

An Assessment of Tree Plantation Activity among Smallholders in the District of Ranau, Sabah

Abstract

The study was conducted to assess the tree plantation activity among smallholders in the District of Ranau, Sabah. There were six range areas involved, namely Kundasang, Randagong, Nalapak, Lohan-Bongkud, Timbua and Perancangan. The objectives of the study have been to identify the type of tree species planted, the distribution of tree plantation areas, the planting practiced, and the perception of small holders towards tree plantation activity. Data were gathered by direct observation, interviews, questionnaire, as well as secondary data, which were collected from related agencies such as the Agricultural Department and the Rubber Industrial Board in Ranau. There were 47 observations of plantation areas recorded, and the farmers involved were interviewed. The study has identified that *Hevea brasiliensis* and *Durio zibethinus* of the agriculture crops' tree were the most types planted by the small holders. Species planted under the category of other selected plantation trees were *Acacia* sp. (40 %), *Tectona grandis* (29 %), *Pinus* sp. (18 %), *Azadirachta excelsa*, *Neolamarckia cadamba*, *Octomeles sumatrana* and *Eucalyptus* sp. (13 %). The species of *Acacia* sp., *Tectona grandis*, *Octomeles sumatrana* and *Eucalyptus* sp. were found at Randagong, Lohan-Bongkud, Timbua and Perancangan while *Pinus* sp. was mainly found at Kundasang. *Azadirachta excelsa*, *Neolamarckia cadamba* and *Octomeles sumatrana* were only found at Timbua, Lohan and Nalapak. The study has also revealed that the tree plantations among the small holders in Ranau were influenced by land areas owned by the farmer, and the willingness to wait for the long term outcome of the investment. Integrated planting among trees and various crops was applied in order to maximize the usage of the available land. The tree plantation under the category of agriculture crops was mainly for the purpose of economic income, while other selected plantation trees were cultivated for landscaping, long term investment and also for soil protection.