

Community-based management of the Calatagan Mangrove Forest Conservation Park in Batangas, Philippines: A case study on environmental sustainability

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Mangroves provide humankind with valuable resources and services. The big decline of mangrove forests in the Philippines was attributed to over-exploitation by coastal dwellers, conversion to agriculture or fishponds and settlement. The efforts of a small group of women to protect a mangrove forest called Ang Pulo in Brgy Quilitisan, Calatagan, Batangas triggered the curiosity of the researcher to conduct this study. The study determined the level of knowledge and awareness (KA) on mangrove resources, services and conservation practices of the local government unit (LGU) of Catalagan, Batangas, the people's organization (PO) called Palitakan, which was initially composed of 10 women and the local coastal community of Batangas Quilitisan. It also determined

the value that these stakeholders ascribe to various mangrove resources. Data was collected using questionnaires. The results showed that LGU, PO and the local community had high to very high level of KA toward mangrove resources, services and conservation practices but the PO had consistently very high level of KA. Their active role in mangrove conservation enabled them to have higher level of KA. The mangrove tree was perceived to have the highest selling price (value) while lowest for seed and seedlings. The perceived selling price of the mangrove resources reflected how the stakeholders value these resources based on their prior knowledge and experiences. They also have very high level of KA on mangrove resources, services and conservation practices.