



POVERTY IN SABAH: THE DYNAMICS, CONTEXT AND PROGRESS

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**PERPUSTAKAAN •
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report consists of 13 chapters of poverty issues in Sabah viewed from multiple disciplines. The main objective of this research is to establish appropriate tools and methodology for poverty research. The four sub-objectives of this research are to:

- i) Provide a profile of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the poor households (e.g. education, economic activities, income and access to poverty eradication programmes);
- ii) Assess the effectiveness of various government or government linked poverty eradication programs and delivery systems;
- iii) Explore the attitude and perception of the poor in order to devise more effective poverty eradication programmes; and
- iv) Evaluate how poverty, well-being and environmental resources are linked.

There were 711 respondents involved in three main location; namely central Kudat, Matunggong and Banggi Island. The profile helps to identify the factors that contributed to household poverty in these areas. This research finds that 16 types of projects offered by the government in attempts to eliminate poverty in the Kudat District. Of the 16 only 3 types of projects, however, were participated by a large majority of participants, the rest were smaller ones catered to specific communities. The three major projects were honey farming¹, subsidy programme for Fishermen² and microcredit financial assistance for low income families.³ From the 188 respondents who participated in the poverty eradication projects, 35.7 percent were involved in the honey bee project. They comprised those living in Central Kudat and Matunggong areas. The project was not introduced to Pulau Banggi. Saving is regarded as important by respondents in order to achieve financial well-being; however, only 25.6 percent of the respondents saved some of their income. Most of the respondents were not able to save part since their income was barely enough to cover their daily expenses. For the respondents who were able to save, majority only did so if there were money left over for the purpose..

Most of the rural poor depended, directly or indirectly, on agriculture for their livelihoods. This research shows that a total of 239 respondents (33.6 percent) owned lands for agricultural activities.⁴ Meanwhile 153 respondents (21.5 percent) owned livestock. This study also indicated the role of education in poverty eradication, in close co-operation with other social factors, is crucial.

The findings show that education plays major roles to eradicate poverty. This research found that 41.7 percent of the respondent did not attended school. Although majority of the poor in these three sub-districts got their primary and secondary level of education, but, there is a need for certain changes in the

¹ The project is introduced by the Rural Development Corporation (KPD) and District Office

² Under the Department of Fisheries

³ Known as the Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) scheme.

⁴ The proportion who are in agriculture would be higher still if the large number of famers who do not own their own land but have access to them through customary rights claims were included. such claims are often established through occupation or improvement but are considered 'un-owned' by the state which regards all untitled lands as 'state land'



education curriculum, for instance curriculum related poverty should be included or integrated in adult education or informal training curricula or modules.

Forest resources can be an alternative source to help alleviate poverty among communities living within the vicinity of a forest in Sabah. Majority of the communities (50.6%) in the three areas studied, use forest resources for daily consumption as well as for earning an income. The use of forest resource management programs to reduce community suffering in poverty will contribute to the community livelihood and also contribute to sustaining forest resources through community involvement in their management. These forest resources could help subsidize the communities' monthly expenditure and therefore, contribute towards a better livelihood.

The research Instruments or tools developed by this group of researchers had good reliability and content validity. It was also found that internal consistency reliability was good for eleven scales in the research instrument. Even though internal consistency reliability level was low for four scales which were "Attitude towards politics", "Access to education and training", "Causes for the lack of fish resources" and "Respondents reaction if natural resources were to extinct" (the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of between 0.30 to 0.40 for these four items); it is hoped that in the future, these scales could be retested and re-evaluated for validity and reliability aspects.

