



EPRA International Journal of  
**Socio-Economic and Environmental Outlook**

SJIF Impact Factor (2015) : 4.312

Vol. 3 February - January 2016-17

EPRA Journals

## **RURAL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SUSTAINABILITY OF IBAJAY MANGROVE ECO PARK (KII) AS TOURIST ATTRACTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study is designed to ascertain the extent of rural women's participation in the sustainability of Mangrove Eco-Park or Katunggan it Ibajay (KII) as a tourist attraction. The study employed a descriptive research employing the quantitative method. The rural women affirmed that they sometimes participate in the tourism planning of KII. The research further proved that the respondents are active in the preservation of the environment by sharing about their participation in activities associated with the preservation of cultural dynamism in the locality. In the economic aspect, however, rural women confirmed that they seldom participate in the income-generating activities in KII. The rural women also participate in the preservation of social dimension in sustaining the KII by joining activities such as seminar-workshops and trainings about tourism services, which enhanced their knowledge about tourism industry and strengthened their support to the implemented policies related to the protection of women in KII. In adherence to the special groups, rural women said that they sometimes participate in every endeavor while maintaining the institutional dynamism. Rural women likewise declared about their frequent participation in all implemented activities. Similarly, stakeholders emphasized that rural women are active in participating in the training offered by their partner agencies and active in preserving the eco-park. In addition, the stakeholders stressed that rural women's involvement in KII marked improvement in the ecopark, specifically in ensuring guests' satisfaction which deemed very important in the sustainability of a tourist attraction.*

**KEYWORDS:** Eco-Park, Katunggan it Ibajay (KII), Participation, Rural Women, Sustainability, Tourist Attraction