

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Introduction

Enriched with wild tropical forest, Malaysia is known as one of the most famous tourist destination in the world. Various attractions can be seen in Malaysia, such as Taman Negara⁴ in Pahang, Tasik Kenyir⁵ in Terengganu and Pulau Langkawi⁶ in Kedah. These are among the 9.6 percent of Malaysia's protected areas (Yeo, 1998).

2.2 Environmental Awareness

The awareness of the importance to preserve the environment has convinced the Government to allocate a big portion of the nations' budget into environmental preservation programs. As a result, the Government launched the National Landscape Day on 3rd March 2001. The aim of this program is to instil the awareness of the importance of environment preservation in the citizens of Malaysia as an addition to the Earth Day on the 22nd of April each year. In addition, the government's commitment in environmental preservation started since the Langkawi Declaration in 1989 and was later agreed upon at the Rio Conference.

It has created an interest to know more about the important role of Malaysia's tropical forests as a tourist attraction and how it has managed to bring growth to the

⁴ National Park in Pahang

⁵ Kenyir Lake in Terengganu

economy. It is believed that a research should be done to evaluate this non-market good as one of the leading tools to the creation of Malaysia's recreational parks in years to come. For this reason, the MAP was chosen as the first agro-forestry park in the world. Refer to Figure 2.1.

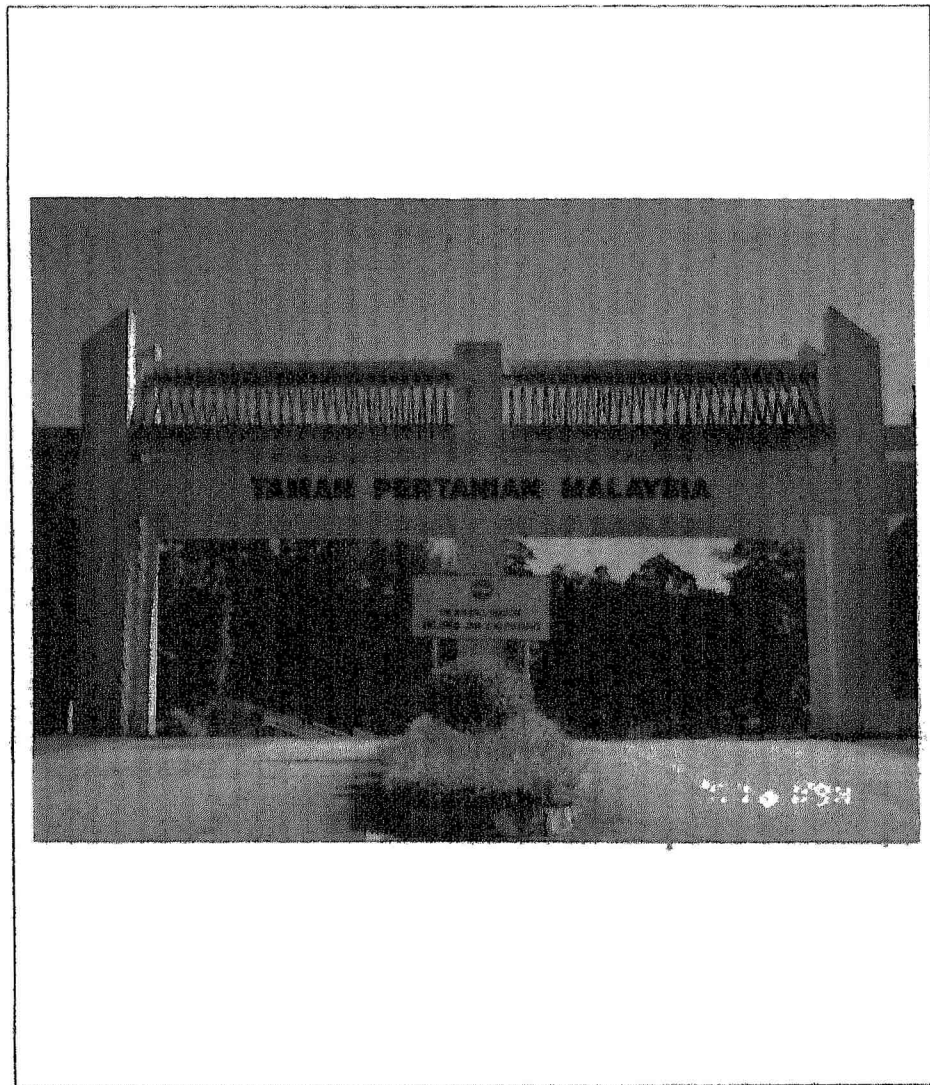


Figure 2.1: Entrance of Taman Pertanian Malaysia

⁶ Legendary Langkawi Island in Kedah

2.3 Taman Pertanian Malaysia (MAP)

Inspired by Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and all its agencies, MAP was launched on May 12, 1986 to become the first agro-forestry park in the world. The park was opened to public in 1988, and has since received overwhelming support from visitors.

The Ministry of Agriculture manages MAP for the Integrated Agriculture Development Program (IADP). In the early stage of its establishment, there were 14 agencies relating to agriculture directly involved such as FAMA⁷ and MARDI⁸ either by contributing workers or facilities to the park. But currently only eight remained active.

Initially, there were a few suggestions for the location of the park. Among others were Bukit Cherakah Reserve Forest and Air Hitam area (near Mardi station in Serdang, Selangor). Nevertheless, Bukit Cherakah Reserve Forest was chosen based on the argument, that it is situated in the centre of Klang Valley, with suitable soil for plantation, rivers suitable for fishponds, the existence of wild forest and native's settlement.

⁷ Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority

⁸ Malaysian Agriculture Research and Development Institute

Generally, the purpose of the park is to create a place for all types of plants such as fruit trees, woods, and herbal plants. These plants will be addressed with both general and scientific names for educational purposes, academics and public knowledge. It also provide fish ponds, bird parks and beautiful landscaped gardens. Located in the middle of Shah Alam's industrial area, with the size of about 1258 hectares, the park was established as the showcase of the country's achievements in agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry. No doubt that, Datuk Seri Sanusi was also very optimistic about the success of the park in terms of recreational, culture and research programs.

2.4 Management of Taman Pertanian Malaysia

MAP employs about 37 employees to manage the park. The figure includes employees from the maintenance and management divisions. MAP manages the park with the budget provided by the Government. The revenue collected by the park is entirely owned by the Government. For the first five years (1987-1991) the Government allocated about RM 70 million to develop the park and for the expenses needed to organize campaigns to attract people to visit the park.

After five years (1992 onwards) of active promotions, financial support allocated by Government was only for maintenance purpose. By referring to Table 2.1, revenues made during the period were only about ten percent of annual total expenses.

Table 2.1

MAP: Expenses and Revenues, 1986-2000

YEAR	EXPENSES (RM)	REVENUE (RM)
1986	2,500.00	-
1987	365,683.76	-
1988	2,609,953.66	-
1989	2,359,601.47	15,487.50
1990	25,361,278.85	203,039.30
1991	32,915,791.43	662,138.95
1992	11,847,115.05	1,023,094.40
1993	8,092,352.50	1,363,944.40
1994	10,777,538.35	1,324,535.60
1995	8,749,191.23	1,165,945.60
1996	5,350,908.85*	1,139,792.21
	993,378.00**	
1997	4,736,592.00*	969,571.61
	408,593.13**	
1998	2,774,397.96*	784,060.58
1999	1,970,158.91*	774,819.43
2000	5,508,878.05	619,440.79

*Expenses for Unit Taman Pertanian Malaysia (UTPM)

**Drainage Irrigation Department Expenses

Source :-TPM : Laporan Kemajuan Projek Pembangunan (RM6)

2.5 Visitors to Taman Pertanian Malaysia

Visitors to MAP belongs to various age group: children, teenagers, adults and elderly. They usually come to relax and enjoy the wonders of the wild forest that could still maintain its existence amidst the development of cities around. Many also come to jog in the jungle and some would come just to enjoy the nature. Those staying nearby would come on weekends, during holidays and even on weekdays. Open to all age group, the park welcome them from Tuesday till Sunday from 9am – 5pm. The entry fees are RM3 for adults and RM1 for children and pensioners.

2.5.1 Visitors

Based on the information from MAP, the number of visitors to the park has reduced by about twenty percent (20%) every year. Data collected by MAP showed that the number of visitors during 1992 were about 500,000 (Refer to Table 2.2). The number of has declined from about 300,000 to 100,000 visitors per annum. The management of MAP reported that the decline in numbers is due to lack of attractive facilities offered in the park. To maintain its status as the first agro-forestry park in the world, it is suggested that the park should increase the number of visitors from all over the world by at least 1 million.

Table 2.2

MAP : Number of visitors to MAP 1989 – 2000

YEAR	VISITOR
1989	33,399
1990	118,741
1991	359,963
1992	546,575
1993	429,826
1994	307,398
1995	319,039
1996	288,596
1997	222,226
1998	181,652
1999	150,865
2000	126,263
TOTAL	3,084,543

Source :- TPM : Laporan Kemajuan Projek Pembangunan (RM6)

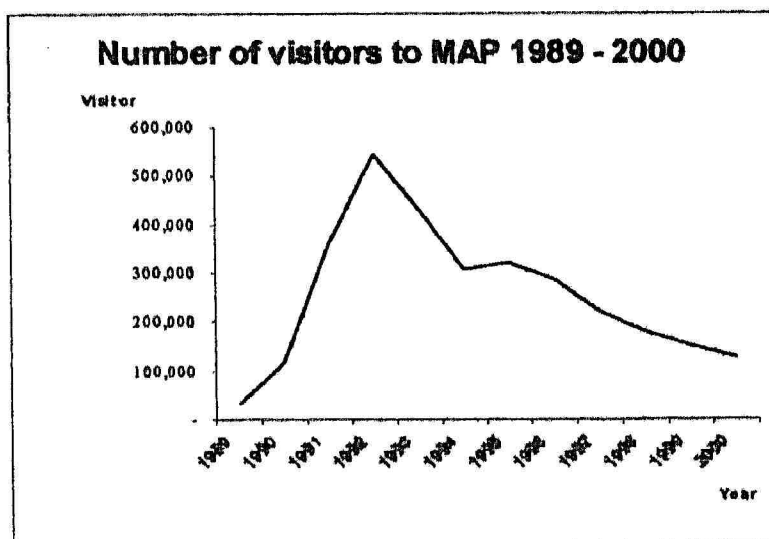


Figure 2.2 Number of visitors to MAP 1989 – 2000

2.5.2 Activities

MAP at Bukit Cahaya Seri Alam, Shah Alam, Selangor, provide various types of activities for visitors of all age group. For example, cycling, camping and fishing. Among others, visitors are entertained by scenic views of the paddy fields, plantations, fishpond, four seasons temperature house, traditional village, and Animal Park. It provides challenging activities for certain target group such as jungle tracking, camping site, and suspension bridge.

For many, it is more than just a retreat as it also offers both recreational and educational activities that Mother Nature could provide to visitors around the city to experience life in the midst of the forest. Refer to Figure 2.3 to 2.5.

2.5.3 Facilities

The park provides in-house bus services, carriages, bicycle rental, surau, food and beverage stalls, camping and fishing sites, and chalets for accommodation. In addition, the management offers their building facilities (e.g. dining hall, film shooting) for renting to outsiders. Facilities such as the in-house bus services are usually the most preferred to visitors. This is because the bus can take visitors around the park. The bus will stop at various places that the visitors want to see. Taking the bus saves the visitors time and energy. These facilities have a range of fees suitable to its use. Details fee are showed in Table 2.3.



Figure 2.2 : Four-Season Temperature House (Autumn Season)

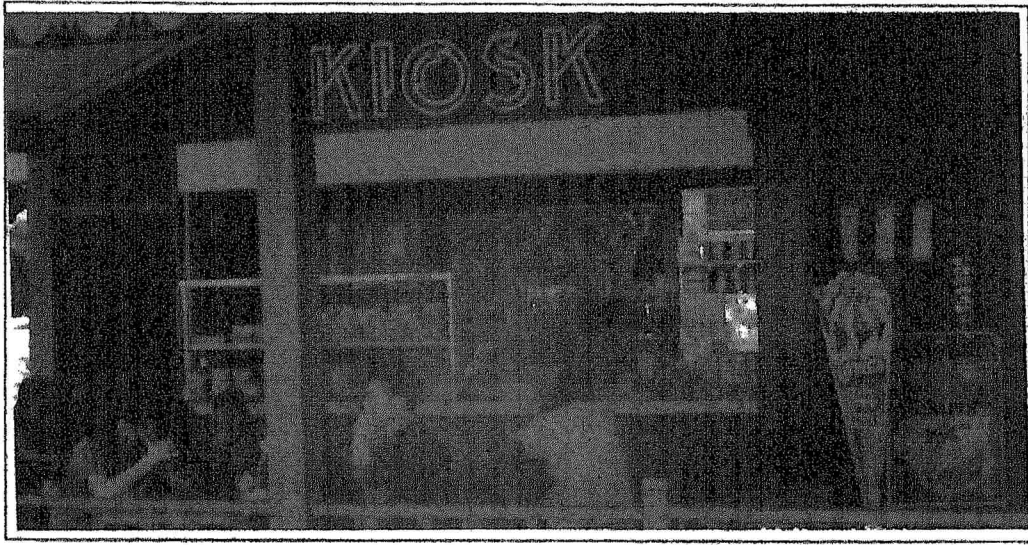


Figure 2.3 : Food At Kiosk

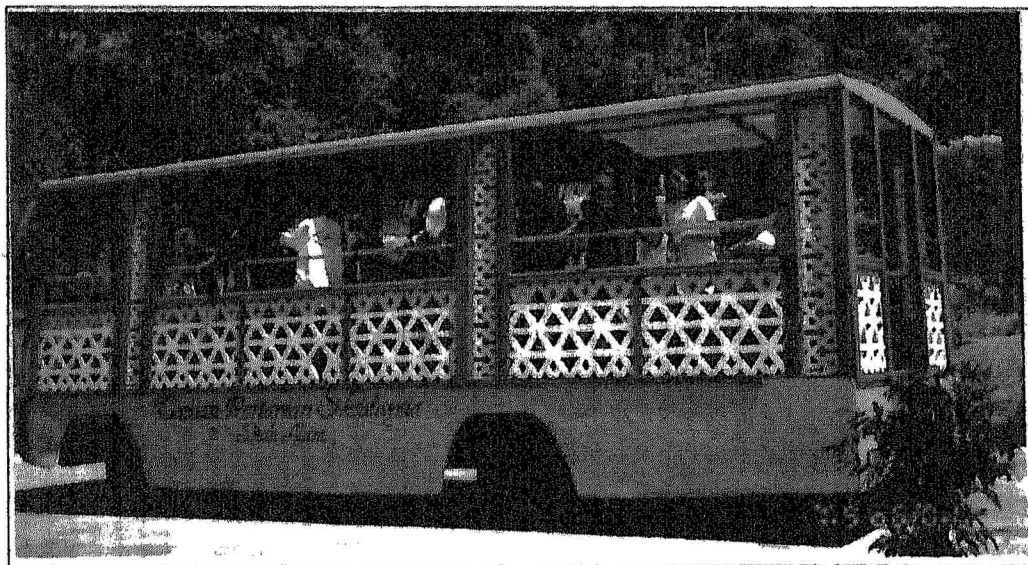


Figure 2.4 : Feeder Bus

Table 2.3

MAP : Facilities Fees

No	Items	Price (RM)	
		Adult	Children
1	Admission Fee	3.00	1.00
2	Four Season Temperate House	3.00	1.00
3	Chalet / Camp Site	Weekday	Weekend
	a. Culture Village	500.00	550.00
	b. Idyllic Village	80.00	100.00
	c. Forest Lodge	50.00	70.00
	d. A'Frame	20.00	
	e. Camp Site	5.00	
4	License for I unit video	10.00	
5	Shooting Fees	1,000.00	
6	License for fishing	2.00 per unit	
7	Amphitheater	100.00	
8	Peak of Art	150.00	
9	Dining Hall	50.00	
10	Swimming Pool	2.00 / 3 hours	
11	Bicycle Rental	3.00 for 1 st hours 1.00 every subsequent hour	
12	Family Day site (5 vehicle passes / site)	100.00 / site	

Source : Taman Pertanian Malaysia

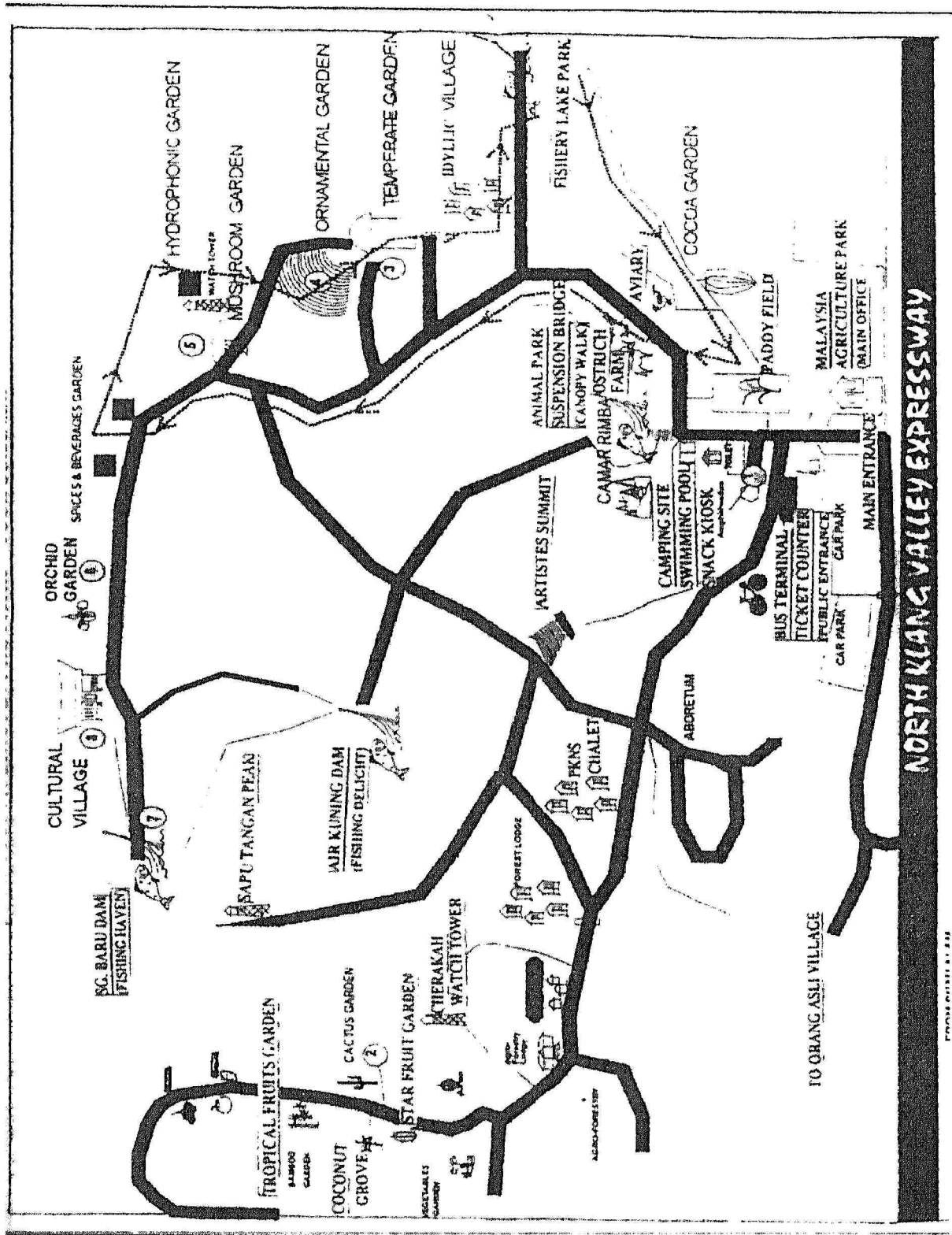


Figure 2.5 : Tour Map of Taman Pertanian Malaysia