

Melanau Women Engagement in Income Generating Activity of Sago Pearls-Based Food Products: Level of Participation and Motivation Factors

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Abstract

Purpose: Melanau women play an increasingly important role in supplementing their family household income. They are actively involved in economic activities related to processing and selling of sago-based food products. This is evident in their involvement of making sago pearls, *lemantak*, *tebaloi*, cookies and selling of other local delicacies that are made from sago flour. The objectives of the paper are twofold; firstly, to identify the level of participation of Melanau women in the production of sago-based food products and secondly to examines the motivational factors that influence Melanau women's participation in the production and selling of sago-based food products.

Design/methodology/approach: A total number of 30 Melanau women who resided in Mukah and Dalat (15 from each area respectively) were interviewed for this purpose. The study used qualitative research method with semi-structured interviews and field observation as the techniques for data collection.

Findings: The findings on level of participation suggest that women involvement is on part-time basis. There are three important motivating factors that can be attributed to the participation intentions of Melanau women in the processing and selling of sago-based food product. They are monetary gain, socialisation and keeping the Melanau culture and tradition alive.

Originality/value: This paper highlights the involvement of rural and indigenous women especially the Melanau in income generating activity to supplement their family's income. It is hope that the findings from this study will be able to assist policy makers to develop program that can help to improve their participations and provide a form of assistance in marketing their products. In addition, this paper will contribute to the literature on this subject matter as there are limited works on Melanau women participation in income generating activity.

Keywords: Melanau Women, Income Generating Activity, Sago-based Products