

# Seaweed Cultivation and Coastal Communities in Malaysia: an Overview

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## Abstract

The majority of research on Malaysian seaweed farming has focused on the biological and macroeconomic aspects, and has significantly disregarded the micro-level social, cultural and economic issues, especially the relationship between seaweed cultivation and coastal communities. Therefore, this paper focuses on the social and economic aspects that have been covered in studies in the seaweed sector, together with those aspects that have been ignored. Seaweed cultivation activities have not only resulted in a contest over marine spaces and resources, but has also led to changes in the values of communities, in that communities have compromised the social values of collective care in favour of individual economic benefits. Due to the increasing tension in seaweed areas, many families have stopped helping each other; however, this aspect has been ignored in academic research. The role of migrant workers in seaweed cultivation is another topic that remains untouched. Also lacking was empirical evidence concerning the role of seaweed cultivation initiatives in reducing the economic poverty of the communities and improving coastal people's level of income. Finally, this paper raises some questions about the absence of data related to seaweed cultivating communities.

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