



# *Household Livelihood Strategy In Manusela National Park, North Seram Regency, Maluku Province*

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**Abstract:** Since it was designated as Manusela National Park as a national park, it has caused social problems due to limited public access to the park area. The study was conducted in Paliana Village and Sawai Village as special zones in October 2025. This study aims to analyze household activities and patterns of household livelihood strategies in meeting the needs of families living around the Manusela National Park area. Data is collected through the survey method. The results of the study show that there are three sources of livelihood for the people living in and around the Manusela National Park, namely; natural capital (in the fields of activities, gardening, farming, livestock, hunting, and harvesting forest products such as picking candlenuts, tapping palm trees to make brown sugar and traditional drinks "sopi", honey, and so on); social capital (greeting neighbors, visiting the sick, sharing crops, helping neighbors and so on) and the work of farm laborers, construction workers, traders, employees, drivers, civil servants, in other provinces or districts. After changing status, some family members look for sources of income outside the forest area, resulting in underembedding. They use various livelihood strategies because the income of the agricultural sector is not able to meet the needs of family life. They seek other income from the non-agricultural sector on a small scale, due to the low level of education so they work as; farm laborers, construction workers, drivers, traders. Some households carry out migration strategies as construction workers, employees, civil servants, traders, in the province or district. This job is done by the lack of job opportunities and relationships and the low level of education they have.

**Keywords:** household activity, level of instability, and livelihood strategy

## 1. Introduction

The use of forest resources for subsistence forests is an economic, social and cultural function. The establishment of Manusela National Park in 2004, through the Decree. Minister of Forestry No. 281/Kpts-VI/1997 dated May 23, 1997. Its presence causes social problems including a decline in the welfare status of communities as a result of limited community access to forests.

Before the establishment of conservation areas, protected forests, and production forests into Manusela National Park, local communities had carried out forest utilization activities and lived around the national park area. In the use of forest areas, people use the land around their place of residence both outside and inside the forest, and then cultivate it into gardens, cultivation or land claims, as their personal land as their family or ancestors' inheritance (Hasanuddin, 2011). The increasing need for food, due to uncontrolled population growth and faced with limited land area, makes humans "forced" to change functional zones to land conservation and conservation of "exploitative production". Therefore, most conservation areas in Indonesia are currently under intense pressure, especially decentralization policies against severe damage caused by uncontrolled illegal logging, encroachment, and forest fires.

The objective determination of conservation forests to become Manusela National Park is expected to have a positive impact on the community, both ecological and socio-economic. In fact, in the early stages of its management, more and more people feel the



negative impact due to limited or even lost access to areas that have been managed for generations that have been converted into national park areas. This has led to conflicts in the management of national parks.

The purpose of this study is to analyze household activities and patterns of household livelihood strategies in meeting the needs of families living around the Manusela National Park area.

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1. Place and Time

The research was conducted in Paliana Village and Sawai Village which are in the Customary Zone in Manusela National Park, North Seram District, Maluku Province in October 2025. The reason for choosing the location is due to the majority of agricultural households who make a living for generations in and around the Manusela National Park area.

### 2.2. Data Collection Methods

This study uses a survey method with a case study analysis unit. Qualitative data collection was carried out using a deliberately selected informant interview method (purposive sampling) which was considered compatible in the provision of data. The informants in this study came from various backgrounds ranging from village officials, community leaders, farmers and from the Forestry Service of the Manusela National Park Authority. In addition, qualitative data is also obtained through field observation at the location to see the factual phenomena that occur and also review existing documents, such as research data and other secondary data sources.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the location was analyzed descriptively according to regional conditions. The translation of field conditions was analyzed with qualitative case studies. This method creates a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts, properties, and relationships between observed phenomena. The results of data analysis are explained based on each goal to be achieved.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Household Livelihood Activities

Agricultural household livelihood activities in national parks are a series of efforts to use household capital to earn household income. Life activities are carried out to explain the economic measures taken by household members to meet household needs. Based on socioeconomic conditions, there are three important resources for household income, namely; natural capital, social capital, and employment opportunities. Natural capital includes; soil, livestock, and natural conditions. Social capital includes; social institutions and social ties. Meanwhile, job opportunities include; economic activities outside the use of natural capital.

#### a. Natural Capital as an Activity-Based Livelihood

Natural capital for households between fields, gardens and land belonging to Manusela National Park. Dharmawan (2001), referred to this natural resource as the agricultural economic sector, because these resources are used for agricultural activities to support agricultural households.

In carrying out this activity using natural capital (cultivation, gardens and livestock), there is a production process that must be followed to be able to harvest farmers' products and use them to earn a household living. Activities in carrying out the use of natural capital carried out by farmers and their families in turn and in cooperation with each other. The content of natural capital in areas owned by national parks such as; candlenut trees, rattan, arma trees for the manufacture of brown sugar, honey and other agricultural products, to encourage the community to be involved in the exploitation of natural resources as one of the activities to meet the needs of household life. Activities of exploitation of forest products such as firewood, rattan, resin, candlenuts, walnuts and others, are generally classified in four patterns: 1) farming and gardening; 2) agriculture and gardening; 3) agriculture, gardening and cultivation; 4) farming, gardening, cultivation, and hunting. Farming and gardening are community activities in and around national



parks and are the main source of livelihood carried out to meet the needs of family life. This agricultural activity is in the form of main food ingredients such as; corn, beans and tubers), and horticulture (vegetables and fruits). While gardening activities are generally with planting (chocolate and coconut). In addition to farming and gardening, some people also raise livestock such as cows, free-range chickens and goats, which are generally still on a limited scale. Meanwhile, agricultural business is the cultivation of cassava, sweet potato, taro and others, which are generally carried out once a year. These community activities still support forest conservation activities, such as hunting activities (wild boars, birds and deer). Hunting activities can cause disturbance of the ecosystem within the park.

### **b. Social Capital Based on Livelihood Activities**

Activities that involve the use of social capital in the community around the national park, households generally build social bonds with other community members to behave in accordance with local social norms. Relationships with members of the outside community are carried out with good relations with the outside community. Social capital is carried out as a daily activity. Social relations between communities in this area are very high because most of the people who live around it have very close family ties so that the relationship between neighbors is very close. Typical daily activities include; greeting and chatting with neighbors, giving food to those in need, helping neighbors who need help in the concept of Gotong Royong, seeing sick people and so on. Gotong royong is endogenous knowledge which means that everyone helps others. Meanwhile, the planned actions include; attending invitations, attending meetings in the village, and so on. This is in the opinion of Hasbullah, (2006), that proactive actions in the form of high and strong will from the community not only participate but also take initiative and think creatively to solve the problems of every activity that is followed.

### **c. Livelihood Activity-Based Employment Opportunities**

Activity-based life is the use of work-related job opportunities carried out by family members as a source of family income. These activities are in the form of non-agricultural activities such as village officials, teachers, civil servants, traders and so on.

## **3.2. Human Resource Proficiency Level**

The level of overembeddedness in carrying out activities in household activities before the area became a national park status changed at a high level (overembeddedness) because all household members worked together to meet the family's income needs. After changing the status of the national park, most of the public lands (especially special zones) were converted into national parks. Community activities are increasingly constrained to conserve natural resources. Some family members look for other sources of income outside the forest, between making a living in sub-districts, districts, and even in other provinces, so that the level of attachment between family members is getting weaker (underembeddedness).

Efforts to build good relationships between community members can be seen from the arrangement of houses that are close to each other and their faces show the preservation of relationships with neighbors. Proximity between neighbors is very important so that access to interaction between communities is very intensive. Social interaction is built on the basis of applicable social norms. As Bimo Walgito (2003) said that, "Social interaction is a relationship between one individual and another, where one individual can influence another individual so that a reciprocal relationship occurs.

Norms form institutional communities such as; celebrations of religious days, invitations, etc. Based on these norms, every member of the community must help each other if there are members of the community who build houses, visit the sick and the deceased, and so on. The assistance can be in the form of; labor, money, or providing agricultural products. These interactions must be reciprocal, or there will be no visits/mutual support between community members. If it is not done, the community has imposed sanctions on community members who violate the norms. Sanctions that can be given are in the form of poor judgment or termination of access to social capital. Individuals in households respond to this norm with a set time and set aside a portion of the harvest and income to maintain relationships between communities.

The excessive level of limitation between households and communities was high before conservation forests were converted into national parks due to the large number of activities that could be done together in their use. After becoming a national park,



agricultural activities among the community decreased (underembeddedness) because there were people who had started to leave the area so that the time together between community members was decreasing due to their respective activities.

### **3.3. Livelihood Strategy Pattern**

A strategy is the choice of household income activities to meet household needs to achieve better goals. This activity is a form of household livelihood strategy that is followed up by each household.

#### **a. Natural Capital Strategy (Agriculture)**

Most of the people who live near this national park have a livelihood as farmers. Agriculture-based strategies provide an overview of households that use natural capital in the face of limited land resources and income from the land they own. The limitations of land ownership are overcome by utilizing land in the park to meet their living needs. Households that use this livelihood strategy also carry out activities outside the use of natural capital, even though the use of natural capital is the main source of livelihood. Prasetya (2013) stated that the alimony structure is the composition of farmers' household income from various subsistence activities carried out by all household members. The income comes from: a. Comes from on-farm or the agricultural sector in the broad sense (agriculture, plantations, forestry, livestock, etc.) that is directly involved in production. b. Originating from off-farm, it is still in the agricultural sector but refers more to agricultural labor wages, profit-sharing systems, and so on. c. Coming from non-farm, which is a source of income that comes from outside agricultural activities.

#### **b. Diversification Strategy (Dual Livelihood)**

According to Adhypoepra Putri (2019), the livelihood system is an effort made by people or a group of people to meet their living needs. Most of the agricultural land in the village is owned by people from outside the village, so most farmers only play the role of laborers. As a laborer, the income they get is not worth the effort and hard work. Usually, wages are obtained in the form of crops, so farmers in this village can be categorized as subsistence farmers because they are only to meet primary needs. Based on this fact, people who make the most living as farmers seek other income from the non-agricultural sector. Some of them work as; farm laborers, construction workers, carpenters, traders and several other types of jobs.

#### **c. Migration Strategy**

According to Lee, Everett S (2011) the migration process is influenced by four factors, namely: 1) individual factors; 2) factors found in the area of origin; 3) factors found in the destination area; and 4) obstacles between the area of origin and the destination area. In some cases, because the family's income needs are insufficient or because they want to improve the family's well-being, some people migrate in search of additional work. Based on the interview, the village youth revealed that the village was no longer able to provide them with a decent livelihood. After finishing school, some of them go to the district or provincial cities in search of better jobs even on other islands including Papua. As a result of the limited level of education makes them less competitive with other better job seekers in the city. Some of these villagers work as construction workers, transport drivers and employees. They earn more from working in the village. This job is done by the lack of job opportunities and relationships and the low level of education they have. This is in accordance with the opinion of Jericho Joshua (2007) that the income received by the population will be influenced by the level of education they have. With higher education, they will be able to have a wider opportunity to get a better job with a larger income. Meanwhile, the population with low education will get a job with a small income.

### **4. Conclusion**

Manusela National Park's household activities are based on three important resources for household livelihood activities, namely; natural capital (in the field of activities, gardening, farming, animal husbandry, hunting, and harvesting forest products such as picking candlenuts, tapping palm trees to make brown sugar or traditional "sopi" drinks, honey, and so on); social capital (greeting neighbors, visiting the sick, sharing crops, helping neighbors and so on) and the work of farm laborers, construction workers, traders, employees, drivers, teachers, civil servants, in other provinces or districts. The excessive level of limitation between families and communities in regional activities before changing the status of national parks is high. After changing status, some family members look for sources of income outside the forest area, resulting in underembeddedness. All farmer households use various livelihood



strategies because the income of the agricultural sector is not able to meet the needs of family life. They seek other income from the non-agricultural sector on a small scale, due to the low level of education so they work as; farm laborers, construction workers, drivers, traders and several other types of jobs. Some households carry out migration strategies as construction workers, teachers, employees, civil servants, traders, in the province or district. This job is done by the lack of job opportunities and relationships and the low level of education they have.

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