

Can indigenous peasants of Central Kalimantan live viably while conserving their forest lands?

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the feasibility of a community-based non-timber forest products (NTFP) enterprise, or CBNE, within the indigenous peasant communities in Manuhing Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. This includes assessing the potential for generating featured agricultural products from the region.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a descriptive qualitative study that integrates ethnographic methods into the SLA analysis, to investigate the feasibility of a CBNE approach within an indigenous peasant community. A number of 13 peasant groups, which comprise 251 members, from the seven villages in Manuhing Raya participated in the study.

Findings – The CBNE approach, when combined with One Village One Product method, is considered appropriate for the determination of featured agricultural products in a local community. In addition, the SLA analysis in this study contributes to identifying vulnerable aspects of CBNE development in the local communities, including weaknesses in social cohesion, leadership and entrepreneurial orientation.

Research limitations/implications – Efforts to preserve the rainforest lands in Central Kalimantan cannot be excluded from the involvement of the local peasant communities. The best livelihood strategy in this case is to adopt a CBNE approach. This shall be made possible by empowering the peasant communities to revive their local wisdom of Upun Pabelum, which means forest lands are their primary resources for life.

Practical implications – This study highlights the importance of using ethnographic investigation prior to the implementation of a CBNE development.

Originality/value – The implementation of the CBNE approach should take into account socioeconomic aspects of the local community, especially the presence of social cohesion, leadership roles and entrepreneurial orientations. In addition, the study demonstrates the potential of integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern business models in CBNEs.

Keywords Sustainable development goals, Community-based forest enterprise, One village one product, Sustainable livelihood approach, Climate change, Deforestation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Deforestation poses a significant global environmental threat, contributing to biodiversity loss and climate change. Indigenous communities, with their centuries-long history of inhabiting forests, play a vital role in forest conservation due to their deep-rooted knowledge of ecosystems and sustainable practices (Fa *et al.*, 2020). Unfortunately, these communities often face



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