

Timber production and distribution in East Kalimantan, Indonesia

-The small scale activities of local people-

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Place of fieldwork: Indonesia

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Research background and purpose

This study has been conducted in order to discuss issues regarding the sustainable system of timber production and distribution in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. A lot of timbers have been produced and exported to other countries since the 1960's in East Kalimantan. Then it was local people who worked to produce such timbers. Some of them had been working in timber companies, and others had been working in their own private business. Although their private businesses were small scale, they were essential for local people because only these businesses support the local timber supply. In addition, their small-scale businesses were important working opportunities for them. But now, their timber producing is restricted strictly by forest policies because forest resources in East Kalimantan have become scarce. It is now required that they reduce their working scale.

I conducted fieldwork in East Kalimantan, Indonesia to make clear the present conditions of timber production and distribution with a focus on the small scale activities of local people. The research period was from February, 13th, 2009 until March, 16th, 2009.

Results and achievements from fieldwork

Three results were obtained from the fieldwork. Firstly, I could make clear the present problems between forest policy and timber production and distribution through interviewing people who work in timber associations in Samarinda, the state capital of East Kalimantan. Local timber producers and distributors must obtain new working permission from the provincial government because forest policy is often revised. Due to the fact that it takes a lot of time and money to obtain the necessary permission, quite a number of producers and distributors continue their work without permission. But these illegal activities are controlled strictly by polices.

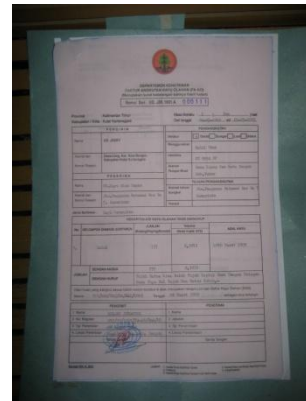
Secondly, the volume of local distributed timber and its area of production could be clarified through interviews with owners of local timber stores in Samarinda. Some local timber stores buy timber from timber companies, the others buy timber from local producers and distributors. There is a significant difference in the volume of timber distribution in local timber stores. For example, some stores buy and sell about 5m³ of timber per month, for others high as about 200m³ per month. The main timber producing areas are Samarinda, the Kurai Kartanegara district, and the Kutai Barat district. It should be noted that many timbers are brought from oil palm plantations and coal mining areas. Oil palm and coal companies are involved in the large-scale felling of forest in order to open their working areas. Local timber producers bring out the remaining logs felled by these companies.

Thirdly, I was able to clarify the present condition of timber production through interview to local timber producers in the Kutai Kartanegara district who have been living their lives based on slash-and-burn agriculture.

These producers usually have several side jobs when they have nothing to do on their farms. Before the 1970's, their side jobs were to collect rattans and make wood shingles. But after 1970's, their side jobs changed into other jobs, for example, producing timber, cultivating other crops, managing small stores, working in companies, and so on. Now almost all men under 40 years have timber production-related work as their side jobs, producing timber because it allows them to obtain the highest income.

Implications and impacts on future research

In my next research, the livelihood of timber producers and distributors will be examined. Their activities are set to become more difficult as forest policies will further restrict their activities. I want to make clear how they depend on timber production work to make their living. Then I will discuss a new system of local timber production and distribution which can support their livelihood sustainably.



Picture1 A small timber store in Samarinda Picture2 Timber brought to a timber store

Picture3 A new working permission