

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF MANGROVE FOREST IN SIBUTI, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

KALEEM SHAH

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By

KALEEM SHAH

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

May 2015

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF MANGROVE FOREST IN SIBUTI, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

By

KALEEM SHAH

May 2015

Chairman: Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal, PhD Faculty: Agriculture and Food Sciences (Bintulu)

Mangrove forest is highly productive and plays an important role to the coastal ecosystem functions including livelihoods of the adjacent coastal communities. Like other ecosystems, mangrove provides enormous tangible and intangible benefits to both the local communities and ecology. Millions of people are dependent on mangroves for their livelihoods around the world including Malaysia. Malaysia is gifted with numerous natural resources and nearly 580,000 ha of mangrove forests grow scattered countrywide, whereas, the state of Sarawak contributes 26% to the total. Many researchers in Malaysia have been focused on ecological and environmental aspects of mangroves; however very few research work are documented on social linkage aspect to this unique characteristic of forest particularly in Sarawak. Hence, this study was focused on the mangroves and its benefits to the local community and their awareness level with regard to the mangrove forest of Sibuti, Sarawak. Ethnoecological approach was adopted during the study. For social aspect, data was recorded from 60 respondents using simple random sampling techniques in three villages surrounding Sibuti mangrove forest through structured and semi-structured interview schedule. While, field survey was conducted through transect line method for species composition and diversity of mangroves in three transects randomly by establishing (10 $\times 10$ m) plots perpendicular from shoreline to inland.

At this current stage, the coastal community was not depended on Sibuti mangroves forest in terms of direct benefits, like; energy fuel wood 52 (87%), timber 58 (97%), grasses/fodder leaves 53 (88%), construction pole/material 58 (97%), livestock grazing 48 (80%), wildlife hunting 43 (72%), Medicinal Plants/NWFPs 55 (92%) and thatching material 57 (95%). However, low dependency was recorded on mangrove forest in term of crabs and mollusk collection 33 (55%), *Nypa* fruits collection 21 (35%) and *Nypa* leaves collection 19 (32%). Fishing was the only direct benefit, which was highly getting by the community 29 (48%) from Sibuti mangrove forest. The community believed that mangrove forest provide them in-direct benefits such as breeding ground of fish 43 (72%), protecting their land from soil erosion 36 (60%), contributing towards land formation 44 (73%), filtering the water resource 39 (65%), increasing scenic view 43 (72%), providing food to the fish 48 (80%), working as nutrients hub for fishes 45



(75%), wildlife habitat 43 (72%), protection from floods 41 (68%), protection from cyclones/storms/tornados 45 (75%) and protecting them from Tsunami 34 (57%). Interest of paying visit to the forest was casually found in 27 (45%). Majority i.e., 36 (60%) viewed Sibuti mangroves as benefited in terms of eco-tourism. Most of the people i.e., 46 (77%) were always willing to play role in the development of Sibuti mangroves, 40 (67%) interested in learning about conservation and protection practices, while 37 (62%) were ready for volunteer role in conservation and protection if assign to them. Most of them i.e., 36 (60%) were ready play role as volunteer and 46 (77%) was ready to work as facilitator. Majority 32 (53%) were willing to pay donations. The educational, research and training program were welcomed by 58 (98%) of the respondents. The people believed that forestry resource could be managed through community involvement. Similar observation was found for fishery, wildlife and eco-tourism development. Joint forest management approach was supported by 47 (78%) and 35 (58%) were satisfied about government efforts for protection, development and conservation of the forest. Majority i.e., 44 (73%) of the people viewed that Sibuti mangrove forest was not facing human pressure on the resource.

Survey on mangrove species composition found that nine true mangroves species were recorded and *Rhizophora apiculata* was recorded as dominated species. The stand density was recorded as 1938 trees ha⁻¹, 1722 saplings ha⁻¹ and 6222 seedlings ha⁻¹. The average diameter of tree in the stand was 21 cm, 13 m for height and 202 m² ha⁻¹ for basal area. The average diameter of dominant species (*R. apiculata*) was 24 cm, height 15 m and basal area 176 m² ha⁻¹. The Importance Value Index (IVI) of *R. apiculata* was 202 followed by 64 for *Xylocarpus granatum*. Shannon diversity indices (H⁻), Margalef richness (D) and Peilou evenness (J⁻) were calculated to be 1.18, 1.41 and 0.54, respectively. Similarity of species diversity showed two major clusters for the whole forest stand.

The findings of this study suggest that Sibuti mangrove forest was undisturbed and healthy. The people were mostly benefited from indirect uses rather than direct uses and they were well aware of the mangrove forest resources. The forest could be managed and conserved in a better way for multi-sectoral uses like eco-tourism, biodiversity, research and education and community people should be considered as primary stakeholder. Integrated resource management approach should be adopted rather than managing the resource as a wildlife sanctuary only. Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

KESEDARAN MASYARAKAT TENTANG MANFAAT EKOLOGI HUTAN PAYA BAKAU DI SIBUTI, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Mei 2015

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Hutan paya bakau adalah sangat produktif dan memainkan peranan penting kepada fungsi ekosistem pantai termasuklah menjadi punca pencarian kepada penduduk berdekatan pantai. Seperti ekosistem yang lain, paya bakau menyediakan kebaikan yang sangat ketara dan tidak ketara kepada ekologi masyarakat setempat. Berjuta manusia bergantung kepada hutan paya bakau sebagai sumber pendapatan di seluruh dunia termasuklah Malaysia. Malaysia dianugerahkan dengan kepelbagaian sumber semulajadi dan hampir 580,000 ha hutan paya bakau tumbuh bertaburan di seluruh negara, manakala, negeri Sarawak menyumbang 26% daripada jumlah keseluruhan. Ramai penyelidik di Malaysia mula memberi tumpuan kepada aspek ekologi dan aspek persekitaran paya bakau; walaubagaimanapun hanya sedikit kajian yang di dokumentasikan dari aspek hubungan sosial terhadap ciri-ciri keunikan hutan terutamanya di Sarawak. Justeru, kajian ini menfokuskan kepada paya bakau dan kelebihannya kepada penduduk tempatan dan kefahaman penduduk terhadap hutan paya bakau di Sibuti, Sarawak. Pendekatan etno-ekologikal telah diadaptasi semasa kajian. Untuk aspek sosial, data telah direkodkan daripada 60 responden menggunakan teknik pensampelan mudah secara rawak di tiga buah kampung di sekeliling hutan bakau Sibuti melalui temubual berstruktur dan tidak berstruktur. Manakala, survei lapangan telah dilaksanakan melalui kaedah garisan transek untuk komposisi spesis dan kepelbagaian bakau menggunakan tiga transek secara rawak dengan membuat (10 x 10 m) plot secara lurus ke dalam daripada pantai ke kawasan daratan.

Pada peringkat ini, penduduk pantai tidak bergantung kepada hutan paya bakau Sibuti dari segi manfaat secara langsung, seperti; tenaga kayu bakar 52 (87%), balak 58 (97%), rumput/daun foder 53 (88%), tiang/bahan binaan 58 (97%), padang ragut untuk ternakan 48 (80%), pemburuan hidupan liar 43 (72%), tumbuhan/NWFPs perubatan 55 (92) dan jerami 57 (95%). Walaubagaimanapun, kadar kebergantungan yang rendah telah direkod di hutan paya bakau dari segi pengumpulan ketam dan moluska 33 (55%), pengumpulan buah nipah 21 (35%) dan pengumpulan daun nipah 19 (32%). Perikanan merupakan satu-satunya manfaat secara langsung, yang paling tinggi diperolehi oleh penduduk 29 (48%) dari hutan paya bakau Sibuti. Penduduk tempatan percaya bahawa hutan paya bakau memberi manfaat secara tidak langsung kepada kawasan pembiakan ikan 43 (72%), melindungi kawasan mereka daripada hakisan

tanah 36 (60%), menyumbang kearah pembentukan tanah 44 (73%), menapis sumber air 39 (65%), menambahkan kawasan pemandangan yang cantik 43 (72), menyediakan makanan untuk ikan 48 (80%), berkerja sebagai nutrient hab 45 (75%), habitat hidupan liar 43 (72%), perlindungan daripada banjir 41 (68%), perlindungan daripada taufan/ribut/putting beliung 45 (75%) dan melindungi mereka daripada tsunami 34 (57%). Minat untuk datang melawat hutan ini secara santai adalah dalam 27 (45%). Majoriti 36 (60%) melihat keuntungan di paya bakau Sibuti adalah melalui ekopelancongan. Kebanyakkan manusia i.e., 46 (77%) sentiasa bersedia untuk memainkan peranan dalam pembangunan paya bakau Sibuti, 40 (67%) berminat untuk belajar mengenai amalan pemuliharaan dan perlindungan, sementara 37 (62%) telah bersedia untuk memainkan peranan sukarelawan dalam pemuliharaan dan perlindungan jika hak diserahkan kepada mereka. Kebanyakkan mereka i.e. 36 (60%) bersedia memainkan peranan sebagai sukarelawan dan 46 (77%) bersedia bekerja sebagai fasilitator. Majoriti 32 (53%) sanggup membayar derma. Program pembelajaran, kajian dan latihan disambut oleh 58 (98%) daripada responden. Penduduk percaya sumber hutan boleh diurus melalui penglibatan komuniti. Pemerhatian yang sama dilihat untuk kemajuan perikanan, hidupan liar dan eko-pelancongan. Pendekatan pengurusan hutan bersama disokong oleh 47 (78%) dan 35 (58%) berpuas hati dengan usaha kerajaan untuk melindungi, membangun dan memulihara kawasan hutan ini. Majoriti i.e 44 (73%) penduduk melihat hutan paya bakau Sibuti tidak menghadapi tekanan manusia terhadap sumber.

Survei ke atas komposisi spesis bakau telah merekodkan Sembilan spesis bakau sebenar dan *Rhizophora apiculate* merupakan spesis yang mendominasi. Kepadatan pokok direkodkan sebagai 1938 pokok ha⁻¹, 1722 anak pokok ha⁻¹dan 6222 anak benih ha⁻¹. Purata diameter diri adalah 21 cm, 13 m untuk tinggi dan 202 m² ha⁻¹ untuk pangkal. Purata diameter spesis dominan (*Rhizophora apiculata*) adalah 24 cm, tinggi 15 m dan kawasan pangkal 176 m² ha⁻¹. Indek Nilai Penting (IVI) untuk *Rhizophora apiculata* adalah 202 diikuti dengan 64 untuk *Xylocarpus granatum*, Index Kepelbagaian Shannon (H⁻), Kekayaan Margalef (D) dan Kesamaan Peilou (J⁻) telah dikira sebagai 1.18, 1.41 dan 0.54 masing-masing. Kesamaan kepelbagaian spesis menunjukkan dua kluster utama untuk keseluruhan dirian hutan.

Hasil dari kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa hutan paya bakau Sibuti tidak terganggu dan sihat. Penduduk mendapat manfaat daripada sumber tidak langsung berbanding sumber langsung dan mereka sedar akan kepentingan sumber hutan paya bakau. Hutan ini dapat diurus dan dipelihara dengan cara yang lebih baik untuk pelbagai sektor seperti eko-pelancongan, biodiversiti, penyelidikan dan pembelajaran dan penduduk seharusnya dianggap sebagai pemegang utama. Pendekatan pengurusan sumber bersepadu perlu digunapakai bukan semata-mata menguruskan sumber sebagai santuari hidupan liar sahaja.

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I certify that a thesis examination committee has met on 13/05/2015 to conduct the final examination of Mr. Kaleem Shah on his thesis titled "Social Linkages and ecological attributes of mangrove forests: A study of Sibuti, Sarawak" in accordance with the Universities and University College act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 march 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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Signature.....Date 22 July 2015Name and Matric No Kaleem Shah (GS 38452)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

^{0}C	Centigrade
CAP	Community Analysis Packages
cm	Centimeter
D	Margalef richness
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
Govt.	Government
Η´	Shannon diversity
На	Hectare
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
ILO	International Labor Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IVI	Important Value Index
J´	Peilou evenness
Kg	kilogram
Km	kilometer
m	Meter
NWFP	Non Wood Forest Products
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
SDR	Species Diversity Richness
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
UPMKB	Universiti Putra Malaysia Kampus Bintulu
US\$	United States Dollar
UV	Ultra Volute
WTP	Willing To Pay

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Mangroves are coastal plants, which mostly grow in the intertidal area of tropical and subtropical shorelines, and resistance to high salt concentrations (Saenger, 2002). These plants are mainly divided into three major categories i.e., true-mangroves, mangroves and mangroves-associates (Wan Juliana *et al.*, 2010). There are 15.2 million hectares of mangroves forests around the world (FAO, 2007). These forests are distributed in almost 123 countries, covering an area of about 1% of the world surface. Asia consists 37% of mangrove forests, while 27.2% in North and South America followed by 21% in Africa and 12.4% in Australia (FAO, 2007; Sandilyan and Kathiresan, 2012). In Malaysia, 0.580 million ha mangroves forests are distributed along the coastal and estuarine areas, in which, 60% is covered by Sabah, 26% by Sarawak and 13% by Peninsular (Shukor, 2004; Latif and Faridah-Hanum, 2014).

Mangroves forests are highly productive and play an important role to the coastal ecosystem functions including livelihoods of the adjacent coastal communities (Kathiresan and Bingham, 2001). Since very long time, people used mangroves forests for timber and commercially exploited these forests for durable construction poles, tannin, firewood and charcoal (FAO, 2007; Spalding et al., 2010). The wood are used in boat building, housing, heavy construction, papers and chipboards business industries in the same manner as the terrestrial forests (Clough, 2013). Mangrove species like Nypa are used for thatching material, cigarette wrappers mats and baskets, hats, bags mats, wrappers, raincoats and juice tapped for conversion into alcohol (FAO, 2002; Shukor, 2004; Kathiresan, 2012). In Asia, millions of people are dependent on mangroves forests e.g. Sundarbans mangroves forests of Bangladesh and India support around 9 million people for their day-to-day life (Viswanathan et al., 2011). These forests provide more than 70 direct human activities and services, which vary from forestry to fisheries resources (Dixon, 1989; Lucy, 2006). Mangroves are also very common vicinity for grazing of animals (Qasim, 1998) and can also provide high opportunities for eco-tourism (Kathiresan and Bingham, 2001). Apiculture activities are also attractive business in the mangroves forest area. The study of Krishnamurthy (1990) has calculated that apiculture sector provided employment to 2000 persons and annually produced 111 tons of honey in Sundarbans mangroves forests. FAO (2007) has reported mangroves forests as a potential source of medicinal plants and Non Wood Forest Products (NWFP).

Mangrove forests have the buffering capacity to stop storms (Garcia *et al.*, 2014) and protect the coastline from flood usually happened due to heavy rainfall (Kathiresan, 2012). Mangroves systems are like buttress system, where the strong roots of plants make natural buffer between the land and the sea. These also have the capacity to break wave action and strong winds (Latif and Faridah-Hanum, 2014). This ecosystem also helps in recycling of nitrogen, carbon and sulphur (Kathiresan, 2012). Mangroves ecosystems provide habitats, spawning grounds to many animals and support rich biological diversity (Faridah-Hanum *et al.*, 2012). The diverse vegetation composition, structure and dense foliage of mangroves have created different layers of heterogeneous habitats, which support variety of wildlife and marine organisms

(Garcia *et al.*, 2014; Rajpar and Zakaria, 2014b). These wildlife communities utilize mangroves forests for foraging, breeding and loafing and helping to make the nature in balance (Spalding *et al.*, 2010; Rajpar and Zakaria, 2014b).

1.2 Problem Statement

In spite of high amount of benefits and services of this important coastal ecosystem, mangrove forests are depleted at average rate of 0.66% per year globally and 15 million ha are lost in 1990s' and mostly happened in tropics (FAO, 2007). In Asia, Philippines lost 60%, Thailand 55%, Vietnam 37% and Malaysia 12% of their total mangroves forests (Siddiqi, 2001). About 0.110 million ha of mangroves are lost in Malaysia from 1980 to 2005 (FAO, 2007). The major threats facing by mangrove ecosystem created by humans that include overexploitation, conversion of land to residential and agriculture purposes, aquaculture, urban development, salt extraction and diversion of freshwater for irrigation (UNEP, 1994). As a result of human activities, many mangrove species are at the verge of extinction (Polidoro et al., 2010). In recent years, the human impact on mangroves has increased and 50-80% forests cover have lost in many countries over the last 50 years (Macintosh et al., 2011). The growing threats and human pressure on the mangrove resource make the situation complex; hence more research works are needed, especially linking human interaction with the mangrove resource and its dependency. Further ways and means are required to explore effective solutions and recommendations for tackling and reducing human pressure on this precise resource.

Worldwide, it is proven from various research studies that when the community people are benefitted from ecosystems, they themselves take care for the conservation of these ecosystems for their own benefits. In addition to that sense of ownership has been established and they started to safeguarding those resource for their own interest. Although, mangroves are the most well described and studied ecosystems of the world (Krauss *et al.*, 2014), researches on mangroves and social linkages are still lacking worldwide (Walter *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, human and social dimensions are relatively new aspect in the mangrove forests and significant regions in the world are understudied for resource utilization and valuation for mangrove forests (Walter *et al.*, 2008).

The scenario of Malaysia is not an exception, considering the global perspectives. In spite of versatile importance in regards to tangible and intangible benefits, very scarce information are available in Malaysia, especially in Sarawak, where pristine and undisturbed mangroves are found along the coastlines (Kasawani *et al.*, 2007; Wan Juliana *et al.*, 2014). Most of the researches in Malaysia are on the mangroves of Peninsular Malaysia, although Sarawak and Sabah are enriched with numerous pristine Mangroves (Saifullah *et al.*, 2014). Some partial researches were conducted on the ecological processes of Sarawak mangroves such as carbon sequestration (Chandra, 2013), water characteristics (Rosli *et al.*, 2010; Saifullah *et al.*, 2014), Soil properties (Rambok *et al.*, 2010), heavy metals in mangrove sediments (Billah *et al.*, 2014), litterfall (Hoque *et al.*, 2015b), Sediment accretion and accumulation (Hoque *et al.*, 2015c). Likewise, assessment of forest structure, species composition and diversity of the study area is very essential and important to derive benefits and services of this vital ecosystem and linking it with social and human dimension. Research scope were felt to

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know the factual situation on the ground and documenting of tangible and intangible benefits and services of the mangroves as well the area were needed to be explored along with available forestry resource in terms of species composition and forest diversity.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Ecological benefits and services are the foundation of an ecosystem and are interlinked with the human interaction and their socio-economic development. Sibuti mangrove, the study area is an undisturbed mangrove forest of Sarawak (Saifullah *et al.*, 2014). So far, research on sedimentation, litter fall, fish diversity, water characteristics and nutrient dynamics are conducted by Hoque *et al.* (2015a,b,c) and Saifullah *et al.* (2014). However, the floral composition and its tangible and intangible benefits derived by the peoples are not documented and relatively ignored. Therefore, being an undisturbed and matured forest, it was hypothesized that the community people residing nearby may benefit extensively or there might have some hidden threats due to unconsciousness/unawareness of the people about the ecological and economic importance of this mangrove, which need to be explored. This work would also be highly important to bridge the gap of knowledge by linking social aspect with ecological attributes.

Likewise, the importance of community awareness and links of mangrove forests with coastal communities are evidently accepted by the researchers, government agencies and other stakeholders. Therefore, there is an essence need of research work to assess the awareness level of coastal communities and to envisage the information gap of human dimension of mangrove ecosystems particularly in Sarawak.

Consequently, considering the aforementioned knowledge gaps and recommendations of the various researchers, social linkages and ecological attributes of mangroves such as tangible and intangible benefits, community awareness regarding these benefits of mangroves as well as floral composition of pristine mangroves were emphasized for the purpose of the present study. Hence, the findings of this study would be helpful for the scientific community especially social scientists and ecologists, planners, decision makers, conservationists and the development practitioners in envisgeing and formulating effective mangement planning considering the social and ecological significance of the concern area.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- To assess the tangible and intangible benefits along with awareness level of the local community inhabits adjacent to the Sibuti mangrove forest.
- To investigate the plant composition and diversity of Sibuti mangroves forest, Sarawak.

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Kaleem Shah was born on Ist March 1975 at Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. He acquired his Secondary School Certificate from Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Peshawar Pakistan in 1991. Then, he passed his Intermediate Secondary School examination from Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Peshawar in 1993. After passing Intermediate Secondary School examination, he has been registered at University of Peshawar, Pakistan for his Bachelor Degree program major in Computer Science, Mathematics and Islamic studies. He was awarded his bachelor degree in 1997. Subsequently, he achieved his Master degree from University of Peshawar during 1999-2000.

He started his professional life in 2001 by joining Forest Department Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan as Community Development Officer. In 2002, he has been appointed as Assistant Director at Research and Development Directorate and since then, he is working in Forest Department on the same post. He worked on different forestry related issues as per his job description and duty assigned to him. Now, he is on study leave from job for his studies.

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