



**A STUDY OF HOTEL WORKERS' PERCEPTION
OF THE IMPACT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY
ON THEIR SOCIAL LIFE IN LANGKAWI,
MALAYSIA.**

BY

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**KULIYYAH OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE
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ABSTRACT

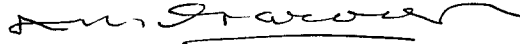
This study focuses mainly on hotel workers' perception of the impact of tourism industry on their social life in Langkawi, Malaysia. It assesses the hotel workers' perception of changes brought about by tourism in their social life and their reaction thereof. It also assesses the changing pattern of economy as well as the environment and their impact on the life of people in general and of hotel workers in particular. The present study focuses on the social impact of tourism on hotel workers. It opens new vistas of understanding the youth culture in the region. Social scientists neglected this aspect and most of the previous researches only concentrated on physical impacts of tourism (environmental, economy and lifestyle at large). By that the economic gains are more concerned than the social life of youths. In order to expose and highlight the issues involved in it, thus, this study concentrates on analyzing the social impact of tourism particularly on hotel workers of Langkawi, Malaysia. The present research studies the changes brought about by tourism and affected, to a great extent, the social life of hotel workers. It assesses hotel workers perception of the changes and the extent they affected their attitude, aspirations and way of life. It also tries to find out their reaction towards tourism and its positive and negative effects on the region. It further assesses how they adapt to these changes with particular reference to family relation and religion. The study adopts quantitative methodology and data is derived from both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire is administered among hotel workers in Langkawi to find out their perception of the impact of tourism industry on their social life.

ملخص البحث

يرتكز البحث على دراسة مواقف المواطنين العاملين في الفنادق في جزيرة لنكاوي بماليزيا نحو أثر الحركة السياحية في نظام حياتهم الاجتماعية. وكما أن البحث يسعى إلى الاطلاع على مواقف هؤلاء العاملين نحو تغيرات الحياة الاجتماعية الناتجة عن هذه الحركة وردود فعلهم نحوها. ويسعى هذا البحث أيضا إلى إبراز التغيرات الحادثة في نمط الاقتصاد وأثرها على المواطنين المحليين عامة وفي شخصية العاملين خاصة. ويحاول البحث أن يفتح لنا أبوابا جديدة لدراسة ثقافة الشباب داخل القطر. معظم العلماء الاجتماعيين يرفضون هذا النوع من الأثر وأما الدراسات السابقة التي كتبت في هذا المجال فمعظمها ارتكز على الآثار المادية فقط (من ناحية البيئة والاقتصاد والمعيشة). وهذا يدل على أن الغرض الاقتصادي أكثر أهمية من قيمة الحياة الاجتماعية لدى الشباب. ولذلك يقوم هذا البحث بتحليل الآثار الاجتماعية الناتجة عن الحركة السياحية لدى عملي الفنادق في جزيرة لنكاوي حتى يتم التركيز على أمور تتعلق بها. ويقوم البحث أيضا بتحليل مواقفهم إزاء هذه التغيرات التي لها أثر بالغ في سلوكهم وطموحاتهم ومسيرة حياتهم اليومية. وحاول البحث أيضا الاطلاع على مواقفهم نحو السياحة وأثرها الإيجابي والسلبي في القطر. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك يكشف هذا البحث عن طريقتهم في مواجهة هذه التغيرات في نطاق العلاقة الأسرية والدينية. يعتمد البحث على المنهج الإحصائي وأما المعلومات الواردة فيه فهي مستنبطة من المصادر والمراجع المعتمدة. استعان البحث بالاستبيانات الموضوعية لمعرفة ردود فعل عملي الفنادق تجاه أثر الحركة السياحية في حياتهم الاجتماعية.

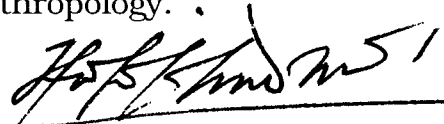
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I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Sociology and Anthropology.



Jamil Farooqui
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Sociology and Anthropology.



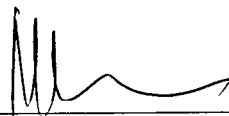
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Name: ROSFAZILA BINTI HJ. ABD. RAHMAN

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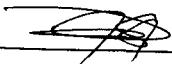
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To my beloved mother and father

Hajjah Lafisah Bt. Hj. Husin

And

Hj. Abd. Rahman Bin Hj. Din

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The study focuses mainly on hotel workers' perception of the impact of tourism industry on their social life in Langkawi. It assesses the hotel workers' perception of changes brought about by tourism in their social life and their reaction thereof. It also assesses the changing pattern of economy as well as the environment and their impact on the life of people in general and of hotel workers in particular.

As a direct result of tourist development in Langkawi many people enter the island both as tourists and as settlers and bring with them alien attitudes and values. It is important to investigate what impact this influx makes on the youth of the island. Does tourism in Langkawi promote healthy cultural exchange?

The tourists embody a different lifestyle and culture usually quite alien to that of the host community. They often represent the decadence of the rich and the developed world. Their behavior and attitude are representatives of a society that many impressionable

young locals regard as superior and worthy of imitation. In many developing countries the influx of alien values through tourism has resulted in social and cultural upheaval.¹

1.1 Statement of the problem

Foreign tourists display symbols of their affluence and way of life to the interested host instilling a desire for those commodities, which remain beyond the reach of most people in developing countries. This is known as the “demonstration effect” and can result in the growth of discontent among the host community.² Resentment and envy are felt towards tourists and their lavish lifestyle in luxurious hotels. The show of affluence and confidence on the part of the tourists can cause the development of an inferiority complex among local people and may lead to attempts to copy their behavior. This has been noted particularly among the young people of traditionally closed societies who observed their freedom and material superiority and aspire to achieve similar status. In some cases, this contributes to increased crime due to the frustration of local residents unable to acquire such wealth by legitimate means.³

¹ Bird, Bella., *Langkawi—From Mahsuri to Mahathir Tourism For Whom?*, INSAN, The Institute of Social Analysis, Kuala Lumpur, 1980, pp.63.

² *Ibid.*, pp.64.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.65.

In case of Langkawi it is true that locals are in a position to benefit financially from the development of tourism. Very often, local elites with contacts in high-ups are aware of such opportunities and position themselves accordingly. Inevitably, well-educated middle class youth fluent in English and other foreign languages are best qualified to work in the tourist sector. Positions for skilled workers are taken up by those who have necessary training and expertise, often from outside of Langkawi. The local youth tend to make up the lowest layers of workers in the tourist industry. Employment opportunities are created particularly for women and young people. These are jobs of lower nature such as waiters, gardeners, and kitchen-helpers, to mention a few. These offer little opportunity for people to raise their standard of living.

The present study focuses on the social impact of tourism on hotel workers. It will open new vistas of understanding the youth culture in the region. Social scientists neglected this aspect and most of the previous researches only concentrated on physical impacts of tourism (environmental, economy and lifestyle at large). It shows that the monetary gains are more important than the social life of youths. Thus, this study will concentrate on analyzing the social impact of tourism particularly on hotel workers of Langkawi to expose and highlight the issues involved in it. It also tries to find out their reaction towards tourism and its positive and negative effects on the region. It

will further assess how they are motivated to adopt these changes in their lives with particular reference to family relation and religion.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To find out socio-economic characteristics of youth in Langkawi.
2. To assess the perception of youths towards the nature and functioning of the industry of tourism and its relevance to the people.
3. To study youths' perception of impact of tourism on the following aspects of social life.
 - a. Identity
 - b. Behavior
 - c. Aspiration
 - d. Moral values
 - e. Family relation
4. To find out the aspects of social life those are most affected by tourism industry.
5. To assess the factors that affect youths to change their social life.

1.3 Research Questions

The investigation of the present problem raises certain questions, which should be studied in the light of empirical evidence. Thus, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the youths' perception of tourism as a major factor to develop the region and change the lives of the people?
2. How much youths are satisfied with the nature and functioning of tourism in Langkawi.
3. Does tourism affects youth's social life with particular reference to identity, behavior and aspiration.
4. Does tourism affects the moral values and family relations of youths?

1.4 Definitions of terms

1.4.1 Impact

According to the Oxford Thesaurus-American Edition, the word impact denotes effect, results, consequences and the impulse resulting from a new idea / theory. It also means a strong effect or influence. ⁴

⁴ Urdang, Laurence, *The Oxford Thesaurus-American Edition*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, pp.223.

1.4.2 Tourism

An extreme form of recreation, which distinguished by relatively long lengths of stay away from home and relatively large distance traveled. Tourism represents a particular use of leisure time and a particular form of recreation but does not include all uses of leisure time or all forms of recreation. It includes much travel but not all travel. Conceptually, tourism is, therefore, distinguished in particular from related concepts of leisure and recreation on the one hand, and from travel and migration on the other. Recreation and tourism are differentiated on the basis of motivation, activity types, modes of travel and distances traveled. ⁵

In this study, the term tourism is specifically used as a social phenomenon consisting of many facets that can, and should, become subjects for research. The influence tourism has brought to bear on customs, habits, values, and the way of life of local populations; as well as its social repercussions for the locals; and many other related topics will be studied from a sociological point of view.

⁵ Mathieson, Alister, (eds), *Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc New York, 1989, pp.9.

1.4.3 Youth

Youth as a social category comprises several age cohorts of people, who are young in the chronological and physiological sense but not completely identical in their social characteristic. Youth is however, also understood as youthfulness- as an abstract construct of such characteristics as the quality of being young and evincing peculiar traits subjects to social evaluation. The actual problems of youth are often approached both in social practice and in sociological theory from the point of view of this evaluation.⁶

This study confines to the local youths of Langkawi, male and female of 15-25 years of age who were engaged in tourism industry. This group constitutes the core of youth's culture according to UN recommendation.

1.4.4 Social life

The word social denotes communal, community, common, coactive, group, public, popular and societal whereas life means existence, living, way of life and lifestyle. Thus, social life can be understood as collective way of life or lifestyle of the community. ⁷

⁶ Kuczynski,Janusc, *Perspectives on Contemporary Youth*, The United Nations University, USA ,1988,pp.3.

⁷ Urdang, Laurence, *The Oxford Thesaurus-American Edition* pp.482 passim.

Social life is, by and large, conceptualized in three broad ways. Geoffrey Barraclough while describing Social Life in Early England finds difficulty to conceptualize it. However, he pays particular attention to the broader social aspect of English history. He took into consideration the social background and the environment in which English history moved from the time of the Roman settlement until the close of the Middle Ages. It is the conspectus of English life. He relates the social life with knighthood as a common phenomenon to the whole Europe, the external trappings of English Chivalry, the knight's arms and Armour that lead to development of English trade, which depended upon the pattern of European trade routes. Thus, it is a conception of the realities of early life in England.⁸

Muhammad Manazir Ahsan explains social life under the Abbasids in terms of present day problems of Arab countries and of their immediate neighbors. He requires certain knowledge of their geographical and social background; and knowledge of the main trends of their history-political, cultural and religious, which are essential for an understanding of current issue. He attempts to clarify the historical past of the Arabs and analyzes their present problems. It has no specific idea of social life. However, he focuses on the social

⁸ Barraclough, Geoffrey, (ed), *Social Life in Early England* , Greenwood Press Publishers, London., 1960.

aspects such as costume, food, housing, hunting, indoor and outdoor games, festivals and festivities.⁹

Rev Justus Doolittle discusses social life of Chinese in detail. He presents various aspects of social life including agricultural and domestic matters, betrothal and marriage, superstitious treatment of disease, death, mourning and burial, religion and literary examination. He refers to the perusal of an original work on the inner life of the most ancient and populous, but least understood and appreciated of nations. He attempts to describe many of their singular customs and opinions relating to almost all subjects of interest, and also to give their own explanation of the origin / the rationale of some of them.¹⁰ Thus, it is detailed and reliable information concerning Chinese social and religious practices and sentiments. As the work appears, it makes no pretensions to a high literacy style, but is a simple and unpolished account of some of the most singular, interesting and important phases of Chinese life and manners.

Brown assesses the tourism's social and cultural impacts through the effect on people, their quality of life and their values, customs and beliefs.¹¹

⁹ Ahsan, Muhammad Manazir, *Social Life under the Abbasids, 170-289 AH, 786-902 AD*, Longman, New York, 1979.

¹⁰ Doolittle, Rev Justus, *Social Life of the Chinese-With some account of their religious, governmental, educational and business customs and opinions, vol. 1*, Graham Brash, Singapore, 1986.

¹¹ Brown, Frances, *Tourism Reassessed: Blight or Blessing?*, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford, 1998, pp.66.

All in all, there is no clear conceptualization of social life given by those authors. However, they preferred to analyze selected aspects of social life. Thus, it is clear that social life can be understood as collective way of life or lifestyle of the community. I consider social life as the entire system of interaction, which a community develops to lead meaningful life. For the purpose of the present research five aspects (identity, behavior, aspiration, moral values and family relation) are selected to find out the impact of tourism on hotel workers. These are the aspects, which are generally affected by tourism.

1.4.5 Impact of tourism on youth

Research on tourism has been highly fragmented, with researchers following separate and often divergent paths. For example, there have been studies of the history of tourism (Sigaux 1966;White 1967), the development of seaside resorts (Gilbert 1939;Wall 1975), and the role of tourism in international trade (Peters 1969; Gray 1970). Impact-oriented research has been equally specialized, emphasizing specific types of impact to the exclusion of others. For instance, Doxey (1976) and Smith (1977) examined the resentments, which may result from tourist-host interactions; the World Bank (1972) and Peters (1969) treated tourism as an economic phenomenon; and Hall (1970) and Cohen (1978) documented some of the effects of tourism on the