

## **Potential of homestay tourism based on seaweed cultivation from the views of seaweed cultivators in district of Semporna Sabah, east Malaysia**

### **Abstract**

Community participation in tourism development especially among fisherman and farmers has begun to given serious attention by the government whereby the communities are given opportunities to engage in tourism development programmes in order to enhance their quality of life. In order to encourage local community participation in tourism development in rural areas, participants' perceptions regarding tourism activities are important aspect to be sought. Good or bad perceptions from the community towards tourism development are important because it can determine the success of the programme. Firstly, this paper aims to explore the views or perceptions of seaweed cultivators towards homestay tourism which is based on seaweed cultivation in the District of Semporna, Sabah. Qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been applied in this study, such as the usage of the face to face interviews survey using survey questionnaires and field observation as primary methods. The findings show that the majority of the respondents have a positive perception of homestay tourism based on seaweed cultivation, such as the acceptance of visits by the tourists to their working place. Seaweed cultivators agreed that this tourism activity bring additional income to them. Activities that can become tourist attractions include tying seaweed seeds on a casino table. Moreover, the tourists have an opportunity to take a boat to see the seaweed farm, and take pictures of seaweed activities and so on. These findings also revealed that the majority of the respondents assumed that the visits of the tourists would motivate them to carry out the activity with more enthusiasm. This shows that seaweed cultivation could become a new tourism product which has great potential to develop in the district of Semporna, Sabah.