

**Asian Conference on Sustainability, Energy & the Environment 2011**

**Osaka, Jepun**

**2 - 5 Jun 2011**

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Pusat Pengajian Sains Kesihatan**

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The Asian Conference on Sustainability, Energy & the Environment

The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences

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# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN, MALAYSIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Public participation has been recognized as key objectives for local, national and global environmental programmes and has been propagated through the various policies and declarations. Public participation means a process that participate the public in the decision making procedures of an organization. The objective of this paper is to highlight participation of Malaysian public in the environmental issues in order to achieve sustainable development. The study was to identify the public participation in environmental issues in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia. The research was based on a set of questionnaire. A total of 200 respondents were interviewed and filled in questionnaire. From the study, Malaysian public are concerned about environment, but their concerns do not naturally translate into action. For Malaysian public participation to be successful, general public should be provided with effective notice of opportunities to participate in environmental issues, and provided with sufficient information to enable them to do so effectively.

**Keywords:** public participation, environmental issues, sustainable development, public awareness

## **INTRODUCTION**

The principle of sustainable development encompasses social, environmental and economic issues, entailing concern with present and future generations. In order to move towards more sustainable development, there is the need to identify and increase the effectiveness of public participation in environmental issues. Promoting public participation in environmental issues has been deemed crucial in recent years. There was a clear need for action to be taken, to increase public awareness on the importance of the environment.

Public participation has been recognized as key objectives for local, national and global environmental programmes and has been propagated through the various policies and declarations such as the Rio Declaration, Earth Charter and UNEP Agenda 21. Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration for example encourages each country to have informed citizens who can participate in environmental management. The role of the Government, the media, schools and other institutions is important in raising awareness on environmental issues if the public is to understand environmental issues and participate at all levels.

Generally, participation can be defined as developing processes of collective learning that change the way that people think and act. In detail, public participation means a process that participate the public in the decision making procedures of an organization. These range from