



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i1/15992>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i1/15992

Received: 08 November 2022, **Revised:** 11 December 2022, **Accepted:** 26 December 2022

Published Online: 15 January 2023

In-Text Citation: (Aziz & Zaini, 2023)

To Cite this Article: Aziz, S. A., & Zaini, F. (2023). A Preliminary Study of Livelihood Challenges in Water Settlement Area in Northern Sarawak, Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(1), 928 – 939.

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Vol. 13, No. 1, 2023, Pg. 928 – 939

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www.hrmars.com

ISSN: 2222-6990

A Preliminary Study of Livelihood Challenges in Water Settlement Area in Northern Sarawak, Malaysia

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Abstract

Water settlement area, also known as water village, is situated above the water and is frequently referred to as a fishing village due to the majority of the population's occupation as fishermen. It consists of a cluster of typical river-long stilt settlements, most of which are located near or outside the city. This paper is a preliminary study in identifying the difficulties of sustaining a living in a water settlement area. The significance of this paper lies in its examination of the obstacles related to the safety of villagers on the water. In this article, qualitative face-to-face interviews with respondents served as the research method, and the obtained data were analysed using thematic analysis. There are three identified challenges that can affect community safety in this geographical area. Water village communities are among the most vulnerable populations, more likely than others to require humanitarian aid or be excluded from financial and social services. Consequently, this article can also be used as a relevant resource for the development and improvement of strategies related to the same problem that occurs in other villages on water and can increase the level of safety for villagers.

Keywords: Challenges, Community Livelihood, Qualitative Study, Water Settlement Area, Social Studies

Introduction

Floating village is the used to describe a village on the water that is associated with fish farming. It consists of a collection of traditional villages built on stilts along the river. Some of the villages are located near or far away from the city. Due to their traditional existence, those who live on the water are disadvantaged in terms of education, communication, and social knowledge (Thi et al., 2017a). It has been a very long time since the inhabitants of a water village had a distinct culture. Kampong Ayer in Brunei Darussalam, for instance, is believed to be older than one thousand years. In 1521, Antonio Pigafetta referred to it as the "Venice of the East" (Ahmad, 2013). The floating villages of Ha Long Bay are both a cultural treasure and a popular tourist destination. Ha Long Bay contains over 1960 limestone islands, grottos, and caves (Thi et al., 2017a). It served as a suburb for harbor-dwelling fishing villages located hundreds of kilometres from the continent. In many parts of the world, floating villages and