

# Exploring Sustainable Tourism Development in Ulu Perak Malaysia: A Case Study of Lanoh Tribe Against Extinction

<sup>1</sup>Annis Jamaluddin, <sup>2</sup>Salbiah Abd Rahman, and <sup>3</sup>Azlinda Mohd Ali

<sup>1</sup>UNITAR International University, Kelana Jaya, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia, <sup>2</sup>Open University Malaysia

Email: annis@unitar.my, salbiah710@yahoo.com, indaazmir@yahoo.com.my

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## Abstract

This research paper examine poverty that has been high among the Orang Asli or indigenous people of peninsular since Malaysia independence. In developing sustainable tourism where the community takes the initiative to create tourism that will benefit and preserve the community, environment, culture and heritage. It also enabled the community to gain economic and financial income for their community for the development of their daily livelihood. Lanoh tribe is among the two Negrito sub-tribe that are subjected to extinction due to modernization, migration, and death. Exploratory and qualitative research method was used with in-situ observation to determine the potential development for community-based sustainable tourism development while increasing the household income of the village community in Kenering Ulu Perak. Natural resources and cultural resources are abundant on site and it's near the Unesco Royal Belum Rain Forest as the oldest rainforest in the world gazetted in 2012 which are viable for local and international sustainable tourist destination in peninsular Malaysia.

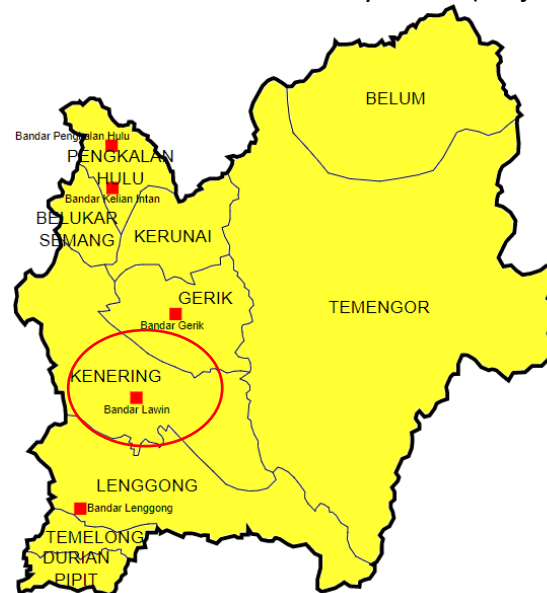
**Keywords:** Community, Indigenous, Livelihood and Sustainable Tourism

## Introduction

Ulu Perak or Gerik District as it's known by the locals is as Malay old territory after the fall of Malacca Sultanate Empire in 1511 by the Portuguese. The district was open up by Tun Saban son of Tun Perak the famous warrior and minister during the reign of Sultan Mahmud of Malaccan empire. After the fall of the empire Tun Saban retreat to Ulu Perak and make it a base there since it is too far from the Portuguese attack and rule.

After the fall of the empire the Sultan of Malacca migrated to Aceh seeking asylum in the state since Aceh was a powerful empire in fifteen centuries in Malay Archipelago. Tun Saban later then invited his royal highness to become Perak first Sultan.

Ulu Perak district has 9 sub-districts of Lenggong, Kenering, Durian pipit, Belum, Gerik, Temenggor, Belukar Semang and Pengkalan Hulu. This district was formerly under Siamese rule of the Reman state of Thailand that also ruled Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu. To avoid British rule the Thai government sign a treaty in 1909 with the Straits settlement called the “Bangkok Treaty” where Hulu Perak, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu states are given to the British government known as unfederated Malay states (Majlis Daerah Gerik 2018).



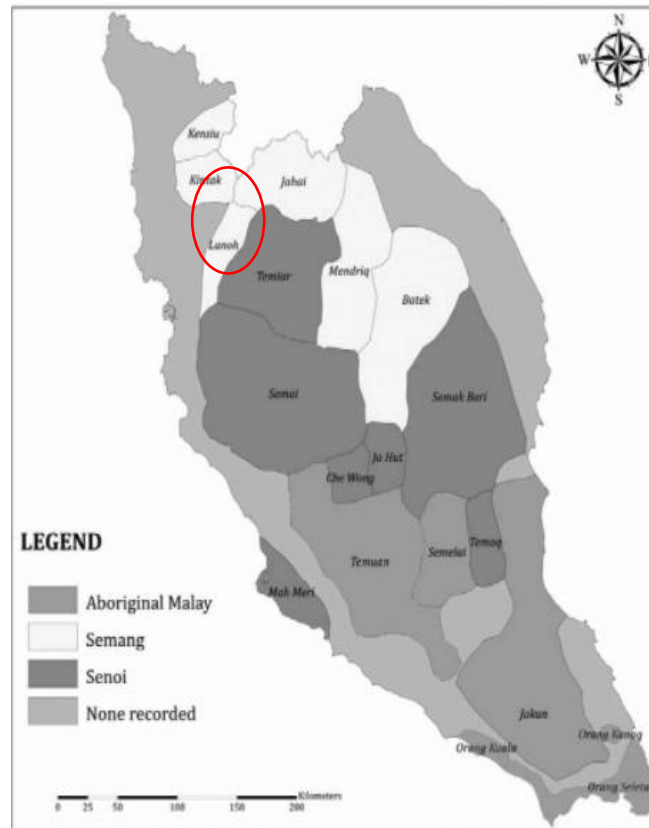
Source: Map of Hulu Gerik, Perak. Majlis Daerah Gerik 2018

Ulu Gerik district has population size of 97,300 of which 86.9% is bumiputra, 9.6% Chinese and 1.9% Indian and 1.6% others. The area size is 6,560.43 km<sup>2</sup> and density of 14 km<sup>2</sup> (Majlis Daerah Gerik 2018). According to local legend the name ‘Gerik’ was from the sound of mouses eating a bamboo tree producing a creaking noise that caught the attention of a Southern Thailand king’s entourage from Pattani resting along the journey to Perak kingdom.

The bumiputra (people of the land) of the district are Malays and Orang Asli (Original People). The demography of Ulu Perak consisted of several tribes which is Jahai tribe settled in Northern Royal Belum (UNESCO Heritage Site) area, the Temiar in Southern part of Royal Belum in Temenggor, Lanoh tribe in Kenering and Kintak tribe in Belukar Semang. These orang asli are part of bumiputra statistic in Hulu Perak. Highest orang asli population statistic is Senoi 55%, Proto Malay 42% and 3% Negrito of 178,197 total peninsular Malaysia population (JAKOA 2015). Orang asli or indigenous people contributed the highest poor household income group at 7% (IWIGA 2020) report.

Issue of poverty was always a concern among the orang asli of Hulu Perak because of natural disaster such as flood during raining seasons. Then threat of elephants and tigers invading their palm oil and rubber plantation. Poverty is at 10% or 1,101 as poor earning less 760RM (USD190) and 6% or 635 under extreme regulation and development control (Bramwell & Lane, 2012). Poor earning less than 460RM (USD115) per month (JAKOA Perak 2018). With this income the orang asli communities should look into sustainable tourism initiatives to complement and increase the household earnings because they have the natural resource of sustainable tourism initiative which is abundant natural resources in the area.

This strategy is also one of the agenda of JAKOA 2020 to 2015 mission and objectives on tourism. The research area chosen was at Kampong Air Bah 1 and Kampong Air 2 in Kenering, Gerik where the only Lanoh tribe is still in existence of peninsular Malaysia.



Source: Dentan 1997

### Literature Review

In community tourism, sustainable development is applied to improve the residents' quality of life by optimising local economic benefits, protecting the natural and built environment and providing a high-quality experience for visitors (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; McIntyre, 1993; Park & Yoon, 2009; Park et al., 2008; Stabler, 1997).

The purpose of sustainable tourism is to make a balance between protecting the environment, maintaining cultural integrity, establishing social justice and promoting economic benefits, meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term (Liu et al., 2013) in both developed and emerging nations (Mitchell & Hall, 2005; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2004)

Globally sustainable tourism development has attracted significant attention in many scientific studies particularly in tourism studies and has been one of the fast-growing areas of tourism studies research since the late 1980s. Buckley (2012) wrote that the specific term 'sustainable tourism' was first used almost two decades ago. In 1980s the first decade, basic frameworks from backgrounds in tourism, economics and environmental management were studied. During 1990s the second decade it yielded a number of reconceptualization and a series of critiques including (Sharpley, 2000; Gossling, 2002; Liu, 2003; Saarinen, 2006; Lane 2009b; Liu, 2013).

According to research by Bramwell & Lane, the two greatest researcher and founders of these concepts in the tourism industry, sustainable tourism emerged in part as a negative and a reactive concept in response to the many tourism issues, such as environmental damage and serious impacts on society and traditional cultures (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). They come out with a concept model that gradually turned tourism development as a solution capable of creating positive changes through the ideas of sustainable tourism.

Later the World Tourism Organisation WTO (2001) defined sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. The organization envisaged tourism leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs that can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

Academically sustainable tourism' is defined as all types of tourism that are compatible with or contribute to sustainable development, 'Sustainable tourism' requires both the sustainable growth of tourism's contribution to the economy and society and the sustainable use of resources and the environment, which will be gained by a deep understanding and proper management of tourism demand (Liu, 2013).

### **Research Methodology**

Ulu Perak research was conducted through a qualitative research method using situational analysis tourism model and case studies onsite with in situ observation analysis. The model contains analysis of the site, community resources and culture resources. The methodology uses a variety of data sources, such as in-depth interviews, personally administered questionnaires and site observations. Purposive sampling was used to determine whether the interviews were intended to provide the rich and useful information required in the indigenous study. The respondents are from the officers of JAKOA Gerik, and communities from Kampong Air Bah 1 and Kampong Air Bah 2, Kenering, Gerik, Perak. Sample data from the interviews included are from Tok Batins (Tribe Leaders) of both villages representatives committee of Jawatan Kuasa Kampong (JKK) of both sites Kampong Air Bah 1 and Kampong Air Bah 2 Kenering Gerik. Three (3) types research Instruments are used for data analysis consisted of site analysis; community analysis and cultural analysis were analysed in this study. Details of the instrument is as follows:

Instrument 1: Site Analysis Checklist comprises of twelve (12) dimensions: Beaches, Coral reefs, Mountain, Forest reserves, waterfall, Lakes, Rivers, Caves, Wildlife, and spring. The assessment focused on the overall condition of the resources, the area size, the type of activities carried out at the site, the types of tourists who visited the area (if any), and the economic or business activities carried out.

Instrument 2: Community Analysis Checklist comprises of fourteen (14) dimensions: Community size and population density, Perception on community development, Major type of residence, Condition of residence, Cluster of residence, community surroundings, Community ethnic background, household and family size, Average age of head of household, major source of household income, Economic activity around residence, Social status of community, Recreation activities around residence and Major household transportation mode.

Instrument 3: Cultural resources Analysis Checklist comprises of nine (9) dimensions: Historical Buildings, Historical sites, Monuments, archaeological site and collection, Folklore and Tradition, handicrafts, Museum, Visual performing and fine arts, and research centre.

### **Findings**

According to JAKOA 2018 Ulu Perak reported there is 11,458 orang asli population and 2242 families settled in 49 villagers of Ulu Perak. Tribe population of Temiar 7661, Jahai 2228, Lanoh 336 and Kintak 212. The Temiar of Royal Belum and Temenggor tribe is sub tribe of Senoi tribe, Jahai, Lanoh and Kintak are from the Negrito tribes that 3% of the indigenous

tribe of peninsular Malaysia. The highest religious belief is still animism at 4863 or 42%, Islam at 4695 or 41%, Christian at 980 or 9%, Other religion at 819 or 7% and Bahai 101 or 1%.

Islam came to the orang Asli in the 1950's to 1960's and later Christianity in the 1970's and 1980's. Bahai religion was spread missionaries in 1970's of which 2 villages converted in Royal Belum area of Kampong Sungai Tiang and Pengkalan Ulu area.

The land reserve given by state government for orang asli 49 villages is 5042.406 hectares including Royal Belum, Temenggor, Kenering, Belukar semang and Pengkalan Hulu. Total land developed for economic agriculture of rubber is 1,864.5 hectares and 500 hectares is for oil palm. Only 47% land reserved are used by the Orang Asli but 53% are not being developed.

Issues on poverty in Ulu Perak was 1,101 or 10% and extreme poverty is 635 or 6%. Therefore cumulative total was 16% poor Orang Asli population in Ulu Gerik district area. It is considered high and needed to be improved drastically (JAKOA, 2018)

The Lanoh community of Kampong Air Bah 1 and Kampong Air Bah 2 is the descendant of the Negrito tribe or Semang tribes that is 3% population of Orang Asli in peninsular Malaysia. According to studies by earlier authors the Semang live in the coastal foothills and inland river valleys of Perak, interior Pahang, and Ulu (upriver) Kelantan, and rarely occupy lands above 1000 meters in elevation. Paul Schebesta writing published in 1924 commented that the areas regarded as Negrito country included lands from Chaiya and Ulu Patani (Singora and Patthalung) to Kedah and to mid-Perak and northern Pahang. Thangarag et al 2002 studies that the Andamanese and other Asian "Negrito" peoples share physical features, including short stature, dark skin, peppercorn hair, scant body hair, and sometimes steatopygia, with African pygmies.

The Semang or Negrito appear to have had a long association with farmers and merchants, and were active participants in international trade in history. They were thus favourably placed to exploit the resources of both the jungle and the lowlands. In addition to maintaining their livelihood from the jungle, they collected forest products to trade or sought wage labour with the lowland communities (Andaya, 2001; Benjamin, 1973)

Lanoh tribe is one of the six sub-tribe of the Negrito group of Orang Asli. Since 2001 the population is at 390 but now the current population is at 257 due to migration and death (JAKOA 2018). The Lanoh communities is still upholding the tradition, languages and customs in the two villages of Kenering, Gerik.

#### Site Analysis

##### Kampong Air Bah 1

This village has more than 200 years of Lanoh community settlement. The location is 5 kilometers from the main highway to Gerik town. As you enter to the village there is 1 kilometer of dirt track road of rubber plantation. Only 4x4 wheel are assessable to the village and motorcycles. Along the route to the village palm oil and rubber trees are seen planted by villagers for income. The route to the villages is hilly and steep valley that required crossing two steel bridges. The view is panoramic to the eyes because the village settlement is on a hill near the river of Sungai Bah where the village got its name.

In olden day the river used to causes flood when it rains heavily. The elder of Lanoh community named the village Kampong Air Bah 1. Current population of this village is 207 from Lanoh tribe. The village now has 2 settlements, Kampong Air Bah 1 is the old village with 41 houses and Kampong Air Bah 2. Distance from one another is 50 to 70 meters from the old village. The houses are two types, wooden Melati 18 houses and 23 concrete houses Projek Bagunan Rayaat (PBR).



In term of facilities the village has good treated water from the river nearby, electricity from TNB (Tenaga Nasional Berhad) and Tar or Premix road of 4 kilometers. They have 1 court for takraw and badminton, 1 Surau, 1 Balai Sewang and 1 pre-school facility. Primary school and high school children goes to Sekolah Kebangsaan Kenering and Sekolah Menengah Kenering nearby.

The economic activities of villagers are rubber, oil palm and vegetables. To obtain extra income they will sometime harvest rattan and resin that their generation of fore-fathers used to trades through middle men that comes to the village. The village has 145.69 hectares of "warta land" that land title is given to Lanoh the community. Most of the villager grow rubber and oil palm for household income and during tropical fruits seasons of durian, rambutan and jack fruits.

From observation most every orang asli settlement is always near the river sources for daily consumption, bathing activities and fishing. The water upriver quality is sparkling clear because its free from population and abundant mineral content from the nearby mountains.

#### Kampong Air Bah 2

The village location is next to Kampong Air Bah 1. It is a new village extended from the old village. It is built on a lower slope of Kampong Air Bah 1 which is situated around 50 to 70 meters away from the edge of Kampong Bah 1. Since it is a new village most houses is made of 16 concrete PBR houses and 4 wooden houses only. Total houses in Kampong Bah 2 is 20 houses. The topography of village is on lower hill slopes with rubber trees and oil palm plantation surrounding the area. Main economic activities are rubber and palm oil. Population census in 2018 reported that this village has a combination of Temiar tribe 61 and 50 Lanoh tribes. In this settlement they inter marry with Temiar tribes. This create the reason for population of Temiars are higher than the Lanoh tribes.

In term of facilities Kampong air Bah 2 has good treated water system from the river, electricity from TNB (Tenaga Nasional Berhad) and 1 Premix road, 1 recreation court for takraw and badminton, 1 Surau,1 pre-school facility and 1 Balai Sewang.

The river source is the same one flowing from Kampong Air Bah 1. Surrounding the village area near the river site are secondary tropical forest. During our research observation children of various ages are spending their time bathing and swimming in the river.

#### Community Analysis

##### Kampong Air Bah 1

The village is headed by Batin Alias bin Semendang. His village has population of 207 with 38 families. Population consisted of 110 male and 97 females. All villagers are Lanoh tribes. Children below 12 years are 56 which 29 are boys and 27 are girls.

In terms of religious believe they practise Islam since 1950's because they are living near to Muslim Malay neighbours and they are attracted to Muslim practises. They hold prayers in the surau near their houses next to their Balai Sewang for communal meeting and gatherings. Community economic activity are tapping rubber and harvesting oil palm as their main source of income. They are categorized as poor household income group earning less than 760 ringgit or USD190 a month.

In education 14 students are in high school and 41 in primary school.1 in boarding school in Gerik town. Since their village is 5 kilometer from the main road to Gerik town where banking facilities, hospitals, Pos office and retails shops are easily assessable. The communities are quite informative and hospitable, you sometime mistook them as Malays.

Most houses have a motor-cycles as a mean of transport for daily transportation to work, schools and buying household groceries.

### Kampong Air Bah 2

Batin or tribe leader for Kampong Bah 2 is Isa bin Pucok. Community population is at 111 with male 54 and female 67.50 of the population are Lanoh tribe and 61 are Temiar tribe from the Senoi sub tribe. Temiar tribe are largest population in Ulu Perak and Gerik district. Children below 12 years old in the village is 19, 11 males and 8 females.

The village has 24 families that are poor earning 760 Ringgit or 190USD a month. Most villagers are tapping rubber and harvesting oil palm for household economic income. During fruits seasons they will be selling their durians, langsats, rambutans and jackfruits for additional income. Some of the community sells vegetables in nearby town of Lenggong and Gerik.

Inter marriages of Lanoh and Temiar is common in this village since Lanoh community are relatively small. They now speak the same languages so the community are more blended with Temiar and the smaller numbers of Lanoh might dwindle as in 2001 was 390 now 257 Lanoh population in Ulu Perak.

In terms of transportation all houses have a motor-cycles for transport and the some villager have all the modern living accessibility such as cable TV Astro and internet connection.

### Culture Analysis

#### Kampong Air Bah 1

According to Hill et al 2006 Semang tradition is associated with Northern Aslian languages, rainforest foraging in small bands, egalitarianism, patrilineal descent, and people of "Negrito" appearance.

Traditionally, the religious beliefs of the Semang or Negrito are complex which include many different gods. Most of the Semang tribes are animistic where they believe that nonhuman objects have spirits. Many significant events in their lives such as birth, illness, death and agricultural rituals have much animistic symbolism. Their priests practice magic, foresee the future, and cure illness. They bury their dead simply, and place food and drink in the grave (Masron et al., 2013)

In most of Negrito or Semang culture they used a Mon-Khmer language which most of the vocabulary used in 18 Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia. Languages spoken by the Negrito are originated to a common proto-Aslian and ultimately proto-Mon-Khmer and proto-Autroasiatic vocabulary.

Since the 1950's according to Batin Alias tribe leader of Lanoh said they have forego their practises after being a Muslim because it is "syirik" or believing other gods than Allah is a major sin in Islam. Since they converted, they choose practises that is safe from "syirik" in their community culture.

Celebration such as "kenduri" or gathering is still there but no priest or shaman rituals. Wedding practises are similar to Malay culture of engagement, dowry and dias or "Pelamin"(Semendang, 2018)

#### Kampong Air Bah 2

Since the population is more Temiar than Lanoh. The practise is different since Semai and Temiar share similar traditional belief system. Both groups believe in the existence of a ultimate supra-natural being responsible for the creation of the world and all of its inhabitants: plants, the seas, the mountains, trees, animals, and above all, mankind. The Semai referred to it as Jenang or Nyenang, while the Temiar referred to it as Tak Pedn. Both these groups believe in the presence of a thunder god known as Engku' by the Semai and Karei by the Temiar. The Thunder God is a supra-natural being that controls human behaviour, punishing those who misbehave against their own cultural norms and social mores as well as

other natural laws. In addition, they also believe in other gods (known as nyaniik in Semai and chinoi in Temiar) who become the foundation of supernatural sanctions, such as bad luck, illness and other disasters (Masron et al., 2013).

In overcoming threats, the people pursue protection from the shaman (Halaak), who is able to connect with supernatural beings, as well as “possess” one or more of them as spirit guides or helpers (called gunig). The halaak, with the help of their gunig, shields the people from unseen threats that abound. Through the gunig, the halaak attains their knowledge about how to cure illnesses, evading natural disasters, and so forth (Masron et al., 2013)

Since the village Temiar and Lanoh converted to Islam this animism practises above are absolute in the community practises especially in Kampong Air Bah 2. It is because Islam forbade “syirik” against believers.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion of the paper on the Lanoh Tribe of Ulu Perak emphasizes the critical importance of involving the Lanoh community in the development and implementation of sustainable tourism strategies in Kampong Air Bah 1 and Kampong Air Bah 2. This approach aligns with the missions of various stakeholders, including JAKOA, the Ulu Perak district municipality, and the Perak state government, to promote sustainable tourism, particularly ecotourism. This suggestion are based on the finding highlighted are:

1. Community Involvement that is vital for the success of sustainable tourism that the Lanoh community is informed and actively participates in tourism development. This ensures that tourism development aligns with their desires and benefits the community directly.
2. Local Ownership for sustainable tourism to be effective, it's crucial that the Lanoh community maintains local ownership over the natural and cultural resources they offer. This ensures that the benefits of tourism directly support the community.
3. Quality Employment is the key success factor in sustainable tourism and it is also measured by its community and stakeholders to have the ability to provide quality employment opportunities for the Lanoh community for which it will contributes to their current and future well-being.
4. Win-Win Situation with sustainable tourism should create a beneficial situation for all stakeholders involved, ensuring the well-being of the Lanoh community, the conservation of the environment, and contributions to the natural biodiversity of Ulu Perak, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Royal Belum Rainforest.
5. Local Agenda for Sustainable Tourism (LAST) Model. This paper recommends in developing a LAST model by Siti Nabiha 2011 that reflects the community's environmental, economic, and social conditions. This model should be created through local public participation, allowing all stakeholders to express their visions for sustainability and select an ecotourism orientation. It calls for collaboration between communities and local government systems to achieve sustainability goals like project in New Zealand and Africa.

In summary, this paper conclusion underscores the necessity of defining sustainable tourism issues clearly, understanding their scope and severity, and securing full support and commitment from all stakeholders. Only with this comprehensive approach can the Lanoh community of Ulu Perak hope to achieve success in sustainable tourism, addressing poverty effectively, and improving the community's well-being. The paper also expresses gratitude towards JAKOA, the Ministry of Rural Affairs, and the Majlis Daerah Gerik for their cooperation in the research, highlighting the collaborative effort required to advance sustainable tourism in the region.



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