

Contribution of mangrove forest and socio-economic development of local communities in Kudat District, Sabah Malaysia

Abstract

Mangroves provide many direct and indirect benefits to humans of which also identified as ecosystem services of the forest. Villagers living within, and around the mangrove area use goods and services from the forest as their source of livelihood. The purpose of this study was to identify goods and services taken from the mangrove forest and to determine its value based on income derived by the local community. Six villages were selected as study sites located in the division of Kudat, Sabah. The method used was semi-structured interview involving 60 respondents representing the head of households. The results indicate that the primary products collected from the mangrove forest are of two main categories namely non-forest products (mud crab (*Scylla serrata*), fishes, 'lokan' (*Geloina coaxans*) and mud creepers (*Cerithidea obtusa*)); and the forest products (fuelwood and firewood (*Rhizophora*'s), Tannin (bark), flavorings (Tengar bark), nuts (*Sonneratia*'s), piling poles and medicinal plants). The non-forest products generated the highest income with an average of RM432.75 per household/month, whilst forest products contributed to an average of RM40.85. The study also revealed that 73 percent of the total respondents were living under the hardcore poor earning bracket with a monthly income of less than RM500. Further studies are required to learn more on the adaptation of the community towards the importance of mangrove forest and their livelihood