THE RATTAN PROCESSING AND TRANSFORMATION INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA

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The idea to produce a complete book on the Rattan Processing and Transformation Industry in Malaysia came to me in 2001 when I was doing a study for the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan in the Rattan Oil Curing, Bleaching and Preservation for the Transfer of Technology Model series. At that time I was still working as a senior research officer for the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM). Now, I am working as a lecturer with Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

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SUMMARY

Source(s) of Technology

The rattan processing and transformation industry can be considered as skill-dependent. The rattan processing and transformation industry can be learned from Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Main Development Attributes

The rattan processing and transformation industry mentioned in this book is readily applicable to Malaysia, other ASEAN countries as well as other tropical climate countries such as India and Pakistan, which have their own supply of raw materials.

The financial aspects required to operate rattan processing and transformation industry might be different from country to country. For countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines, the labour costs may be far less than that of Malaysia. The cost of purchasing equipment, machinery and chemicals may also vary depending on the rate of import taxation imposed by the respective governments.

Rattan processing and transformation industry can best be run as a small and medium industry (sole proprietorship). It is also suitable as community cooperative business since the villagers can be the workforce. In Malaysia, rattan processing and transformation industry has been taught to the aborigines as a way to upgrade their standard of living.

To succeed such businesses need substantial amounts of funding, consistent supply of raw materials and secured skilled workforces.

The rattan processing and transformation industry still needs a lot of research and development efforts in order to maintain its relevancy to other industries. While the world has seen a growing concern about the environment, the rattan processing and transformation industry should strive harder in adapting and developing better and systematic methods to select and use rattan materials to minimise wastage and to ensure highest quality output, both in terms of the appearance and the in-service output. Better techniques should be developed to lessen damage to raw materials during the processes. Mechanisation of certain processes would help in reducing dependency on skilled labour. Inevitably, new designs of rattan furniture would be required to suit the changing lifestyles.