

# Collecting Forest Resources as Livelihood Strategies in Kampung Tambirat, Sarawak

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## ABSTRACT

A livelihood is a means of making a living, securing necessities of life such as water, shelter medicine and clothing. For communities dependent on forest resources for livelihoods, sustainability of forests are important. In Kampung Tambirat this study aims to find the income generated from forest resources particularly Nypah palm forests, the measures of conservation, challenges and type of assistance required so that the villagers engagement in the activities will flourish in the future and benefit the younger generations. It is found that there are no conservation measures for Nypah forests and seasonal floods further increases the difficulty for the villagers to sustain their livelihood activities.

Keywords: Forest resources, livelihood strategies, Nypah forests, Sarawak, sustainability

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## INTRODUCTION

Forests provide a variety of products and services. Trees provide oxygen to the environment and absorb carbon dioxide. The raw materials for wood products, paper and housing are obtained from forest. According to Tietenberg and Lewis (2015), forests provide shelter and sanctuary for wildlife and they play important role in maintaining the watersheds that supply much of our drinking water. More than 1.6 billion people worldwide depend to varying degrees, on forests for their livelihoods. About 60 million indigenous people are almost entirely dependent on forests. Some 350 million people who live within or adjacent to dense forests depend on them to a high degree for subsistence and income (World Bank, 2016). Livelihoods and management of natural resources must be adaptable to ecological and social system changes so that it would be resilient and sustainable (Allison and Horemans, 2006; Chapin et al., as cited in Abdullah, 2014). "Rural communities are dependent on forest resources which are common in Sarawak as subsistence or personal use" (Noweg & Songan, 2009, p. 35). Despite the contribution of the forest to the communities, measures of taken for conservation of resources are often minimal. Often, forest conversion into commercial agriculture caused the forest lands to lose. "Overall global forest areas registered net decrease of 1.7 % between 1990 and 2005 at an annual rate change of 0.11 percent (Tietenberg & Lewis, 2015, p. 281). For communities dependent on forest resources for livelihoods, sustainability of forests are important. In Kampung Tambirat we aim to find the income generated from forest resources, the measures of conservation challenges and types of assistance required so that the villagers' engagement in the activities will flourish in the future and benefit the younger generations.

A livelihood is a means of making a living, securing necessities of life such as water, shelter medicine and clothing. The most commonly used definition of livelihood written by Carney (as cited in Haan, 2012) "A livelihood system comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhances its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (p.347). According to (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2016) example of shocks and stresses includes earthquakes, droughts and other natural disasters; economic recession, pest and disease epidemics, wars, hungry season, death of family. These are the unpredictable events causing households to fall into poverty. "Livelihood studies were brought to the centre stage of development studies in the late 1990s and the beginning of new millennium, when the so-called Sustainable Livelihood Framework was strongly promoted by the Department for International Development (DFID), the British state development corporation agency" (Haan, 2012, p. 346).