

## Forest supports living on earth: awareness of the youth at Jembrana Regency Bali Province Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Locals awareness of the importance of forest in sustaining the earth plays an important role in the success of forest conservation. Using forest as an agricultural area without depriving its main function requires awareness of the farmers including the people living around the forest. This study examines the level of awareness of the Youth at Jembrana Regency particularly the elementary, junior high and senior high school students regarding the importance of forest supporting living on earth. This research is a qualitative study exploring the response of the youth to a question: how forest support living on earth? The results indicate three types of awareness: 1) Fully aware of the function of the forest and a harmonious co-exist with forest farmers, 2) Forest for economic benefit, and 3) Only focus on forest issues and conservation. It is expected that the study results could become a reference for people, organization and relevant authority concern regarding the forest conservation particular in Jembrana Regency.

**Keywords:** Forest, conservation, youth, farmers

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### Introduction

Jembrana Regency has the largest percentage of forest area compared to other regencies in Bali. The forest is covering approximately 41.07% of the land (41,307 ha) in Jembrana regency (Forestry Statistic Department of Jembrana Regency, 2015). The majority (80.47%) of the forest is protected area. The essence of a protected forest itself is defined as an area that designated to be protected to maintain the ecological balance and functions as a life support system. However, in its management, around 27% of the forest area does not function optimally due to its physical alteration that result in the function shifting of the forest caused by the illegal logging, forest encroachment, livestock grazing (Jembranakab.go.id, 2015). The issue that raises concern at present time is the deforestation conducted for the purpose of developing an agriculture area to support the farmers living around the protected forest. Nonetheless, it negatively affects the protected forest. These have worsened the damage of forest in Jembrana regency, which had occurred since the 1970s. The level of forest damage is escalated, yet in the long-term; the earth needs forests for the balance of ecosystem and a better quality of life.

Forests are an integral part of human life system (Boyd, 2010:10), in which natural resource is an environment important aspect. Human's survival, growth, and wellbeing are relied up on the natural resources available around them such as land, water, flora, fauna, microorganisms, minerals and energy (Sikor et al., 2010). The existence of forests in this case the supporting capacity and effectiveness of the forest functions to support all aspects of human, animal, and plant life is highly determined by the level of human awareness of the importance of forests particularly the forest utilisation and management. Forest is a medium for mutual relationships between humans and other living things, factoring ecological processes as well as the single cycle that can support life (Reksohadiprojo in Rahmawaty, 2004). One of the important

factors that have to be scrutinized to further develop is how people should care for the environment without sacrificing the economic and social development (Blowers, 1993).

It is people's turn now to restore the function of the forests and reduce all activities that threatening life on the planet. Even though there have been many forest conservation projects and many studies that have been conducted on forest ecology; nonetheless, forest benefactors and activists are not certain about the best solutions that need to be undertaken for forest conservation and in overcoming the problems at hand (Newton, 2007). In response to this problematic situation, (Ernawati et al, 2020) see that the younger generation is the best investment for making a change. As stated above, self-awareness is very important. A self-aware people are taking responsibility for their actions that leads by a good mindset. To broaden the reach, the strategy adopted at Community-based Tourism Pohsanten (CBT Pohsanten) is to synergise the forestry and the tourism sector. In this case, is to educate the younger generation about green lifestyle in order to shape green and sustainable mindset through the Green Living Program in Pohsanten Tourism Village; considering that the older generation already has their mindset fixed and tend to be harder to shift. These activities are expected to provide a greater potential for sustainability. A sustainable future cannot be manifested without the input and participation of the youth. This article presents study results that exploring the understanding of the Youth in Jembrana Regency regarding the importance of forest for the living on earth.

## Methodology

This research is conducted with an explorative study that had been conducted to explore the understanding of the Youth in Jembrana regency regarding the importance of forest for the living on earth. Forests need to be conserved because of its vital role in maintaining the sustainability of the earth. Forests are habitat for various flora and fauna that interact harmoniously in the forest ecosystem (Nix, 2019). This study was carried out using a qualitative survey to the Youth at the Jembrana Regency Bali Province in Indonesia asking the question of: how forest sustains living on earth? There were 53 respondents involved in the study, the profile is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristic of Respondents

Respondents	Gender		School/Organisation				Total	
	Male	Female	Elementary	Junior High School	Senior High School	The Youth of Pohsanten		Literacy Community
Youth at Jembrana Regency	10	43	2	31	14	4	2	53
	Total							53

The characteristic of respondents were classified from their genders and education backgrounds. From Table 1, can be seen that the majority of the respondents was female. In the term of education background, it was dominated by junior high school's students. The results of data collection were grouped based on the level of awareness and presented in the next section.

## Results and discussions

### Results

Tourism is intended to be used as a pathway to sustainable forest, especially in CBT Pohsanten located at Jembrana Regency. The tourist attractions and products develop and offer by CBT Pohsanten center around nature and sustainability particularly the forest. These for example, the Green Living Tour which components include: breeze walk and trekking, green living class and agro-cacao edu-tour. The product is intended to cater the youth considering that the young generation is the best investment for making a change.

## Discussions

The discussion should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. Comment on the data, referring to the literature (compare it to previous research) and pointing out similarities and differences, explaining these if possible. Return to the aim and research question and show how the aims have been met, and the research question answered.

In discussion, it is the most important section of your article. Here you get the chance to sell your data. What might the answer imply and why does it matter? How does it fit in with what other researchers have found? What are the perspectives for future research? Please compare to what other researchers have found. Following, a study to explore their understanding was undertaken to define the level of their awareness on the issue of forest sustainability. In exploring the awareness of Youth at Jembrana Regency, the written answers of the 53 respondents to the stated-question earlier, in the form of essay argumentation were examined and themes are withdrawn from the arguments. There are 3 main themes were identified from the essays as presented on Table 2.

**Table 2.** Breakdown The Awareness of Youth at Jembrana Regency

Classification	Total	Percentage (%)
Fully aware of the function of the forest and harmoniously co-exist with forest farmers	30	56.7%
Forest for economic benefit without considering nature sustainable aspect	4	7.5%
Only focus on forest issues and conservation	19	35.8%
Total	53	100%

The table above presents the summary of the analysis and assessment results of the essays expressing the awareness of the Youth at Jembrana Regency on how forests support living on earth. The majority of respondents, 56.7% (30 respondents), are fully aware of the function of the forest and the propensity of harmonious co-exist of the forest and the forest farmers as written by Respondent - A:

"The function of trees for this planet starts from absorbing carbon dioxide, supporting ecosystems, home to various species, storing water reserves, fulfil society's primary needs up to help in reducing global warming. Nonetheless, all of that is useless if there is no forest conservation effort. It can be pursued through reforestation, selective logging and do not litter into forest areas".

In conjunction to human and forest co-exist, integrating forest conservation and tourism is also a decent option. Recently the interest of people worldwide in forest tourism increases (Ernawati, et al 2018); apart from recreational activities, forest tourism also provides many benefits. These benefits include: to prevent misuse of the natural environment (Butcher, 2012); to prevent agricultural malpractice (Scheyvens, 2002); to preserve the natural environment (Fennell, 2015); to increase the prosperity and awareness of local communities about nature conservation (Weaver, 2012).

A minority of 7.5% respondents presumes the forest is dedicated for economic benefit without considering nature sustainable and the forest function to sustain the survival of the planet, as written by Respondent - B:

"Forest holds rich natural wealth, thus various flora and fauna can be used to fill human needs, one of that is vanilla. In the next two to three years, Indonesia will dominate the World's vanilla production, competing with Mexico, Ghana and Madagascar. Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many workers were laid off, many switchovers to farming with the concept of agroforestry using vanilla culture media. Agroforestry opens up new economic opportunities instead of the massive exploitation of forests".

A significant number of respondents (35.8%) only focuses on forest conservation as written by Respondent - K:

"27% of the forests in Jembrana are not functioning optimally due to illegal logging, encroachment and livestock grazing. Protected forests have been switched to plantations due to economic factors, clean water crisis during the dry season and flooding in Tegal Cangkring. It is not an exaggeration to say that this condition is getting worse and the forest conservation is the solution".

Implementing forest conservation needs an understanding of the interrelationships between social, economic and political issues, as well as appreciating the values upheld by stakeholders; subsequently, the ability to identify trade-offs and compromises to achieve practical solutions is required. Frequently, management decisions are based on economic and political needs rather than ecological urge. Yet, understanding of ecology enables devising the right management method (Newton, 2007).

Based on above discourse, integrating tourism with natural environment conservation, in this case forest becomes a good resolution. CBT is regarded as a tool for natural and cultural resource conservation and community development and is closely associated with ecotourism (Wood, 2007). Tourism using the natural environment as an attraction, especially forests can serve as a catalyst for development for indigenous peoples living around the area; job diversification; a medium of cultural exchange - bringing together people around the world; biodiversity conservation; recreational facilities for residents because tourism shares infrastructure; conserving forests means protecting water reserves and mitigating climate change (Voda and Montes, 2018) confirm the potential for the development of forest recreational activities, emphasising its importance for community-based tourism initiatives around the world. Considering the complexity of the interactions and forest ecosystems, activities carried out in forests need to be regulated and their application needs to be enforced.

## Conclusions

Exploring the understanding of the Youth in Jembrana Regency regarding the importance of forest for the living on earth; the analysis results indicate three types of awareness: 1) Fully aware of the function of the forest and a harmonious co-exist with forest farmers, 2) Forest for economic benefit, and 3) Only focus on forest issues and conservation. Human and Forest co-exist could also be materialised by integrating forest conservation and tourism; in response to the increasing interest of people in forest tourism; the benefits obtained from forest tourism include: to prevent the misuse of the natural environment; to prevent agricultural malpractice; to preserve the natural environment; to increase the prosperity and awareness of local communities about nature conservation.

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