

KEY ISSUES IN APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY USE ZONE (CUZ) TO CROCKER RANGE PARK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract

Throughout the world including Malaysia, parks and protected areas are commonly managed by strict top-down enactments that marginalize local people. This often has resulted in recurrent conflict between park management and communities living in and around these areas. To tackle the problem, Sabah parks in collaboration with Borneo Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation (BBEC) started implementing a program known as Community Use Zone (CUZ). The major aim of this program is to harmonize situation between Crocker Range Park (CRP) authority and the communities residing in CRP by balancing existing local community needs and conservation through participation and collaboration. The objective of this research is to assess implementation process of CUZ program in its two years span by using thematic analysis of data obtained through interviewing relevant stakeholders, i.e., communities and park management. The result indicated that land use issue, such as different perspective by CUZ community and parks management regarding restriction of planting, hunting, land expansion and no cutting trees policy in CUZ areas, to be the most salient frustrating proper implementation of the program. This study hope more concerted effort by parks management and CUZ committee in conducting discussions regularly from the issues identified. This will be useful in designing future CUZ programs in other regions.

Keywords: Social work, Community Use Zone, Park Conservation, Malaysia.

Introduction

Attention to issues related to the environment, ecology and the issue of sustainability has increased in the field of social work. Social work seen to have an orderly plan to engage in efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of agriculture and forest conservation for the future (Besthorn, 2013). Today social work has shown the uniqueness of this profession by helping others, this related because of the relationship between humans and the environment is a practice that cannot be separated (Compton, Galaway, & Cournoyer, 2005)

The objective of this research is to look on the key issue emerge in application of Community Use Zone (CUZ) to control agricultural activities especially in the areas of national parks or forest reserves. It is important to

avoid the destruction of habitat and avoids causing damage to the forest ecosystem. Disturbing forest ecosystems will directly lead to the extinction of many species of flora and fauna. Neutral policies with priority to the environment and human life are important to reduce agricultural activities in the National Park area. Local people especially the indigenous residents should also be educated in order to see the importance of the existence of forest ecosystems continue for future generations. Therefore scientific research and social studies are very important to control of agricultural activities continue to grow in the area of national parks (Tilman et al., 2001).

The main key point of this program is to make an agreement to enable the communities of Ulu Senangang village living in and around the park to continue their livelihood activities while taking into account the need to conserve and manage resources in the CUZ area. To achieve it the local community must also take the same responsibility in the conservation effort, the success of such programs often caught the attention of various stakeholders because it is depends on the attitude and the acceptable of local communities involvement with the management of the park (Daugstad et.al, 2006).

Problem Statement

Crocker Range Forest Reserve was gazette in 1969 by the state authority, by 1984 the Forest Reserve were gazette to a park and rename as Crocker Range Park. Settlement began in Crocker Range Park in 1975 that is in between 1969 to 1984 and named the settlement area as Ulu Senangang Village. Originally communities in Ulu Senangang Village were migrating from Pensiangan district. Since the communities moved in to the park area in 1975, they have being trying to apply a legal land status with the Land and Survey Department and it's never being approved because of the land status and location as Crocker Range Park.

In 2001, communities in Ulu Senangang Village again requested the area they occupy to be removed and giving a legal status. However this action was not approved by Sabah Park. To neutralize the situation Sabah Park has allowed activities within the park area but any expansion of land are prohibited, this is due to the Parks Enactment 1984, stated they are no settlements or villages, and any activities or subsistence agriculture inside the park. By the way Sabah Parks granted the communities to continue farming only on the land that the community already cultivated before 1984 and communities of Ulu Senangang are subject to the Parks Enactment 1984.

Eventually after taking a consideration of International Law on Indigenous People (IUCN WCC Resolution 1.53) Crocker Range Park Management Plan has implemented a concept of Community Use Zone (CUZ) to allow the existence of current community continue their agricultural activities within the zone on mutually

agreed terms and conditions. Initially implementation of CUZ goes smooth for each party, problems arise when implementing of CUZ started to get dissatisfaction from the community in CUZ area based on strict rules on the allocation of those living in the zone and the communities see the rules are quite strict. Therefore, this study attempts to analyze the issues that led to the dissatisfaction of the community.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was practiced in this study. Qualitative research provides an opportunity for researchers to explore in-depth views, to understand deeply the meaning of each respondent words and underlying belief that constructed over time through social relationships and reflection (Patton, 2002). The primary focus of the data analysis was on how the participants made sense on issues of application of CUZ at Crocker Range Park. Respondent interpretations and their experiences as well as researcher interpretations came together during data analysis. This approach means to highlight on a topic through in-depth inquiry to understanding similar problem that occur during research.

Sample

Using purposive sampling technique, 15 respondents from Crocker Range Park CUZ participated in this study and based on the consent of their interview being recorded (Bernard, 2000). Criteria for the key informant selection were based on the criterion of key informant roles as a chief village, senior community members and Sabah Park staff of area that participates in the (CUZ) program in Crocker Range Park (CRP).

Data collection and data analysis

We use a standardized open-ended interview also known as semi structured interview, and collected the data from each participant with separate interview ranging from 30- 50 minutes to each participant. Semi-Structured questionnaire used to each participant and all the interview are recorded by audio recorder tools (Creswell, 2013). Researcher directly doing the

interview using a set of semi structured questionnaire and asking the same set of questionnaire to all key informants that participate in this research (Patton, 2002). The data from participant is transcribed in to verbatim from audio tapes. Verbatim data then was analyzed and coded, researcher than look for basic emerge themes. Theme will be put in potential category and organized to main theme.

Findings

According to most respondents interviewed, many of them consistently, states that the land use in implementing the CUZ was a main key issue emerge, for other issue it may be can consider but in term of land use issue it's hard to tolerate. Respondents criticized the issue in related to cutting trees rules, prohibited of hunting animal, issue on land expansion and freedom in planting tree.

Cutting trees rules

There are respondents who feel troubled with cutting trees rules that really make them in difficulty in their livelihood style. As expressed by some respondents:

"With the rules set up in CUZ, we are unable to chop tree anymore for general purpose, before this... we can find a good tree and we select only best and hard one...we not simply chop other small tree" ... (Respondent M)

"They only allow us chop tree that has been fall down...that type of tree is useless and the wood can't be use for build house"..., is only can be use as Woodstock(Respondent E)

"They said we can only allowed to cut or chop any of our commercial tree....why we must cut our own tree that we plant...that was not a logical point at all.." (Respondent A)

"I'm not understand at all why the CUZ management didn't give permission to cut tree if the tree mature to cut and we use it wisely"... (Respondent D)

"No chances to look for good wood to build house or for other command use anymore, if want then can look at sawmills only" ... (Respondent L)

Prohibited of hunting animal

According this two respondents there were no chances to hunting like before as hunting was a culture and activities for food supply. The Parks management should rearrange the rules at least a partially free hunting zone close to CUZ:

"Now it's hard to hunting since we agree to the CUZ regulation ...it's a bit disappointed as hunting is our culture from our great-grandparent"... (Respondent F)

"I want have a fresh meet just go to buy in market, I can't not hunting here in CUZ it's prohibited now"... (Respondent O)

Only animal that enter the CUZ and causing damage to their crop be able to be hunted. Other than that communities in the CUZ area are totally prohibited to hunting. As all animal are also being protected, villagers may have limitation to hunt other type of animal, here one of the respondent comment:

"We only being allowed to hunt animal that destruct our agricultural product...that mean if a wild boar run out of CUZ we can't hunt them anymore"....(Respondent H)

According in CUZ terms catching fish is only inside CUZ border. The communities must perform the local rules of catching fish season that may only be able to catch fish twice a year or only once a year, this rules may not have any trouble for villagers to follow. They worry if during raining season and heavy rain fall will cause flood that may flow all the fish out of CUZ, this may cause no fish anymore in CUZ river zone:

"Catching fish only inside the CUZ, during heavy rain and flooding all the fish being flow far away, at last no more fish in CUZ compound river..." (Respondent B)

Issue on land expansion

Besides having issue in cutting trees and hunting activities, communities also have issue in term of land expansion, as the CUZ will be implemented they request a larger land for cultivation of differentness plant as one of the respondent stated below:

"With larger land provided, so that we can plant different agriculture product to balance with other commercial

agriculture product that not productive” ... (Respondent G)

“Land that we use is now very small, sometimes planting in to other people's boundaries this situation not so nice, so through this CUZ it can prevent soil and land border conflict” ... (Respondent N)

Land expansion issue is related because the community's population is getting more in future time, they will be not enough space for agriculture in the future if all the generation will continue to have cultivation activities. While one respondent stating as a big family one day everybody have their own family and own land for their children too:

“We request larger land because our population are getting more, my son will growth up and they may need a land for their own cultivation, they also may build their own house, so if I have 4 sons that means the demand of land is crucial” ... (Respondent K)

Freedom in planting

Respondents also criticized the rules that not allowing them to plant oil palm in the area of CUZ. Planting oil palm for respondent may give high return due to prize of the commodity in producing oil palm. There are also rules that need villagers to request permission for plant that not consider as domestic or local plant to be cultivated in CUZ.

“I don't know why they not allowed us to plant oil palm... as I know the oil palm tree can generate good income... what I know they said the land not suitable for planting oil palm...in my view there shouldn't be a problem at all” (Respondent C)

“If we need to plant any other plant that not a domestic plant at CUZ....we need to get permission ...we need to fill up paper work and wait for approval” ... (Respondent I)

“If we plant different crops here we have a variety of food sources and not just rely on one type of crop, because there are some plants only seasonal fruits such as durian trees and deliver according to the season” ... (Respondent J)

Discussion

This research aimed to find out issue arise from the implementation of Community Use Zone (CUZ) in Ulu Senagang Village, this findings suggest that before the implementation of CUZ, it's important to address the concern from the communities in Ulu Senagang needs regarding of CUZ rules and regulation. For example the communities was not happy with the rules which ban tree cutting, because tree cutting purposes for making household bridges and other facilities.

Tree cutting rules should be considered for these communities to provide opportunities for them to obtain forest products for daily use. The perception of the respondents surveyed also indicated that members of the community are also not satisfied with the issues involved in hunting the animal CUZ zone, where only animal that can be hunted only destroy crops, this means that the animals are running out of the zone cannot be hunted or be penalized for failing to follow rules and regulations of CUZ (Blouch, 2010).

Another problem faced by the communities when implemented of CUZ is the problem of getting more land for crops and for the purpose of building future settlements. This is because the land there is now quite limited magnitude. Therefore attention should be given to CUZ community demand in more land could be provided to them. As the community argued the area of Sabah Parks is still wide when compared with the total area of land that they have requested. However the decision not to allow an oil palm plantation in the term and regulations of CUZ near the park area is logical to be considered. Looking on the terrain in Ulu Senagang circumstances, it is impossible not to damage the forest soil system, which of course has an impact on Sabah Park ecosystems. The issue of oil palm planting prohibited by the park is viewed correctly.

Indeed, the findings of this study indicate the important of concerted effort by parks management and CUZ committee in conducting discussions regularly from the issues identified. Participatory involving stakeholders in communities to address the current situation in CUZ are very important. Discussion that involve various parties is important, not just the party of government agencies,

the NGOs should also be involved in meetings involving CUZ rules, if everyone can understand the needs and considerate the feeling of the communities, issue of dissatisfaction among the people in this village can be easily avoided and reach a consensus to implement CUZ. Meeting and discussions should be held more frequently and have reached a consensus so that the next meeting and discussions between the management of the park and residents Ulu Senagang going smooth as well (Foley et al, 2005).

Conclusion

This qualitative study identified many issues of implementation CUZ. The perception of the community about the terms and regulations are not happy because there are some things that are not satisfactory. Although they occupy an area of the parks, does not mean that they are denied the right for livelihood survival. Today economic situation will undoubtedly have an impact on the lives of this people. Both party needs a balanced cooperate so that conflicts do not arise with the people involved in the area of CUZ.

Overall, the study showed that respondents require the park management to be more appropriate to pay attention on the issues CUZ term and regulations that emphasis on the program more on conservation than the livelihood of the communities need. Its importance of looking after the welfare and needs of the community as important as protecting and conserving the environment of Crocker Range Park. Land use issues are very important to the communities that rely on

agriculture for their daily subsistence. Any implementation process should take into account the interests of subsistence farmers and in balance with forest care for watersheds and forest ecosystems.

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