

ABSTRACT

Accessibility of facilities to disabled people has become an emerging issue in Malaysia. Hosting FESPIC games 2006 in Kuala Lumpur has further increased awareness among disabled people, government and private sectors on accessibility to buildings and transportation service. Since Langkawi is one of the most famous tourist attraction in Kedah, the accessibility of disabled facilities of hotels in Langkawi are crucial. Receiving 752,290 foreign tourist arrivals in 2005, it is inevitable that disabled visitors also make up this statistic. This research investigates the lodging properties' awareness of the need to accommodate disabled guest, especially guests on wheelchair. This research also determines the perceived benefits and barriers faced by lodging properties in providing disabled facilities. As the approach used in this study is qualitative research, data was collected through in-depth interviews which have been tape- recorded, transcribed to MS word and analysed through the content analysis method. The findings reveal good feedback on awareness of disabled facilities in hotels as well as several drivers and barriers in providing disabled facilities. It is suggested that a coordinated approach by the government, related agencies and tourism industry in planning tourism access is vital to provide accessibility for the disabled traveller. Consideration should also be given to introduce legislation that will encourage lodging properties to provide accommodation services that are more disabled friendly.