BACKGROUND

Classic tourism revolves around motor-vehicle tours and homogeneous energy-intensive destination resorts that feature a primary activity - beach, golf, skiing and wildlife and often in hot or cold destinations which require extra energy-consuming cooling or heating. For local tourism, tourists are more often channelled towards bus tours of the city, boat tours of the harbour or walking tours of a museum (IBF, 1995). There is very little development of intermediate level activities. Bicycle tourism can be one of these intermediate level activities.

With ecotourism growing worldwide, bicycle tourism can be made as an important supplement to the industry. Nonetheless, bicycle tourism is hardly in the picture. How can people who are interested in bicycle-tourism and cultural-tourism use ecotourism to build their programmes? It appears that bicycle usage and associated tourism activities has become a popular travel mode together with the rising environmentalism and increasing awareness for sustainable development (Chang and Chang, 2003).

Even in Malaysia, the bicycle tour is a new tourism concept. Bicycle tour is being categorised as a niche market tour package. It is considered as an ecologically responsible alternative tourism. Extensive research done by Newsome et al. (2002) tried to define alternative tourism as a tourism that gives emphasis to the contact and understanding between the hosts and the tourist, as well as the environment. Thus, bicycle tour can be considered as an alternative tourism in Malaysia.

Generally, Malaysians do not fancy bicycle tour. This is mainly due to the conservative mindset of Malaysians who perceived that such tour will not suit their purpose of travel and is unsecured. Furthermore, with the tropical and humid climate in Malaysia, bicycle tour is certainly not the preferred form of tourism for the locals. The local tourist do not realise the importance of bicycle tours in promoting an ecologically responsible tourism to the nation. Indeed there is lack of emphasis on this adventure and alternative type of tourism in the country.