

**IMPACT OF LAND LEGISLATION IN SARAWAK:
POLITICS AND ITS LEGISLATIVE TRENDS**

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Abstract

This paper is entitled “Impact of Land Legislation in Sarawak: Politics and its Legislative Trends”. It is aimed at analyzing the development of land related legislations that have been passed by the Sarawak Legislative Assembly, since its inauguration till date. The analysis will also include the impact of the numerous amendments made to the ordinances and the Sarawak Land Code. Then, this paper seeks to highlight probable reasons that fuelled the initiative to amend the legislations.

Impact of Forest Legislation in Sarawak: Politics and the Legislative Trends.

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1.0 Introduction

Sarawak is one of the two Malaysian states on the island of Borneo. Known as *Bumi Kenyalang* ('Land of the Hornbills'), it is situated on the north-west of the island. It is the largest state in Malaysia. The administrative capital is Kuching with population of 579,900; Kuching City South - 143,500; Kuching City North - 133,600; Padawan- 3rd Mile/ 7th Mile/ 10th Mile - 302,800 which literally means 'cat'. Major cities and towns also include Sibuan population 254,000, Miri population 263,000 and Bintulu population 176,800. As of last census the state population was 2,357,500. ¹

The regional differences between Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah notwithstanding, this research paper highlights the common factors. McMorrow & Talip² have pointed out that, based on its performance up till the end of the 1980s; Malaysia is one of the 14 major countries with over 250,000 hectares deforested annually. They added that by the late 1980s half of the forest area in Peninsular Malaysia and a fifth in Borneo had gone. A variety of factors contribute to this state of affairs. When deforestation and forest degradation became critical issues, shifting cultivation was singled out by the governments, and particularly by the Sarawak government, as the main cause of forest loss. Yet, it has since been established that forest degradation due to shifting cultivators is 'minor'³. In fact, widening, or rotational agriculture, has long been the accepted mode of agriculture among indigenous communities living within or close to forested areas. The major causes of the decline in forest area and quality include

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarawak>

² 2001: 217, citing Wood 1990

³ Cramb 1989; Jomo et.al.2004; Nicholas 2003