondents disagree, and 12.0% strongly disagree that ecotourism development could improve the main road to Sukau and related facilities such as bus stops, petrol stations and so on. Only 35.5% of the respondents agree, and 8.0% strongly agree that ecotourism could improve the main road and its facilities.

Figure 9.5: Improve Local Public Transports and Services



The second is improving post office facilities and services. There was no proper post office in Sukau village. All types of letters or packages sent to the villagers are put by the postman at the Sukau Primary School Office or at a specific shop in the village. Then, someone informs the addressee. This is a common practice, and was understood by the villagers and the postman. For other purposes such as sending money orders or buying postage stamps, the villagers had to go to Kinabatangan town centre, about 50 km from Sukau village. Thus, 52.0% of the respondents strongly disagree, and 31.0% disagree that ecotourism has improved the post office facilities and services of the village. By comparison, only 3.5% of the respondents agree, and 1.50% strongly agree that ecotourism could improve postal services.

The third is improving bus facilities and services to Sukau village. There were minibus and taxi services run by a few individuals from the village. Commonly, the minibus or taxi services go from Sukau to Sandakan town beginning at 6.00 a.m. every morning. They return from Sandakan town to Sukau village commonly at 12.30 p.m. daily. The mini bus or taxi owner will charge a fare of RM12.00 a person for every journey. In some circumstances, if there is a special request, particularly by independent visitors, for a chartered transport service from Sukau village to Sandakan town or *vice versa*, the fare will increase to RM100.00 or RM150.00 per journey/per minibus or per taxi. Therefore, 45.5% of the respondents perceived that the village bus services could be improved because of ecotourism development, and then 7.5% strongly agree. At the same time, however, 31.5% of the respondents disagree, and 10.0% strongly disagree that the village transport system was improving. They claim that ecotourism does not play a significant role in improving the quality of the village transport system, particularly in respect of journey schedules and the fact that the number of passengers who could use the transport is very limited. Moreover, some of the vehicles were unsafe and not very roadworthy.

The fourth is improving boat facilities and services. Since ecotourism development was implemented in Sukau village, 67.0% of the respondents claimed that boat facilities and services were obviously improved. 10.0% of the respondent also strongly agreed. For instance, most of the boat owners in the village use small boat engines in their daily operation. A new boat jetty was built by FELCRA to replace the old one. The passengers were also provided with life jackets. Rescue and life-saving training was provided by the WWF to the village boat operators some time ago²⁸. There was also an agreement among the village boat operators about river cruising fare rates (see Table 9.11):

Table 9.11: River Boating Fare Rates of Sukau Village

To Destination and Return	Fare Rates per boat	Maximum Hours
Menanggul River	RM50.00	3 hours
Main Tenegang River	RM80.00	4 hours
Bilit Village	RM150.00	8 hours
Resang River	RM80.00	4 hours
Abai Village	RM200.00	10 hours
Kelenanap Lake/Menanggul River	RM60.00	4 hours
Kelenanap Ox Bow Lake	RM90.00	4 hours

Source: Data from The Village Development and Security Committee of Sukau, 2003.

At the same time however, 17.0% of the respondents disagreed, and 1.5% strongly disagreed about the quality of Sukau village boat facilities and services. This group of respondents argued that the boat service time tables were not systematically scheduled, and more importantly the boat operators in Sukau village are still struggling to organise “Sukau’s Boat Service Association” in order to strengthen bargaining power in order to compete with the private tourist lodges in the village. The lack of competent leadership and management has delayed the approval and functioning of the boat services association by the Sabah state government, so that the unequal competition faced by many boatmen of Sukau continues.

9.4. Part IV: The Discussion of Findings (Chapter 8 and 9)

The sub-themes discussed in this section are set out below.

9.4.1. The Socio-economic Background and Characteristics of the Local Community

The findings of the research on the socio-economic background of the local community demonstrated that it did support proposition 1 of this research. The statement of proposition 1 was:

Proposition 1: The local community in Sukau Village is heterogeneous. The community has variations in gender, age and ethnicity, and inequality in income and education levels, and is likely to be a mixture of individuals and groups. These mixed characteristics of the socio-economic background of the local community could lead to individuals and groups in the community having varied political perceptions and/or attitudes toward ecotourism development in the area.

The heterogeneous nature of the ethnic backgrounds of Sukau's population is related to the early phase of historical events in the Lower Kinabatangan area, in which the main factors why people migrated into Sukau area were the abundance of natural resources such as forest timber, birds' nests, rattan, freshwater prawns and fish, and game animals such as deer as in this area. These early socio-economic activities, and then logging activities in the 1950s attracted many sub-ethnic groups such as *Liwagu*, *Idahan*, *Bugis*, *Bajau* and *Segama*, who became early settlers in Sukau village. These ethnic groups live in scattered settlements along the Kinabatangan River. Thus, the Sabah government have classified them as a unique group of "*orang sungai*". The term "*orang sungai*" describes the unique socio-cultural identity of a local population whose everyday life activities are strongly related to the Kinabatangan River, and its surrounding natural environment.

In other words, as the findings have indicated, the majority of the local population lived in poor conditions, and far away in remote underdeveloped areas. There were very limited social facilities provided by local authorities, for instance, there was no clean water supply, there was still a gravel road linking Sukau village to the junction of Sandakan-Lahad Datu motorway, and no 24-hour electricity power supply for the village. Sukau's population has a majority of youths aged between 16 and 30. The male population was higher than the female population. The administration of the village, however, was controlled by the older generations, aged between 31 and 55 and above (see section 8.3.4. p. 264). Most of the villagers have a low level of education; the majority of them have low-levels of total family income. Some of them are in a very low-income category (section 8.3.6. p. 266). Significantly, this situation causes the majority of them to have too limited financial resources, knowledge and skills to be involved effectively in any socio-economic development programmes whether in oil-palm agriculture or ecotourism.

The findings disclose that the introduction of oil palm plantation development in the 1970s, and then ecotourism in the 1990s actually did not change the characteristics of the socio-economic backgrounds of local population effectively (see section 8.3.2. p. 260). The majority of the villagers still live in poverty. The numbers and size of the village population and settlements have increased, but the majority of villagers still do not have their own land and/or house to help them survive (see section 8.3.7. p. 271, and section 8.3.8. p. 274). The declaration of the Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau village as a wildlife sanctuary suddenly demolished many villagers' hopes of having their own land in the village area.

The findings of the research also indicate that ecotourism development has been implemented in Sukau village from the 1990s to date. This development, however, has failed to overcome the disadvantaged conditions of the socio-economic background of local community of Sukau. "Tourism or ecotourism

for community development” just became a panacea or political slogan for policy makers to appear to be working to overcome the socio-economic problems and to eradicate poverty among local communities in the remote areas (Schyevens, 202: 68). Accordingly, in case of Sukau, this has obviously happened on paper only. For that reason, many villagers were not satisfied with the development process in their village because it was actually continuing to marginalise them and to sustain their conditions of poverty.

Moreover, ecotourism was introduced in the village nearly 15 years ago. Private company lodge operators whose investors came from the urban areas of Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu led this development. Although the majority of villagers were in favour of ecotourism development because it offered some small benefits to a number of villagers, in many situations it has had an enormous negative impact on the local community.

9.4.2. The Negative Impact of Ecotourism Development on the Local Community.

The findings of the research strongly support proposition 2, which states that:

Proposition 2: The implementation of ecotourism development in Sukau village has had a negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. This is for several reasons such as the lack of mutual understanding between the local people and the visitors, and the emergence of conflicts of interests between the local people and the other stakeholders in the destination area.

Therefore the discussion of findings on this negative impact is divided into two sub-themes as follows:

i. The negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community.

This negative impact was greater in the middle phase of development but became less at the later stage. The evidence of the research findings shows that the main causes were:

- a lack of awareness of ethical tourism guidelines which should have been seriously implemented by the private tourist lodge management in the early phase of ecotourism development in Sukau. As a result, the contradiction of cultural values and norms between the villagers and the visitors was strengthened (see section 8.4.2. p. 283).
- the ecotourism development process produced a situation which was described (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Hashimoto, 2002; Mason, 2003) as having a negative demonstration effect of the tourists. The findings show that the presence of foreign tourists in the village had ruined one of the villagers' family relationships (see section 8.4.2. p. 283); Although the number of cases of individual crimes such as poaching, illegal hunting, theft, robbery and stealing were still under control, the trends gradually increased (see section 8.4.3. p. 285). The drinking habits of the village youths reached a significantly worse level (see section 8.4.4. p. 286). The respondents perceived all these negative effects to have been caused and influenced by the image of foreign tourists and their leisure lifestyles.
- although the presence of foreign visitors did not disturb the local community's religious values and practices (see section 8.4.5. p. 290), the degree of cooperation between members of the community increased and collective decision-making among the villagers improved a little because of the tourists' presence in the village. In general, however, the practice of individualistic values among members of local community gradually increased because of ecotourism development in the village (see section 8.4.6. p. 291).

ii. The existence of conflicts of interest between the local community and the other stakeholders.

The findings of the research have indicated that there are conflicts of interest between the local community and the other stakeholders in Sukau village. There is strong evidence that the negative impacts of ecotourism development occurred in the case of Sukau. There are a few main reasons why these conflicts of interests occurred. These are set out below.

- ***The villagers versus the private tourist lodge operators on the boat issue.*** The research findings, significantly, show that the private tourist lodge operators dominate the tourist boat services in Sukau. Although some tourist lodge managers claimed they had used the village people's boats to carry tourists, many village boatmen of Sukau have denied this. The village boatmen actually were barred from fair competition with the lodges to ferry the tourists in their boats. This situation actually effectively marginalised the local community in the ecotourist activity in the village (see section 8.5.1. p. 292).
- ***The villagers versus NGOs.*** The findings reveal that the disputes between the villagers and NGOs were based on three main issues (see section 8.5.2 (i). p. 294). *Firstly*, the dispute over the environmental conservation programme and the traditional use of forest and/or wildlife resources. Most of the villagers were not satisfied with the vision of WWF-Partners for Wetland that discourages local people from clearing and developing their forestland into oil palm plantations in the name of conservation and ecotourism development. Although they encouraged them not to develop their forestland, the WWF and the other government agencies did not provide any compensation for the villagers. Thus, the villagers perceived that WWF made too many promises but never implemented them. That is why many local people

continue to want to develop their land around Sukau for agricultural activities. WWF was seen by the villagers as never taking serious initiatives to involve the local community in ecotourism development or helping them to overcome the wild elephant problem effectively. WWF representatives, however, argue that the villagers in Sukau village were very reluctant to give their full support and cooperation to the vision of Partners for Wetland in lower Kinabatangan. *Secondly*, the dispute over land - the land leasing agreement between the KOCP and a village family. There was a misunderstanding about a land rental agreement, in which the family felt they had been cheated by the KOCP management. The KOCP management, however, claimed that the family had not understood the written agreement fully; this was admitted by the real landowner (the leader of this family) before he passed away recently (see section 8.5.2 (ii). p. 299). *Thirdly*, the findings disclose that the JKKK committee mistrusted the role of KOCP in the village. Some of the JKKK committee members were suspicious about the role of KOCP because they saw that the KOCP operation in the village had lasted a reasonably long time (nearly six years). Although the KOCP were working in good faith for the good of the community, they did not realise that their role had diminished the role of the JKKK in the village. This is because many government agency officers, education institutions and local or international researchers preferred to make contact directly with the KOCP and not with the JKKK as they usually did before. The conflict of interests between the JKKK committee members and the KOCP continue. Thus, some of the villagers perceived that ecotourism development has had a negative impact on local political power and control particularly at village level (see section 8.5.2 (iii). p. 300).

- *The villagers versus wildlife.* The findings disclose that there are six main species of animals, which have been always in conflict with the villagers. These are elephants, orang-utans, wild boars, porcupines, pig

tailed macaques and long tailed macaques. All six of these species eat and damage oil palm seeds, fruit and crop trees, causing loss to plantations, and they also put at risk and threaten the everyday life of local people. The number of crocodiles around the village area has increased because the crocodile is a protected animal under the Sanctuary Enactment 1997. The decrease of forest area has limited elephant movement from one location to another. As a result these elephants usually bulldozed their way through oil palms plantations and village areas in order to get to the next patch of forest or to look for food. This type of elephant activity has damaged a lot of oil palm trees belonging to the local people. Unfortunately, all the losses faced by the villagers were not compensated for by any government agencies. As a result some of the villagers and the oil palm estates workers have taken matters into their own hands including an extreme level of illegal killing of these elephants and orang-utans (see section 8.5.3. p. 303). This is another negative impact of the conservation-ecotourism related programme because it could not solve properly the wild-animal related problems, which jeopardised the local community's agricultural activities. Thus, some villagers perceived these programmes as "wildlife is more important rather than human lives".

- ***The villagers versus government agencies.*** The findings of the research reveal that disputes occurring between the villagers and some government agencies were commonly related to issues of illegal hunting, illegal logging, and collecting forest resources in sanctuary areas. Hunting wild animals for meat, and collecting forest resources such as wood to make small boats or houses, rattans to make fish traps, collecting herbs for traditional medicine and collecting jungle fruit have been traditional activities for the *orang sungai* for a long time. The local people, however, were not satisfied with the way that some government officers enforce the Sabah Conservation Enactment 1997 very rigidly on

them, “unfairly”, in comparison to the private companies particularly in case of cutting timber (see section 8.5.5. p. 307). Whilst the villagers get verbal hunting approval from the Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), the NGOs and the tourist industry categorise this hunting activity as illegal. Therefore, the practice of the SWD verbally giving permission for hunting to the villagers has caused confusion among the stakeholders in this area in distinguishing between legal and illegal hunting. The findings also indicate some other issues where the villagers were not satisfied with the role of some government agencies, as follows:

- they are not satisfied with how these government agencies tackle elephant-related-problems;
 - they are not satisfied with the lack of improvement in social facilities for the village such as no clean water supply, no 24-hour electricity, no asphalt road going to Sukau, no local handicraft training centre and so on;
 - they do not have very clear information regarding the “Integrated Rural Development Project” (IRDP) in Sukau; how this new settlement area will be implemented and how much compensation they can get if they have to move from their current traditional house locations.
- ***The villagers versus environmental pollution.*** The research findings disclose that the villagers realised that those private and semi-government owned oil palm plantations and factories surrounding the Sukau area are the major cause of environmental pollution or disasters (see section 8.5.6. p. 316). There are three stages where the oil palm estate development process and activities caused environmental pollution or disasters; *first*, land clearing caused destruction to rainforest, flora and fauna and increased surface erosion; *second*, the growth period (fertiliser and pesticide runoffs polluted the rivers and lakes); *third*, processing of oil palms (organic and solid effluents from factories largely dumped into rivers). Fishing is traditionally an

important village activity for food and a source of income. Thus the pollution of rivers and lakes by oil palm estates' activities has put the life of the villagers, fish and other wildlife in danger because they are still using and drinking the water from these rivers. The villagers want the relevant government agencies and local authorities to take effective action to overcome this problem. Unfortunately, the local authorities could not do much about this problem. Thus, the environmental pollution caused by the oil palm estates' activities continues to threaten the villagers' daily lives.

- *Villagers versus villagers.* The research findings indicate that ecotourism development has not created divisions between local people. An argument, however, occurred between a group of village youths working for the KOCP and some JKKK committee members (see section 8.5.7. p. 320). The JKKK committee members criticised the role of KOCP as “neo-colonialism” because the KOCP successfully influenced the minds of the youths to cooperate with them. The village youths, however, perceived the conflict between the JKKK and the KOCP management as threatening their jobs with the KOCP. As a result, there was a gap in the relationship between some of the KOCP volunteers and the JKKK committee members.

Therefore, the negative impact of ecotourism development on the local community in Sukau accorded with Doxey's Irritation Index. It describes the negative impact as a phase of *annoyance* and *antagonism* of reactions because of the outsider investors' influence on local development decision-making, their goals being far different from the local community's development goals (Doxey, 1975; Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 276) (see section 4.5.1. p. 122). Butler (1980) described this negative impact in his tourism resort/destination life-cycle model (see section 4.5.2. p. 126) as occurring in the phases of *exploration* (the early phase of tourist destination development), *involvement*

(tourism industry leads to the provision of basic services but limited interaction with local residents), and *development* (greater control of the tourist trade by outsiders, number of tourists increased at peak season, followed by a rising antagonism of local people to the tourists and tourist operators because of certain factors) (Mason, 2003:23). The findings of the research on the negative impacts of ecotourism on everyday life of the local community are quite similar to the research findings of Rudkin and Hall (1996) in the case of the Solomon Islands, which indicated that the lack of consultation over development led to opposition and dissatisfaction among the local community. If every stakeholder in Sukau village does not properly manage this negative impact, the prospect of achieving sustainable ecotourism development in this area is blurred. Thus, active participation by the majority of the local people in ecotourism development is fundamental for future sustainable development.

9.4.3. The Positive Impact of Ecotourism Development on Local Community

As mentioned earlier, besides the negative impacts of ecotourism development on local communities in ecotourism destinations of the Third World (Mathieson and Wall, 1992; Hashimoto, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002; Mason, 2003), the findings of the research also indicate the positive impact of ecotourism in Sukau village with, however, certain limitations. The findings once again strongly support proposition 3 of the research, which stated:

Proposition 3: Ecotourism development in the destination area has increased the participation or involvement of the local community in various types of new job opportunities, increased community involvement in the homestay programme, and increased involvement in the conservation programme. This involvement is, however, limited due to factors such as lack of skills and knowledge, lack of financial support and expertise, and they are not gaining “real benefits” from it.

Therefore, the findings of the positive impact of ecotourism development on local community of Sukau are discussed under the following sub-themes:

i. Community involvement in various types of new job opportunities.

The findings indicate that new types of job opportunities have been created since ecotourism development was implemented in the village. These jobs include employment at the tourist lodges (waiters, waitresses, kitchen helpers, housekeepers, tourist guides and boatmen) (see section 9.2.1. p. 332). The number of respondents involved, whether directly or indirectly in ecotourism activities, is relatively high. Before ecotourism, none of these jobs existed. It is interesting that the findings reveal that the indirect involvement category fits the term “part-time jobs or activities”, a term never used by the villagers before ecotourism existed in their village. In the circumstances, ecotourism has created, for instance, the job of tourist guide as permanent employment for certain individuals, for whom traditional jobs such as fishing became part-time. This situation is also happening *vice-versa* (see Table 9.1. p. 333). Thus, the creation of part-time jobs provided a source of side-income for families or individuals. This is the positive impact of ecotourism development on the local community of Sukau because it diversified job opportunities for the villagers, in what Wearing (2001: 396) described as ecotourism benefits to the socio-cultural environment of local communities (see Table 3.1. p. 84)

ii. Community involvement in the homestay programme.

The findings of the research disclose that the homestay programme was introduced in Sukau village in 2002. There are 10 families eligible and certified by the Sabah State Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment as homestay providers. By being involved in this programme, visitors can experience the unique culture and daily life of the *orang sungai* (river people) by staying with the host family. Every tourist is charged RM40.00 per night/person, but boat trips, wildlife viewing, fishing and the other activities provided by the host

family are charged separately. Thus, the participants involved in the homestay programme gain other economic benefits or sources of side income instead of fishing or farming activity per se (see Table 9.4 and 9.5. p. 338). Through this programme, the villagers were exposed to the idea of “participation” and it has increased local awareness of how to improve their standard of living, to preserve their culture, particularly in relation to traditional dance and handicrafts, in order to attract the ecotourists and gain their appreciation.

iii. Community involvement in the conservation programme.

The findings indicate that about 30 youths of the village work as wildlife conservation volunteers for Kinabatangan Orang-utan Centre Project (KOCP). As KOCP volunteers, they are paid a monthly allowance. This means the village youths involved in the conservation programme directly have a source of income to support their living (see section 9.2.4. p. 346). Some of them have distributed this income to support other family members, particularly their parents. This is the positive aspect of local participation in the ecotourism-related conservation programme in the village. Moreover, these younger generation workers have also increased their capability to solve the elephant-related problem in Sukau through a special unit called Wildlife Control Unit (WCU). Some members of the WCU were sent to India to receive special training on the elephant problem. As a result, the villagers, through the WCU, have managed to overcome the elephant-related problem gradually.

iv. Community involvement in other related events in the development process.

The findings of the research also disclosed that the interest of the villagers involved in other related events in the development process has increased. The respondents have attended many types of meeting in the last five years (see section 9.2.5. p. 348; Table 9.10. p. 349). This means ecotourism development has increased the level of consciousness of the villagers regarding many current

issues in the village. The willingness of the villagers to take part in these events is a strong sign that there is a great potential for collaboration between the villagers and the other stakeholders on the ecotourism and conservation programme in Sukau village. Ecotourism could provide the local community the opportunity to expand its economic resources through strong partnership with the sanctuary area managers such as the state government agency officers and NGOs. Thus, the planning process must take into account community involvement with an understanding of how local communities can be best approached, understood and integrated (Wearing and Neil, 1999: 85) in order to achieve sustainable development. This would be best achieved through other related events in the development process.

9.4.4. The limitations of local community participation in ecotourism development.

The two main sub-themes discussed regarding the limitation of local community participation in ecotourism development in Sukau are as follow:

i. Limited participation in the homestay programme.

- The finding indicates that many participants *lack the financial capital resources and financial assistance* needed to upgrade homestay facilities and services. This is due to a lack of coordination by and support from the Sabah State Committee members in developing this programme systematically and effectively (see section 9.2.3(i). p. 340). Thus, the capital-financial problems faced by the homestay participants remain.
- There is still *ineffectiveness in homestay management at village level*. For instance, among the village homestay committee members, there is less cooperation but much argument particularly regarding the distribution of visitors, and who does what in running the programme (see section 9.2.3(ii). p. 341).

- There is also a *lack of marketing* to promote the homestay programme in Sukau village. For instance, the Sabah Tourism Board (STB) is doubtful about the quality of this product. Thus, the STB is reluctant to promote it seriously (see section 9.2.3(iii). p. 341). The homestay participants of Sukau depend much on the initiative of the Ministry to promote their homestay programme because the villagers actually have no expertise in marketing their product to national or global ecotourists.
- *Barrier to language communication.* The language barrier was also one of the main problems faced by many homestay participants. Many homestay participants do not know how to communicate with the visitors whether in basic conversational English or Japanese (see section 9.2.3(iv). p. 342). This situation has limited the interaction between the hosts and the guests.
- The findings also disclose that there is a *lack of continued support and consultation from government agencies* particularly in respect of financial assistance, development consultation, and an advance homestay training programme (see section 9.2.3(v). p. 342). The survey results revealed that local people perceived that the WWF Malaysia (or NGO) consulted most of the villagers before and after ecotourism was implemented in the village. By comparison, most of the government agency officers consulted the villagers very much less before and after ecotourism was implemented. The villagers, however, want the government agencies to lead the ecotourism development process instead of the NGOs and the private companies because to them, these government agencies have the capability to overcome many major problems faced by the villagers in the homestay programme. Unfortunately, this has not happened because the government agencies

gave the development responsibility to the NGOs in the name of top-down management and/or integrated development strategy.

ii. Limited participation in the conservation programme.

- The findings of the research disclose that the villagers most involved in the conservation programme are a group of village youths. Most of them are KOCP environmental workers or volunteers (see section 9.2.4. p. 346). The JKKK have taken an initiative to set up a Bureau for the Rehabilitation of the Environment at the village level. The Kinabatangan District Office, however, has not yet approved this proposal. Thus the role of this Bureau in solving conservation-related issues such as environmental pollution, illegal hunting, and illegal logging is limited. Moreover, the survey results show that the majority of respondents are not involved in the tree-planting project organised by Kinabatangan District office, WWF Malaysia, Sabah Wildlife Department, and the private lodge owners because of a lack of information disseminated by the organisers to attract the villagers to the programme.

iii. Limited “real benefits”.

- *Limited economic benefits:* The findings of the research show that a majority of the respondents agree that ecotourism development could offer the villagers economic benefits such as new job opportunities, improved family income, and to some extent an improved standard of living (see section 9.3.1. p. 350). The findings, however, indicate that these economic benefits are actually limited because the vast majority of local people are still not involved. The reasons why the majority of local people are not involved are:

- some felt that ecotourism is urban-oriented, and therefore totally different from village-based-economy or agricultural activities;
- some were not interested at all in being involved in ecotourism;
- some do not have enough capital to invest, and feel that they do not have the capability to be involved in a risky investment such as ecotourism businesses.

Tosun (2000) conceptualised the above situation as *cultural limitations* where the vast majority of the people in the less developed world, particularly people in the remote ecotourism areas, are poor. This applies to Sukau. The villagers have difficulty in meeting basic needs, which limits their ability to get involved in community-based ecotourism. The fact is that most of the villagers still live at the mercy of government administrators (Tosun, 2000: 625). Although the majority of the respondents of Sukau favour ecotourism development and gaining some economic benefits from it, in day-to-day practice, their participation is still limited to the role of tokenist or manipulated participants (Arnstein, 1971). Pretty (1995) classified this type of limitation as participation for material incentives where people participate by contributing resources (e.g. labour) in return for food, cash or other material incentives and for a short period of time only.

- *Limited Social facilities and infrastructures for the village.* The findings disclose that the majority of the villagers perceived that ecotourism development could improve the electricity supply in the village. In reality, however, it is still limited to 12 hours a day (see section 9.3.2. p. 352). There has been no clean water supply for 15 years; there has been no extensive improvement in shop facilities and buildings, and no great improvement for the police station office and its' environment. The findings also indicate there are limited improvements in schools and

public health clinic facilities in the village (see section 9.3.3. p. 354). There has also been limited improvement in local public transport and services (see section 9.3.5. p. 361), particularly in the existence of a gravel road for 45 km from Sandakan-Lahad Datu motorway to Sukau village for 15 years; there are no proper post office facilities or services in the village; there is a lack of quantity and quality in the village bus services; there is a lack of quality in the village boats services. In other words, there are a few social facilities and infrastructures provided by local government agencies such as a 12- hour power supply for the village, a public health clinic, schools and a police station. All these facilities and infrastructures, however, are still limited in quantity and quality. Thus, ecotourism development in the village has failed to boost related social-infrastructure development quickly as expected by most of the local people of Sukau.

Tosun (2000) characterised the above findings as "*limitation at the operational level*" because in many developing countries, as in the case of Sukau, planning is a highly centralised activity. The formulation and implementation of any kind of community participation approach, however, requires decentralisation of the political, administrative and financial powers of central government to local government. Because of the unwillingness of politicians and high-ranking government officials to seriously implement the decentralisation of powers, much of the decision-making on development-related projects as mentioned above has been delayed or has stagnated (Tosun, 2000: 618; Desai, 1995: 40). This traditional powerful bureaucracy that dominates legislative and operational processes, becomes an obstacle to establishing co-ordination and cooperation between the various stakeholders (Jenkins, 1982). As a consequence, in the case of Sukau, there is also a lack of co-ordination between the public and the private sector in establishing planning for community participation in ecotourism.

Moreover, there is also a “structural limitation to community participation in tourism”. The lack of improvement in social and public facilities and infrastructures in Sukau village is related to the lack of expertise on how to incorporate the idea of community participation in development planning and ecotourism (Tosun, 2000: 621). This is because the concept of development or planning in ecotourism is multi-dimensional. It does not only require tourism planners and developers, but also social anthropologists, sociologists, economists and political scientists with some prior knowledge of tourism. Thus, the absence of these experts limits the implementation of a participatory ecotourism development approach effectively at all levels of management.

- *Limited social interaction between the villagers and the visitors.* The findings of the research reveal that majority of the villagers perceive they have friendly relationships with the international tourists (see section 9.3.3. p. 354). Ecotourism has successfully and positively changed the villager’s attitudes to the presence of international tourists. In reality however, these closed interactions between the villagers and the tourists only take place with those who are working in the lodges and not the villagers in general. The reason is because the tourists stay overnight in the lodge area, which is separated from the vast majority of the residents’ area. The main reason why the visitors come to Sukau’s lodges is to experience “nature” and not local culture.
- *Limited proper commercialisation of local culture.* The findings of the research indicate that there is a limited real initiative to commercialise local culture in Sukau, whether by the villagers or by related government agencies. Ecotourism development has failed to improve local handicraft activity or to produce local handicraft tourist products (see section 9.3.4. p. 357). The local traditional dance performance activity was set up by WWF Malaysia under WARISAN in year 1999. This group successfully geared up their activity in that year and had

performed a few times in the lobbies of the tourist lodges in Sukau. During this research however, WARISAN activity declined or stagnated because there is no longer continuing support or demand from the private tourist lodges for WARISAN's culture show. The lodge management claimed that the fees charged by the WARISAN were high. In fact, the charged are quite low and reasonable. These are the limitations to the real benefits gained by the villagers in Sukau from their active participation in the ecotourism development process.

Scheyvens (1999) described the above situation as an indicator of *economic disempowerment* where most profits go to outside operators, government agencies and local elites while the majority of local people cannot gain any benefits because they lack capital and skill; they feel confused, frustrated, and uninterested in the development initiative (sign of *psychological disempowerment*); the ecotourism agencies such as the private lodges treat local community as passive beneficiaries, failing to involve them in real decision-making. Thus the majority of community members feel they have nothing to say on how the ecotourism initiative operates (sign of *political disempowerment*) (see Scheyvens, 1999: 247).

9.5. Conclusion

In chapter 8 and 9 the evidence shows that whilst there has been a minimal positive impact by ecotourism development on Sukau village since the 1990s, there has also relatively been a strong negative impact on the socio-cultural life of the local community. Ecotourism-related activities could give some economic benefits and jobs opportunities for some villagers because of their active participation (whether direct or indirect) in the homestay programme, or becoming tourist lodge workers, tourist guides, conservation volunteers/workers etc. However, this participation has certain limitations and

problems that could impede the progress of ecotourism development in the near future.

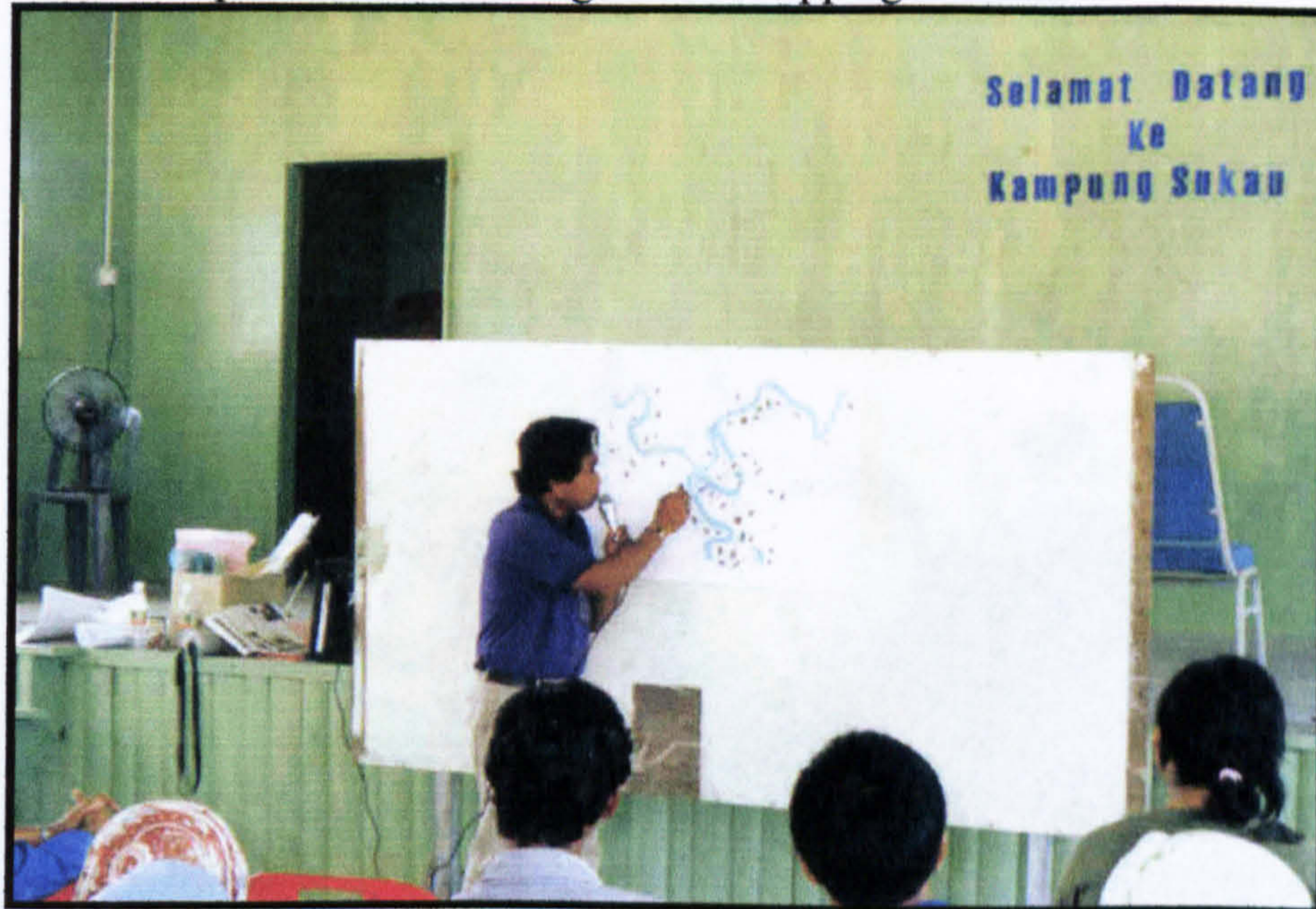
Moreover, these negative impacts of ecotourism development not managed and understood carefully by the ecotourism policy-makers or the other stakeholders in Sukau when they designed or planned ecotourism. At the early stage of the development process, it was obvious that negative impacts on the socio-cultural life of the local community dominated the situation because there was a lack of consciousness that the 6 private tourist lodge managements should seriously follow ethical tourism guidelines. Social relations at this stage, described by Doxey (1975) as the “apathy stage” (where visitors are taken for granted and planning concentrated mostly on marketing) leading towards “annoyance” (where residents have misgivings about the ecotourist industry and local protest groups emerge because planners attempt to increase tourism growth) and the “antagonism” stage (where residents’ irritations are openly expressed) cited in Mowforth and Munt (1998: 277).

Then, in the middle stage of development, conflicts of interest between the villagers and the other stakeholders arose. The main reason why these occurred is because ecotourism trade and businesses in Sukau were mainly in the control of outsider investors (Mason, 2003: 24). The Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau village was declared a sanctuary area by the Sabah state government in the mid-1990s to support ecotourism initiatives. This effort, however, has increased misunderstanding between the villagers and the related government agencies in terms of access to natural resources. As a result, the relationship between local people in the sanctuary area surrounding Sukau and conservation officers was characterised by mistrust, specifically because the conservation officers implemented what Scheyvens (2002: 89) called the failure of the “fortress conservation” approach, which created national parks as islands of anti-development which are not acceptable to Third World countries. The participatory approach, on the other hand, demands parks management to

improve the livelihoods of local communities by allowing them to gain some benefits from the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources, because, traditionally the local people of Sukau are also inhabitants of this natural environment. In other words, the relationship between ecotourism, the protected area and the local community in Sukau's case can be classified as a *win-win-lose scenario* (Nepal, 2000: 74-76) where the ecotourism planners and ecotourism providers have benefited from the conservation efforts but the local community has suffered from *disempowerment* socially, economically, psychologically and politically (Schyevens, 1999) because of negative impacts.

In terms of sustainable development, ecotourism development in Sukau can be classified as having *weak sustainability* (O'Riordan, 1996; in Carter, 2001: 201) or "weak sustainable community participation", because the negative impacts of the development are more dominant than the positive impact expected by the policy makers, protected-area managers, and the villagers of Sukau. Thus, it is time for the Sabah state government to seriously revise their role and policy towards the "participatory approach" in order to give a real meaning to "sustainable ecotourism development" that could give "real benefits" and "minimise the negative impacts" on the local community of Sukau in the near future. This conclusion will be elaborated further in the following chapter (see chapter 10).

Template 9.1: The Villagers and Mapping the Wildlife



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 9.1: WWF's Meeting with Local Community of Sukau



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 9.3: A Troop of Proboscis Monkeys



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 9.4: The Main Attraction for Ecotourists in Sukau



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 9.2: Ecotourists at one of Private Lodges in Sukau



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Template 9.3: Shopping in Sukau Village



Source: Photograph from the fieldwork, 2003

Endnotes

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- ¹ The name of this Ministry since 1999-2003 has been Ministry of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology of Sabah.
 - ² Interview with Homestay Coordinator of Sukau, Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ³ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ⁴ Interview with one of the homestay participants of Sukau, 08.05.2003
 - ⁵ Interview with Puan Fatimah, homestay participant of Sukau, 08.05.2003
 - ⁶ Interview with Dr Isabelle, Homestay Coordinator of Sukau, 19.04.2003
 - ⁷ Interview with Sabah Homestay Director, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Ms Joana Kiskey, 16.06.2003
 - ⁸ Interview with Ms Joana Kiskey, 16.06.2003
 - ⁹ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ¹⁰ Sukau Homestay Participants Meeting- researcher's direct observation, 08.05.2003
 - ¹¹ Interview with Sabah Tourism Board Officer, Mr Allen, 16.06.2003
 - ¹² Interview with Homestay Coordinator of Sukau, Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ¹³ Interview with Mr Pastor, 18.04.2003
 - ¹⁴ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ¹⁵ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ¹⁶ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003
 - ¹⁷ Informal interview with Mr Asrah, small scale oil palm farmer, 16.04.2003
 - ¹⁸ Conversation by telephone with Pak Cik Indal, January 2005
 - ¹⁹ Interview with Che gu Mohd Noor, Head Teacher of Sukau Primary School, 15.04.2003
 - ²⁰ Researcher observation in Annual Meeting of Parents and School Teachers Association of Sukau Secondary School, 05.05.2003
 - ²¹ Sukau Secondary School Meeting Minutes and Activity Reports from 2000 to April 2003
 - ²² Interview with Mr Isri, Sukau resident, 01.05.2003
 - ²³ Interview with Mr Pastor, 19.04.2003

²⁴ WWF Malaysia, 1999, "Celebrating Gifts to the Earth Kinabatangan Floodplain '99" Partners for Wetlands". Quarterly Bulletin No 3. October-December. Sandakan: WWF Malaysia.

²⁵ Interview with the Chairman of WARISAN, Mr Suhor, 20.04.2003

²⁶ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003

²⁷ Interview with Dr Isabelle, 19.04.2003

²⁸ Interview with Sukau village boatmen, Pak Karim, Shahrin, Kamsah and Baharin, 27.04.2003.

Chapter 10

CONCLUSION

10.1. Introduction

This study, in general, has achieved the five main objectives stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.6. p. 15). In the cases of Batu Puteh and Sukau, the research findings showed that there are advantages and disadvantages for local community participation in ecotourism development and conservation related-programmes. The discussion in this chapter is divided into sections as follows:

- The *first* section is the introduction.
- The *second* summarises the case studies cross conclusion.
- The *third* sets out the implications of the study on theory.
- The *fourth* outlines the policy implications from the result of this study.
- The *fifth* is the illustration of the research findings in the formation of conceptual frameworks.
- The *sixth* contains the contributions of the study.
- The *seventh* shows the limitations of the study.
- The *eighth* are recommendations for future research,
- Finally the *ninth* contains the final remarks arguing that the research findings of Sukau and Batu Puteh have demonstrated a model of weak sustainability.

10.2. Summary of the Research Findings: Case Studies Cross Conclusion

In general, the research findings, in this study, suggest that the following issues have been indicated as the “problem areas” particularly related to the impacts of ecotourism (negative or positive), and local community participation in ecotourism development processes in Batu Puteh and Sukau village. These are:

10.2.1. The negative impact of ecotourism development on the socio-cultural life of the local community.

The research findings show that the negative impacts of ecotourism development were more dominant in Sukau village than in Batu Puteh. The main reasons for this are:

- a. Mismanagement of the host-guest relationships.*** The ecotourism stakeholders in Sukau did not produce any written “ethical guidelines for tourists” particularly in the early phase of planning and development. In Batu Puteh, however, these guidelines and the socio-cultural effects on local community are the main priority in the MESCOT’s ecotourism planning agenda and were implemented effectively (see Table 7.4. p. 224). As a result, the contradiction of cultural values and norms between the villagers and the visitors was strengthened in case of Sukau but the socio-cultural guidelines on “Dos” and “Don’ts” for tourists give the local community the ability to reduce the negative demonstration effect (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Hashimoto, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002; Mason, 2003) that the tourists’ presence could cause in the case of Batu Puteh.
- b. Crimes and moral dilemmas among of the village youth.*** There is a lack of monitoring and less organised action by the village committee in Sukau to overcome the moral dilemma of young people (see section 8.4.3. p. 285). For instance, the use of alcohol among the village youth reached a significantly worse level. This is a negative demonstration effect of the tourists (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Hashimoto, 2002). This situation, however, was less visible in Batu Puteh. The MESCOT and Miso Walai Homestay Committee have successfully coordinated, organised and monitored the village youth’s interests in cultural activity (through MESCOT’s Cultural Group) and conservation activities (through MESCOT’s Volunteers) (see section 7.10.1. p. 232). The

situation in Batu Puteh has been described by Scheyvens (2002) as having features of “psychological empowerment (Scheyvens, 2002: 60). As a result, this situation increases confidence in the minds of community members, particularly among women and young people. In the case of Sukau however, the situation can be classified as a sign of political disempowerment where many people, particularly the young generation, feel they have little or no say in the village’s development issues (Scheyvens, 2002: 60).

- c. The overall research findings reveal that *the presence of the foreign visitors did not disturb the local community’s religious values and practices* in both village of Sukau and Batu Puteh. In general, however, the practice of individualistic values, and the emphasis on materialistic interests among the members of local community in these villages has gradually increased because of ecotourism development (see section 7.10.2. p. 235; and 9.4.2 (i). p. 366). Therefore, the level of negative impact on the aspect of socio-cultural values and norms of the local community in Sukau, can be classified as moderate. In Batu Puteh it can be categorised as low. Butler’s Tourism Resort Life Cycle model described three early stages of (eco)tourism development as *exploration, involvement, and development* (Butler, 1980; Mason, 2003: 23). At these stages the development process commonly was hindered by certain conflicts and antagonism between the villagers and the other ecotourism stakeholders in the destination areas (see Table 3.3. p. 84).

10.2.2. The existence of conflicts of interests between local community and the other stakeholders.

The research findings disclose that another aspect of the negative impact of ecotourism development in Sukau and Batu Puteh is the existence of conflicts of interest between local communities and the other stakeholders. These conflicts have been more obvious in the case of Sukau (see section 9.4.2 (ii).

p. 368), but less visible in Batu Puteh village (see section 7.7.2. p. 209). They are discussed as follows:

a. The villagers versus the private tourist lodge operators on the boat issue. The research findings significantly show that the six private tourist lodge operators dominate the tourist boat services in Sukau. This situation has effectively marginalised the local community in ecotourism activity in the village (see section 8.5.1. p. 292). In Batu Puteh, however, local boatmen have been integrated under a 'Boat Service Association' and they are not competing with any boat service from the private tourist lodge operators. Getz (1987) described this situation as the effect of "capitalism" and the laissez-faire tradition with its basic premise that (eco)tourism is good, so it should be promoted with little regard to the negative socio-cultural, ecological and economic impacts on local community by the policy-makers (cited in Timothy and Tosun, 2003: 181). This is actually a type of 'inadequately' or 'unplanned' form of (eco)tourism development.

b. The villagers versus NGOs. The research findings indicate that the main issues which have been disputed between the villagers and NGOs in both villages are over the conservation programme and the traditional use of forest and/or wildlife resources; clearing the forestland; illegal hunting; and illegal logging. In Sukau, however, these problems were more visible than in Batu Puteh (see section 8.5.2 (i). p. 294). The level of illegal logging activities for instance in Batu Puteh was reduced and controlled by MESCOT, but illegal logging, illegal hunting, poaching, and forest clearing activities in Sukau remain a major problem faced by the KOCP and WWF. The conflicts between the villagers and NGOs such as between the WWF and KOCP in the case of Sukau, reflect the different ideologies regarding 'environmentalism' (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 162).

Whilst NGOs commonly represent “eco-centric” views, the villagers believe in ‘anthropocentric’ views (Eckersley, 1992: 26). For that reason local people in Sukau frequently view the conservation project in the village, as “animals are more important than human lives”. Some of the JKKK committee in Sukau have criticised the role of KOCP in the village as significantly close to the concept of “neo-colonialism” or ‘green imperialism’ (Shiva, 1993: 15) because there were unequal relationships of power and domination under ecotourism between this NGO (the Global/First World’s middle-class representative) and the villagers (the Local/Third World community) (de Kadt, 1979; Krippendorf; 1987; Nash, 1989; Mowforth and Munt, 1998). This different world-view continues unresolved.

- c. *The villagers versus government agencies.* Whilst in Batu Puteh most of the villagers were not satisfied with the role of local government agencies because of a lack of a clean water supply which has been demanded by the local community for more than a decade. In Sukau village, however, the situation was worse than that (see section 8.5.5. p. 307). The related government agencies have failed to improve social facilities and infrastructure for the villages for a decade. These problems remain unresolved and the conflict of interest between the villagers and the government agencies continues. The existence of these conflicts and limitations are actually related to the traditional approach or top-down approach to tourism planning and management (Kavita, 2000; 9; Scheyvens, 2002: 181), because of which the government agencies have failed to adequately consider socio-cultural and environmental issues at the bottom (village) level (Sheyvens, 2002: 181). Thus, under the sustainable development approach the Sabah state government has to strategically change ecotourism development policies and implementation towards a community participation approach as in the cases of Namibia (Ashley,

2000), and KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa (Brennan and Allen, 2001).

d. The villagers versus wildlife. In general, the elephants' activities have damaged a lot of oil palm trees belonging to the local people in the Lower Kinabatangan area including Batu Puteh and Sukau village. This problem however was highly disputed in the case of Sukau (see section 8.5.3. p. 303). The other main species of animals, which have always been in conflict with the villagers in Sukau, are orang-utans, wild boars, monkeys, snakes, monitor lizards, civet cats, and crocodiles. The government agencies and NGOs have failed to take any effective action to overcome, for instance, elephant related-problems. Therefore, as Akama claims, villager versus wildlife conflicts are the impacts of the creation of protected areas in major ecotourism sites in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This, for instance, in the case of the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary in Belize, has led to force, uncompensated resettlement, alienation from resources and sacred sites, and damage to crops, livestock and humans by the animals living within the protected area (Akama, 1996; Lindberg, et al, 1996: 559). Under these circumstances, we cannot expect the local community to benefit from ecotourism or that they will support any conservation programme sincerely.

e. The villagers versus the oil palm estates management regarding the environmental pollution issue. Both the villages of Batu Puteh and Sukau have faced this problem generally. The pollution of rivers and lakes by oil palm estates activities in Sukau were reported and covered by local media as one of the national environmental disasters (see section 8.5.6. p. 316). The local authority, unfortunately, failed to overcome this problem effectively. Thus, the environmental pollution caused by the oil palm estates' activities continues to threaten the

villagers' daily lives, the wildlife and the future of ecotourism potential in this area. This is a visible sign of ineffective monitoring of government policies, on a large-scale, of (eco)tourism development areas (Hong, 1985; Wall, 1996). As a result, local community participation in ecotourism activities in Sukau and Batu Puteh suffered considerably from environmental pollution coming from massive oil palm agricultural activities.

10.2.3. The Positive Impact of Ecotourism on the Orang Sungai Community of Batu Puteh and Sukau Village

Although there were negative impacts of ecotourism development on the Orang Sungai community, particularly in Sukau compared to Batu Puteh, the research findings indicate that there were also positive impacts in both villages with, however, certain limitations. The positive aspects of ecotourism development which have been indicated are:

- a. Community involvement in various types of new jobs opportunities.***

The number of villagers involved, whether directly or indirectly in ecotourism activities, is gradually increasing in both villages. New types of job opportunities have been created since ecotourism development was implemented in the villages. In Sukau for instance, these jobs include employment at the tourist lodges for such as waiters, waitresses, kitchen helpers, housekeepers, tourist guides, and boatmen (see section 9.4.3 (i). p. 374). Before ecotourism, none of these jobs existed. A similar trend also occurred in the Batu Puteh homestay programme. Wearing has argued that ecotourism can bring benefits to the socio-cultural environment of local communities as long as host community hostility and anger towards ecotourism is managed (Wearing, 2001: 401), and the government's administration must consider 'real benefits' to the local community (Li, 2006:140).

b. Community involvement in the Homestay programme. Whether in Sukau or Batu Puteh, the number of villagers involved in the Homestay programme has gradually increased since the year 2000. This programme has benefited the participants with side income to supplement the income earned from subsistence, agricultural, and fishing activities. The Homestay programme in Batu Puteh, however, was planned, organised and implemented more systematically by MESCOT compared to the Homestay programme in Sukau (see section 7.10.1. p. 232). As a result, whilst the Homestay programme in Batu Puteh was chosen as the winner of the “Malaysian Village Vision” competition because of remarkable Miso Walai Homestay programme achievement and planning by the Malaysian government, the Homestay programme in Sukau is still struggling to survive or establish itself. In the case of Bali, the positive impact of tourism had also benefited local residents rather than outsiders in batik making, cultural performance and homestay programmes (Wall, 1995; Mason, 2003: 35-36), and the local residents owned the family hotel in the case of Jiuzhigou, China (Li, 2006:137). This trend has obviously been repeated in the case of Batu Puteh.

c. Community involvement in the conservation programme. The findings indicate that the youth of both villages are highly involved in conservation-related programmes or activities. In Sukau’s case, about 30 young villagers are working as wildlife conservation volunteers and/or research assistants for KOCP (see section 9.4.3(iii). p. 375). The MESCOT in Batu Puteh has successfully organised 33 young people to become environmental volunteers or environmental protectors, called “Sukarelawan MESCOT” by the villagers (see section 7.7.1. p. 207). As a consequence, illegal logging and hunting activities in both villages have steadily declined and been controlled because the villagers are beginning to appreciate the forest and the wildlife as part of the

Homestay or ecotourism product. This is a good sign for community conservation initiatives and cooperation between NGOs and local community in Batu Puteh and Sukau villages, a similar pattern to which occurred in the case of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) (Panos, 1995). The success of the ACAP is based on the success of the environmental NGOs integrating their interests with the core of the project's aims – seriously considered the needs of local residents (Stevenson, 1997).

d. Community involvement in other related events in the development process. The findings disclosed that the interest of the villagers in Batu Puteh and Sukau in being involved in other related events in the development process have increased (see section 9.2.5. p. 348; Table 9.10. p. 349). Scheyvens has argued that, if ecotourism development and conservation efforts can contribute to local development, with understanding, no doubt later on it will also contribute to the social, cultural and political dimensions of development (Scheyvens, 2002: 97). Many ecotourism policy makers or ecotourism providers in the Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah, however, ignore this positive linkage.

10.2.4. The Limitations of Local Community Participation in Ecotourism Development in Batu Puteh and Sukau Villages.

Although there were positive impacts of ecotourism development in both Batu Puteh and Sukau, these positive impacts have certain limitations or challenges compared to community participation in the developed world (Timothy, Singh and Dowling, 2003; Timothy, 2002; Tosun, 2000). These are:

i. Limited participation in the Homestay programme.

This is due to a few factors such as:

a. The continuing resistance of the older generation regarding the Homestay-related programme in the two villages. This issue was more

visible in Batu Puteh than in Sukau village, particularly at the early stage of ecotourism development (see section 7.10.2. p. 235). As Cohen (1998b) has argued, the authenticity of culture (in the content of the homestay programme) is negotiable. At the moment, this cultural negotiation between the hosts and the guests in the homestay programme is working, but this does not guarantee that the resistance of the older generation is over.

- b. Lack of clean water supply in the villages.* This has been the main problem faced by the majority of the homestay participants and the villagers in Batu Puteh and Sukau for more than 10 years (see section 7.8 (i). p. 220; and section 9.4.4 (iii). p. 379). In the drought season, the situation is worse in Sukau village as it is located far away in a remote area compared with Batu Puteh. Commonly, the tankers, which come from Kinabatangan town centre, arrive late into Sukau village to supply and distribute clean water.
- c. Lack of financial support and resources* particularly from the government agencies. The research findings disclose that the homestay participants from both villages face this problem. The majority of the participants live in poor conditions, and they lack the financial resources to become involved effectively in the homestay programme (see section 7.8 (ii). p. 222). Many of the relevant government agencies, however, do not adequately support the villagers with special schemes that could ease the financial burden of upgrading homestay facilities and services. Thus, whilst the Miso Walai Homestay committee can provide homestay members in Batu Puteh with loans to ease the participant's financial burden, in Sukau a similar loan or scheme does not exist.

- d. Lack of marketing strategy to promote the homestay programme.* In Batu Puteh, the MESCOT and Miso Walai committee have struggled to promote or market the homestay programme, particularly among local tourist operators and hotels, and through the Internet (see section 7.7. p. 206). In Sukau however (see section 9.2.3 (iii). p. 341), the participants depend much on the initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah to promote their business because they actually have inadequate knowledge and skill, and lack expertise in marketing the homestay as an ecotourism product to national or global ecotourists.
- e. Ineffectiveness in homestay management at village level.* This situation is noticeable in the case of Sukau compared with Batu Puteh (see section 9.2.2. p. 336). There is too many political struggle at the village level of Sukau between the village committee members and the KOCP (see section 8.5.2 (iii). p. 300), a situation which has left the homestay programme in Sukau neglected for the time being in terms of systematic or organised homestay management. In Batu Puteh however, the effective role of MESCOT has led the Miso Walai Homestay programme towards a model for sustainable community-based ecotourism in the Lower Kinabatangan area (see section 7.7.1. p. 207).
- f. Barrier to language communication.* The research findings indicate that homestay participants in both villages (see section 7.8 (iv). p. 225; and section 9.2.3 (iv). p. 342) face this problem constantly. Many homestay participants do not know how to communicate with the foreign tourists whether in basic conversational English or Japanese. This situation limits the interaction between the hosts and the guests. In Sukau, KOCP has taken an initiative to set up an English class for the homestay participants. A similar initiative has been taken by MESCOT in Batu Puteh. To some extent, however, these classes have been

stopped because of a lack of teachers and funding to run them continuously.

g. Lack of continued support and consultation from government agencies particularly in respect of financial assistance, compensation, development consultation, and an advance homestay training programme for the two villages (see section 7.8 (vi). p. 227); and section 9.2.3 (v). p. 342). The majority of the villagers in Batu Puteh and Sukau pick their hopes on government agencies to lead the ecotourism development process, including the homestay programme, instead of the NGOs and private companies. The villager believed that these government agencies are capable of overcoming many of the major problems they faced. Unfortunately, this has not been the case because the agencies give ecotourism development responsibility to the NGOs and the private companies in the name of top-down management and/or privatisation strategy.

ii. Limited “real benefits”.

a. Limited economic benefits. Research findings indicate that ecotourism development in the two villages has brought some of the villagers economic benefits such as new job opportunities, supplementary income, improved family income, and to some extent improved standards of living (see section 7.10.1. p. 232). These economic benefits are still limited because the vast majority of local people are still not involved in ecotourism-related activities, and the majority of them are still living in poor conditions (see section 9.4.4 (iii). p. 378). Moreover, the income from oil palm agriculture is seen by the villagers as more attractive and lavish compared to the “side income” earned from ecotourism activities (see 7.10.2. p. 235).

- b. Limited social facilities and infrastructures for the villages.** Ecotourism development in Batu Puteh (see section 7.10.2. p. 235); and Sukau village (see section 9.3.2. p. 352) has failed to boost social facilities and infrastructure such as a clean water supply and electricity supply, the latter in Sukau still limited to 12 hours a day etc. For that reason both villages are continuously dominated by “underdevelopment” conditions.
- c. Limited social interaction between the villagers and the visitors.** In both cases, the research findings revealed that ecotourism has successfully changed the villagers’ attitudes positively towards the presence of international tourists (see section 7.9 (ii). p. 228). In Sukau however, close interaction between villagers and tourists only takes place with those who are working in the lodges and not the villagers in general (see section 9.4.4 (iii). p. 381). This situation has separated the vast majority of the villagers from the tourists. The main reason the visitors come to Sukau’s lodges, moreover, is to experience nature, and not local culture.
- d. Limited proper commercialisation of local culture.** In Sukau village, ecotourism development has failed to improve local handicraft activity, and WARISAN’s culture group activity has stagnated (see section 9.3.4. p. 358). In Batu Puteh, however, MESCOT’s Culture Group has performed amazingly and has been well organised under the supervision of MESCOT and the Miso Walai Homestay Committee (see section 7.9 (iii). p. 229). The failure of WARISAN’s Culture Group activity is related to insufficient support, a lack of promotion and no cooperation from the private company tourist lodge management. To some extent, however, this failure is related also to the lack of WARISAN’s leadership and creativity in commercialising local culture for tourists to enjoy and appreciate through Sukau’s Homestay programme.

10.3. Implications for Theory

The above discussions, however, have a number of implications for theory including:

i. In terms of *sustainable development* and *community approach* in the context of the less developed countries, the main limitations faced by the villagers in Batu Puteh and Sukau have been classified by Jenkins (1982), Desai, (1995) and Tosun (2000), as a limitation at the operational level and/or structural limitation to community participation in (eco)tourism development. The principle of community participation in ecotourism development commonly entails a need for flexible policies towards decentralisation of power or “empowering the local community” (Friedman, 1992, Akama, 1996, Scheyvens, 1999) in which the bottom-up approach in development planning is preferred. But many of the developing countries’ governments (the Sabah state government or the Malaysian government are no exceptions) are reluctant to seriously implement decentralisation of power, and the administrative and financial powers of central government to local government, which is experienced in the case of developed countries (Tosun, 1998; Tosun, 2006: 503). Thus, there is very little democratic experience or little prospect of an opening to freedom and democratisation in many less developed countries. The form of political relationship between the state and the people in terms of democratisation and development is that of “patron-client”. Thus, many tourism development projects are not driven by the local community, but by local elites in conjunction with international tour operators or outside investors (Tosun, 1998). In this manner, the slogan of sustainable development for ecotourism promoted by policy makers and ecotourism providers in these areas actually is still in question.

ii. According to Agenda 21, as Warbuton (1998: 7) notes, the success of sustainable development requires high level of *government responsibility* to encourage:

- broadest public participation;
- effective development strategy for tackling the problems of poverty; and underdevelopment conditions;
- enhancement of public or social facilities;
- promotion of sustainable livelihood and environmental protection at every level (global and national), particularly at community and local levels (Agenda 21, 3.2 and 3.5) at ecotourism destinations.

The research findings indicate that many government-related agencies play very limited roles in ecotourism development. These limitations faced by the villagers in these areas were demonstrated as a type of “unsustainable development” (Butler, 1992). This is because the state agencies failed to support the destination community in fulfilling its hospitality functions effectively. Thus, this can lead to euphoria or an antagonistic reaction in the local community towards the visitors (Murphy, 1985), and/or towards the other stakeholders in the destination areas indicated in this research.

iii. The research findings also disclose that there are several meanings of the concept of “*ecotourism*” understood by several people in this research. Some of the government related agencies, NGOs, and the tourists understood the concept from a *deep ecotourism* perspective. The other stakeholders (the villagers in the two villages, the tourist lodge operators, some of the tourists, and the other government agencies) understand the concept of ecotourism from a *shallow ecotourism* perspective, commonly known as “nature-based-tourism”, which adopts a shallow ecology position (Accott and La Trobe, 1998: 24). It represents a business-oriented attitude to the environment, according to its usefulness to humans (tourism industry), but makes little commitment to

distinguishing the significant role of the local community in this sector. This is similarly viewed from a *weak or very weak sustainability* perspective where ecotourism management ensures that the environment is not degraded to provide the backdrop to commercial service areas and recreation sites (Turner et al, 1994; Duffy, 2002). That is why ecotourism activity in Batu Puteh and Sukau village overlapped with mass tourism activity simultaneously. In this manner it cannot avoid the negative effects of mass tourism, and makes a limited contribution to the positive social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes, particularly in improving the progress and welfare of local people in these areas (Duffy, 2002: 15). This research finding reveals a similar pattern to that argued by Duffy. The government and other ecotourism providers have not properly managed the negative socio-cultural impacts, they have not resolved the conflicts of interest between the stakeholders and the wildlife, and have not improved the limiting conditions faced by the villagers. Therefore “(eco)tourism as a vehicle for development” has not become a reality, but it just a panacea or a form of unsustainable community development.

iv. In terms of *authenticity of local culture*, MESCOT, in Batu Puteh has been relatively more successfully organised and commercialised the socio-cultural life of the local community through the Homestay programme than Sukau Village. Many tourists enjoyed the authenticity of local culture through this programme. The research findings indicate, however, that cultural authenticity is “negotiable” (Cohen, 1988b) between the hosts and the guests. This negotiability, however, commonly did not provide a strong base for harmonious relationships between the hosts and guests in the longer term. The lack of social facilities and infrastructure in Batu Puteh and Sukau village, and the existence of certain limitations in the Homestay programme have altered the meaning of authenticity as negotiable to “authenticity as a consequence of globalisation” (Azarya, 2004: 961). This means that the poor conditions and/or marginality of the socio-cultural life of the “orang sungai” implicitly has become an

ecotourism commodity for post-modern tourists to experience in the “pleasure periphery” areas of the globe (Urry, 1990; 95). Authenticity, as a consequence of globalisation, has commonly not benefited much the quality and the standard of living of indigenous people in the Third World. Rather, it has continuously marginalised the lives of these remote communities. Ironically, however, the agents who are involved, to keep portraying as genuine as possible their “primitive” or “poor culture”, and to ensure this marginality is maintained as a saleable commodity, are their governments and the other related agents (Azarya, 2004: 964). This is the same paradox as faced by the Homestay participants in Sukau and Batu Puteh village. In Sukau’s case moreover, the uniqueness of the socio-cultural and daily life activities of the local people were not in the promotional list of the six private lodges. Without strong support from these private lodges, local culture and nature have become separate items as ecotourism products in this village. This is the worst scenario in comparison to Azarya (2004) because the poor culture of the local people has been totally marginalised without being given any value in the ecotourism development process. The introduction of the Homestay programme in the 2002 in Sukau village however, at least has given some hope to the local community to overcome this scenario.

v. The concept of *community participation*. In general, the research findings disclose that the number of villagers participating in ecotourism-related activities in Sukau and Batu Puteh can be classified as high. Local attitudes towards tourists are favourable. This high level of participation, however, does not mean that these local communities automatically gain “real ecotourism benefits or profits” equally with the other stakeholders in the development process. In fact, the level of participation of the villagers in Sukau can be classified as “tokenist” (Arstein, 1971; Tosun, 2006: 494), whereby, commonly, the villagers just follow the plan made by ecotourism policy makers and planners, and have no power to change the status quo (Telfer, 2003). In Batu Puteh however, the villagers participation achieved “placation” level, whereby

and reviewed appropriately. Based on the results of the study, some of the aspects to be adjusted or reviewed are:

i. The current ecotourism policy implementation must be matched with a “community participation approach” or “community conservation approach”. This approach has not been practiced sufficiently by many government related agencies in the Lower Kinabatangan area. The reason is that without good governance or high level responsibility of the government agencies towards the democratic participation process, the sustainability of ecotourism development and conservation programmes in the destination areas is just rhetoric, and will not achieve its real meaning according to the sustainable development principles of Agenda 21.

ii. The government have to consider seriously a ‘bottom-up’ approach in ecotourism planning and management, particularly through the principal of delegating authority, accountability and resources (Agenda 21). This bottom-up approach requires an attitude change in government officers to ensure that public and social facilities and infrastructures at the village level are adequately and immediately provided in order to support community participation in ecotourism.

iii. The government must seriously consider leading the ecotourism development projects, such as homestay programmes, in the villages. This is because the development of the rural areas and poor communities is a democratic government’s responsibility. In the ecotourism context, the role of government related agencies, as a “developer”, is vital because the government has enough “power” and “resources” to carry out the development agenda compared to private companies and/or NGOs. Then the support mechanism such as consultation, education, and guidance in ecotourism development can come from NGOs and the private companies. Smart partnerships between the government agencies and the private companies in ecotourism development at

village level commonly is not successful because most of the private companies are focused too much on profit-making, and not towards the sustainable livelihood of local communities.

iv. At the national or state level, the government must consider creating a national or state fund called the “Homestay Incentive Scheme” to support villagers who are involved actively in this programme. This funding scheme should not only be limited to homestay participants in ecotourism but also open to the homestay participants of traditional kampong (village) and fishing villages in Malaysia (see Amran, 1997). This scheme must be controlled and monitored by the Department or Division of Homestay Programmes of the related Ministry.

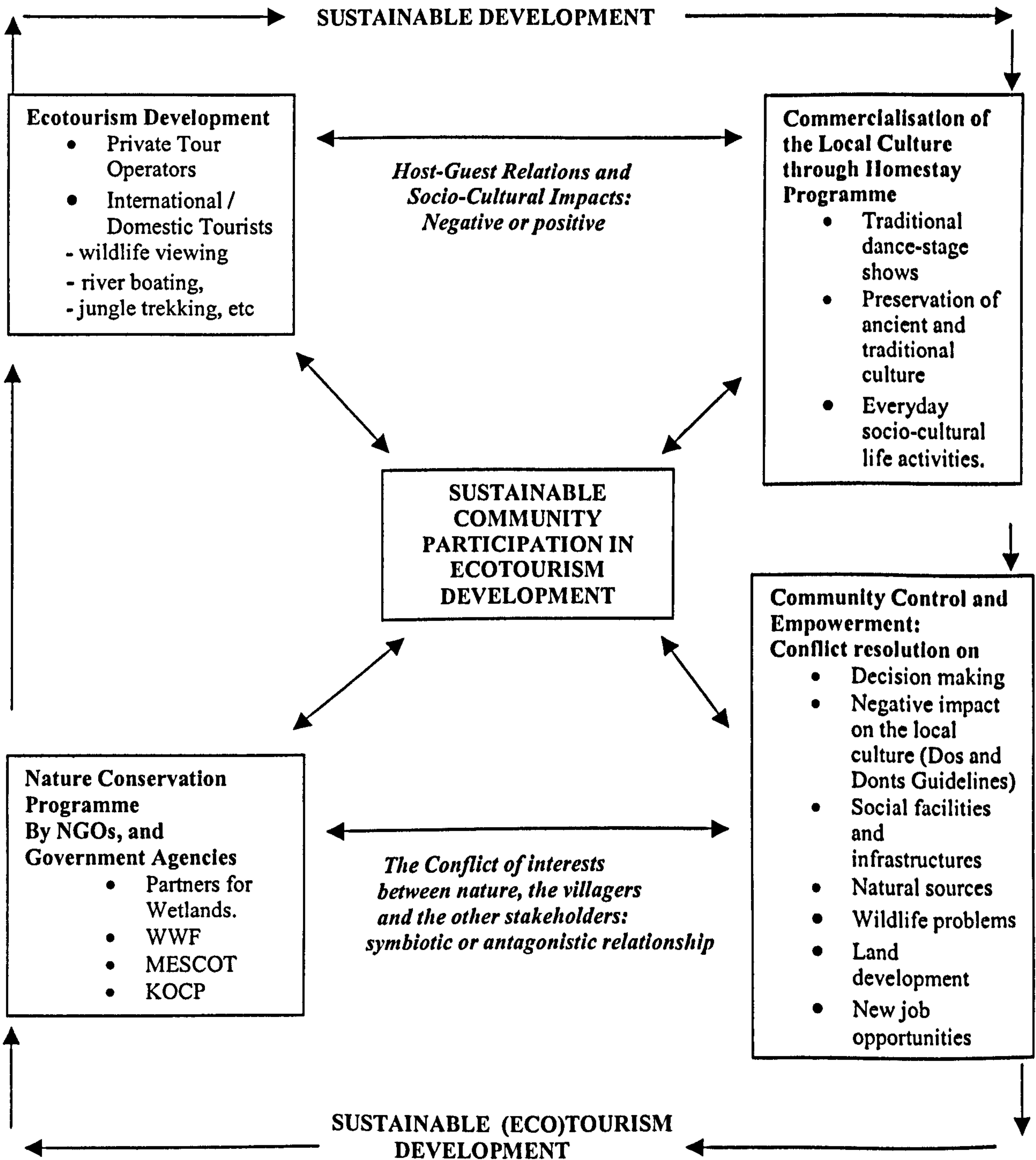
v. The state government should suggest setting up a special fund to be called the “Conservation Compensation Scheme” for those villagers who are willing not to develop the forestlands as oil palm plantations in the Lower Kinabatangan area. This scheme must also cover the villagers’ oil palm agricultural losses from damage by elephant activity and/or environmental pollution in the village areas. The introduction of this scheme is to ensure that local people who would receive benefits and welfare from this effort or contribution will support wildlife and rainforest conservation in this area actively. In parallel, the government are advised to set up a “Village Conservation Committee” for every village in the Lower Kinabatangan area without further delay to ensure “community conservation” programme becomes a reality.

vi. It is also suggested that the state government set up “Community Ecotourism Training Centre” in the Lower Kinabatangan area. Within the four main villages in Lower Kinabatangan, Sukau village is considered the best place for this community-training centre because of its strategic location for community based-ecotourism, and community- based-conservation activities.

10.5. Research Findings in the Formation of the Conceptual Framework

Figure 10.1 summarises the research findings in the formation of the conceptual framework. This conceptual framework contains the influential factors towards sustainable community participation in ecotourism development in the Lower Kinabatangan Area of Sabah, including Batu Puteh and Sukau village, which have been identified in this study.

Figure 10.1: Conceptual Framework of Findings



10.6. Contributions of the Study

The two main contributions of this study are:

First, is a contribution to the existing body of knowledge. The study has expanded the existing body of knowledge, particularly in its contribution to the literature of development studies and tourism studies. This study has linked the debates in term of ecotourism development and community participation in the development studies and tourism paradigm shift from mass tourism to alternative tourism and/or ecotourism, and its impacts on local communities, particularly local people in the less developed countries. The commercialisation of the local culture of the less developed world in ecotourism can be classified as one of the consequences of globalisation. This socio-cultural aspect, however, was given less attention in the literature of development studies and/or tourism studies previously. This study has expanded the literature debates on the aspect of the socio-cultural impact of ecotourism on local communities in the context of sustainable development.

Second is a contribution to public policy making. This study, to some extent, is applied research. The conceptual debates and theoretical perspectives argued in the literature, have been applied to study ecotourism development, local community participation, and its impacts on the socio-cultural life of local communities in Sabah, Malaysia. Therefore the results of this study, it is hoped, will provide important information and/or knowledge for ecotourism policy makers and ecotourism providers in Malaysia to review or adjust the inappropriate ways ecotourism policy have been planned or implemented in order to develop more effective sustainable community participation and ecotourism in the near future.

10.7. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations faced by the researcher in this study. These are:

i. Lack of previous research on socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism on local communities, and community participation in ecotourism in Sabah generally (see Chapter 1, section 1.5. p. 13). Due to this limitation, there is also a lack of theory regarding community participation in the ecotourism development process in developing countries, particularly Malaysia.

ii. Time constraints, and remote areas. The period of time to complete the fieldwork in this study was limited to three months only. This is the maximum period of time given by the sponsor's institution for this study. The fieldwork, moreover, was conducted in the Lower Kinabatangan area of Sabah, in Borneo. Sukau village and Batu Puteh village for instance, are located in remote areas of Lower Kinabatangan. The distance between these two villages is great, and the transport system between them is very limited. Thus, it was time-consuming to move from one village to another during the fieldwork. Even the distance between the respondents' houses, particularly in Sukau village, is far. To complete the face-to-face survey interviews, the researcher(s) had to walk from one house to another in very warm and humid conditions or in rain, and this experience was really time consuming and challenging. On some occasions the researcher(s) hired local transport to reach upper Sukau, and hired local boat services to reach the respondents' houses at the other side of Kinabatangan riverbank. The six private tourist lodges in Sukau were also located far from each another. Thus, the local boat service was hired to ensure in-depth interviews and observations were done promptly. These experiences again were very time-consuming and challenging. Fortunately, however, in the fieldwork in Batu Puteh, Miso Walai committee members provided sufficient transport and a tourist guide, as well as relevant data from their records to guide the researcher. The interviews with government agency officers, however, took place in Kinabatangan town centre. The distance between Sukau village and

Kinabatangan town centre is about 45 km, and it only can be reached by a gravel road. Thus, the challenges faced by the researcher during this fieldwork were not only time constraints, but also physical and mind constraints.

iii. Financial constraints. The researcher had to struggle with limited financial resources during the fieldwork. The cost of local boat services and local transport car or van hire were expensive due to the remoteness of these villages. On many occasions, to complete some of the interview sessions, the researcher(s) needed to revisit respondents' houses or private tourist lodges because the interviewees, were not at home or busy. This situation increased the cost of transport, and indirectly increased the financial constraints faced by the researcher during this fieldwork.

iv. Limited observation, and limited used of data collection method in Batu Puteh compared to Sukau village. During the fieldwork, I stayed in Sukau village for nearly two and half month. During this time, I visited Batu Puteh a few times to gain the data. From an *ethnographic* perspective this situation puts the researcher in the position of limitation, due to time constraints, in order to understand local people's views, life experience, beliefs and meanings in the specific research location (Brewer, 2003: 100). This could be limited as a result of comparative analysis between these two villages. It is common for ethnographers to stay in the research site for more than twelve months when working.

In my research, however, *a case study approach was applied as a research strategy* because this empirical investigation about ecotourism and local community participation is used "multiple source of evidence" through multiple data collection methods (Robson, 1993: 52). Multiple data collection methods such as social surveys, focused interviews, direct observation, and documentary resources were applied in the case of Sukau. In Batu Puteh however, the social survey method has lifted out due to limited time and finance (see Chapter 5,

section 5.4.1 (iii)). Most of my time is spent in Sukau rather than Batu Puteh. This could limit the observation process in Batu Puteh village, but, it is. This hard to avoid because of the following reasons:

- Sukau village is located far away in the remote area of Kinabatangan compared to Batu Puteh. Therefore much time and finance is needed to do fieldwork in Sukau village. In addition, the size of Sukau is broader than Batu Puteh village. This meant more time is needed for doing the fieldwork in Sukau village.
- During this research, ecotourism activity through homestay programme in Batu Puteh was established compared to Sukau village. This is because the homestay programme in Batu Puteh has received great support from NGOs and local government agencies. This means that there are less controversial issues such as a low negative impact of the ecotourism development, which is apparent in Batu Puteh, compared to Sukau village. This situation has provided the homestay committee of Batu Puteh enough time to do research work and produced data bank regarding on the villagers socio-economic demographic, the total income of the homestay participants, the villagers' level of participation, the visitors feedbacks regarding the homestay programme in the village. In Sukau village however this type of data does not exist in the village committee records or in the KOCP's data bank. This means that by using the case study strategy, the type of secondary data provided by Homestay Committee of Batu Puteh is reliable to support the main issues in the case study analysis, because it does not emphasise quality of "cultural meaning" as demanded in ethnography research. If the researcher spent a short time period in the specific research site, this is actually not a major controversial issue of research design as long as the data that the researcher has in hand is relevant evidence for the study.

Later on, these evidences are enough to answer the specific research questions in this study.

In other words, the decision to spend longer time in Sukau rather than Batu Puteh village is not limited to the “nature of qualitative data” or information the researcher wishes to gain for study ecotourism and local people participation in Batu Puteh compared to Sukau village. This is because previous research experience and knowledge on Batu Puteh has given me an early exposure (i.e. familiarity with local people’s culture and daily life experience in the village) to overcome the time constraint during the fieldwork in Batu Puteh (see Chapter 1 section 1.5 (iv)). As a result, from multiple data collection methods, a case study data analysis is produced for the each village. Then a comparison of empirical findings and theory generalisation for these two villages are made. This is the great strength of the case study strategy because of its flexibility in research design, and its variety of evidence (Robson, 1993; Yin, 2003: 22) rather than emphasis much on the need to stay a long period of time in the specific research location.

10.8. Recommendations for Future Research

Although the focus of this research was on the impacts of ecotourism development on local communities, and community participation in the ecotourism development process in Sukau and Batu Puteh, it would be of great benefit if (i) a replication of this study could be done in other ecotourism destinations in Sabah or Peninsular Malaysia or in the other developing countries in order to compare the research findings. The results of this study could potentially stimulate (ii) qualitative and/or quantitative research on the role of gender in ecotourism or the homestay programme (iii) research on host-guest relationships in the homestay programme from the international tourist’s perspective, (iv) comparative research on the role of NGOs in (eco)tourism

development, (v) research on the role of family-owned or privately-owned companies to develop community-based-ecotourism in Malaysia.

10.9. Final Remarks

The relationship between ecotourism, the protected area, and the villagers in the case of Batu Puteh can be categorised as a *win-win-win scenario* because all three players mutually benefit at least from this early phase of ecotourism development. In the case of Sukau, however, the situation can be classified as a *win-win-lose scenario* (Nepal, 2000: 74-76) because the ecotourism planners and providers have benefited from the conservation efforts and ecotourism, but the local community has suffered from disempowerment socially, economically, psychologically and politically (Scheyvens, 2002), because of negative impacts. Thus, the promotion of sustainable (eco)tourism development and local community participation in the Lower Kinabatangan area, including Sukau and Batu Puteh village, remains 'elusive' (Carter, 2001: 197), and what sustainable (eco)tourism is seeking to sustain, and for whom (Mowforth and Munt, 1998: 64), remains a critical subject.

The success of "sustainable ecotourism development" in fact, depends on continuing support and participation, and the "real benefits" should be gained by the local community and the other stakeholders in this development process (see also Mat Som, 2005). A "weak sustainability" model was demonstrated in the case studies of Sukau and Batu Puteh. The studies indicated that tourism or ecotourism is unlikely to cause negative impacts on local communities automatically but there always were negative impacts because it was simply badly planned, implemented and/or managed (Singh, Timothy and Dowling, 2003: 4). This is the real challenge to be considered seriously by ecotourism policy makers and ecotourism providers in order to achieve "sustainable community-based ecotourism" in Malaysia, where the most effective efforts can be originated at local level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

The Guideline Research Questions for Focused or In-Depth Interview with Related Government Agencies' Officers, NGOs' Officers, the JKKK Committee Members, the Oil Palm Estate Manager, and the Head of Village.

Section A: Background Information

1. Current Position : _____
2. Age : _____
3. Academic Qualification : _____
4. Duration of Services and job experience : _____
5. Date and time : _____

Section B: Ecotourism Development and Conservation Programme, and Local Community Participation.

6. When did your "agency" realise that Lower Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village is a vital place for rainforest and wildlife conservation programme? Why?
7. What is the relationship between conservation programme and ecotourism in this area? What is your "agency's" vital role in this relationship? Why?
8. How did your "agency" ensure that the conservation programme could be successful implemented?
9. How could your agency ensure the local community in this area would involve or give support to the conservation project and would be involved in ecotourism projects?

10. To what extent did the local community resist (a) the conservation programme (b) ecotourism project in this area? How could/did your agency overcome this problem? (c) To What extent you think local community involved in?
11. Is there any special unit in your agency that monitors conservation programme in this area? May you elaborate more about the role of this unit?
12. There is special project called "Partners for Wetlands" in this area? What does it mean? To what extent is your agency involved in this project? Why? How could local community more involved in this project?
13. To what extent your agency did consults local community before this project implemented?
14. How could the local community be involved in "Partners for Wetlands" project? Do you think the local people would support this project? Why?
15. What are the major problems that have occurred when your agency implemented "Partners for Wetland" project? How could you overcome these problems?
16. What strategies have been used by your agency in order to gain support from private tour operators in order to sustain conservation programme and ecotourism in this area? Do you think this strategy is effective? Why?
17. Do you think these conservation programme and ecotourism projects affect the traditional economic activities and socio-cultural daily lives of the local people in this area? Why?
18. Did your agency produce any specific procedures or policy regarding conservation programme, ecotourism activities and local community development in this area? Why?
19. Do you think these procedures and policies are still appropriate until now or do they need to be revised? Why?
20. What sorts of strategies have been used by your agency to promote conservation programme and ecotourism, to educate local people and the tourists in this area? Do you think this strategy effective? Why?

21. How much money did your agency allocate in its annual budget to implement the conservation programme and local community development in this area? Do you think it is enough? Why?
22. Are you satisfied with the economic and social infrastructures in this area? Why? How could your agency contribute to develop the infrastructures such as roads, clean water, transport etc?
23. What is your opinion about the involvement of local people in ecotourism industry? How could you solve the conflictive interest between local people, private tour operators and your agency in this industry?
24. Do you think by commercialising the people culture it could contribute to local economic development? Why?
25. Do you differentiate between “ecotourism” and “nature- based tourism”? Which concept does you agency refer to tourism in this area? Why?
26. What are your suggestions to improve conservation programme and ecotourism industry in this area? Do you think this area has bright future in ecotourism industry? Why?
27. Do you think sustainable local community development can be achieved in this area? Why?
28. To What extent your agency consult local community before those projects implemented?
29. Do you think this area has a bright future in ecotourism industry and in the same time could contribute to local community development? Why?

Thank you very much for your co-operation and participate in this interview

Appendix II

**The Guideline Research Questions for Focused or In-Depth
Interview with Private Tourist's Lodge Managers
in Sukau Village.**

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of the Company : _____
2. Duration of the Company Operation : _____
3. The Number of Workers : _____
4. Date and time of Interview : _____
5. Place : _____

Section B: Managing Ecotourist's Lodge in Sukau Village

6. Could you please explain why your company chose Sukau Village for your investment in tourism project, and not other places in Sabah?
7. What type of "tour package" does your company offer to the visitors if they interested to stay at your lodge?
8. Who are your company's main marketing targets for this "tour package"?
9. What type of "facilities" does your company offer to those visitors during their visit in Sukau Village and Kinabatangan Area?
[Probes: reservation, accommodation, transport, entertainment etc]
10. What is the average number of visitors who have stayed at your lodge per month or per year?

11. Which season do you classify as “peak season” and “low season” for visitors who stay in your lodge in every calendar year? Why is this?
12. What sort of problems does your company face for every “peak season” and “low season”? How did your management confront with those problems?
13. Are you satisfied with the quality of “infrastructure” such as roads, clean water etc. in Sukau Village and Lower Kinabatangan Area in order to support your business? Why?
14. In your opinion who should be responsible for the development of “these infrastructures” in this area? Why?
15. Do you think your company should be responsible for “joint-venture” project to set up the infrastructure in this area? What type of infrastructures projects?
16. How would you describe the level of participation or cooperation between your company and government agencies in ecotourist development project in this area?
17. What sort of difficulties in your experience does your company face from “this cooperation”? How could you overcome these problems?

Section C: Contribution to the Local Community Participation in Ecotourism and Environment Conservation’s Programme.

18. Do you think local people in “this area” play an important role for your company's success in the ecotourist industry in this area? Why?
19. Your company has been success developed “the resort building” on this land. Therefore between your company and the owner[s] of the land, how did your company overcome the disputes on “status of the land”?

20. Does the local culture and traditional economic activities give you some advantages and limitation into your company's daily operation?
21. What is your opinion regarding conflictive interests between your company and local people in ecotourists activities in this area? How does your company solve the problems?
22. How does your company regard the local community development programme? Do you think your company involvement in this programme is well done enough? Why?
23. What is your view about rainforest and wildlife conservation programme in Lower Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village? Do you think this programme will affect your company's activities?
24. Who should be responsible for the conservation programme in this area? Why?
25. To what extent does your company contribute to the conservation programme in this area?
26. Does your company provide revenue for the conservation programme in this area? Approximately how much per month/per year? Why?
27. Who should be responsible for the environment pollution [such as the decline of rainforest area, the disturbing of wildlife, river and lake pollution] in this area?
28. Do you think your company is affected by pollution? How did your company confront these problems?
29. Do you think that ecotourists activities run by your company can sustain the daily traditional economic activities and culture of the local community? Why? How does your company do that?

30. What is your opinion about the visitors perception on the culture of local people in this area?
31. Do you think the concepts of “ecotourism” and “nature-based tourism” is different? Why is this? Which concept does your company refer to in your daily operations?
32. What is your company's future plan for visitors' activities in this area?
33. To what extent are you satisfied with your company's achievement in this industry?
34. To what extent are you satisfied with your company's contribution to the conservation programme and local people development in this area?

Thank You Very Much for Your Participation and Co-operation In This Interview

Appendix III

Local Community Face-to-Face Survey Interview

**Socio-Cultural Impact and Local Community
Participation in Ecotourism and Conservation
In Sukau Village, Kinabatangan Sabah**

Respondent Information:

Name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Time: _____

Part 1: Information of Personal Background (please tick as applicable).

1. Gender

- Male Female

2. Ethnic origin

- Liwagu
 Bajau
 Visaya
 Suluk
 Dusun
 Malay
 Other (please specify) _____

3. Your age _____ years

4. Marital Status

- Single Married Widowed Divorced

5. Number of children who are currently dependent on your income?

(Please specify) _____ persons

6. Your level of education

- No formal education
 Completed primary school
 LCE / SRP
 MCE / SPM
 HSC / STPM
 University Graduated

7. Were you born in this village?

- Yes No *(proceed to question 8)*

8. If you were not born in this village where did you come from?

(Please specify) _____

9. Approximately how many years have you lived in this village?

(Please specify) _____

10. Is this house yours?

- Yes No *(proceed to question 12)*

11. If yes, did you?

- Inherit it
- Bought it
- Family owned (wife, husband, and relatives)
- Given by the government
- Other *(please specify)* _____

12. (a) Other than this house do you own any other land in this village and Lower Kinabatangan area?

- Yes No *(proceed to question 13)*

(b) If yes, what type is it *(you may choose more than one)*?

- Traditional lands,
- Agriculture lands
- Logging lot
- Housing lot
- Other *(please specify)* _____

(c) Approximately what size is your land?
(you may choose more than one)

- Traditional lands _____ square acre/hectare
- Agriculture _____ square acre/hectare
- Logging lot _____ square acre/hectare
- Housing lot _____ square acre/hectare
- Other (please specify) _____

(d) How did you gain ownership of this land?

- Inherited it
- Bought it
- Family owned (wife, husband, and relatives)
- Given by the government
- Other (please specify) _____

(e) Have you developed this land as _____

- subsistence farming
- palm oil planting
- cocoa planting
- tourism resort
- shop-house
- private resident house
- Other (please specify) _____

(f) If you have not developed this land, what is your main purpose for the land in future?

- To sell it
- To rent it
- To develop it by myself, for (please specify) _____
- To develop it by joint venture, for (please specify) _____

13. (a) What is your current occupation (*if more than one please tick*)?

- Fisherman
- Subsistence crops farmer
- Small-scale palm oil cultivator
- Small-scale cocoa farmer
- Boatman
- Resort employee
- Shopkeeper
- Van/Lorry/Bus/Taxi Driver
- Government Servant
- Other (please specify) _____

(b) If you have more than two occupations what is your estimated total income

(Please specify) _____ (RM per month)

(c) If your have only one occupation what is your estimated total income

(Please specify) _____ (RM per month)

14. Is you wife/husband (*you may choose more than one*)

- Full-time employee in government sector
- Full-time employee in private sector
- Part-time worker in government sector
- Part-time worker in private sector
- Self-employment (*please specify*) _____
- Full-time house wife (*please proceed to question 16*)
- Other (*please specify*)

15. Estimated total income of your wife/husband
(please specify) _____ (RM per month)

16. Estimated total of your family income (include your children) _____
(RM per month)

- 500 and below
- 501 - 1000
- 1001 - 2000
- 2001 - 3000
- 3001 - 4000
- 4001 and above

17. Household equipment or appliances

Type of Equipment or Appliances	The Way of Possess	
	Cash	Monthly Instalments
1. Television	RM	RM
2. Video/VCD/DVD Player	RM	RM
3. Personal Computer	RM	RM
4. Refrigerator	RM	RM
5. Furniture	RM	RM
6. Other	RM	RM

18. Do you have any form of vehicle, transport or equipment as follow?

Type	Number	Capacity	Value
1. Boat engine			RM
2. Motorcycle			RM
3. Car			RM
4. Van			RM
5. Lorry			RM
6. Electrical generator			RM
7. Other			RM

**Part 2: The Impact of Ecotourism on Socio-Cultural Life of
the Local Community**

19. Please indicate how strongly agree you or disagree with the following statement which best describes your perceptions about ecotourism development in this village. *Please circle your answer by using the following scale:*

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Strongly disagree |
| 2 | Disagree |
| 3 | In the middle |
| 4 | Agree |
| 5 | Strongly agree |

(a) When you first heard the government's plan to develop a project later called *nature-based tourism* or *ecotourism* in Lower Kinabatangan area including Sukau Village, what was your first reaction to it?

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

(b) In general, how do you gain your information about (eco) tourism?

- Through newspapers
- Through the national radio and TV
- Internet (IT)
- Through the public meeting and hearing
- Through newsletters
- Through friends and relatives
- Through government officers
- Through NGOs representatives
- Through private lodges owners and workers
- By personal experience
- Other (*please specify*) _____

(c). What is your opinion of private company lodges in this village?

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

(d) In general, do you think that the recent development of ecotourism in Sukau Village could benefit the villagers as follows? (*Please circle your answer*).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>			<i>Strongly agree</i>		
	1	2	3	4	5	
• New employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	
• Improve household income level	1	2	3	4	5	
• Improve standard of living	1	2	3	4	5	
• Improve infrastructures-facilities						
such as:						
road	1	2	3	4	5	
electrical supply	1	2	3	4	5	
clean water supply	1	2	3	4	5	
school	1	2	3	4	5	
clinic	1	2	3	4	5	
police station	1	2	3	4	5	
post office	1	2	3	4	5	
bus services	1	2	3	4	5	
boat services	1	2	3	4	5	
shops	1	2	3	4	5	
• Friendly relation with international tourists	1	2	3	4	5	
• Local handicraft improvement	1	2	3	4	5	
• Intention to learn English	1	2	3	4	5	

- Traditional dance activities become more active 1 2 3 4 5
- Other traditional activities Become more active (*please specify*) _____ 1 2 3 4 5

20. (a) Did the government authority consult villagers before the project of ecotourism in this village was implemented?

- Yes No I do not know

(b) Did the government authority continue to consult the local community after the ecotourism project was implemented in this village?

- Yes No I do not know

(c) What other official body{s} consulted the local community before and after the ecotourism project was implemented in the village?

(*please specify*) _____

21. (a) Do you think the presence of tourists/visitors in this village has had an impact on the traditional values of your community?

- 1 Significantly worse
- 2 Worsened a little
- 3 Has had not make any difference
- 4 Improve a little
- 5 I do not know

- Disturbing your religious values and practices 1 2 3 4 5
- Decline in youth morality 1 2 3 4 5
- Increasing used of alcohol 1 2 3 4 5
- Increasing individual crime 1 2 3 4 5

- Cooperation between member of the community 1 2 3 4 5
- Collective decision making 1 2 3 4 5
- Increasing individualistic values 1 2 3 4 5

(b) What type of tourist do you most deal with in the village and Kinabatangan Area?

International Tourists
(please proceed to c)

Domestic Tourists
(please proceed to d)

(c) If they are international tourists, which country do they come from?

(Please specify) _____

(d) If they are domestic tourists, which part of Malaysia do they come from?

(Please specify) _____

(e) Do you think the presence of international tourists creates division within the village?

Yes

No

(please proceed to question f)

(f) Are these division become

Significantly worse

Worsen a little

Not make any difference

Improve a little

I do not know

**Part 3: The Local Community Participation in
Ecotourism Development Process**

22. (a) Have you been involved in ecotourism activities in Lower Kinabatangan area and Sukau Village?

- Yes *(please proceed to b)*
- Not involved at all *(please proceed to No. 24)*

(b) What type of involvement?

- Direct Involvement
(please proceed to c)
- Indirect Involvement
(please proceed to d)

(c) Direct involvement

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time employee in tourist lodges | <input type="checkbox"/> Bed and Breakfast owner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time tourist guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage traditional dancer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed boatman | <input type="checkbox"/> Homestay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourist car/van driver | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____ |

(d) Indirect involvement *(you may choose more than one)*

- Part-time boatman
- Boat maker
- Part-time tourist guide
- Part-time taxi/van/bus driver
- River's fish and prawn supplier to lodge operators
- Vegetables and fruits supplier to lodge operators
- Part-time carpenter and repairs works
- Shopkeeper
- Restaurant owner
- Other *(please specify)* _____

23. I am not involved in ecotourism activities in Sukau Village and Lower Kinabatangan area because.....

- Not interested at all
- No capital to do investment
- No skill and experience
- Risky
- Cannot see opportunities
- Can see opportunities but not permitted
- Other (*please specify*) _____

24. Do you interact directly with the foreign tourists?

- Yes (*please proceed to No. 25*) No

25. Why did you interact directly with tourists because.....

- It is my daily job
- It is part of my daily jobs
- I volunteer to do that
- Tourists are my customer
- Other (*please specify*) _____

26. The following events are meant to involve local people in tourist development process in general. Which events have you attended in the last 5 years? (*You may select more than one option*).

- Attended a general village community meeting
- Attended a meeting at the village community level on security issues
- Attended a meeting on rural development issues
- Attended a meeting regarding wildlife conservation issues
- Attended a meeting regarding health issues
- Attended a meeting of a political party
- Attended a meeting regarding local cultural activity
- Attended a meeting regarding sports activity

- Attended a meeting regarding tourists activity
- Attended a work course or training
- Responding to research survey
- Not participated at all
- Other (*please specify*) _____

27. From your view, who should lead to tourism development process in Sukau Village and Lower Kinabatangan area? (*You may select more than one option*).

- The government bodies
- The private tour operators
- The government and private joint venture
- The local people and government joint venture
- The local people and private company joint venture
- The local people and NGO joint venture
- I have no idea
- Other (*please specify*) _____

28. Would you be interested in attending a course work or training session in order to increase your personal knowledge and skill?

- Not interested
- Undecided
- Interested (*please proceed to No. 29*)

29. What sort of course or training skill would you like to attend in order to improve your participation in tourism development in this Village?

- Handicraft
- Sewing
- Cooking
- Small business
- Homestay management
- Tourist Guide

- Agriculture
- Farm Breeding
- Aquaculture
- Traditional culture performance
- Other (*please specify*) _____

30. Have you heard about the “*The Intergrated Rural Development Project (IRDP)*” in Lower Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village?

- Yes No

31. Are you interested to participate in the IRDP plan in the future?

- Not Interested
- Not Sure
- Interested

32. (a) Are you aware as apart of the IRDP plan you may have to move from your traditional housing lot to new housing scheme area?

- Yes No

(b) What is your opinion about it?

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Part 4: The Local Community Participation, Wildlife, Rainforest and Conservation Programme

33. What is your view regarding the declaration of Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village as a protected area for wildlife and rainforest conservation?

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

34. (a) Do you think that wildlife hunting and gathering activities are still carried out by the villagers?

Yes

No

(b) Do you think wildlife hunting and gathering should be allowed in a controlled method?

Yes

No

35. What types of interests or activities for those villagers still depends on Kinabatangan rainforest protected area (*you can choose more than one*)?

Hunting for wildlife meats

Collecting rattans/ bamboos /resins

Collecting Firewood

Collecting herbs for traditional medicine

Collecting jungle's fruits

Collecting leaves or seeds for food

Logging

Other (*please specify*) _____

36. (a) What sort of wildlife creatures in Kinabatangan Sanctuary Area effect most of the villagers agricultures crops?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primates such as monkeys | <input type="checkbox"/> Crocodiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elephants | <input type="checkbox"/> Jungle cats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civet-cats | <input type="checkbox"/> Bats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |

(b) What sort of wildlife creatures in Kinabatangan Sanctuary Area effect most of the villagers reared animals?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primates such as monkeys | <input type="checkbox"/> Crocodiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elephants | <input type="checkbox"/> Jungle cats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civet-cats | <input type="checkbox"/> Bats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |

(c) What sort of wildlife creatures in Kinabatangan Sanctuary Area effect most of the villagers daily life activities?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primates such as monkeys | <input type="checkbox"/> Crocodiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elephants | <input type="checkbox"/> Jungle cats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civet-cats | <input type="checkbox"/> Bats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |

37. Which organisation do villagers mostly deal with concerning wildlife problems in Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village?

- World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia (WWF)
- Sabah Wildlife Department
- Sabah Forestry Department
- Kinabatangan District Office
- Other (please specify) _____

38. What is your view regarding these organisations in managing wildlife or rainforest conservation policy in this area *(please circle your answer)*?

- 1 Strongly dissatisfied
- 2 Less satisfied
- 3 Moderately satisfied
- 4 Satisfied
- 5 Strongly satisfied

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia (WWF) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Sabah Wildlife Department | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Sabah Forestry Department | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Kinabatangan District Office | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

39. (a) Have you been involved in the tree-planting project run by the private lodge operators or other organisation in Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village in the last five years?

- Yes No *(please proceed to question b)*

(b) Why are you not involved in the tree planting project?

- I am not interested
- Does not benefited my family and me
- I was not informed about the project
- Other *(please specify)* _____

40. Which of the following activities is a major cause to pollution in Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village? (Please tick an appropriate box).

Types of Pollution	Activity				
	Private Company and government agency Owned Palm-oil Estates	Logging	Villagers Owned small palm oil farm/cocoa farm	Ecotourism Project and daily ecotourists activities	Other (please specify)
1. River/Lake pollution					
2. Destruction to rainforest, flora and fauna					
3. Extermination of Wildlife animals					

41. What do you think are the conflicts between the interests of Sukau Village and the conservation programme manager?

(Please specify) _____

42. Do you agree that ecotourists activities in Kinabatangan Area and Sukau Village could simultaneously sustain both a conservation programme and improve standard of living of the local community in near future?

Yes

No

Thank You Very Much For Your Cooperation.

Appendix IV

AN EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

An Interview with the Chairman of Miso Walai Homestay of Batu Puteh, 14 May 2003 (2.00 p.m.)

Researcher: First of all, I would like to ask you about the history of the original formation of MESCOT and homestay. How long have you been the director of homestay?

Respondent: I 've been the chairman of homestay for a year now. The homestay was originally set up in February 2000, when we had our initial meeting in Batu Puteh and at that time we explained the concept of homestay, its purpose, the name, the objective and so on, the laws and guidelines and regulations governing it, and selected the committee members. And with that, the kampung people agreed to it and a week later, we went to Kota Kinabalu to register it under the register of societies. At that time we submitted an application, which was rejected because it was felt that it leaned towards the commercial. Because of that, we were not registered. After that we referred back to the Tourism Ministry and met with Joanna Kiskey, and then she encouraged us to establish homestay as an association but under the Sabah Tourism Ministry.

Researcher: Joanna Kiskey, what position did she hold?

Respondent: She is an officer in the Sabah Tourism Ministry and her role is to oversee the homestay section in the state of Sabah. As a facilitator.

Researcher: At the initial stages, were there any problems? Specifically, when you held the meeting with the kampung people, did they immediately agree to the idea or otherwise?

Respondent: In fact, at that initial meeting when we proposed the homestay and so on, there were only about 50, 60 people who showed up...

Researcher: At the time, how many were you hoping would turn up?

Respondent: A lot more, but we had to go ahead because we had already been running MESCOT for almost two years, so it was high time to do something. We had to carry on, even though not that many

showed up, we of course didn't expect them to because we were only explaining all the criteria of what an acceptable home was. At the time of our formation, there were about 37 members for the homestay, who actually were members. Those 37 were inspected internally and externally by the AJK and at that time, I was not the chairman yet, at that time Encik Rahman made his inspections with Martin before the ministry came, and several houses were selected at that time 12 houses were ready to be inspected by the Ministry of Tourism. About a month after that, the Ministry came here to give a briefing on homestay, at that time it was Joanna Kiskey and Encik Jakaria Kechuk from MOCAT [Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism]. Of course there were some problems in the initial start-up, people were doubtful, they didn't have much confidence in the idea.

Researcher: How did you finally manage to convince them?

Respondent: We went ahead and ran the program with the initial 12 houses, of course it would be hard to convince people with words only. We knew that not everybody would want to join, so we were practical and observed the situation first. At that time only 12 houses were really interested, so we started with them. But at the time of inspection, only 7 of them were approved by MOCAT [Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism].

Researcher: So only the 7 were in operation at that time.

Respondent: No, all 12 were operating.

Researcher: The kampung people were beginning to understand what homestay was all about?

Respondent: If we compare the kampung people who are members of homestay with the typical kampung people, the typical kampung people naturally understand much less about it. The members understand it better, only that some of them still feel a lack of confidence about certain aspects...

Researcher: For example?

Respondent: Language, how to treat the tourists, perhaps also the food. So we tell them that as far as the language problem, this we can learn, even if we don't know something, we can use sign language, if for eating we can do this (respondent shows how to invite someone to eat) in the hopes that after a year or so our members will have learnt a bit more of the foreign language. As for food,

we tell them that whatever food we eat in our homes, the tourists can also eat it, unless we know they are allergic or they're vegetarian... As to service, we can also hold in-service training for our members, how to serve the tourists, how to welcome them, how to talk with them at home in the hopes that they will have a bit more self-belief, more self-confidence.

Researcher: How was the reaction at first of the kampung people to the homestay idea, especially those that did not quite agree with it..

Respondent: Those people were concerned about our culture, our way of life, and worried what the effects of having tourists here would have on our families, our children, our way of life.... negative effects on our culture, unhealthy aspects,.. but, we have already prepared Do's and Don'ts, whereby before tourists come we give them a briefing to ensure that these kinds of things won't occur.... there was one case previously, when we were really strict about these Do's and Don'ts, when we called to KK, the tourists were coming from KK, we called them and asked what they were wearing, if they were still wearing short pants, we told them to change, not to come until they had changed their clothes,...

Researcher: They didn't complain?

Respondent: Out of ten, say, there might be 1 or 2, not everyone agreed,.. but we have to, if we really want to run this activity properly, our way, with our ethics, our laws, we have to be quite strict, if they want to come here, they must follow our rules, never mind if we lose a few customers, we still have to follow our own rules. Thank God, over these last two years those who have come here have followed our ways... We have two types of tourists, one type is called FITs, free independent travellers, those who just show up, we don't accept this type.

Researcher: If we are independent tourists, we won't be allowed in here?

Respondent: Not to say, we don't accept them, what I mean is that we see first, if they come they must understand first, they must be told like this, like that, if they agree with it, then we will accept them. In most cases with homestay, we only accept pre-bookings. They have to book early. They have to book early, and a week or two before we send them the Do's and Don'ts, we tell them in advance that if they come here what they need to follow. When they arrive here, we give them another briefing. Thank God that after a year, we have received very good feedback. The

kampung people who did not get involved, whose first impressions of homestay were negative, after seeing the benefits it brings to the kampung people, thank God, they begin to accept it. But now we have a group of 25 members for 3 years, maybe the kampung people are concerned about the criteria for a homestay because we must have certain criteria.

Researcher: What criteria are the most important?

Respondent: Most important is that every house must have a verandah, it must have a proper toilet, we have told them there must be at least 2 rooms, one for the tourists and one for the head of the household.

Researcher: Oh, these rooms include the room for the head of the household?...

Respondent: Yes, at least 2 rooms, one specially for tourists. This is a must, if they want to join this program, they must set aside at least one room for tourists. If there are no tourists, the family can use it, but if there are tourists, it must be made available, and a sitting room as well, that is the most basic criteria and in addition to that, we also look at the surroundings of the house, whether it's clean or not.

Researcher: At the earliest stages, where did the idea of having a homestay program in Batu Puteh come from?

Respondent: It came after encouragement from the government, The Tourism Ministry at that time, went from kampung to kampung giving briefings about homestay, what is homestay. We also had heard that there was homestay in Sukau, on the radio, there was encouragement from the government to involve the community. Secondly, probably due to the fact that homestay can be opened with a low capital, because we figured that if it was meant for the kampung people, which tourist activity required the lowest capital, so homestay seemed the most appropriate for the kampung level. A house, they already have a house, as long as they fulfilled the criteria and procedures to become a member, that was it, because of the low capital to start-up. So, the members, providing they paid the RM10.00 membership fee, they could accept tourists and so on, this is probably why we were encouraged by The Tourism Ministry, because of the low start-up costs. It's quite easy to manage, for me it's very easy to manage.

Researcher: What was the objective of initiating this homestay project?

Respondent: Most importantly, among the kampung people who want to join us, they misunderstand about it, it is only a sideline, for side income, in addition to the sharing of our culture with outsiders and our own people. But the most important objective of all is to provide a side income. The kampung people also benefit in other ways as well.

Researcher: What kind of benefits?

Respondent: To their quality of life, take for example their houses, they can improve them, because they have certain criteria that they are required to meet. They need to repair and improve them and if they are one of our members, we have a fund, we can assist them and help them beautify their homes a bit. Secondly, indirectly it's educational, for example if a member is involved in homestay he will have the motivation to learn more, like English, current events, things he can talk to his guest about. Indirectly his children will be exposed to a non-yellow culture, be more exposed to English. In addition to that, it can help in maintaining the cleanliness of the kampung or the compound around the house, because if they want to follow this program, they must make sure that their house is clean, that the food is clean. Not only in preparing clean wholesome food, but they themselves must keep their lifestyles clean. Our food, we take care of it, the cleanliness of our kitchens, the house itself, and soon this idea spreads throughout the whole kampung. This is the advantage of this program, from small the benefits spread. This is the objective of homestay. At first, there were a lot of misconceptions, in Sukau, in Bilit, in Abai, they thought that if there were no tourists, they started to worry, what for we joined this program if there are no tourists. In fact, you don't need to have tourists every day, that is not the homestay objective. Because we have to understand that a family must have family time for themselves. Supposing if every day a tourist came, it wouldn't be very comfortable would it? Like us here, not everyday do we have tourists, every month perhaps twice tourists come, and they are referred by INTREPID, and that is only at the end of the week, that is Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Like recently, last week tourists came, this week no tourists, and at the end of the month more will be coming. So, our members do not always necessarily have to entertain tourists, they also have time for their families, that is the objective of homestay.

There was a time last year, when we were too busy, some of our members gave feedback that they were too busy, they were too tired to entertain the tourists. Well, you know the kampung people, the way of life of the Malaysian people, if we have a guest we feel we must really look after them, so it's difficult to go out, or have company over, we can't just leave them behind. That's why, we can't have tourists every day.

Researcher: If there is an understanding that tourists will be coming every day wouldn't it be better to have a B&B instead of homestay..?

Respondent: In the west coast of Sabah, they don't really understand what homestay is all about. They build a house next door, tourists stay next door, they prepare food for them. This is actually what is called B&B, this is the wrong concept.

Researcher: Do they call it homestay?

Respondent: Yes,, they call it homestay. In the west coast of Sabah, most of them are like that. There is one homestay run by (?).,,,,, by his family, but there are several houses, the tourists stay in them and they call it homestay....

Researcher: So as for you yourself, Encik Hashim, please give your definition of what homestay is in your capacity as chairman.

Respondent: Homestay means living together with a family, in their home, not with single people. (by definition) they must have a house, that's number one, stay together with the tourists, if they stay in a separate lodging, that's not homestay any more. They have a house, a family, meaning that if I'm living alone in a big house, I cannot offer homestay. They must have a family. and follow the specific criteria I mentioned earlier. And there must be activities, this is an essential point. They must have activities.

Researcher: Activities like what?

Respondent: Inside the home and outside the home. For outside the home, they can follow the association's activities. Inside the home, they can cook together with them, wear a sarong, try on our traditional clothing and follow the traditional way of bathing of the Malay people, eat not with a spoon but with their hands. That is actually homestay as we understand it.

- Researcher: Hashim, do you feel that with the homestay project continuing as it is, that it will change the lifestyle of the kampung people either directly or indirectly?
- Respondent: Up until now, there has not been that effect. In my view, in the three years that we've been running it here, the way of life has not changed, I mean the way of life of the Malay people has not changed.
- Researcher: The Malay people or Orang Sungai?
- Respondent: Orang Sungai... but I cannot speak to the long term effects of say, 10 or 15 years, we will have to see...
- Researcher: But it seems inevitable that it will be affected...
- Respondent: If we continue running it properly our way following our laws, we can, we can maintain this... but if we alter it too much, for instance if our tourists don't follow our laws, dress inappropriately and if we just let it be, then cannot.... if this happens, word gets out, people will criticize us and see it's not the same anymore..... we always have to be careful to maintain our standards. For me this is why having the association is so important. We can't let people operate on their own..
- Researcher: Operate within the association...
- Respondent: Yes, operate within the confines of the association because the association is able to look after the interests of its members. This means that the members have to stay in line, they have to follow the guidelines which they've been told. If they don't the association can discipline them and there are even ways to expel members.
- Researcher: Oh, the the association can terminate membership?
- Respondent: Yes, we can.....
- Researcher: What would cause a member to be expelled?
- Respondent: Up until now, we have never had to expel any members but we have suspended them from hosting tourists in their homes. Maybe not because of any misbehaviour to the tourists but because their homes did not fully meet the required criteria. What I mean is, they were renovating their houses in such a way so as not to be able to receive tourists. Because of that, we had to

temporarily suspend their membership. They ought to understand why. If for example we have already told them beforehand that if they were to renovate their house, to do repairs and so on, they would not be able to receive tourists until it was fully ok. Secondly, we will suspend their membership if they leave their house, say for a month or two leaving behind only their children, we don't want that. Because it must be a family situation. Yes, we have suspended members for that reason but it was not a permanent suspension. We suspend their right to host tourists. So if he does it again 10 years from now, it's possible he will be suspended again. So what's important is the association. If it's carried out 'freelance' as it is in Abai, well then anything can happen, anybody can come. Because they are not registered. Our homestay association is registered with the state, the Sabah state board, so if we break any of the rules, we can be suspended or severely penalized. So what I believe is, that even 10, 15 years from now, we can still maintain our culture and so on if we emphasize the laws. But if we are too lenient in enforcing our laws, the whole thing will become untenable. That's what I believe,... we'll see, if in a year or two from now I step down, and am replaced by someone with a slightly different style of management, different ways of looking at things, maybe the situation has changed a bit, it shouldn't matter. We must follow our basic principles, we have to. So, we have to be bold enough to criticize or discipline our members and also we have to keep having frequent meetings. Every month, we meet and discuss any existing problems. Otherwise, if there are problems somewhere, how would we know,... we have to openly discuss this problem, that problem....

Researcher: What has been the biggest problem that you have been faced with up till now, En Hashim?

Respondent: The water problem, it has reached the extent that some of our members couldn't accept any more tourists. If we are afraid that we will have no water in our homes during the dry season, like last year, there are members who will have to refuse tourists even when the tourists are right there at our front doors.. But we cannot accept them because there is no water.

Researcher: Which month was the drought season?

Respondent: April? December to April, wasn't it? October.....
So, they refuse them.... We have had the problem of tourists who have already arrived here, then having to explain to them, to apologize to them, that because we don't have water... because

water is so vitally important... Water that is unclean can cause all kinds of diseases, if there is no water, our members are willing to even refuse the tourists. This is the biggest problem to me, it just doesn't seem right to have to refuse tourists who are already right at our doors, just because we don't have enough water...

Researcher: How do you think we can overcome this water problem?

Respondent: It's is a long term plan, we have a tourist cooperative which we depend on, we have a lot of ideas like digging a permanent well.

Researcher: Is it completed?

Respondent: Not yet. There are a lot of ideas, a lot of plans, to dig wells,... In Kampung Perpaduan, for example, we have water gravity, they have a pipe feed.....

Researcher: It's not one that they bought and paid for, En Hashim?

Respondent: No, they made it the natural way, it was free,... If there is no water here, the way that we do it now, the member can notify the AJK, tell them that in 2 or 3 days time that some tourists will be arriving, then they will have to notify us. Suppose that I have a problem with water, then we will request some water, we will contact a supplier who will send the water to the place.

Researcher: You mean one of those 30 ringgit water tanks?

Respondent: Yes, one 30 ringgit tank. So, if they don't have water, they have to let us know, we will contact them and the water will be sent to the house., a supply of water... This is one of the ways to handle it if there is no water. We have to force our members so if they have no water they've got to tell us earlier, we will ask the lorry to send water to the house.... drinking water is so important.

Researcher: Does every homestay member's house have a well?

Respondent: Several houses have wells, 2 or 3 other houses use tanks.

Researcher: You don't use a pumping system, where you put the pump in the ground and then use an electric pump...You don't use this idea?

Respondent: We do, but the problem is we are only just beginning, I feel we are still at the early stages, so things like this we have already collected, discussed and you know that sometimes if an

association is still newly starting out, funding is not yet stable. That would need a bit of capital.

Researcher: Yes, because electric pumps are quite expensive....

Respondent: Yes...

Researcher: What kind of promotion?

Respondent: Many types of promotion, when we just started promoting it, we made a brochure. Have you seen our brochure?

Researcher: No, I've never seen it...

Respondent: Where is our brochure, have a look at it....

Researcher: What do you want to show me, can you show me..?...

Respondent: Ok, here is our brochure, we worked so hard, like we were coolies. We went down to KK, from hotel to hotel, from tour operators we went to STBC to send the brochure. We left our (?) homestay, here's our brochure, if tourists come, please show them. This is how we started out, distributing our brochure around.

Researcher: Like a travelling salesman?

Respondent: Yes...

Researcher: You went down to the field yourselves...

Respondent: We had the highest level members of the AJK go down to KK, stopping along the way, giving out the brochure, from hotel to hotel, give, give give..... It was quite pitiful at the beginning. Just after we proposed the idea, soon after that we put up our website. That too was a bit painful..because our website was not the free type, we had to pay nearly 2 4 thousand. Painful, but we had no choice, we knew how important it was to have one. But after our website was up...

Researcher: Did you have to pay to host it?

Respondent: Yes, the payment was around 4 thousand.

Researcher: 4 thousand...

Respondent: One payment.

Researcher: One time or...

Respondent: 4 thousand for the first year, after that every year we have to pay...

Researcher: How much do you have to pay?

Respondent: One thousand to maintain it every year. We use the money from the fund.

Researcher: How long have you had the website?

Respondent: 3 years.. More or less right from the start...

Researcher: So from the earliest stages you had a website... and with that having been taken care of, tourists from every corner of the world could find out about you?

Respondent: Yes, from the website... Yes, we knew that....

Researcher: Do you have any links...? Linked with other websites.....

Respondent: Under the WWF website...

Researcher: Ohhh. Besides the WWF, any other links?

Respondent: No....

Researcher: Hashim, besides these,... what else have you done to promote it?

Respondent: We have tried promoting it in international magazines... We did two magazines, the MAS in-flight magazine and one other under world environment.

Researcher: A fixed spot?

Respondent: For a few months.

Researcher: Exhibitions?

Respondent: We joined in the Cuti-cuti Malaysia in KK, 1 stop centre...

Researcher: Recently, I went there,... at the end of April in centre point

- Respondent: CP had. Recently we did it in Kuala Lumpur.
- Researcher: That is the tourists rate or how? If for instance I heard it was RM40, now it's already gone up?
- Respondent: Yes, now it's up to 50, but we depend on this type of tourists. If our place is special, it depends on the place. If there is a group that wants, maybe they can get a further discount.. This is the way of business, it's like that... at the beginning 40 and now raised to 59 ringgit because we feel our maintainance is a bit higher now because we have a website, we are using the fund for more promotion. There is a plan to join the SBC, together with the ministry to have an exhibition in Japan.
- Researcher: When?
- Respondent: This year, in July or September.
- Researcher: As for the distribution of *tourists, how is it handled?*
- Respondent: We follow a rotation...
- Researcher: Ok, you mean you take turns. If done... meaning at the end of the year it is sure to be done so, more or less it can take in tourists?
- Respondent: Yes, it's like this. We will start Kg Perpaduan above, one to 24. Say that house no. 1 gets 2 tourists and there 6 tourists, it will get 2, 2, 2. not counting how long the tourists will stay, as long as he gets his quota the other tourists will go to the other houses. We have already explained that he is lucky to get tourists who will stay for 2 nights and there are tourists who will stay for 1 week.....
- Researcher: He is lucky... Meaning other people will not question this?
- Respondent: No, they cannot question this...
- Researcher: This has been agreed ?
- Respondent: Yes, it has been agreed on during a meeting, which is why a meeting is important and considered as an agreement. We cannot divide the tourists' length of stay to different houses. We have tried but its impossible.
- Researcher: Has any homestay proprietor ever complained about this issue?

- Respondent:** No complaint because they only have to pay 10 ringgit to be a member and now their earning is so much more than that... Meaning, as long as they get their share of tourists. If they are being skipped then they have the right to complain, thank God, so far they have been satisfied.
- Researcher:** Any problems with your members so far?
- Respondent:** The members up to now, most of them are our own people... There are no major problems. Most of the issues are settled in our meetings, if there is any problem we just discuss it like normal. Like some of the tourists were said to be too demanding, too fussy..
- Researcher:** How were the tourists being fussy?
- Respondent:** Saying they wouldn't eat this or eat that, so the head of the household felt a little bit disappointed, that's to be expected. It's normal. So we as members of the AJK just try to explain to them that there are all kinds of tourists, tourists like this, tourists like that...
- Researcher:** Comparing the local tourists with the foreign tourists, in the time you've been here En.Hashim. who are more demanding?
- Respondent:** Local tourists...
- Researcher:** What are they usually so fussy about?
- Respondent:** Locals, I'll tell you straight out, they are much more demanding. For the foreign tourists, if they've already been briefed on what they can and cannot do in a certain place, they will follow. If locals on the other hand, they will have a lot of questions and a lot of comments, a lot of special requests and so on.
- Researcher:** What is their usual comment about homestay in general?
- Respondent:** Good, only that while they are staying in homestay they say all sorts of things. The foreign tourists are easier to handle than the locals. This is something we have discussed with our members. Like, if we come from a different country and it is explained to us how to act, we will follow the advice. If we don't know how to do something we won't do it. But if it's the locals, they think they know everything already. So, it's like, it's nothing new...

- Researcher: As if they are coming to their own place..?
- Respondent: Yes, like entering their own place, whereas the foreign tourists have more respect for us. If they want to take a photo, they ask "boleh ambil gambar". If they come for a visit, they knock first. If it's the local tourists, they usually display their improper attitude not so much in the kampung but in the homes. As if they show more courtesy when they are overseas.
- Researcher: Are there any course for the participants?
- Respondent: Yes, we have...
- Researcher: What course do they undergo?
- Respondent: Homke management courses, efficiency courses...
- Researcher: What are efficiency courses?
- Respondent: Regarding the running of the homestay. The Sabah Tourism Ministry is the facilitator. Besides this, we have English courses to improve the communication skills of our members. In-house courses from our AJK...
- Researcher: What kind of courses?
- Respondent: English courses, we also developed a course called tourism culture, where we explained about recycled tourism. This includes, how to look more friendly when looking at the tourists, sweet-smiling, even when we are in no mood to do it or feel fed up, how to maintain our poise.... At the moment we can say there has been a slight drop in standard, according to feedback received. Now that our people have been welcoming tourists for 2 or 3 years, there has been a bit of a levelling out in the quality. So we are trying to maintain our service, keep the quality of up, keep the people here motivated.
- Researcher: How can you manage to do that, what can be done?
- Respondent: By having courses, to raise our standards, be more efficient...
- Researcher: Are the course always on-going?
- Respondent: Yes. Secondly we make visits to other kampungs. Thirdly, we have group projects (gotong-royong). Build team spirit. The most important thing is frequent meetings,. This way, if we

always see them they won't become distanced from us. They will be able to explain their problems to us more openly. And we as members of the AJK have to respond quickly to their problems and see what we can do to overcome them.

Researcher: At this point, what kind of visits have the members made?

Respondent: To Kota Kinabalu, we have been to Kampung Bayangan, Keningau. We are already very familiar with the West coast. To Sukau, many places..

Researcher: Does everyone have to go or do some stay behind?

Respondent: Some stay behind. Not everyone, some are left behind but we take turns..

Researcher: Have any of the members ever voiced out that they want to pull out?

Respondent: Up until now, we haven't had any...

Researcher: No... So we can say it's still sweet so far...

Respondent: Up until now, it's still ok. We can say it's running pretty well..

Researcher: How about tourists complaints, any comments?

Respondent: The most frequent complaint that we hear from the tourists is that their host family are too shy.

Researcher: Oh, they've said the hosts are too shy?

Respondent: What they mean is, the tourists feel it's a bit difficult to mix socially with them. We tend to be a bit shy. They come here to get to know us. If they are here 2 or 3 days, then with each day there is more socializing. That's the most common remark that the host is very shy. Secondly, there's the communication barriers, they still exist. This is probably why they don't socialize that much, because they can't speak English that well. If there is a child who can speak, he or she will mix a bit with the guests but very often the children are away at work, the wife may speak a bit but only a few words.

Researcher: That's all..

Respondent: Yes, up to now these are the usual comments...

- Researcher: As for positive comments...
- Respondent: (there is another respondent but the conversation is not clear)
- Researcher: Ohhh, they want to see children too...
- Respondent: Those are the usual comments. Besides these, the rest is ok...
- Researcher: They love it. Usually they have good things to say about it...
- Respondent: (...), later, we'll, see, it's difficult to say.... he's still reading it...
- Researcher: I suppose there are cultural differences between the tourists and the local kampung people that place limitations on the homestay project? I mean, differences that can restrict... does this limit the number of tourists who are interested in coming here, or *otherwise...?*
- Respondent: I think this is not a problem...
- Researcher: *Not a problem?*
- Respondent: The only problem is misunderstanding the true meaning of *this* project. For example a someone who wants to join but doesn't understand it.. This is what limits it to some extent. If we really understand that this is actually a very good program and any of the kampung people who want to get into tourism can start with homestay.
- Researcher: So you mean, *homestay* could be a good first step to becoming more seriously involved in the tourism field?
- Respondent: Yes, like now, I think we're a bit ahead of some others... because we started homestay and expanded it a bit, have done surveys and the like... now we have come up with the idea of forming a cooperative.... now we have a private subsidiary. Now we have someone who wants to open up an eco-lodge not far from here. So all of these have come out of starting with homestay. We are still discussing much more. All kinds of things. So from a small start-up capital a lot of things are coming from it. Modal that can grow a bit. This is what I'm saying.
- Researcher: Hashim, have you received any money from any sources so far for this homestay project?

Respondent: Up till now we have received nothing...

Researcher: Nothing from the government, the Ministries of Culture or Tourism?

Respondent: Nothing...

Researcher: So, they have only provided consultancy?

Respondent: Consultancy and encouragement...

Researcher: Have you all ever tried to solicit sponsorship from anywhere?

Respondent: Right now, none of the homestays are sponsored, but one of the eco-lodges is sponsored by SHELL.

Researcher: Oh, SHELL...

Respondent: They have provided somewhere between 80 to 220 thousand to build the eco-lodge. That's an amount far greater than... We are actually grateful that our project, project MESCOT has only received training, because it's basically independent. Homestay runs on its own from association money which is growing, tourists are coming, we control our own funds and we thank God for that.

Researcher: Does the Tourism Ministry check up on you monthly, annually, or...?

Respondent: Every month we submit a report, and also every year.

Researcher: Do they come here?

Respondent: If they are doing their inspections they will come here a few times.

Researcher: A few times a year?

Respondent: One year twice...

Researcher: Usually, which month?

Respondent: Usually in the middle of the year and at the end, and usually at the end of the year we submit our report. There is my own report, that we prepare, perhaps you have seen it?

Researcher:

Respondent: From the website, from the internet. Afterwards I will cc it with an attachment. If it arrives, just email us. We have finished two annual reports, I'm still stuck in this year's one, I'm still in the process of collecting all the data to be submitted.

Researcher: Still stuck? That sounds dangerous...

Respondent: Actually it's my problem. In fact I have all the data I just need to complete it and send it off.

Researcher: Is there any tie in between your homestay project and the nature reserve program in Batu Puteh?

Respondent: Yes, as far as the outdoor activities, if tourists come we may prepare a forestry program, then our tourists will be involved. So they may go off in the morning and then return in the late afternoon. This is one of the forestry program activities. So, yes there is some connection with the homestay program.

Researcher: To the extent that the homestay program involves the local community, does this have any connection with the rehabilitation of the forest?

Respondent: Up until now I can say that almost 200 of our community members are indirectly involved with the forest rehabilitation program. If we want to add to that number, then we would have to increase our activities. For example, taking the cooperative, we have to be very flexible. So, if I have a homestay, the kampung people's (..) also can join. College students should also be able to join as members. So we....

(CASSETTE SIDE A FINISHED....TURN TO SIDE B)

Researcher: What would you like to be seen as a model homestay program in the future?

Respondent: I hope that this homestay, because we don't want to become the model homestay for the whole state of Sabah, thank God we have already been chosen as a model not because of our houses, but perhaps because of the way that we run the project, how it is managed and so on, but if we consider only the houses maybe other places are even better. I hope if possible to increase the membership of the homestay to the whole kampung because

I can see that there are still a few house that are being left behind, small, old house and the like. I hope that if they join the homestay, they will be able to enlarge their houses, increase their income and so on. That is what I would like to see. The truth is that we are not profit-oriented, we hope to bring benefits to the people here in other ways as well, both directly and indirectly. It's beneficial for the kampung people to be involved in it. We hope that more will join homestay especially from our kampung and other kampungs too, hopefully they will want to join the tourism activity. At least they can get a bit of additional side-income, so I feel this is one area that will develop in time to come.

Researcher: Does anyone have any intention to open up lodges here?

Respondent: Well, as I said, up till now there is one eco-lodge...

Researcher: But that is still under MESCOT, isn't it? How about personal ones?

Respondent: Not yet, except for those that are quite far from here..

Researcher: Is Uncle Tan still operating in the Batu Puteh area or somewhere else?

Respondent: Still in the area...

Researcher: Do you feel there is any competition with that, or is there any threat in Uncle Tan being here?

Respondent: Competition...

Researcher: You don't feel it's a threat?

Respondent: Not really, because as I mentioned earlier, we have our own permanent customers. We don't feel threatened because we have a fixed stream sent from INTREPID, throughout the year, January to December. So every month at least two groups will come, and some months every week there are two groups. So we have the advantage of having tourists sent to us. So because of that we don't feel directly threatened....

Researcher: What is the name of that place?

Respondent: What is it.... Danau Girang...

Researcher: Dana Wirang?

Respondent: Previously a lot of the kampung people complained... because they passed by below us...

Researcher: They passed here?

Respondent: Yes, they passed here...

Researcher: After that they took a boat below?

Respondent: They took a boat below and after that went to their eco-lodge... the kampung people could only look at it, but they derived no benefit from it. So, actually from afar Uncle Tan is not that popular with our homestay.

Researcher: So you mean previously Uncle Tan....

Respondent: Yes, it was before, about 10 years ago...

Researcher: So this idea might have sprung from that too, the dissatisfaction the people had...

Respondent: Maybe, it could be one of the reasons for the existence of this, because we want the kampung people to be directly involved in any tourism activity here. A second reason could be because we want to keep the tourism industry going here. What if we didn't only emphasize this homestay program? If instead we had an eco-lodge and we had a subsidiary to run it operating as a tour operator. This subsidiary will come in as our tour operator, it will have a licence to bring tourists from the waterport, we could bring in bus tourists buses. We could develop this. Like Trek Sdn Bhd, they have an eco-lodge and it is developing. Say we open a branch in Sandakan, in an office. We get one big tour bus, we bring it here. We could make all sorts of programs. They could stay in the eco-lodge 4 or 5 days and after that 3 or 4 days in a homestay. So it would be the same in the eco-lodge as staying with the kampung people, staying in a homestay with the kampung people .

Researcher: So, make it like a package kind of a thing?

Respondent: Yes, like a package...

Researcher: So a week in Batu Puteh, 3 days in the eco-lodge...

Respondent: Yeah, something like that... more or less...

- Researcher: Hashim, here in Batu Puteh, which stands out the most outstanding tourist product... the culture, the tourists, the homestay code or the nature here?
- Respondent: Actually it's the homestay. Maybe it's about the same, the homestay and the nature.
- Researcher: So both of them together?
- Respondent: Yes, both of them together. Balanced... If, suppose we hear comments that they like the nature here. The natural beauty, the wildlife, the forest and so on... They also enjoy the homestay, the culture, the kampung people. If, say, they come from a nature society or group they might say it's the nature that attracts them the most. But if the program is balanced, then homestay and nature together. They would say the homestay was ok, good, outstanding, and the nature was outstanding too. So, it depends on what group as well.
- Researcher: May I ask a bit about KOPEL (Batu Puteh Tourist Cooperative)?
- Respondent: Sure....
- Researcher: What....(?)
- Respondent: To keep the tourism activity in Batu Puteh going.
- Researcher: Do you think then if not for KOPEL it would be sustained?
- Respondent: It would be more difficult to run. Because suppose there was no KOPEL, only the homestay. We would have difficulty in getting any tour operator's licence, we might get a licence to carry on tourism activity but it would be difficult if we wanted to expand our activity. If there was no KOPEL, the other associations would not be able to come together. But with the existence of KOPEL, they can come together. If we are united, we can combine our energy, our ideas, money, administration into one. Another advantage is that KOPEL enables us to involve more members of the kampung community. Not only the homestay, not only Miso Walai, not only the boat service. But more people, even those not involved in the homestay not involved with the boat service, they can become members, too. Because of KOPEL. Another advantage of KOPEL is that we can now open our own subsidiary. Ahh, that's what we are trying to get registered now, , Trek Sdn. Bhd. So this subsidiary will have a

licence and we could then open a branch in Sandakan and we could expand our activities. Suppose we could do that in Gomantong, in Sukau or in Sepilok. Then, it would be sustainable, our income would increase, and we could sustain the tourism activity in Batu Puteh. This is our main objective now.

Researcher: Whose idea was this?

Respondent: The idea of Miso Walai Homestay and other associations. The members of MESCOT itself.

Researcher: What is the connection of KOPEL with homestay?

Respondent: The homestay is under KOPEL. Meaning that KOPEL, Tourist Cooperative of Batu Puteh has a lot of things, homestay, bureau of boat services, bureau of handicrafts, bureau of tourist guides. bureau of MESCOT, bureau of transportation,...

Researcher: Ohhh, so MESCOT is under KOPEL now?

Respondent: Because MESCOT, we don't want to do away with. It is considered the basis of all the others... Like that is the plug and this is the fuse... if it doesn't die... Ahhh, because of MESCOT, we have kayaking, we have our culture, there are many bureaus under it... So we have members from each of them, one from Miso Walai, from handicrafts, from the boat service, one from culture, one from transportation, one from the kayak club, one from MESCOT... Ahh, it is one of the members of the constitution of the cooperative. Ahhh, we still have all these. Ahhh, one more, Trek Sdn Bhd is under the tourist cooperative.

Researcher: Then it can be said to be quite large. All done in three years...

Respondent: Yes the Batu Putih Tourist Cooperative (KOPEL) is the first tourist cooperative in Malaysia. It had never been done before in Malaysia.

Researcher: Congratulations...

Respondent: Because we wouldn't have been able to form the tourist cooperative if we didn't have the subsidiary.

Researcher: Ohhh, the one that's forming Trek Sdn Bhd?

Respondent: Ahhh, because you can't run a tourist cooperative if there is no subsidiary to run the tourist activities. That is why we started the company and included it as a subsidiary.

Researcher: Is Trek Sdn. Bhd. already operating?

Respondent: Already...

Researcher: It is already registered?

Respondent: Yes....

Researcher: What is it doing now?

Respondent: Building an eco-lodge, now it's building an ecolodge...

Researcher: Ohhh, so your company is building an eco-lodge ...

Respondent: Yes, that's how we included the money from SHELL which was around 80 thousand to 220 thousand... it's quite complicated, but...

Researcher: So the eco-lodge is part of the MESCOT program?

Respondent: The MESCOT program and KOPEL...

Researcher: But eventually MESCOT will close down?

Respondent: No, it will be absorbed into KOPEL.

Researcher: So, then KOPEL will become the holding...

Respondent: The umbrella...

Researcher: Ohh, the umbrella... that's why I want to give you some paper so that you can draw me a chart...

Respondent: OK, let me show you how it looks on paper...

Researcher: Thank you very much!

----- THE END -----

