

## CHAPTER 8: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

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This chapter reports on the results from the semi-structured interviews with forest users. Four overarching themes emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data for both sites: “Activities and Experience in the Recreational Forest”, “Value of the Recreational Forest”, “Forest Culture and Memory of the Forest Environment” and “Issues and Expectations towards the Recreational Forest”. The themes for Kanching Forest were generally similar to those relating to Ampang Recreational Forest. However, there were a few differences in the sub-categories related to “forest activities”, “motives for forest use”, “forest characteristics” “human interactions with the forest” and Issues and Expectations of Recreational Forest. Every first paragraph of each section in this chapter will give an overall summary of the section, followed by succeeding paragraphs with more details regarding both forests.

Figure 8.1 sets out the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis. Sub-themes included under the Activities and Experience in the Recreational Forest theme are “the pattern of recreational use”, “the motive for forest use” and the “feelings experienced” in the recreational forest. The sub-themes grouped under the Value of the Recreational Forest are the “function”, and “benefits” of the recreational forest. “Human interaction with forest”, “cultural memory” and “first experience” are categorised under the Forest Culture and Memory regarding the forest environment theme. Issues of Concern and Expectations of Recreational Forest comprise “management aspect”, “preservation aspects”, “future planning” and “public awareness”. This chapter also reports on the impact of gender and ethnicity on the areas covered by these themes.

### 8.1 Use and Experience in the Recreational Forest

#### 8.1.1 Pattern of recreational use

The sub-theme, patterns of recreational use, covers activities engaged in by the interviewees, the composition of the group visiting the recreational forest, the temporal pattern of use and the reason for choosing

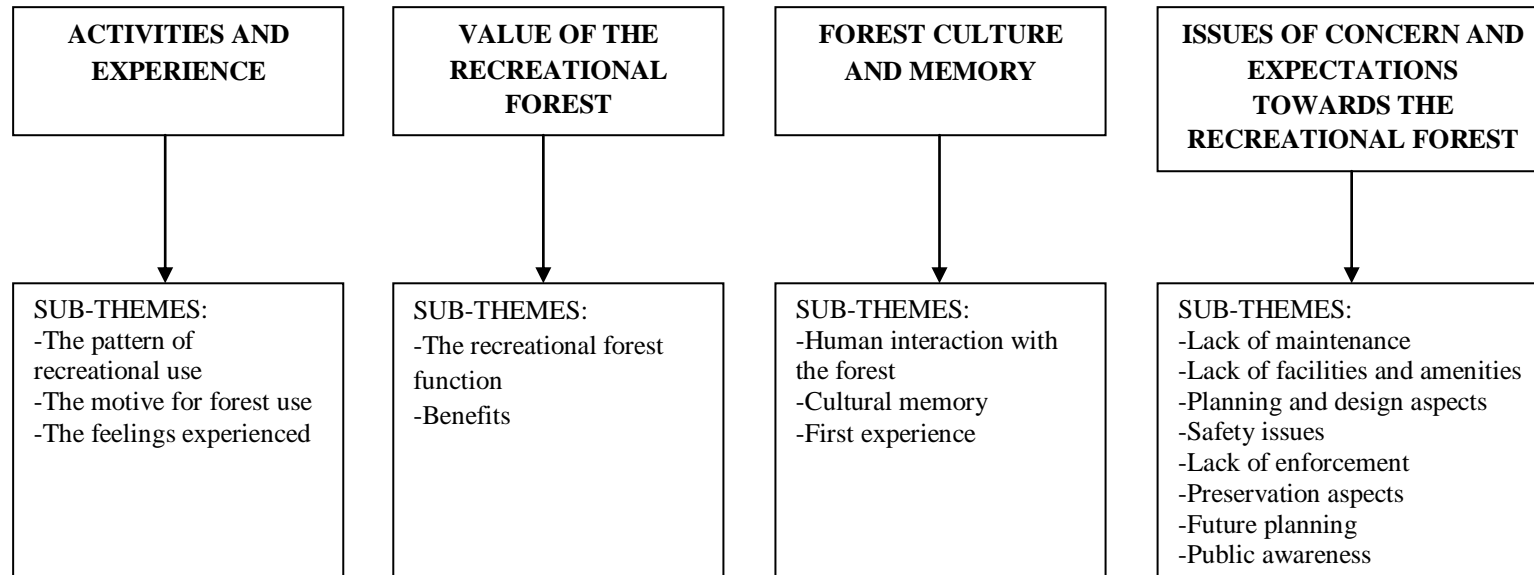


Figure 8.1 Themes and sub-themes of both recreational forests

recreational forests as a destination. Swimming, playing in the water, picnicking, sitting while observing the surroundings, fishing, sitting and supervising children, resting and soaking feet in the water, viewing water, watching monkeys and viewing the scenery were activities usually engaged in by the interviewees at both forests:

Mr. C:	“Just bathe, no other activities, ... picnic” (Malay, married, 39 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	“Just sit and enjoy the environment” (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. E:	“Playing in the water at waterfall and swim”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. C:	“When sitting here, watching other people kids swimming, ... and looking at the water, that’s it!”. (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	“Catching fish with family...”. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

There were some differences between Ampang and Kanching Forest in respect of the types of activities carried out. Some activities engaged in by the interviewees at Ampang Forest bore a greater resemblance to activities carried out in urban parks which related to health benefits. Ampang Forest is also famous among bird lovers for the opportunities to take photos of birds and bird watching:

Mr. B:	“I just came for jogging because it is near to my house”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. O:	“Normally, I do three laps, up down! Up down! [along the road]. Jogging and walking”. (Indian, married, 50s’, Ampang Forest)
Mr. G:	“... I enjoy watching birds, ... basically a hobby as a recreation”. (Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“..., here I can walk or jog, [and] feel calm”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“All types of activity, strolling, exercise, ...”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	“Their character, when we observe them [users], some of their behaviour seemed funny, we enjoy ourselves”. (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In slight contrast, the activities in Kanching Forest tended to be more exploratory, for example, climbing up hills and jungle trekking:

Mr. B:	“Usually I climb up the hill, the highest level [level 7]. The waterfall area, which is a small area on the top. I carry astride on the hips (his children), because they like water, the hill water is clean”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“...at the same time when we actually walk up here, we also exercise and we also sweating...”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Most interviewees in Ampang Forest said that they liked to visit the forest in groups consisting of a selection of friends, children, spouses, immediate and extended family, but some preferred to visit the forest alone. With one exception, conversations with interviewees who visited the forest alone suggested that they came alone out of necessity rather than choice. Visiting the forest alone was also a highly noticeable gendered issue (See the Impact of Gender in the last section for an explanation of this). In Kanching Forest, the social make-up of groups visiting the recreational forest was quite similar except that some interviewees came with colleagues from work:

Mr. E:	“All [my] friends, same working place”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
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Most of the interviewees at both sites said that they visited at weekends, whilst a few of them visited on weekdays and school holidays. For example, in Kanching Forest, some of the interviewees who worked, were busy with other matters or studied in universities or colleges usually preferred to visit at weekends when they had time to come to the recreational forest:

Mr. D:	“When I have free time, usually on Saturday or Sunday”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“Weekends. Because we are working. Weekends will be the best time because you can enjoy the whole day activity”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss C:	‘Because today is holiday and my relatives have free time today so we came’. (Chinese, single, 30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

An important finding is that proximity is a very important driver for the interviewees’ choice to visit and use both recreational forests. There were several reasons for the interviewees’ choice of the Ampang Forest. A few of them said that there was no other recreational forest in Kuala Lumpur and that the nearest one was the Ampang Forest. Other interviewees said that the recreational forest was suitable for activities they wanted to do. However, most of them said they visited because of the location of the recreational forest’s proximity to their homes. A few of them lived in flats nearby:

Mr. F:	“It’s quite close to my house. Just 1 Km away, ...”. (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
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Mr. I:	“Near, near! I just live here, at the nearby flats”. (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
Mr. K:	“..., it is quite near to my house. Within half an hour [cycling]”. (Malay, married, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“There is no other forest, just here. Because I am staying at the nearby flats .... Near to my house. Because I have not much time to go somewhere else”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	“Frequently come! Furthermore near my house. Less than 5 minutes [driving]”. (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“Here, near to home, I came here every day. 15 minutes [driving]”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In Kanching Forest, some interviewees said that the recreational forest was the only forest close to their homes. Another interviewee presumed that he usually visited the recreational forest was the nearest forest to the city (in reality, the Ampang Forest is nearer to Kuala Lumpur than is Kanching Forest):

Mr. D:	-“.... Actually I live nearby this area, so I come here. I am familiar with this area. .... (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Miss A:	-“Perhaps this is the nearest. ... not so near but compare to other forests perhaps this is the nearest”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss C:	“In addition, it is the nearest to home. My home is in Kepong less than 25 minutes drive”. (Chinese, single, 30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

### 8.1.2 Motives for forest use

The interviewees mentioned several motives for visiting the recreational forests. These can be grouped under the following headings: to gain restorative experience, for fitness and health purposes and for social interactions.

Restorative experience was described by the interviewees in Ampang Forest as feeling calm, being away from mundane chores, recharging the batteries, releasing stress, meditation and relaxation. As mentioned earlier, at Ampang Forest, some interviewees visited more to take photos of birds or to meditate because of the tranquil ambiance compared to Kanching Forest. On the other hand, at Kanching Forest some interviewees like to explore forest by engaging in activities such as climbing up hills and jungle trekking. Information from forest staff at the Ampang Forest site indicated that there was also a group of people who occasionally did jungle trekking or marathons with permission from the forestry department.

Restorative experience was gained through direct or indirect interactions with the forest. Two different types of restorative experiences emerged: direct restoration from just experiencing the forests' ambiance and indirect restoration through engaging in activities in the forest.

The restorative experience in Kanching Forest was quite similar to Ampang Forest's except that a few interviewees also came to view the natural scenery: Kanching has spectacular scenery in the form of waterfalls. One can experience a weekly retreat from everyday routine just by going into the forest and being surrounded by nature. A few interviewees at Kanching Forest said that while they were in the forest, they did not think about household chores and the environment was different compared with when they were at home. Some interviewees at the Kanching Forest believed that the forest's ambiance could reduce their stress level; they felt recharged either from work, studies or household chores, with the result that they felt peaceful and relaxed. Being in the forest could make their problems temporarily vanish and they did not feel stressed whilst being in the forest. A number of interviewees connected their sense of relaxation with aspects of the forest ambiance such as fresh air:

Mr. A:	"I was originally from a village. Since I moved in Kuala Lumpur, some sort a retreat for me for peace my mind...This is always our retreat place [for his family]". (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	"I think at the same time able to help all of us to recharge from our stress either from works or studies, so gain peace for all of us". (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. C:	"Peaceful! Nothing to think about! Not thinking to cook at home". (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	"Can breathe fresh air, more relax" (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	"My mind now is relax, nothing to think about, happy,...". (Indian, married, 25-30 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	"...to get away from the city lifestyle. Because we worked in KL, very hectic .... So forest is just you ... can get away from those things". (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. G:	"It's a break from (the) normal city life...". (Mr. G, Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Restorative forest interactions included activities such as taking photographs, going fishing, viewing natural scenery/wild animals, swimming and also viewing people and surroundings. Interviewees came

purposely to perform activities that could relate them with nature and the best way of doing this was to visit the recreational forest. They could use all of their five senses to enjoy and immerse themselves in whatever activities they engaged in. From the interviews, it was apparent that swimming gave them the chance to interact with the physical character of the cool water, and their children could also have the opportunity to swim and play in the water:

Mr. B:	“I and my family swim here. The water feels cool”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. C:	“Bring kids for swim in the river, .... They wanted to swim in the river, so we bring them here”. (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. I:	“I like to watch animals, feel excited, nothing else!”. (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“... when we breathe in fresh air, feeling enjoy in the morning. If I am at home, I don't feel enjoyment”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Some of the interviewees at both forests were motivated to visit the forests for health and fitness reasons. In Ampang Forest, fitness and health are gained from activities such as brisk walking, tai-chi, jogging, cycling and meditation, while in Kanching Forest, activities engaged in by some interviewees were climbing up hills and jungle trekking. One interviewee said that climbing up hills helped him to increase his stamina and get back to his ideal weight. Another interviewee said that she engaged in jungle trekking to maintain her health [she came with her husband and younger sister]:

Mr. D:	“Today I come to strengthen my leg by climbing up the hill. Actually it is more to build up the stamina, for health and to balance back my weight (to get back his ideal weight). .... When I have time, I come for exercise”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“We only use the upper and bottom jungle trekking, that's all. For the health benefit, to maintain health.” (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In terms of social interaction, interviewees visited the forests to spend time with family or friends, to meet friends/ and make new friends. For some interviewees at Ampang Forest, being in the forest provided a special opportunity for being with friends and family and enjoying activities together; creating feelings of togetherness and bonding among the interviewees:

Mr. A:	“The purpose we come here is to enjoy the activities together, if I go alone, no point! We are sharing”. (Chinese, single, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
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Mr. P:	“Uncomfortable! ... because if I am alone, there is no companion, we need many companions, so be together with friends, enjoy the nature with friends. ... when we are alone, then there is no transition in ourselves, nobody to chat to, there is no companion ...”. (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
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### 8.1.3 Feelings experienced in the recreational forest

The experiences gained by the interviewees at both forests are various (positive, negative), influenced by the surrounding ambiance or human presence. Key words repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees at both forests about their positive feelings were “refreshed”, “enjoyable”, “peaceful”, “relaxing”, “calm”, “tranquil”, “calm”, “recharged”, “happy”, “fun” and “absence of worry”.

Key words mentioned by the interviewees at Ampang Forest to describe the forest environment were “breezy”, “cool”, “peace”, “green”, “natural”, “no disturbance”, “have river” and “smell of forest”. They felt “peaceful”, “relaxing”, “calm” and “enjoyment”. They felt calm when they hear the sound of water, without human disturbance, or enjoyed seeing birds:

Mr. G:	“There are varieties of birds’ here.... I enjoy watching birds...”. (Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. K:	“When I come to places like this [Ampang Forest], hearing the sounds of water or others can give me calmness”. (Malay, married, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“Here, I feel calm, there is no disturbance”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. E:	“..., enjoy the smell. When we came and stepped out from car, there is a kind of smell from trees, that’s what we wanted, that’s we want”. (Malay, married, 50s, Ampang Forest)

Other keywords mentioned by the interviewees at Kanching Forest were “fun”, “happy” and “absence of worry”. Some interviewees felt a sense of enjoyment when they recalled the experience of being in the forest when they were children or just being in the forest together with family or friends. Another interviewee felt fascinated when monkeys were seen carrying their young along with them. The researcher assumed that those feelings had a restorative effect. Their feelings were also associated with the recreational forest characteristics such as “natural”, “fresh oxygen”, “cool ambiance”, “sound of water”, “green surroundings” and “unpolluted areas”:



Mr. B:	“Happy, comfortable, peaceful.”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“Fresher, fresher! The water is cooler, lately the weather is hot but here don’t feel hot”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss A:	“...we come to the forest for relax, make myself calm, relax...”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“Happy, happy! My mind now is relax, nothing to think about, happy, .... Not similar as when at home”. (Indian, married, 25-30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Two particular interviewees at Kanching Forest said they felt secure being in the forest because many people and animals, such as monkeys, which made them feel part of nature:

Mr. E:	“There are many visitors in this forest, perhaps I feel safe”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“...even when you came in you can see the animals like the monkeys. So it’s make me very secure. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Some interviewees at Kanching Forest felt an absence of worry and the freedom of not thinking of anything, and not to worrying about work problems:

Mr. F:	“.... Another word is like there are no worries here”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“When here I don’t think anything, all vanish (the problems)”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss C:	“I feel so relax and not worry about problems related work, the pressure also less”. (Chinese, single, 30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

There were also negative feelings that detracted from the experience of some of the interviewees, such as fear of wild animals, fear of having an accident, feeling bored, fear of crime and incivilities, fear of getting lost and fear of contamination. Those feelings prevented them from fully utilising the forests. A few of the interviewees at Kanching Forest expressed a fear of wild animals (aggressive monkeys/preying animals), feeling worried and afraid. One interviewee talked about her experience with the aggressive monkeys:

Mrs. B:	“The upper part has many monkeys...my kids feel afraid. We have gone to the upper part just now. They brought a crisp each of them; we did not yet reach the area, the monkeys have grabbed the crisps. The monkeys here are fierce. .... They grabbed the foods, my kids cried and asked me to walk down, so we just been here”. (Malay, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“Afraid when seeing many monkeys”. (Indian, married, 25-30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Other fears related to a fear of contamination from exposure to airborne diseases or from mixing with other people while swimming. Interviewees at Kanching Forest had feelings of fear of contamination by the forest, for example, one interviewee was worried that contamination by worms or small insects would affect her health:

Miss B:	“Animals such as worm, small insects, worry they will affect health ....”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
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A few interviewees at both forests also expressed negative feelings towards aspects of the forest environment which might harm them. Interviewees at Ampang Forest mentioned environmental hazards including sharp pebbles in the water or vehicles entering the forest. Some interviewees at Kanching Forest felt wary towards the physical character of the elements within the recreational forest, such as the slippery pathway and steeply sloping waterfall areas; they feared that they would have an accident:

Mr. F:	“...my health, I find when I go into the water, I have got two problems. One is I shiver a lot and the other one I scare the stones (sharp pebbles in the stream) will tear my legs, will poke my leg”. (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. A:	“...because I have small kids (below 5 years old), I will find areas that suitable for the small kids. Usually, I will find area like this (stream, level 2) which is not so sloping”. (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Miss A:	“...but when I wanted to go to the waterfall areas, I feel fear of danger; probably I can fall because the pathway is quite slippery because we need to go up towards the waterfall areas”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)

The fears of crime and incivilities included a fear of being mugged by snatch thieves, and these were mostly mentioned by women. The interview results showed that fear of crime and incivilities were related to the forest characteristics such as thick bushes, which might conceal hostile individuals, such as thieves. A few of the women felt unsafe being alone in the forest. Therefore, areas such as the vegetation close to the river’s edge with the potential of being hiding places were avoided. Interviewees at Ampang Forest were also afraid of getting lost because there were no rangers available who could escort them along the jungle tracks:

Mr. B:	“Here, ... there is no rangers, if we lost who want to search for us?”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“Oh! I have to go with my family, my husband will not allow me “go

	alone". "The world nowadays is more dangerous than good. (Fear towards) Human!. Nowadays there are many incidents such as snatch thief, ...". (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	"I don't go to the edge of the river [nearby to forest], feeling afraid. Human beings, we don't know, right?". (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Miss A:	"Perhaps the thick forest on the top, bushes, place that people don't go because fear of danger ...". (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	"The environment is okay but the people here [fear being harm], when being alone feels reluctant. .... The environment is okay but the people here, when being alone feels reluctant". (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	"Alone, it's quiet! Don't want! Feel fear ... if there is a thief". (Indian, married, 25-30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

A few interviewees at Kanching Forest experienced mixed feelings. They felt enjoyment, but at the same time, they worried about accidents because of the slippery pathway. Another interviewee felt happy being in the forest but was simultaneously tired when she needed to climb up to the hilly locations:

Miss A:	"Enjoyable! But when I wanted to go to the waterfall areas, I feel fear of danger; probably I can fall because the pathway is quite slippery because we need to go up towards the waterfall areas". (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. F:	"I don't think about anything, just happy. But I feel tired when to climb up to this area". (Malay, married, 41 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In summary, the results show that the interviewees liked to visit both recreational forests in social groups, such as groups comprising friends, children, spouses and immediate and extended family. Most of them visited on weekends and a few during school holidays. Some interviewees visited the recreational forests because the recreational forests were closest to their homes. The interviewees were motivated to visit because of the activities they planned to do (such as meditating, brisk walking and jogging), the available amenities (such as fresh air) and perceived benefits offered by the recreational forests (such as recharging their batteries and gaining a sense of relaxation). Most of the interviewees experienced positive feelings while being in the recreational forests, such as feeling "relaxed", "calm", "happy" and feeling an "absence of worry".

## 8.2 Value of the Recreational Forest

The interviews revealed that the recreational forests were important in terms of their perceived functions and benefits. Interviewees at both forests mostly appreciated the recreational forest ambiance and the natural resources such as clean and clear water, and the wild animals. They felt that these were important to preserve for the benefit of future generations. They appreciated the forest's function as a recreational forest for leisure activities and for the amenities such as waterfalls, natural wild life, green surroundings, fresh air as well as a source of ecosystem services. In general, most of the values mentioned in the interviews leaned more towards leisure and social value orientation rather than seeing the forest as an ecosystem and habitat for wildlife.

### 8.2.1 Function of recreational forest

Interviewees at both forests believed that the forest was important and functioned as a recreational place and a provider of natural resources. In terms of benefits, interviewees believed that the recreational forest gave psychological, social benefits and health and well-being benefits to the current and future generations in general.

As a recreational place, Ampang Forest provided low cost leisure or recreational opportunities to the interviewees to perform activities such as bird watching, swimming, jogging and walking:

Mr. J:	"Recreational forest in a sense, people is having a walk, they come back [again], and they like to have fresh air". (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. H:	"... it is a place for me to do a recreation by watching birds, that's it". (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	"It is important! ... for the elderly such as to exercise, jogging or walking, compare to other places we have to pay. No need to jog, only walk for two to three times (along the road) also as an exercise". (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Some of the interviewees at Kanching Forest said that the recreational forest was a place for people to spend their leisure time, relaxing and to bring their children for swimming:

Mr. D:	"Every week there are visitors, for people to have leisure activities, release tension". (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. G:	"The recreational forest is important for bringing my children swim, everyone is happy here. Even though I asked them to stop playing and swimming, difficult to ask them for going back home". (Indian, married,

	43 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	'It is important for recreation especially for my kids'. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In terms of amenities, the recreational forest provided “natural environment”, “green environment”, “cool ambiance”, “fresh air”, “shades”, “tranquillity”, “nature sounds” and “nice view”. Keywords mentioned by the interviewees at Ampang Forest regarding the natural surroundings were “green environment”, “full of green trees”, “many types of trees”, “flowers”, “beautiful trees”, and “undisturbed”, “unspoilt”, and “unpolluted and clean air”. The physical character of the recreational forest played an important role in attracting people to visit. For example, the main attractions in Kanching Forest were waterfalls that gave cooling and refreshing effects to the surrounding area:

Mr. G:	“I always like the forest..., I think same with many people like natural environment that’s relatively unspoilt... Of course this forest is quite develop, [however] still a lot of greeneries...”. (Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. E:	“The waterfall is cooler, the air is fresher. ...the water is clearer, ...”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“Perhaps here it is much cooler, excellent because there are waterfalls”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	“I only go to the upper part to show my kids the waterfall. Forest is natural; if there are birds it’s better, at least there are trees. There are monkeys ...”. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

The interviews revealed that the forests were seen as important in terms of the natural resources they provide, such as the ecological function of generating oxygen, the microclimate effect, a habitat for wildlife and as a water resource. A few of the interviewees at Ampang Forest believed that the green environment and the river helped to improve the air quality in the forest:

Mr. J:	“... I feel there is more oxygen that comes out in the morning, oxygen!. We have to pay [to get the oxygen] in the hospital but here it is free. So that’s why we visit here in the morning”. (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. P:	“It’s ecology, they give us oxygen, [in terms of] psychology, the ecology also the same. So, forest is to balance the ecology [ecosystem]”. (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. B:	“..., we see trees, so beautiful, natural. What tree is this, we don’t know, it doesn’t matter, all natural”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“.... The attraction is the river, because river helps to clean up the air”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Interviewees at the Kanching Forest also believed that the forest provides natural resources, such as ecological functions, as a habitat for wildlife and as a source of water. In terms of ecological functions, the interviewees at Kanching Forest said that the recreational forest provided “oxygen” and was also a “habitat for wild animals” and a “source of clean water”:

Mr. B:	“Natural forest has many wild animals such as monkeys, green leaves, and natural waterfall”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“Yeah! It’s very important because I think forest is also protecting the wild animals”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. B:	“..., maybe if they don’t have a water supply they can come here for bathing. When I was a small when there was no water supply we bath using well water”. (Malay, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“Because recreational forest, the water is clean. The forest has a waterfall, that’s why I come here. There is a waterfall. If there is no forest, there is no waterfall”. (Indian, married, 25-30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

### 8.2.2 Benefits

Interviewees at both forests believed that the recreational forest ambiance provides psychological benefits by promoting relaxation and peacefulness, releasing stress and improving mood states. The interviewees at Ampang Forest gained health benefits through recreational activities, breathing “clean air” or fresh air and seeing green surroundings:

Mr. I:	“It is important not only for me but to others, for health, we jog, breathe the clean air. ...” (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“The air is clean because the sick people really like a place such as this. Suitable for health ...”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Some of the interviewees at Kanching Forest believed that the recreational forest was a place for people to release stress, to be at peace, to relax and rest:

Mr. D:	“For people who have stress related to work, it helps. So need to preserve. Our life is busy we don’t have other place to release stress”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mrs. C:	“Important, important! Now we can see people can picnic, peace their mind if they wanted to rest. (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In terms of health and well-being benefits, a few of Kanching Forest interviewees said that the fresh air made them feel relaxed and swimming made their bodies feel refreshed. They believed that it was important to preserve the recreational forest for the benefit of future generations; to give an opportunity for future generations to experience what was currently experienced by present society:

Mr. F:	“..., if recreation forest will not there, the future generation won’t be able to come here to see what we have. They don’t have a place to enjoy themselves, to relax. At the same time they also can bring their family along”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. A:	“-Need to preserve ..., For example, when we were small there were many trees that we can recognise in village, when come to the new generation, they all gone, there is no such trees!”. (Malay, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“Important because there are many developments nowadays, so if there are no forests such as this, the future generation would not get the opportunity to feel the experience. The forest as a natural source so we need to preserve”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Most of the interviewees believed that the forest was important for social interaction and integration. Being with friends, family or neighbours gave social benefits to the interviewees such as family bonding, friendship or social integration. The social interactions were emphasised through the accounts of togetherness and bonding among family members, relatives, friends or colleagues. To a particular few interviewees at Kanching Forest who were often busy working, the forest afforded an opportunity to spend time with family or friends during weekends:

Mr. D:	“It is for recreation with family, strengthen the family bonding”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“Oh okay! Of course the bonding time together, the friendship and getting to know one and another even more”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“To maintain health. If [come] with friends, can strengthen the friendship”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“When working, we seldom see family members, only working. So today off day, we all can meet up and spend time together. My mother is far away, I already married. Morning I go to work, I reach home at night, 10 p.m. I seldom see my mother. It’s difficult to see her even once a week”. (Indian, married, 25-30 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In addition, two particular interviewees at Kanching Forest believed that the forest was an important opportunity for social integration among different people or as a place to gather with neighbours:

Mr. F:	“It gives a lot of benefits to the society because nowadays the society likes getting more on like self centred, we worked and after that we just go back
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	to house. Even nowadays also when we have neighbour next door we don't even really talk to neighbours. In recreational forest we can like invite friends and neighbours just to come here. So that we can able to have a talk and communicate. So it's a time they would not be burden about something. There is a time for come out and feel relax. It's another great place to be bonded together. It is much benefited to the society" (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	"Important, because when many families come, they can communicate among each other even though they don't know each other. Actually, by just smiling and talk (chat) a little bit, that can make the relationship [among other users] closer". (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Another benefit of visiting the recreational forest that interviewees mentioned was that it was low in cost compared with going to shopping centres, places that charge entrance fees or other areas further away such as beaches.

To summarise this section, the interviewees valued the function of the recreational forests as recreational places providing recreational amenities (such as "natural environment", "green environment", "fresh air", "shades" and "tranquillity"). The researcher believes that the recreational forests are important for their social interaction and integration functions as they give opportunity for users to engage in activities together with families and various races to mix and understand the cultures of others. Some of the interviewees felt attached to the recreational forests because the forests' surroundings are similar to the village environments they had experienced as children, such as rivers and the forested environment. Thus, some forest elements (such as river flow and green trees) had personal meaning for them.

### 8.3 Forest Culture and Memory Regarding the Environment

Most of the interviewees had experienced forest environments when they were children, especially in the context of a village upbringing. Their experiences related to activities with parents, relatives or friends. Therefore, they felt a sense of familiarity and attachment towards the recreational forest.

#### 8.3.1 Human interaction with the forest

Human interaction with the forest fall into five sub-categories which are "connection with the natural world", "interdependence", "sense of



identity”, “familiarity” and “intergenerational experience”. In terms of human interactions with the forest, there was a sense of attachment, intergenerational experience and continuity with the past. Some interviewees at Ampang Forest felt attached to the forest because the surroundings were similar to the village environments they had experienced as children which had forested surroundings and rivers. At the Kanching Forest, however, some interviewees believed that they visited the forest as the result of an intergenerational experience passed to them from their parents because their parents used to bring them to areas similar to the recreational forest when they were young.

Interviewees at Ampang Forest connected with the natural world by understanding the forests’ characteristics, and giving meanings to them, such as by associating the flow of river with their lives, seeing trees as living creatures or as part of nature, and green trees as giving hope. A few of them believed that human beings and the forest are interdependent. Several of the interviewees at Ampang Forest had their own metaphysical belief system or philosophy in relation to the elements in the forest, such as the river being a metaphor for one’s life course and green trees providing a sense of continuity and giving hope for the future:

Mr. D:	“..., in my opinion forest is a living creature. For example, me as the forest, I always assuming like that, human’s life is like trees “patah tumbuh hilang berganti” [Malays proverb: things will always will be replaced when gone], ... when the mature tree die, there will be replaced by the young tree...It is not wrong befriended with the forests even though they could not speak...”. (Malay, single, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. F:	“... the water flows. Your life should also flow [he associates his life with the flow of the river]. You see obstacles, you just avoid it and you go and go [moved on] and life is a flow ...”. (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. P:	“.... Because we need one another [interdependent]. If there is no forest, we can feel like missing something ...”. (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“Positive! Here is green. Living! There is hope. If there is no forest, there is no hope (relate to her health condition)”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

A few interviewees at Ampang Forest said that the forest also provided personal and local identity which gave a sense of pride to them:

Mr. B:	“I come to forest like this, natural and original; human could not create this [referring to the forest]”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. M:	“... I also brought my relatives from village when they came visiting us, I

	brought them here”. ‘... in village there are forest, so they will know here also have a forest similar to the village environment’. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
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Human interaction with the forest in Kanching included “connection with the natural world”, “contact and interdependence with the natural world”, “familiarity” and “intergenerational experience”. Some interviewees believed that humans are interdependent on the forest as a natural provider of resources, such as water and air. Interviewees who were familiar with the forest felt confident enough to visit the forest alone. By doing activities together in the forest, the interviewees were able to connect direct or indirectly with the natural world. If grandfather or grandmother came with their grandchildren and did leisure activities together in the forest, it would create an intergenerational experience between them. For example, one interviewee in Kanching Forest felt connected with the natural world by seeing animals and seeing a divine design through looking at the surrounding trees. Another interviewee felt connected with the “friendly” forest trees appearance:

Mr. F:	“I felt that it is a sense of that there is a meaning behind that I unable to explain... Get to connect with god’s creation [He’s a Christian], feel impress about the design of it”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	“I like this forest because they seem friendly; the trees are not so scary”. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

The interviewees at Kanching Forest who came regularly and who were already familiarised with the surroundings did not feel afraid of wild monkeys or accidents. One particular interviewee believed that humans were interdependent with the forest, therefore, the forest needed to be preserved:

Mr. D:	“Don’t come too early. There was once when I came early, it was really quiet, sometimes it is quite dangerous. I used to it”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“We get used to them. Monkeys if you don’t disturb them, they won’t disturb you”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. D:	“The forest is necessary. We need forest to preserve the “earth culture”. Forest has relation with our live. If there is no forest, it will be hot, flooded, the living thing will vanish. We need the existing forest. No forest, (therefore) no human beings [continuation of life]”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)

Another two interviewees at Kanching Forest felt connected with their parents because of their intergenerational experience with their parents when they were children:

Mr. A:	“Probably. Because my parents used to go to the waterfall, most of the time, weekends, because family can’t afford to go to expensive place” (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. B:	“When I was at school, my parents brought me to forest. At that time I liked it. In primary school. My parents brought me for fishing or went somewhere else, now me myself, following them”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In summary, the results in this section demonstrate that the physical character of elements in the recreational forests such as river flows and green trees, had personal meanings for the interviewees. Familiarity with forest environments when they were children and memories of childhood experience made them feel attached to the recreational forest.

### 8.3.2 Cultural memory

Sub-categories under the cultural memory theme were “past experience” “childhood memories” and “revisiting childhood”. A few of the interviewees talked about their past experience visiting a recreational forest or forest environment when they were younger.

The interviewees’ childhood memories in Ampang Forest related to the activities they did when they were children, either with parents, friends, teachers or relatives. Most of them related the forest to their memories of being in a village and the activities they performed there, such as picking fruits, swimming or finding forest plants. Among the activities engaged in by the interviewees at Kanching Forest when they were children were accompanying their parents to the recreational forest, camping, hiking, looking for forest fruits, swimming, collecting fire wood, playing hide and seek, fishing, climbing trees, picnicking, cooking and eating in the forest:

Mr. G:	“I am familiar with forest environment, when I was small, along with friends, we secretly went for swimming in the river, if my parents know about it, I will get spank from them. When I was small in my village.... I collected fire wood, sometimes I followed my parents and sometimes I went alone. The forest was thick and I don’t feel fear because the forest was near to my house”. (Indian, married, 43 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. B:	“We like to go to the forest because we only play, just play! We played hide and seek...Sometimes we climbed up trees. There were girls and boys.

	Because in the forest, there was like a pool but there were many fishes, we were fishing. Actually it was natural pond, ... the water was cool and can swim, ...". (Malay, Married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. F:	"I went with my mother to the Ledang Mountain. I was in a primary school at that time. Just for fun. We had a picnic there, when I was 10 years old, I feel happy, fun!". (Malay, married, 41 yrs., Kanching Forest)

On the other hand, some of the interviewees remembered their past adult experiences in the forest environment. As adults, they had been involved in hobbies related to forests, such as bird watching or mountain climbing. One of them brought his children and family to swim. By continuing to revisit the recreational forest later in their lives, it seemed as if they were revisiting their childhood or past experiences. They recalled their old memories of being in a village or past experiences related to the Ampang Forest. Some of the interviewees at the Ampang Forest felt that they were revisiting a childhood place too. Eight of the interviewees used to come to this forest when they were young:

Mr. I:	"Long ago, when I was 15 years old I came here by cycling from Datuk Keramat. Previously I stayed at Datuk Keramat [name of a place in Ampang] with my brothers, now they have married. When I married in year 83 at that time I did not have children, we came here and swim. I like the river at this Bukit Belacan (other name called by the villagers here for the Ampang Forest). Because it was cold, furthermore it was not far away from other places". (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
Mr. P:	"For bringing back the old memory!. I stayed here in Kampung Pandan when I was in a primary school, I always came here on weekends". (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	"When I was at school, I also came here ... with teachers, sometimes also with family. Having a picnic! With friends. We came when our teacher asked us to come to collect leaves and many things". (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	"I came here since I think at age 13 at that time. At that time, the areas were not like today. It seemed a [thick] forest and the road was dirt. I felt fear of the leeches so that's why I did not come for a long time. It was muddy, many leach, no parking, when I came back here, they already tarmac the road". (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Similar to Ampang Forest, some interviewees at Kanching Forest also felt as though they were revisiting their childhoods in coming to the forest. One of them had visited a waterfall cascade similar to the one found at Kanching Forest when he was a child. Another interviewee enjoyed visiting Kanching Forest because he could recall memories regarding his visit when he was young:

Mr. A:	"The waterfalls there similar like here, the difference was only the waterfall cascade was longer, about 2 Km [away]". (Malay, married, 40s,
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	Kanching Forest)
Mr. D:	“I feel enjoyable because we already had experience when we were small, right”. ‘We have left the experience a long time ago, when [being] here we feel the experience and recall the memory”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)

The results in this section indicate that when some interviewees visited the recreational forests, they felt like they were revisiting their childhood, which evoked memories of village cultural activities such as collecting firewood and climbing trees.

### 8.3.3 First exposure related to forest environment

Whilst some interviewees at Ampang Forest first experienced the forest when they were as young as five years old, others first encountered it when they were in their teenage years or early 20s. A few of them recounted their first exposure to forests around the villages where they were brought up. In general, these accounts showed the importance of prior experience of forest environments. Their first exposure was related to certain activities such as looking for forest plants, picnics and swimming with friends, finding forest fruits or following their parents who worked on a farm. Other activities they experienced when they were teenagers or adults were cycling with friends, doing adventurous things in the jungle, mountain expeditions or hiking. Most of their experiences were positive and exciting:

Mr. E:	“40 years back, forest reserve at Teluk Panglima Garang, my village. Followed my father looking for ‘red palm’ about five years old”. (Malay, married, 45 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. K:	“When I was in a primary school, first time I visited forest was here, Ampang Forest Park. At that time this forest was not yet developed. Picnic and swim. I went with my friends when it was school holidays”. (Malay, married, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“... when I was still small. ... maybe aged six or five years old. We lived in Perak at Telaga Nenas Village. ... there were many fruit trees, ...”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	“My first time was in Tapah, Perak. We swim there. I was 12 years old. It was really fun, happy”. (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

One female respondent at Ampang Forest recounted with pleasure a childhood forest experience. She described how she had walked a long way along a road covered by a dense overarching tree canopy to visit her grandmother who lived in a traditional village deep in the forest. She

enjoyed the walk but when her grandmother asked which route she had taken to get there and heard her reply; her grandmother had said that she was very brave as this route was frequented by wild animals and an ancestor who appeared in the form of a tiger. On hearing this, she felt scared as a child but the interviewee enjoyed telling this story which was clearly a memorable part of her childhood experience of the forest:

Mrs. E:	“When we [I] recalled the experience [walked alone and about tiger], we [I] felt afraid, but when we experienced that at that time, we knew nothing, we felt happy while running, at that time ...”. (Malay, married, 50s, Ampang Forest)
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This is similar to the experiences of some of the interviewees at Kanching Forest. Most of them were exposed to the forest environment when they were in primary school and one particular interviewee first visited the forest when he was six years old. Another interviewee first experienced the forest when she was an adult, following her friends to hike a mountain:

Mr. A:	“I was originally from Kedah [a state in Malaysia]. The first time I visited [forest] when I was 6 years old. At Bukit Hijau [named of the forest]. (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“Because I came from Ipoh so, during childhood it was more to a secondary forest. We have jungle, hiking there. We called it the Bukit Bendera which is in Ipoh itself in Menglembu, so that one was my first experience, so kind of like the first time [exposure] helping me to understand myself more. That actually I like nature and outdoor”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss A:	“The first time was, when I went for camping, when I was in standard 6. I followed the school activity at Janda Baik. I am from Sungai Besi. I was schooling at Sungai Besi and went for camping in forest at Janda Baik”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“..., when I met a friend, yeah!, starting (from) when I went to Mount Kinabalu. Positive [experience]! At that time I went with my friend’s group, I felt quite tough. Furthermore when we went to the peak, the weather was very cool”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Most of the Malay interviewees related their first exposure to forest environments back to the villages where they had lived when they were children. It can be assumed that most Malay interviewees were familiar with either village or rural environments, which have a similar character to the recreational forests.

#### 8.4 Issues of Concern and Expectations towards the Recreational Forest

In general, interviewees at both forests were concerned about the “lack of maintenance”, “lack of cleanliness”, “lack of facilities and amenities”, “planning

and design aspect”, “safety” and “lack of enforcement” issues. However, there was a slight difference in issues of concern and interviewees’ expectations of the two forests, such as “illegal open fire” and “entrance fee” issues in Kanching Forest.

The interviewees had various expectations towards Ampang Forest in terms of management (lack of maintenance, lack of facilities, lack of cleanliness, other users’ behaviour, crowding, absence of rangers, lack of activities, entrance fees, public involvement, health related programmes and enforcement), social education, and design (deepening the river and the provision of a guard house).

Poor maintenance seemed to be a major issue for most of the interviewees at Ampang Forest. They complained about the broken facilities at the children playground, poorly maintained walk ways or jungle tracks, old tree labels that could not be read, withered trees and no water supply in a toilet. Issues related to facilities were lack of toilets and shelters. Issues related to cleanliness seemed important to five of the interviewees. They complained about rubbish, piles of leaves, plastic bags and food residue that had been left by other forest users:

Mr. B:	“I dislike people’s habit, that’s it. Not discipline, throwing rubbish anywhere, not helping to take care (of the forest). After eating food, they throw food residues everywhere ...”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. G:	“.... Sometimes when people come for picnic, they just leaved whatever [belonging] they bring here”. (Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)

There were a few complaints about users’ behaviour in the Ampang Forest, such as destroying plants, taking plants home, destroying ants and beating monkeys. Crowding and absence of rangers seemed to be minor issues to them. Only one interviewee complained about crowding in certain areas and another one about the absence of rangers to guide him on the jungle track. Two interviewees complained about a couple who had behaved too intimately.

One respondent at Ampang Forest agreed with the entrance fees because he said that the fees would help to maintain the forest. Some interviewees were willing to participate in activities related to the care of the recreational forest depending on the availability of their time. One of them suggested activities such as replanting forest trees or “gotong-royong” [working together] with the residents nearby. Some of the interviewees at Ampang Forest thought that it was important to

educate people not to litter. Two of them suggested giving out pamphlets or having a ranger to advise or educate people and especially children.

In terms of planning, six interviewees at Ampang Forest agreed that it was important to have recreational forests within walking distance in the future so that people could exercise, have less polluted environments and do not have to spend money going to gyms. There was also a suggestion to hold a programme related to health which should be promoted to the public. Another interviewee at Ampang Forest suggested enforcing regulations by demanding a deposit from users if they bring food along before they go into the forest. This was to ensure that the users bring all their belongings or litter with them when they exit the forest, in order to get back their deposit. Two interviewees suggested deepening the river so that adult users could swim. They also said that the upper part of the river used to be deep before, then the forest management deposited sand to make it suitable for children to bathe. There was also a demand for a guard house at the centre of the forest for safety and surveillance reasons. One respondent found that the recreational forest was not attractive enough and he suggested providing a mini zoo, tricycles or horse riding.

Amongst issues raised by the interviewees at Kanching Forest that were similar to those raised at Ampang Forest were the lack of maintenance, lack of cleanliness and lack of facilities. However, there were some different issues mentioned by the interviewees, such as illegal open fires, poor water quality, excessive entrance fee and design and planning aspects. The most frequently mentioned concerns were lack of facilities, lack of cleanliness and entrance fee issues. The less mentioned issues were related to illegal open fires, design aspects and poor water quality.

The interviewees at Kanching Forest expected the forest management to provide patrols to supervise the areas to avoid accidents or inappropriately intimate behaviour from other users. Several of them were not satisfied with the facilities available. The toilets were an important facility for changing clothes and other purposes. The interviewees suggested improvements and they wanted more toilets at level three, more shelters and a barbeque area to be provided:

Mr. G:	“The toilet is small, need to enlarge the toilet. Many people come here, need to add more toilets”. (Indian, married, 43 yrs., Kanching Forest)
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Miss A:	“... should have a toilet because when wanted to use a toilet, have to go to the upper part area [the level 4]. One more thing! If we wanted to eat [picnic] we can use shelter, no need to spread a mat on the rocks difficult to eat, uneven surface [not comfortable]. Perhaps if there are more shelters, people can easily use for relaxing or eating”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. A:	“Perhaps place for resting, add more shelters, if there is a place for BBQ for family, that’s all”. (Malay, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“Sometimes the toilet is not so okay [not in a good condition], if possible every areas there is a toilet so that it’s easier for people to change clothes, that’s all”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)

A few of the interviewees expected forest maintenance to be improved such as by keeping the areas free from litter, and managing the monkeys:

Mr. A:	“I think the problem related to any waterfalls area is the cleanliness, sometimes we saw people throw litter and all that” (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“Should improve in terms of the bridge, pathway. They all have broken and old, should be fixed. They pathway should be fixed because difficult for small kids to walk [a point of view as a mother]”. (Indian, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Three interviewees at Kanching Forest were not satisfied with the entrance fee charged because two of them said that it would burden users and another one said too much money was needed to pay for individuals with many family members:

Mr. D:	“I don’t think it is suitable. It is become our liability to support. We need to pay for vehicle and person, what for right? I think pay only for the vehicle but no need to pay for people inside the vehicle”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Miss C:	“I feel not satisfied with the entrance fee. If wanted to park car has to pay and when wanted to go into the forest also need to pay, if someone has many family members they need to pay much money. Nowadays patrol is expensive”. (Chinese, single, 30 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	“I am not satisfied with the entrance fee, fee for children should be cheaper and they should put the fee sign so that the visitors know about it. If there are fewer visitors, it’s okay but if there are many people they should give discount at least for children”. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

There were two issues related to design aspects, such as the inconsistency of step risers and the lack of parking spaces. In addition, only one interviewee complained about illegal open fires and water quality:

Mr. E:	“The steps have various riser [some are short, some are high] difficult for kids to climb up”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. B:	“There is not enough parking! Add more parking spaces, it’s better!”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. C:	“.... And do not allow open fire” (Malay, married, 46 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. B:	“The water quality here [the bottom part] is not so good, I don’t know about the upper part because I did not go there. It seems dirty”. (Malay, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Some of the interviewees believed that the recreational forest needed to be preserved to maintain the country’s uniqueness, as a natural resource and a place

for leisure activities, and to prevent these from diminishing. Another said that the government was responsible for enforcing regulations that prohibit the destruction of the recreational forest for development:

Mr. F:	“I think maintaining the uniqueness of our country because without the forest I think there will be many things will happen like floods and the pollution will get even worse if recreation forest will not there [exist], ...”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. D:	“The support is from the society. The government should take the responsible, they need to supervise each districts, ensure each local authorities supervised works such as this. If they take for granted, more concern about future development without preserving the existing, it’s no point! If there is no enforcement and supervision, the forest won’t last. The local authority enforce, we [the society] support. We need to preserve, if possible add more”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“The recreational forest as a natural source, so we need to preserve”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“Yes! Now the forest is diminishing...Could not find a place similar like this. It is important to preserve it.”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)

A few of the interviewees at Kanching Forest said that they were willing to participate in maintaining the recreational forest if they were given a chance, or if they had time available. One particular interviewee believed that society was responsible for maintaining the recreational forest:

Mr. D:	“Can! But need to look for free time. If they tell us earlier, most probably I will get involve. If they inform late, it is quite difficult”. (Malay, single, 30s, Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	‘Preserve forest and don’t cut tree and come and work together maintaining the forest’. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

One interviewee believed that it was the management’s responsibility to educate society and especially children by giving briefings on how to take care of and love the forest in order to raise awareness about the forest. Another interviewee believed that parents played an important role in inculcating awareness in their children about the environment:

Mr. F:	“When people want to enter, they [the staffs] need give briefing to them [the user] to take care the forest and also give them the knowledge of why we need to take care of our forest because I think lot of people do not have knowledge or maybe they have that but just ignore it..., so bring in the awareness and have someone brief them before go up [to] the waterfall”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“...and parents should inculcate love towards natural environments towards their children, that’s it. Bring their children and know about the forest so that they feel love about forest! .... The important is the individual awareness” (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In terms of safety aspects, a few of the interviewees at Kanching Forest expected to have staff patrolling secluded areas or jungle tracks to avoid any unexpected problems occurring or any immoral behaviour which are against cultural norms:

Miss B:	“In terms of safety, there should be a patrolling staff supervising the areas. Because in this forest, sometimes people take for granted [doing immoral behaviour]. Such as couples, they came and do something that not so good to see”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“There should be people to observe this area. If there is a problem, they could help [patrolling staff]”. (Indian, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In terms of the future expansion of the recreational forest resource, one interviewee at Kanching Forest disagreed with the creation of more recreational forests because he said this would affect the ecosystem and cause pollution. Another interviewee disagreed with adding more facilities because they would look modern and out of place:

Mr. F:	“This one I am not so sure. Why I say that because I am afraid that when we have other forest for people it’s either it will pollute the place or either do some constructions over there, might affect the ecosystem on the sites. Unless they take precaution, to survey and also plan so that it will not have a big affect on the ecosystem. Even though we have another place for us to go to but it has a lot of things that need to consider if we want them”. (Chinese, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	“If there are many facilities here will look modern and not seem as forest. Chalet should not build here because probably it will get less support from people”. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Another two interviewees at Kanching Forest agreed that the recreational forest should be accessible and near to their home:

Mr. E:	“We can come at any time. For example, no need to drive far, anytime we can come”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“Easy in terms of accessible, near and easy to come. Furthermore, no need to go too far”. (Indian, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In summary, both interviewees at both sites highlighted the three main issues of concern to most interviewees: maintenance, lack of facilities (such as the need for additional toilets) and cleanliness. Although some interviewees mentioned the safety issue, this concern was not widely shared because most interviewees usually visited the forests in groups.

## 8.5 Impact of Gender and Ethnicity on the Recreational Forest

In general, male interviewees engaged in more active pursuits compared to females. There was a noticeable difference between male and female interviewees in Ampang Forest: the male interviewees tended to be involved in activities

related to their hobbies such as cycling, taking photographs of birds and bird watching. For example, two males liked to take photos of the birds and two males liked to watch birds, while in contrast, females liked to sit and observe the surrounding environment. Generally speaking, female interviewees at Kanching Forest preferred activities such as sitting and supervising their families, picnicking, resting, sitting and watching their surroundings, soaking their feet in the water and looking at the scenery. However, there were a few female interviewees at Kanching Forest who engaged in more active pursuits such as exploring the forest, playing in the water, swimming and catching fish with her family:

Mrs. D:	“We only use the upper and bottom jungle tracking that is all”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. F:	“No other activities, only swim!. Sometimes, I swim too”. (Malay, married, 41 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. A:	“Here, nothing else, just picnic and camping, it is fun”. (Malay, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	‘..., looking at [viewing] waterfall and swimming ... catching fish with family’. (Chinese, married, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

A gendered pattern of social interaction exists in the Ampang Forest in which male interviewees felt able or free to visit the forest alone if they wanted to, whereas female interviewees invariably said that they preferred to visit in groups, and married women preferred visiting together with their spouses. There was one exception, a female who was familiar with the forest, who came by herself:

Mr. D:	“If I have a companion or threesome, a minimum of two people, it’s okay ...”. (Malay, single, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. E:	“Alone and sometimes with children”. (Malay, married, 45 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. H:	“... sometimes alone, sometimes with a friend”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“Oh! I have to go with my family, my husband will not allow me “go [come] alone”. “The world nowadays is more dangerous than good”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs E:	“I can come alone but I prefer come in groups, with friends”. (Malay, married, 50s, Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“With family, this is my aunt. My mother is at that bottom area there [near the river], watching my children”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“Usually I come alone; they all [the forest staffs and frequent users] already know me”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In terms of the nature and composition of the social groups who visit the Kanching Forest, both male and female interviewees preferred to do so in groups, especially with their family members. Due to their commitment to work or study, the time they could enjoy activities together with their family members was limited and

their visits to the recreational forest were seen as a valuable opportunity to spend time with the family. Female interviewees felt more comfortable visiting the forest either with family members or relatives, and married male interviewees also opted to visit with their spouses and children. In addition, two female interviewees' visit to the recreational forest was constrained by the work patterns of their respective husbands:

Mr. A:	"I always come with family! Usually my wife also comes" (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	"Many people come here ... So I asked my sister to come here. .... I prefer to come with family, with sister". (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. B:	"On weekends, other days worked, my husband was working". (Malay, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs C:	"On weekends, when my husband on leave, other days no time". (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Similarly at the Ampang Forest, the times of forest visits by both male and female interviewees' were dictated by their work patterns:

Mr. F:	"Yes! ... every day at least once. Regular, I would say twice! Morning and evening. ..., after I retired I came regularly, on a steady basis". (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. J:	"Weekdays, Monday to Friday. From 6.30 to 8.00 o'clock". (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. O:	"Weekends, Saturday morning and Sunday evening". (Indian, married, 50s, Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	"We are working, so we come here at weekends and with family". (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	"At weekends with family". (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Both male and female interviewees at the Ampang Forest said that they found the forest relaxing. In general, both male and female interviewees preferred to be actively occupied, simply to relax or to engage in less purposive activities. However, the observations suggested that male forest users also engaged in less purposive activities such as sitting and observing the surroundings. Ten male interviewees said that they engage in forest interaction activities such as watching birds, animals or the surrounding beautiful scenery, taking photographs of birds, going fishing and just breathing fresh air. In addition, six male interviewees came to do exercise such as tai-chi, cycling, jogging and walking for fitness and health purposes:

Mr. K:	"Today I only want to increase my stamina because I will be meeting up with my group [cyclist group] soon". (Malay, married, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. N:	"Only walking, do tai-chi, good health, that's it!". (Chinese, married, 60 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. H:	"... watch birds so have to come here [his hobby]... can see many types of birds. ... and hopefully can watch birds that I have never seen before". (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)

	yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. I:	“I like to watch animals, feel excited, nothing else!”. (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	“I sit here just to relax; sometimes I play in the water. Just to relax!”. (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“I think to relax, work is so stressful, so here you can relax, ...”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Both male and female interviewees at the Kanching Forest agreed that their motives for visiting the forest was to recharge their batteries, relax and release stress. More female interviewees came for relaxation purposes compared to males. However, only female interviewees said that they visiting the forest to get away from mundane chores:

Miss A:	“... we come to the forest for relax, make myself calm, relax ...”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. D:	“Can breathe fresh air, more relax”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. E:	“... Not similar as when at home. Need to do work, cooking [house chores], that’s it. I like being here”. (Indian, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. C:	“Peaceful! Nothing to think about! Not thinking to cook at home”. (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

In terms of ethnic groups’ motives for forest use in Kanching Forest, several Malay interviewees came to go swimming and three Chinese interviewees came for togetherness and bonding. The Malay interviewees came for swimming because their children wanted to swim. In contrast, the Chinese valued social interactions which can strengthen relationships and bonding between friends or colleagues through the activities they do together. There were no specific preferences indicated by the ethnic groups at Ampang Forest in terms of activities engaged in.

Generally speaking, female interviewees were more likely to articulate fears and concerns about being in the forest, such as feeling afraid of wild animals, fear of contamination, afraid of social stigma, and fear of crime and incivilities. For example, a few female interviewees at Ampang Forest were afraid of social stigma and had a fear of crime and incivilities. Some female interviewees at Ampang Forest also expressed a fear of contamination by the forest environment such as contracting a disease carried by small insects, or contamination from swimming with other ethnic groups. They were also afraid of evoking social stigma by being alone in the forest.

Five Malay interviewees felt peaceful while in the Ampang Forest and two of them loved the tranquil environments:

Mr. K:	“I like to come to places such as this because there are peaceful, calm, if in urban areas, they are noisy”. (Malay, married, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. M:	“... tranquil environment, can make our mind peaceful, not like when we [are] outside [from the forest], there are busy and many cars”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“This forest can make mind peaceful ...”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)

There was also a distinct difference between male and female interviewees in terms of the ways in which they articulated their fear of wild animals in the forests. Two males at Ampang Forest said that they were afraid of snakes (an imagined threat; none of the interviewees had encountered a snake in the forest), whereas two females at Ampang Forest said that they were afraid of aggressive monkeys (which they had experienced in the forest) and one female at Kanching Forest felt uncomfortable because the monkeys were aggressive. There was a similarity between one male and one female at Ampang Forest who were both disgusted by leeches:

Mr. D:	When the areas [dead leaves] are strewn, there will be preying animals hiding. Dangerous! Danger to the children and ourselves. ...” (Malay, single, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. F:	“Because of the snakes, yes!”. (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. L:	“I feel afraid to go into the forest because there are many leeches”. (Malay, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	“Afraid! Afraid! There are many monkeys. ... I feel afraid of monkeys”. (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	“Then there are monkeys ... sometimes they attack people! There was once I fell down when quarrelling with them (escaping from the monkeys), my kid was small, they don’t afraid of us. I fell down, my legs were bruised. Dangerous! Some are okay some are very aggressive, afraid!”. (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“I came here since I think at age 13 at that time. At that time, the areas were not like today. It seemed a (thick) forest and the road was ground. I feel fear of the leeches so that’s why I did not come for a long term (time). It was muddy, many leeches ...”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

One male interviewee at Ampang Forest was afraid of having an accident because of his feelings of vulnerability due to a health condition; he was afraid of injury caused by sharp pebbles in the stream. Another male feared having a traffic accident because of the large volume of vehicles entering the forest:

Mr. F:	“... my health, I find when I go into the water, I have got two problems. One is I used shiver a lot and the other one I scare the stones (sharp pebbles in the stream) will tear my legs, will poke my leg”. (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. N:	“Here, I don’t like too many cars allowed to go in. There are many motorcycles come in, there is not good. Dangerous! ...”. (Chinese, married, 60 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In contrast, two male interviewees emphasised how the presence of other people or even monkeys in Kanching Forest helped them to feel safe in the forest but female interviewees felt the opposite regarding the monkeys. One male interviewee felt fascinated by the monkeys, who were like an entertainment to him:

Mr. E:	“There are many visitors in this forest, perhaps I feel safe”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“...even when you came in you can see the animals like the monkeys. So it’s make me very secure. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. B:	R: “Like monkeys, many people like them, I also like, one of the entertainments [here]. We can see they bring their kids along to find for food. Like an entertainment [to me]”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Other humans and areas close to dense forest vegetation were the main factors that contributed to the fear of crime and incivilities. Four female interviewees at Ampang Forest felt afraid of being mugged or of other crimes whilst no males expressed such feelings. One female interviewee felt secure because forest staff and regular forest users already knew her.

Mrs. B:	“Oh! I have to go with my family, my husband will not allow me “go alone”. “The world nowadays is more dangerous than good. [Fear towards] Human!. Nowadays there are many incidents such as snatch thief ...”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	“I don’t go to the edge of the river [nearby forest], feeling afraid. Human beings, we don’t know, right?”. (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	“Like [now] we sit here, sometimes there are motorcyclists [coming in] feel fear, the guards are outside, inside, there is nothing [no patrol staff]”. (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“I feel afraid too. Even though people say there is nothing here [not danger], feel afraid too, sometimes people will bring knife or what, when we wanted to ran to outside it’s far, they tied you up to the trees, who knows?. ... I feel afraid of people.”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

There were similarities with some female interviewees at Kanching Forest. A few of them expressed a fear of crime and incivilities because of the presence of undesirable people or aspects of the forest environment such as bushes that were seen as hiding places:

Mrs. D:	“Here we cannot come alone. Feel not safe. ..., animals I don’t think so but more to human”. (Chinese, married, 48 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. G:	“Only bottom areas. There are also rumours that there is a snatch thieved and that’s why my siblings do not want to come here because they feel fear about it. The bottom part is safer because there are many people”. (Chinese, single, 37 yrs., Kanching Forest)

The male interviewees at Ampang Forest expressed a more instrumental view of the forest compared to the female interviewees who seemed more interested in



social and recreational activities with their families. Two male interviewees at Ampang Forest emphasised the importance of the forest as a recreational place in which they can breathe in the fresh air. Male interviewees at Kanching Forest highlighted the forest as a habitat for wildlife and valued the quality of the water:

Mr. B:	“Natural forest has many wild animals such as monkeys, green leaves, and natural waterfall”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. F:	“...the water is clean [from dirt and litter] and you are able to really enjoy not like certain waterfalls, you will see such as litter everywhere...”. (Chinese, single, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Two female interviewees at Ampang Forest had a different view; they described the recreational forest as a place for them to exercise and to bring family for recreational activities. In contrast, a few female interviewees at Kanching Forest placed more emphasis on the physical characteristics of the forest such as the waterfall, the cool ambiance, the sound of birds or waterfall, the clear water, shade and natural surroundings:

Mrs. E:	“I like the weather; cool, good weather...the ambiance is cool”. (Indian, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. F:	“...it’s hot nowadays. Here is cool and many shades” (Malay, married, 41 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Four males at Ampang Forest highlighted the importance of the recreational forest in terms of the ecosystem producing oxygen. A greater number of male interviewees, compared to females, highlighted the importance of the natural surroundings of the recreational forest:

Mr. M:	“For recreational places where people can do leisure activity, jogging, swimming, to breath in fresh air, right?”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“This recreational forest good for recreational, bring family ...”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. H:	“.... Forest also functions as cleared up the pollution, give oxygen, biodiversity and much more”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. P:	“It’s ecology, they give us oxygen, the psychology one, the ecology also the same. So, forest is to balance the ecology”. (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Several Malay interviewees liked the Kanching Forest because of its natural and green ambiance:

Miss A:	“Probably, forest is natural, full of green plants, natural!”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. A:	“The environment is different. The surrounding is different, if we go to Water Park or pool, here is natural and original”. (Malay, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss B:	“Probably, forest is natural, full of green plants, natural! Other places seem artificial, we get used with the unnatural things, when we come to forest, (and) it is full of natural environment which is peaceful”. (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)

One male and two females at Ampang Forest agreed that the recreational forest environment was not polluted with fumes from vehicles such as in towns. Two males and a female agreed that the river helped to give a microclimate effect:

Mr. G:	"I always like the forest..., I think same with many people [who] like natural environment that's relatively unspoilt.... Of course this forest is quite develop, [however] still a lot of greeneries...". (Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	"Forest is natural, without pollution, without pollution!". (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. L:	"For me it is very important, very important! ..., water resources and others. ..., to avoid from hot weathers [temperature]". (Malay, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G	".... The attraction is the river, because river helps to clean up the air". (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Both male and female interviewees broadly agreed on perceived benefits of the recreational forest. Three male interviewees at Ampang Forest said that the recreational forest gave various psychological benefits such as rest, releasing of stress, relaxation and a peaceful mind. Two females stated that the recreational forest could give health benefits through its clean air. One male said that exercising in the forest could make people healthier and could cut hospitalisation costs because the forest produced much oxygen:

Mrs. B:	"In terms of health is very good because there is much oxygen, our eyes see green things early morning, it's good for your eyes, nothing else". (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	"The air is clean because the sick people really like a place such as this. Suitable for health, ...". (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. J:	".... The reason is there is more oxygen generated for people..., people will exercise, [they] become healthier. Hospitalization cost will cut down! Less people will go to hospital". (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Male and female interviewees at Ampang Forest felt that the forest was a low-cost recreational option. Two female interviewees said that the recreational forest was important to them because it was low-cost entertainment compared to going to a shopping centre or another place which charge entrance fees. In the same vein, two male interviewees felt that visiting the recreational forest was a cheap alternative compared to long distance travel to destinations such as beach areas:

Mrs. D:	"It is important! For me, the important is for the family, having a picnic it's quite okay because not waste much money [save cost]. ..., compare to other places we have to pay, here we don't have to pay. .... For children, they can learn about the environment". (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	"Here we don't have to spend money compares to when we are going to shopping centre. We need to spend a lot of money, here we don't have to spend ...". (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. B:	"This is the forest that gives opportunity to the urbanites when they do not work on Saturday and Sunday. The most cheapest, cut cost, compare going to Port Dickson or Morib beach, far away ...". (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Mr. I:	“.... It’s also save the cost, if we want to travel long distance not that cheap”. (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
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In terms of differences between male and female interviewees at Kanching Forest regarding forest benefits, more males than females mentioned health benefits. They said that the recreational forest gave them fresh air to breathe, unpolluted air that relaxed their mind and refreshed their bodies.

Through interacting with the forest, four males in Ampang Forest had their own belief system or philosophy related to the forest elements. They believed that they could learn from their natural surroundings by understanding the forests’ characteristics and related these characteristic to their own personal lives. For example, one male said that human life was like the nature of trees; trees grow and die and there would always be a new young tree established. One female who was receiving treatment for cancer said she loved seeing trees because green trees gave her new hope. In contrast, some female interviewees at Kanching Forest valued the appearance of the recreational forest which was natural and seemed “friendly”. On the other hand, a few males valued opportunities to interact with nature by watching animals or related to the forest as a divine creation:

Mr. E:	“Forest [has] many trees, perhaps there is animals, can see the animals”. (Chinese, married, 33 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Miss A:	“Forest for me is full of nature environment. It’s natural. When being in the natural surroundings, peaceful. .... Forest is full of green trees, peace, natural and peaceful”. (Malay, single, 19 yrs., Kanching Forest)

Compared to the female interviewees, two male interviewees at Kanching Forest placed more importance on intergenerational experience:

Mr. A:	“Probably. Because my parents used to go to the waterfall, most of the time, weekends or [pause], because family can’t afford to go to expensive place” (Malay, married, 40s, Kanching Forest)
Mr. B:	“When I was schooling, my parents brought me to forest. At that time I liked it. In primary school. My parents brought me for fishing or somewhere else, now me myself, following them [his parents’ footstep while laughing]”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mr. B:	“The first time I visited forest was here!. A long time ago!. In 1989, with friends. Now I mature [grown up] already so I bring my family, bring wife, kids and father”. (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)

From the point of view of forest culture and memory aspects, the interviews at Kanching Forest revealed that a few males experienced visits to the recreational forest as revisiting childhood, because the surrounding environment was similar to

the recreational forest they had visited as children. No female interviewees at Kanching Forest mentioned that experience. One man nostalgically recalled his memories:

Mr. B:	“The first time I visited forest was here!. A long time ago!. I like the silence, the waterfall that is flowing. That is one of the nostalgia” (Indian, married, 34 yrs., Kanching Forest)
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There was a distinct difference between male and female interviewees in terms of their childhood memories. The men’s memories were strongly linked to their fathers, whereas the women’s memories related to a wide circle of siblings or family members:

Mr. E:	“40 years back, forest reserve at Teluk Panglima Garang, my village. Followed my father finding for ‘red palm’ about five years old”. (Malay, married, 45 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. L:	“Oh! When I was small, in the village .... I picked up firewood followed my father, [and] with friends. (Malay, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“...when I was still small, maybe my aged six or five years old. My father originally from village.... There were many fruit trees; there, we have to go into the forest. We went with other siblings, at that time we will gather all together, climbed up trees [fruit trees] ... the boys were already on the trees, they “shaken” the trees and the fruits fell, and they were shouting. I started to “melatah” [I started shouting] because the fruits fell on us [others] “gedebak-gedebuk” [imitating the sound of fruits fell on her, so she “melatah” by using the same sound]. “Oh! Gedebak-gedebuk”. What is the “gedebak-gedebuk”? Those things [mentioned about the fruits] when fell onto you, you will feel the “gedebak-gedebuk”. .... Actually in my village, there were “rambutans” that have long hairs and very sweet. ... “buah sentul”, “buah rambai” I liked it! “buah kemunting”, all types of fruits there, that’s why we loved to go back to a village, something nice! [memory]. ... my village was located nearby a seaside. When we have picked up all the fruits, afterwards we went for a swim”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In terms of childhood memories there was a difference between interviewees with a Malay background and those with an Indian background. Most Malay interviewees had childhood memories related to living in a village, river, forest, hills and waterfall areas. Five Malays at Ampang Forest remembered their childhood activities in a village environment and recalled finding forest plants, picking up firewood, picking fruits and swimming. In contrast, the childhood memories of Indian interviewees at Ampang Forest were related to experience in managed forests and recreational forest environments. Activities involved were looking for a forest camp site with friends, doing adventurous things in the forest, following family and teachers to collect leaves for educational purposes:

Mr. J:	“I was a boy scout. .... I called it a small forest where there were many trees which have a lot of greenery, so that we went to look for a camping site”. (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. L:	“Oh! When I was small, in the village .... I picked up firewood followed my father,

	[and] with friends. At that time I was young, about age 11 .... There was a hill beside my house and a river like here [Ampang Forest]. We are village people, so we went to paddy field, go to forest, that's familiar ..., there was many fruit trees. I like area such as this [the forest environment] because it feels like I am in a village, because I am originally from a village". (Malay, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. C:	"When I was small, because my grandfather there [in Baling, Kedah]. Since I was small, before primary school ..., the river was located in front of my grandfather's house.... I felt fun being alone [swimming], if there were friends it was more fun". (Malay, married, 29 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	"When I was schooling, I also came here .... With teachers, sometimes also with family. We came when our teacher asked us to come to collect leaves and many things. Sometimes we collected sands and rocks. We came here to find leaves, there were many type of leaves. At that time, the teacher told us to collect [leaves/rocks, etc.] but we do not know the purposes". (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)

A few Malay interviewees at Kanching Forest had similar childhood activities. They did activities such as playing with friends, catching fishes, picking fruit from trees or looking for forest plants:

Miss B:	"Quite familiar because there is also a forest in my village. At the edge of the village, there was a hill and also a waterfall such as this. I was in a primary school, in standard 6. I used to go, follow the curriculum activities. It was organised by "PBSM" so we only picnic, BBQ, [and] swim it depends. The guys like to swim, the girls felt reluctant but I like the environment. ... I like to play [with] water and waterfall such as here". (Malay, single, 20 yrs., Kanching Forest)
Mrs. C:	"Familiar! When I was small, long time ago, followed my aunties...looking for forest fruit. When we reached there, we cooked...we were looking for the fruits in groups. When I was in standard 6, now I am 31 years old". Exciting! Very excited went to forest, just followed people [her aunts]. When we ate food it tasted delicious! Even though "pucuk paku"! [name of a plant that usually can be found in a jungle area]. ..., we cooked there, brought light pot, rice .... Not feel afraid because we were excited" (Malay, married, 31 yrs., Kanching Forest)

A greater number of Malay interviewees at Kanching Forest mentioned their first experiences as being related to the forest environment when they were children, compared to Chinese and Indian interviewees.

In terms of first experience with the forest environment, there was a similarity between male and female interviewees at Ampang Forest that related to childhood experience under the age of 12. Three males described different activities such as following their fathers to look for forest plants, finding forest fruits or following their parents who had planted vegetables and fruit trees in the forest. One female remembered that her village had many fruit trees. One male remembered having a picnic and swimming, while one female remembered swimming alone in a river at her grandfather's village. Three male interviewees remembered their experiences

as teenagers doing activities together with friends such as cycling, doing adventurous things in the jungle or following school activities:

Mr. B:	“I first visited a forest was here [Ampang Forest], [in year] ’80 and ’82. When I was a teenager. I was about 14 to 16. Came cycling, very tiring. Now I am 43 years old”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. F:	“When I was in Form Four. We just did an adventure thing, we went to the jungle”. (Indian, married, 55 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. J:	“First visited a forest when I was schooling, I was a boy scout. We went to a forest. It was not a thick forest but a small forest. ... in 50’s when I was 15, 16”. (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Particular male and female interviewees who visited recreation forests as adults usually were familiar with the forest environment when they were young. For example, one female interviewee who lived near the Ampang Recreational Forest came to the forest alone to jog once a week because she was used to the Ampang Recreational Forest and was also familiar with the forest environment when she was a child. Two males and one female recalled memory related to their hobbies when they visited the jungle as adults:

Mr. H:	“I used to go to National Park at Kuala Tahan. To see the birds, [as] a hobby, 10 years [ago]”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. P:	“Yes! I am familiar with the forest environment. Usually I went to forest such as Endau-Rompin, National Park ...surrounding Ulu Dungun. I have several of activities such as forest 4 by 4, mountain biking and went to sea. ... and usually in National Park, I have been there for 4 to 5 times. We also went to National Park using Mat Kilau [a name of a Malay former warrior] tracking. It was very tough”. (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“There were many places that I have visited. When I was 20’s something, I went to Seremban, Gunung Angsi or Gunung Datuk [the mountain name]. When I was involving in mountain tracking, I will go to any forests in KL, waterfall and all this ... I like! I like [forest] since I was small”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In terms of expectations towards the recreational forest, one male at Ampang Forest believed that to preserve the forest was everybody’s responsibility, including society’s and the government’s. One male interviewee at Ampang Forest suggested giving away pamphlets to the forest users so that they would be aware of their responsibility to preserve the forest and know about facilities provided in the recreational forest. Another male interviewee suggested having patrolling staff with knowledge about plants and trees so that they could educate users, especially children. One female also had a similar point of view; she believed that society needed to take care of the forest and suggested replanting the trees:

Mr. P:	“To preserve the forest is not one person responsibility, but the whole society need
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	to take care of it. There's no personal interest, there's no political interest, [and] there must be everybody interest and they should take care of it". (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. F:	"The society needs to take care of the forest, don't cut down the trees, no need to cut down too many trees, need to replant. If possible they buy a tree. Yeah! They buy a tree and plant here, that's my suggestion". (Indian, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. D:	".... I meant there should be a guard. Always patrol and the guards should at least [have] knowledge about the environment; the plants and all the trees ... at least when they communicate with people or children, they can tell what trees are there and what should or should not be done [in the forest areas]". (Malay, single, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. P:	"... for the improvements also can do pamphlets explaining about how to preserve the forest and know [info] about forests also telling people what facilities been provided here". (Malay, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In terms of facilities and activities, two males found that there were no attractions and they suggested deepening the river so that it would attract adult users to swim. Another one male interviewee suggested providing a mini zoo, tricycles or horse riding activities. Another one complained that he could not do any other activities and could not use the toilet because it was leaking. One female said that it was important to have more toilets especially when many people and children used the facilities. A female wanted to have a guard house at the centre of the forest for safety and surveillance purposes:

Mr. I:	"If possible, deepening the river, beautify the area. People like to swim right?. But there must be a lifeguard..., should also have a mini zoo. Tricycles or horse riding. Should create attractions". (Malay, married, 40s, Ampang Forest)
Mr. M:	"If possible, deepening the river at upper part. Two years ago they have dug the areas but now it's shallow. For adults to swim, when the water is shallow, there are few adults [swim]. The most important, dig up the sand, so that it is quite deep". (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. C:	"Facilities. There are no facilities, toilets; there are no jungle tracks, no other activities. Toilet cannot be used, leaking". (Malay, married, 39 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	"... , lack of toilet. When there are many people, not enough, when there is two or three people use, the toilet will get dirty .... A place like this [recreational purposes] we need many toilets because there are children. Here to me only the toilet, nothing else, ...". (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	"If possible, there is another guard house at the centre. Because at the end part, they have at the reservoir there are workers but at the centre, nobody guard the area. .... I have always seen a male and a female sitting, [she is mentioning their immoral behaviour]. When there is no guard, they do such thing [behaviour] regularly". (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Males and females raised similar issues regarding the children's playground equipment in Ampang Forest. Three males and two females complained about the broken facilities at the children playground such as broken swings. One male said that if children could not play on the equipment provided, their parents would

probably not come again. One female said that the children’s playground was important for children who were too young to swim. Two females mentioned about trees not being properly managed; they complained about barely legible tree labels and mature trees that were ‘dying’:

Mr. M:	“... The children playground is still not well maintained. The responsible body should take action fast. ... when children want to come here, they complain about the worst condition of playing equipments. ... so the children could not play, when children could not play, probably parents are not keen on coming here. They will go to other places that are my opinion”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. D:	“... also the children playground equipments. There are worn out and broken, sometimes when the children is still small, they are not allow to swim by themselves, so they can play [using playing equipments]”. (Indian, married, 40 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“Previously, the trees have been tagged; actually the trees’ name should be rewrite because the tagged are “too old” and could not read, “That’s why”. That’s what they [the forest staff] have to do”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. G:	“..., don’t let mature trees die, wasted. There are trees that live hundreds of year if you not maintain, they will destroy. The white ants eat them, they will die, it’s pity! Look at that tree [showing to the trees] they look wither, [and] seems to die. They do not maintain the parasite plants, they could not stand it, [and] they withered. Now you look at that side, they dried up. They don’t maintain the trees ..., they die just like that”. (Chinese, married, 41 yrs., Ampang Forest)

Both males and females were concerned about cleanliness issues. One male said that rubbish, leaves, plastic bags and food residue polluted the recreational forest areas. In addition, one female did not like to see many dead leaves that been piled up and one female said that there was no point in visiting when rubbish could be seen:

Mr. D:	“Pollution! Such as rubbish, the leaves ... plastic bags, food residue ...”. (Mr. D, Malay, single, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. A:	“Somehow I noticed there was rubbish over there, when come to that part, seeing rubbish, it seems that no use to come here. Even though here [it] is green, but you still can see rubbish, ...”. (Indian, married, 30 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. E:	“... The cleanliness is important, everywhere, the cleanliness is important! Maintain the areas, well, don’t let the leaves too much, look at the front areas they are thicker [the leaves]”. (Malay, married, 50s, Ampang Forest)

Two male interviewees disliked users who abused the recreational forest areas by throwing rubbish everywhere and did not use the dustbins provided. One male and one female mentioned users who liked to take away or destroy plants. Another disliked cruelty towards animals such as destroying ants and beating aggressive monkeys:

Mr. B:	“I dislike people’s habit, that’s it. Not discipline, throwing rubbish everywhere, not helping to take care. After eating food, they throw food residues everywhere ...”. (Chinese, married, 43 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. G:	“... Sometimes when people come for picnic, they just leaved whatever [stuff]



	they bring here”. (Chinese, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mr. J:	“... more people come and destroy this place, which can be seen on Saturday and Sunday. People come and damage all these, the plants, different-different [various] species of plants, you can see people beating the monkeys, you know ...it’s a bad part of it”. (Indian, married, 58 yrs., Ampang Forest)
Mrs. B:	“Don’t take away things, don’t destroy things” that’s important. Don’t destroy and take away things. Here when people take away the things [plants], what other thing left?. ..., if there is a beautiful thing, they will take away, ...”. (Malay, married, 52 yrs., Ampang Forest)

In terms of expectations towards the Kanching Forest, more females expected to have patrol staff supervising the recreational areas. The purpose of the staff was to ensure the safety of users and to prevent any immoral behaviour mentioned previously.

## 8.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, some aspects of the users’ experience of the recreational forests differed according to the users’ ethnic backgrounds and gender. The interviewees felt that the recreational forest was important to them according to their personal values. These values, which are constructed through their individual upbringing, lifecycle and culture, determined their attitudes towards their surrounding environments such as the recreational forest. Interviewees who were familiar with forest environments perceived the recreational forest differently compared to first-experience visitors. Those who had childhood memories in rural areas or villages associated the recreational forest ambiance and environment with their experience of village life. Expectations and issues of concern to them also differed according to their value orientations, with more emphasis on leisure and social values than on the ecosystem and habitat for wildlife.

There are differences in user experience in recreational forests between male and female interviewees. The choice of activities is slightly different between male and female interviewees whereby males engaged more in activities related to their hobbies and females liked to relax while enjoying the surrounding environments or the activities of other users. Forest physical characteristics and ambiance created various feelings in and meanings to the interviewees. Distinct feelings associated with female interviewees were social stigma, fear of crime and incivilities, and fear of aggressive monkeys. In contrast, older males expressed a fear of accidents because of the condition of their health. The interviewees valued

the recreational forest because the forest gives many benefits to them or to society; therefore; they felt it was important to preserve the recreational forest. In terms of childhood memories, Malay interviewees associated their forest memories with the activities they had either in rural or village environments when they were children, while Indian interviewees associated their earlier experiences with secondary forests or recreational forest environments in urban settings. Some of the interviewees used to visit Ampang Forest when they were children or as adults and they revisited it when they were older. In terms of expectation, a few of the forest users agreed that future recreational forests should be within walking distance and proximate to residential areas, and the maintenance quality and facilities should be upgraded. Chapter 9 will discuss the findings gained from the site observations, questionnaire surveys and interviews.