

Institutional Co-Operation for Eco-Tourism Management in Royal Belum Forest State Park (RBFSP), Malaysia

Kerjasama Institusi untuk Pengurusan Eco-Pelancongan di Taman Negeri Royal Belum (RBFSP), Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The management of eco-tourism in Malaysia is experiencing a period of transition, from commercially-driven towards sustainable focus management. The shift has caused the authority to prepare a comprehensive development plans as the means to achieve sustainable developments. However the implementation of the programs are in the purview of the respective states as the 'land is a state matter'. The stakeholders' reaction to this current phenomena are varied. Some of them are receptive while others are sceptical. In this light, a survey was conducted with participation of 26 respondents among RBFSP stakeholders. They includes the 12 local authorities, eight tourism service providers, one private and four local community (NGO and community). Questionnaires were design to gauge their perspectives of co-management, its importance and to evaluate their current practice of eco-tourism in the RBFSP. In-depth interviews were also carried out on selected stakeholders. The overall result from the stakeholders' perspective of co-management in RBFSP indicates that 15 stakeholders are ready for co-management to be implemented, while the other 11 stakeholders are quite reluctant. However, all of them including the 11 stakeholders agreed that co-management is important in sustaining the eco-tourism resources. Moreover the cooperation among stakeholders is much needed to ensure the eco-tourism resources are sustainably managed and maintained.

Keywords: Eco-tourism, management; Royal Belum; Malaysia

ABSTRAK

Pengurusan ekopelancongan di Malaysia sedang mengalami tempoh peralihan, daripada tujuan komersial ke arah tumpuan kepada pengurusan lestari. Peralihan ini telah menyebabkan pihak berkuasa untuk menyediakan pelan pembangunan komprehensif untuk mencapai pembangunan lestari. Walau bagaimanapun, pelaksanaan program berada di dalam bidang kuasa negeri masing-masing kerana 'tanah' merupakan dalam urusan negeri. Tindak balas pihak berkepentingan dengan fenomena ini adalah berbeza-beza. Sesetengah daripada mereka bersikap terbuka manakala yang lain berasa ragu-ragu. Dalam hal ini, kajian yang telah dijalankan dengan penyertaan 26 responden dalam kalangan pihak berkepentingan RBFSP. Mereka termasuk 12 pihak berkuasa tempatan, 8 penyedia perkhidmatan pelancongan, satu swasta dan empat masyarakat setempat (NGO dan masyarakat). Soal selidik direka bentuk untuk mengukur perspektif mereka bersama pengurusan, kepentingannya dan untuk menilai amalan mereka terhadap ekopelancongan di RBFSP itu. Temu bual juga dijalankan ke atas pihak-pihak berkepentingan yang dipilih. Keputusan keseluruhan daripada perspektif pihak berkepentingan terhadap pengurusan bersama terhadap RBFSP menunjukkan bahawa 15 pihak berkepentingan bersedia untuk bersama-pengurusan yang akan dilaksanakan, manakala yang lain, 11 pihak berkepentingan amat berat untuk turut serta. Walau bagaimanapun, kesemua mereka termasuk 11 pihak berkepentingan bersetuju bersama pengurusan adalah penting dalam mengekalkan sumber ekopelancongan. Lebih-lebih lagi kerjasama antara pihak berkepentingan amat diperlukan bagi memastikan sumber ekopelancongan diuruskan secara lestari dan dikekalkan.

Kata kunci: Eko-pelancongan; pengurusan; Royal Belum; Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative management is seen as one of the preferred alternative solutions to strengthen the management of eco-tourism resources in Malaysia. It has been given serious attention as management strategy (Bramwell & Lane 2000a; Bramwell & Sharman 1999; Jamal & Getz 1995; Lovelock 2002;

Plummer, Kulczycki, & Stacey 2006b; Selin & Chavez 1995; Vernon, Essex, Pinder, & Curry 2005; Plummer & Fennell 2009) and acts as an emergency effort in resolving the ever-increasing number of ecological crises in Canada (Goetze 2004). Initially, environmental management in Malaysia was rather loose, *ad hoc* and confined to protected areas only, particularly the national and state parks, forest

reserves and wildlife sanctuaries gazetted under various laws (Mohd. Daud 2002). According to Hezri (2011), Malaysia is not new to the issue of ecological crisis, it was one of the pioneers in establishing framework for the environmental governance in as early as 1970s, and however, the institutionalisation is haphazard and patchy. DOE, other relevant agencies and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been conducting campaigns to raise the level of awareness on conservation issues throughout the country (Mohd. Daud 2002) including the eco-tourism issues. Hezri (2011) also mentioned that the response to the post 1992 sustainable development agenda was a disappointment. Having said that, Malaysia has ministerial councils on green technology, forestry and biodiversity, ministries on natural environment and natural resources, numerous cabinet processes, cross-agency task forces such as the Inter-Agency Planning Council, and a *de facto* environmental policy unit in the central planning agency (Hezri 2011).

Schwabe et al. (2014) in their research of Royal Belum State Park, revealed that the challenges confronting the federal and state governments, conservation organisation and its citizens on conservation and development, are common issues in developing tropical countries. The federal government and conservation groups give much attention to conservation while the state government, under the Malaysian Federal Constitution have the legal right to use forestland as they desire. Despite that, this competing interest resulted in the creation of 117,500 hectares of protected areas called the Royal Belum State Park, in Gerik, Perak. Therefore, the central issue of this study is to look into the institutional cooperation of various bodies in developing eco-tourism. In order to do so, the first section of this paper will focus on the management and the development plans for eco-tourism in Malaysia, while the second section will probe the cooperation amongst the stakeholders towards sustaining eco-tourism resources. This part is done through the use of a case study in the Royal Belum Forest State Park, in Gerik, Perak, Malaysia.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ECO-TOURISM IN MALAYSIA

Currently, the management of tourism in Malaysia falls under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, formerly known as the Ministry of

Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOCAT). The main role of this ministry is to draft policies related to tourism, legislation and infrastructure. The role of promoting tourism is delegated to the Malaysian Tourism Promotions Board, or in short, Tourism Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia is responsible for the marketing and promoting Malaysia and its various tourist destinations. Matters related to tourism in Malaysia is complex and influenced by the three-tier form of government i.e. Federal Government, State Governments and Local Authorities (Amran 2004) as shown in Figure 1 below.

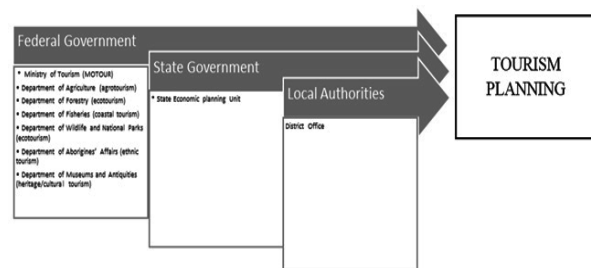


FIGURE 1. Tourism Planning Organisation

The above diagram shows that at the federal level, tourism is handled by various departments under different ministries. This shows that these ministries are aware of the economic benefits of tourism and how it can benefit them. However, due to the involvement of various agencies, integration and coordination can become a problem if it is not planned properly. Furthermore, land is a state matter, the local authority is fully responsible for the management of its land. The federal government may come up with many plans, the enforcement is still in the purview of the state government. The state authority would decide on the tourism policy and provide the necessary funding to the relevant state implementing agencies, particularly Parks, Forestry, and Wildlife departments (Mohd. Daud 2002). Therefore, due to the various interests among the government, local government and government agencies towards tourism, institutional conflicts become apparent in the management of tourism (Amran 2004). There are three areas where the conflict become apparent and listed as follows.

OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION

This occurs among the above departments (Figure 1) which are responsible for managing the fragments of

tourism products such as agro-tourism, ecotourism, coastal tourism, ethnic tourism and heritage tourism. It should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia to integrate programmes designed by those departments rather than just formulating framework for tourism product development (Amran 2004).

REVENUE MECHANISM

Revenue from tourism such as the 10% sales tax and 5% service tax collected by the Federal Government is distributed to the 13 states in Malaysia. All income from tourism is channelled back to the Federal Government. Therefore, the lack of funds restricts State Government activities in tourism.

POLICIES

At local level, tourism is not regarded as core business as it is only for the purpose of providing and maintaining public facilities such as recreational areas, landscaping and garbage disposal. The main focus is to improve and beautify the streets. Clearly these are problems faced by the federal and state governments. There should be a mechanism to bridge co-operation between them. One of the mechanisms is development plans. Many of them were written to enhance the collaboration of state and federal government.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Federal Government's commitment in developing eco-tourism can be seen through its efforts in devising various plans and strategies. At the federal level for example, the five year economic plans, national tourism policy, rural tourism master plans and the national ecotourism plans are written to ensure the appropriate measures are taken in developing eco-tourism. In all of these plans, the 6th Malaysia Plan, 7th Malaysia Plan, 8th Malaysia Plan and the 9th Malaysia Plan, the elements of eco-tourism is clearly apparent, but not in the 10th Malaysia Plan. In the 10th Malaysia Plan, the focus seemed to divert in all forms of tourism activities, though the eco-tourism element was mentioned. Partly due to the Economic Transformation Plan that was introduced in 2010 to boost the economic

activities by prioritising 12 industrial sectors which were able to support Malaysia in achieving a high-income nation. Having said that, all these documents are prepared by the Federal Government (as figure 2). The initiatives to adopt them lies with the respective states. All these plans are summarised in the figure 2 below.

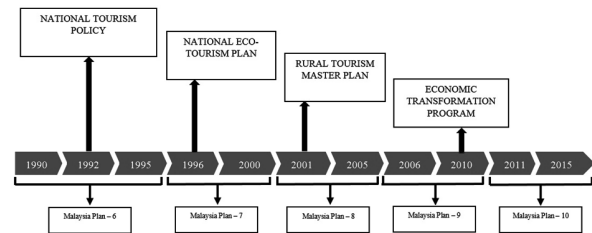


FIGURE 2. Tourism Development Plans in Malaysia

THE COOPERATION OF STAKEHOLDERS FOR SUSTAINING ECO-TOURISM RESOURCES

At the state level, eco-tourism is perceived as one of the more favourable sources of income to offset the revenue earned from forest resources. It is apparent from the formulation of 'The National Ecotourism Plans' that the Federal Government has realised the potential of ecotourism as a substitute to timber. Having said that, the only question is whether the revenue collected from eco-tourism can match that of the earnings from timber. Like most economic activities in Malaysia, ecotourism development is mainly private-sector led (Mohd. Daud 2002) and as such, private enterprises are encouraged to develop eco-lodges, organise tours, and market products and, through their various business associations, conduct training programs for their members. Henceforth, they should also be responsible for planning eco-tourism activities and programs.

According to Mohd. Daud (2002), in order to implement the ecotourism activities successfully, there must be joint efforts between the various levels of government, the private sector and the local community. In the case of Royal Belum Forest State Park, even its state park status, poachers and illegal encroachers continue to pose a threat to its flora and fauna. In forest management, maintaining and protecting the forests through active involvement of stakeholders is central in ensuring its sustainability. This then gives rise to the question as to how the stakeholders which include the local authorities,

the private sector and the local community can be involved in co-managing the forest state park. The following section dwells on these issues in greater detail.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, only eight national documents related to tourism are analysed. Four of them are the Malaysia Plans which detail the country's five year development programmes. The plans contain a section on tourism developments, while the other four documents focus on the specific strategies to develop tourism in Malaysia. The cooperation of the stakeholders is assessed by using a case study on Royal Belum Forest State Park.

ROYAL BELUM FOREST STATE PARK (RBFSP), A CASE STUDY

The Perak state government established the Royal Belum Forest State Park under the PSPC Enactment of 2001, which includes the clause, "The State Authority may at any time when it is found necessary to cancel or change the reservation of any area or part thereof as State Park" (Suksuwan & Kumaran 2003). Royal Belum is the only one of the three reserves with park status, which prohibits logging within its area, but this status is not fully secured (Schwabe et al. 2014). Prior to 2014, there was no integrated management document used as guidelines in managing RBFSP. It was only recently, that the plan was approved and adopted by the state government. However, the execution of the plan needs further research. The RBFSP is an 117,500 hectares area gazetted as the state park in 2007 and managed by the Perak State Park Corporation (PSPC) is believed to be in existence for more than 130 million years. The forested area is under the responsibility of the State Forest Department while the fauna is under the responsibility of PERHILITAN. As mentioned earlier, both the forest department and PERHILITAN are responsible for eco-tourism (refer to Figure 1).

Except for Orang Asli, the Belum-Temenggor eco-tourism destination has no major Malay settlements. This is partly because the Federal Government had to relocate many of the inhabitants during the insurgency. Approximately 200 Orang Asli (aborigines) families, mostly comprising

the Jahai and Temiar ethnic groups, live within Royal Belum (Suksuwan & Kumaran 2003; WWF-Malaysia & PSPC 2011, and Schwabe et al. 2014). The Orang Asli Affairs Department (JAKOA) is responsible for the welfare of the orang asli. The Temenggor Lake which is the second largest man-made lake in Malaysia after Kenyir Lake is under the care of a private utility, Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) that handles the maintenance of the reservoir, its cleanliness and the water level. As for the tourism authority, the officials are located in Ipoh, the capital of Perak and not in Gerik, the town which is the closest to the lake.

Gerik, is located on the East-West Highway west of the forest with the population of 31,291 in 2010 (Schwabe et al. 2014). There are only a few shops available in the district, including a Jahai souvenir shop and a few restaurants in the Jetty Aman area. There is no convenient store, petrol stations or banking service in this area. There is limited economic activity in Belum Temenggor, other than logging. The maintenance of this small economic area is under the responsibility of the Gerik District Office. Basically, these are the direct stakeholders who use and maintain the park and its surrounding areas.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) are important stakeholders that care for the well-being of the park. These NGOs played a pivotal role in ensuring that the Royal Belum Forest State Park received its parks status. The NGOs continued to serve as pressure groups to ensure that these areas are protected. It began with two scientific expeditions led by Malaysian Nature Society in 1990s, the first to the Temenggor Forest Reserve in 1993–1994 and the second to the Belum Forest Reserve in 1998 (Schwabe et al. 2014). The expeditions to Belum-Temenggor surveyed the unexplored land and assessed its biodiversity (Davison et al. 1995; Latiff & Yap 2000; MNS 2007). They demonstrated great passion and dedication to these efforts. The figure 3 below demonstrates this. The text above the line indicates state and federal government-related actions while the text below the line indicates NGO-related actions.

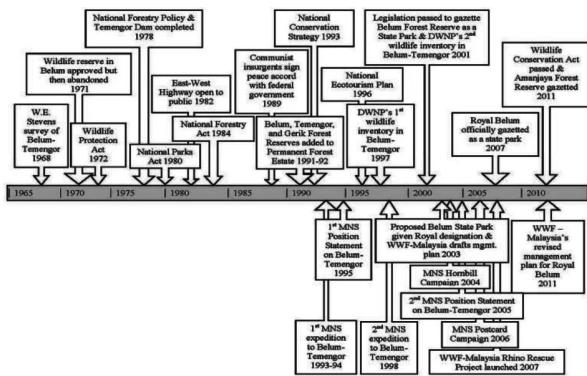


FIGURE 3. Events surrounding protection of Belum-Temenggor Forest region

Source: Schwabe et al. (2014) in Creation of Malaysia’s Royal Belum State Park: A case study of It is Conservation in a Developing Country

It is obvious that the NGOs are playing an important role in conserving and protecting the forests. Many researches were conducted and documents were written to educate the public and the authorities on the treasures of our forests in the form of flora and fauna. But are all the stakeholders working hand-in-hand in protecting the forests or are they still in their silos, oblivious to what the others are doing? What do they think about co-management? This is the focus of this study, to look into the co-operation of the stakeholders in sustaining the eco-tourism resources through co-management.

METHOD

This study took the approach of a mixed method case study. A survey was done on 26 respondents among RBFSP stakeholders. They included the 12 local authorities, eight tourism service providers, one private and four local community (NGO and community). Questionnaires were distributed to all the 26 stakeholders in order to gauge their perspectives of co-management, its importance and their current practice of eco-tourism in the RBFSP. In-depth interviews were carried out on selected

stakeholders such as respondent 4 and 21. Higher level management officers were also interviewed to gain further information on issues concerning the sustainability of the RBFSP. To reinforce the validity and reliability of the research item, a pilot test was done on the Tasik Raban, Gerik, administrators to gain initial response of the stakeholders. Data was analysed by using Winstep 3.72 of the Rasch Measurement Model with a result of cronbach alpha (kr-20) person raw score “test” reliability of 0.94. This indicates the test reliability is acceptable to measure co-management agreement among the stakeholders and fit for further analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The questions are taken from a section in questionnaire survey research done to investigate the stakeholders’ perspective on the six elements of co-management. PTMEA Corr is in positive values (or more than 0.30) where an item is able to distinguish the ability of respondents. Item fit depends on the outfit mean square MNSQ value less 1.5, and Z standard value less than 2.00 (Nor Ivoni & Saidfudin 2012). The item reliability of 0.61 item is considerably low, however, the number of items to measure is sufficient to what it needs to measure. The person separation is 2.47 which is in the acceptable value and it means the instruments can reliably separate the person perception apart (Nor Ivoni & Saidfudin 2012). This validates the instrument of having acceptable validity and reliability (Nor Ivoni & Saidfudin 2012).

Out of 26 respondents, only 15 respondents agreed with co-management while the other 11 could not agree with certain aspects of it. Those who were not fully agree includes five local authorities, one private company, three community representatives and two tourism service providers. They are listed in the table 1 below;

TABLE 1. The not fully agreeable stakeholders

Respondents	Stakeholders
Respondent 4	The local authority (state)
Respondent 22	The tourism service provider
Respondent 13	The local community
Respondent 10	Private

Respondent 7	The local authority (federal)
Respondent 12	The local community
Respondent 2	The local authority (state)
Respondent 8	The local authority (state)
Respondent 21	The tourism service provider
Respondent 14	The local community
Respondent 5	The local authority (state)

Table 1. Stakeholders who not fully agree with co-management. They were less agree to 25 items in co-management between +1.45 and +0.32 logit. The items are listed as in the table 2 below;

TABLE 2. The 25 items of six co-management elements

Six co-management elements	Less agreeable to items	Less important items
Real or imagined crisis (two out of nine items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Poaching activities are increasing. Agriculture and land encroachment should be minimised. 	
Willingness for local users to contribute	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work together to build infrastructure such as bridge, road, trail, rest area, toilet and signage. Work together to restore infrastructure such as bridge, road, trail, rest area, toilet and signage. Work together to solicit donations for infrastructure restoration. Provide expertise and training to the parties in need. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work together to restore infrastructure such as bridge, road, trail, rest area, toilet and signage. Provide expertise and training to the parties in need. Work together to solicit donations for infrastructure restoration.
Opportunity for negotiation (five of nine items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to solicit donation for the purpose of conservation and protection of the flora and fauna in RBFR. Inclination to the signing of memorandum of understanding in the management of RBFR. Common agreement towards sustaining and conserving the environment. Inclination to solve the problems of poachers, together with the community, tourism service providers, the local authority and the government agencies. Inclination to solve the problems of land encroachment, together with the community, tourism service providers, the local authority and the government agencies. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to solicit donation for the purpose of conservation and protection of the flora and fauna in RBFR.
Legally mandated (one out of five items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Tagal System' helps to conserve the fish population in the lake. 	
Leadership (one out of five items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to have the 'one-stop-centre' to manage RBFR. 	
Common vision (six out of ten items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Practice recycling to reduce the amount of rubbish so as to reduce environmental pollution. Personal interest and conflict exist in the arrangement of eco-tourism activities. Social activities involving women and children. Programmes arranged meet the needs of all the parties involved. Trust in the development of RBFR. Providing technical expertise to those who are interested in the eco-tourism business. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Personal interest and conflict exist in the arrangement of eco-tourism activities. Social activities involving women and children.

The two items in the crisis element showed that the 15 stakeholders agreed the crisis is real while 11 stakeholders less agreed. They include the local community. However it was perceived as important to the stakeholders in order for co-management to take place. Clearly, the 11 stakeholders were less agreeable to the items in the element of willingness of the stakeholders to contribute. However, they agreed that these items were important. The stakeholders were less willing to contribute in terms of funds or effort. To them, they were not crucial. Nevertheless, these items remain the core issues of co-management.

The 11 stakeholders were also less willing to negotiate opportunity in soliciting financial contribution to help conserve and protect the flora and fauna. However, other items were perceived as important to them. In legally mandated element,

only the ‘Tagal System’ were less agreeable to the stakeholders, but acknowledged its importance. In the leadership element, the stakeholders were less agreeable to the ‘one-stop-centre orientation, however they were still agreed with its importance. The stakeholders are less agreeable in areas like recycling, arrangement of eco-tourism activities, programmes, trust and technical assistance. They also dismissed personal interest, conflicts and social activities as unimportant.

As the 11 stakeholders who were less agreeable to co-management elements are categorised into local authority, the private, the tourism service providers and the community. Further explanation on the reasons for the perspectives is triangulate with the qualitative data as the list in the Table 3 below;

TABLE 3. The Qualitative Data

The respondents	The Category	Triangulate with qualitative data
The local authorities	Respondents 2, 5, 7 & 8	All the respondents think that they have done enough to protect the forest and eco-tourism resources legitimately.
The private, the tourism service provider and the communities	Respondent 10, 22, 12, 13 & 14	All the respondents were unsure that co-management would be able to succeed in dealing with substantive issues pertaining to the protection of the forest and eco-tourism resources.

Data from respondent 4 and 21 are further triangulated with data from an interview with the senior management respondents. The table 4 below

shows there is conflicting views due to the level of managerial posts the respondents hold.

TABLE 4. Conflicting views of the higher management and staff

Different views on;	The Staff (respondent 4 & 21)	The Management
Crisis	Not fully aware of the problems of poachers and land encroachment.	Fully aware of the problem of poachers and land encroachment.
Willingness for local users to contribute	Do not think that the stakeholders are willing to contribute.	The stakeholders will contribute if they were showed how to do it.
Opportunity for negotiation	This items depended on the authority of higher ranking staff, while having limited resources and power.	Agreed with all the items that led to co-management.
Legally mandated	Not fully aware if there is a system that able to counter the problems they faced.	Agreed with a system that is able to solve the problems they faced.
Leadership	Unsure a one-stop-centre concept would be able to solve problems.	Strongly support the one-stop-centre concept with the belief that it can solve problems.
Common vision	In reality, recycle did not happen, personal interest and conflict has no influence on the eco-tourism arrangement, believed social activities did not involve women and children, program did not meet the need of all parties, there is no trust in the development of RBFR and less support in providing technical expertise to those who are interested in the eco-tourism business.	More effort should be put on improving the practice of recycling, in eco-tourism arrangement, getting the involvement of women and children, to increase trust between stakeholders, exposure to the locals to get good training in eco-tourism businesses.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysed data, 15 respondents agreed with co-management while 11 respondents less agreed. This does not mean that the 11 stakeholders fully disagree with co-management elements. They only less agreed with 25 items mentioned above. With some improvements, they would fully support co-management. Amran (2004) stated that there were problems in coordination of tourism at the state level and federal level. Four of five local authorities which were less agreeable with co-management are from the state governments and one from the federal government. According to Singleton (2000), states that are attempting to design effective co-management regimes must solve a series of difficult dilemmas: they must demonstrate that they are tough and capable, that is, they must show that they operate under clearly-specified rules and restraints, and are willing to punish violators; yet they must also remain flexible enough to distinguish between major and minor violations, and between communities who are routinely opportunistic and those for whom transgressions are an anomaly. In addition to that, they must also strengthen local capacities and be responsive to local concerns while maintaining an independent perspective that is able to represent broader public interests (Singleton 2000). In reality, it is difficult for the state government to convey all the values that were expected out of them.

In this research also, conflicting views among respondents at the lower and higher level of management are apparent. Lower level management staff are less aware of management issues and problems surrounding them, compared to the senior level staff. As such, senior level staff are more inclined towards co-management. This could be also due to the failure to internalise the management aspiration and policies by the staff of the lower level.

On the other hand, the private respondent who was a senior management personnel was less agreeable with co-management. He was less confident with the capabilities of the states in handling and managing conflicts. In this regard, Singleton (2000) stressed, that there is a need for the states to build confidence among community members on the competency of state management practices and the science upon which it is based. This is essential for successful management.

Data also shows that the communities which are less agreeable to co-management comprised representatives from the nearest village and the

Orang Asli. They believe that they were deprived of their rights. For example, the Orang Asli are not happy as they feel that their traditional way of hunting, planting and fishing will be hampered. The villagers, on the other hand, feel they will not benefit from the economic development in their vicinity. According to Andrade & Rhodes (2012), restricting local access to natural resources, which is a crucial role in their livelihoods, health, and culture, might favour biodiversity conservation in the short term. They further suggested that in the long term, such strategies may fail to preserve biodiversity if park authorities disregard the importance of simultaneously promoting active local community participation in protected area management, capacity building, implementing adequate outreach programs and also efficient governance, guaranteeing that penalties will be applied and consistently enforced. In relation to that, data also indicated that the 11 stakeholders were less agreeable in the trust of the development. According to the community, they were less informed of the activities organised by the government. They only come to know of these programs when they are implemented. According to Hezri (2011), community programmes tended to be poorly resourced, switched on and off according to near term government needs, lacking of clear mandate and set of responsibilities, cost shifting and delegation of implementation tasks rather than sharing of knowledge and power. This has resulted in less co-operation from the community. Unfortunately, as Adelzadeth, Bryan & Yafee (2003) highlighted in the issue of trust, this reaction of not participating is usually misinterpreted by the state as disinterest.

Considering this (Andrade & Rhodes 2012), the partnerships with local communities and authorities of protected areas could promote a win-win outcome by allowing more active local participation in protected area decision-making processes. This means that protected area financial resources can be better invested in improving governance, local capacity building, participation, and outreach programs rather than draconian measures.

The 11 stakeholders also were less agreeable with the element to contribute towards building and restoring infrastructure, solicit for financial resources in the conservation of facilities, flora and fauna and assist in training. They felt that it was the sole responsibility of the government to provide sufficient financial for the maintenance of the infrastructure, flora and fauna. On the other hand, Bruner et al. (2004) emphasised, often protected areas in

developing countries have a common funding deficit feature. Patrolling and management costs could be reduced with local collaboration (Boissière et al. 2009). Establishing and maintaining protected areas require both political and financial commitment in the long term (Andrade & Rhodes 2012).

Of the 11 stakeholders, six local authorities and three community representatives less agreed that the problem of poachers and illegal land encroachment for agriculture were real. These stakeholders included the local authorities who are tasked to look after the forest. If they themselves do not think the problem needs serious attention, the current problem of poachers, foreign smugglers and land encroachment for agriculture would not be stop. Walt (2001) mentioned in the co-management manual for fishery, the key determining components of co-management are an awareness of the problems, a concern about these problems and the will to take action to solve these problems. This is tied to the next element of co-management being studied - opportunity for negotiation. According to Walt (2001), if the assessment of the problem is positive, it is usually appropriate to arrange a meeting with the key stakeholders. In this research, data indicates that the 11 stakeholders were also less agreeable with to "opportunity for negotiation" because they did not fully believe that there are real problems. Therefore, there is no urgency to negotiate.

This goes to show that they still the work in silos. There is little information disseminated and a lot of confidentiality on this issue. Programmes need to be initiated for stakeholders to raise awareness and to promote the sharing of responsibility to address management and development issues. Hopefully, through this process (Walt, 2001), the stakeholders will eventually become more receptive to sharing the responsibility of management. According to Amran (2004), cooperation in tourism is an area of vast potential but requires proper planning and coordination.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that a management plans is needed in order to manage a park effectively (Thomas, Middleton, & Philips 2003). The management plan provides the legal basis for effective compliance and enforcement action by managers. Although there were sufficient plans written at both federal and state levels, RBSFP is still managed in silo. Hezri

(2011), stronger alliances are needed to break the silos, all the stakeholders involved need to think as one big institution, problems are solved together in a systemic perspective and not separately. In the absence of general management plan, preservation, development and utilisation of a park will occur in a haphazard basis, often in response to political pressures with little consideration as to the implications for the future. The result is likely to be lost opportunities and irreversible damage to park resources and values' (Young and Young 1993 in Thomas, Middleton, & Philips 2003).

The overall result from the stakeholders' perspective of co-management in RBFSP indicates that 15 stakeholders are ready for co-management, while the other 11 stakeholders are quite reluctant. However, all of them including the 11 stakeholders realise the importance of co-management in sustaining the eco-tourism resources.

The central idea of co-management is when the stakeholders are ready to contribute willingly, whether in the form of finance or efforts to sustain eco-tourism resources. Despite that, the result shows that the stakeholders are less agreeable to solicit for donation to conserve the flora and fauna. Neither did they agree that this effort is important. However, Vincent et al. (2014) contested that there is an increase in public demand for conservation in wealthier tropical countries but it does not match the protective actions by the governments. Hence, the government should play a vital role by giving incentives to those who are actively involved in the co-management programmes.

Having said that, in order for co-management to take place, there is plenty to be done. The first move is to strengthen the institutional conflicts of policies, overlapping jurisdiction and the revenue mechanism. In this study, the stakeholders mostly agreed on the importance of co-management, however they are reluctant to the practice of co-management due to these unresolved conflicts. Co-management does not necessarily eliminate the conflicts between states and communities over the management of natural resource systems, nor does it ensure that resources will be managed sustainably but it may also opens up to new possibilities for constructive engagement between state and communities, as well as continuation of old conflicts under (Singleton 2000).

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