

# LOGGING AND ITS IMPACT

Forests and trees are important resources and hence play an important role in development locally, regionally and even globally. As such, it brings with it many challenges and opportunities which contribute to the human well being. In the Solomon Islands, both Natural and planted Forests play an important part of our lives. Its daily usefulness ranges, simply as wood for cooking, timber for housing to even medicine products. Its existence provides habitats for wild life, as well as protecting both land and marine water quality.



Its economic benefits include significant income for the Government through export duties and to landowners through royalties. Hence, proper harvesting and management of our Forests is essential to maintain and increase benefits derived from this resource

## **What is logging?**

Logging in the Solomon Islands context is a means of harvesting merchantable trees in a given area for the purpose of export to overseas markets. The logging industry is mainly dominated by expatriates (Asians who owns machineries and resources to harvest trees) merging harvesting agreements with Resource owners who normally grant their timber rights authorizing nominated logging companies to harvest trees on their land. Resource owners on the other hand owns felling license a legal requirement under the Timber and utilization Act which specifically grant timber rights to concession areas covered under the timber rights acquisition process. In practical 100% of the production is done by the foreign companies whilst benefits are shared between the resource owners in a form of royalty and the SIG in a form of export duty (25%).

Logging can bring benefits to our people. It can also cause a great many changes. Poor practices can harm our natural and cultural resources, and the welfare of our people. It is therefore essential, that where logging operation occurs, they are carried out in a way that minimizes damage to water, soil and forest resources.



### **Methods of logging**

There are two main methods of logging practiced in the Solomon Islands, they are Helicopter logging where logs are felled on the ground and air lift to log yards or to the log pond. This method of logging is very expensive and most logging companies would not prefer especially in the situation where Solomon Islands forestry law does not restrict any form of logging operation. This method of logging has been carried on Malaita Province once

and now hardly adopted by current logging companies.

The other method of logging is “ground based logging” (felling and skidding), this is the most common method of logging currently practiced as it is much less expensive and safer. This method involves the use of chainsaws to fell trees and bulldozers to skid trimmed logs to bush yards and log trucks to haul logs to log ponds

### **Advantages of logging**

1. Provide revenue for SIG
2. Provide revenue for resource owners
3. Infrastructure development
4. Contribute to cash flow in rural areas
5. Provides employment.

### **Disadvantages**

#### **Deforestation through logging**

Logging is presently the most pressing issue both environmental and economic, facing the country. The



environmental, economic and social consequences of continued logging at current rates will be disastrous. The collapse of the export industry will be accompanied by further decline in the ability for village people to eat, drink and build houses. When government duty revenue collapses, this additional hardship will be visited on the whole country, not just the poorest rural people who are now already bearing the burden.

## **FOREST AND SOILS DEGRADATION**

Inland soils suffer from an increasing depletion of nutrients and other forms of degradation due to overuse of available land and insufficient land conservation and management practices. The cropping systems are not adapted to the new conditions.



## **BIODIVERSITY LOSS**



The extra-ordinary biodiversity of Solomon Islands is highly dependent on intact habitats and a low degree of disturbance. It is therefore vulnerable to loss as a result of a wide range of activities that destroy habitats especially through logging.

## **DEGRADATION OF COASTS, SEAS AND REEFS.**

The other habitats under direct and sometimes severe pressure are the coasts, lagoons, seas and reefs. Logging is often accompanied by deforestation particularly of mangroves and other coastal vegetation. It increases the rate of siltation of surround reef systems. Siltation kills coral organisms and is capable of altering the community structure of reefs. Garbage's and non-biodegradable materials such as plastics are also contributing to coastal degradation. Mangroves and reefs are marine breeding grounds hence siltation from runoffs normally affects the cycle of marine breeding and reduce the population of the marine life.



### ***INCREASE IN LAND DISPUTES***

Land dispute cases continue to increase between close family members over the primary rights and ownership of land. During the days of our great ancestors and ancestors, land disputes are rarely recorded, this is when the forest is left alone and people value its existence as provider of basic needs and sustenance of life. The increase in land dispute cases today becomes eminent especially in places where logging took place; this signifies that logging has the ability to dismantle the art of tribal ownership of land where our ancestors once embraced and even go as far as continuous deteriorated relationship between these family members.



### ***INACCESS TO NON-TIMBER PRODUCTS***

Fuel wood and other non-timber forest products continue to play a significant role in the lives of 80% of the population of Solomon Islands. Many people depend on fuel wood for everything for cooking, and for income. Land clearing pushes the available forest further making it more difficult for women to fetch forest products. In the past women don't have to walk far to gather forest products and have more time to spend on family income generating activities but now collecting firewood is hard and women spend more time in a day walking kilometers to the forest and spend very little time attending to family commitments.



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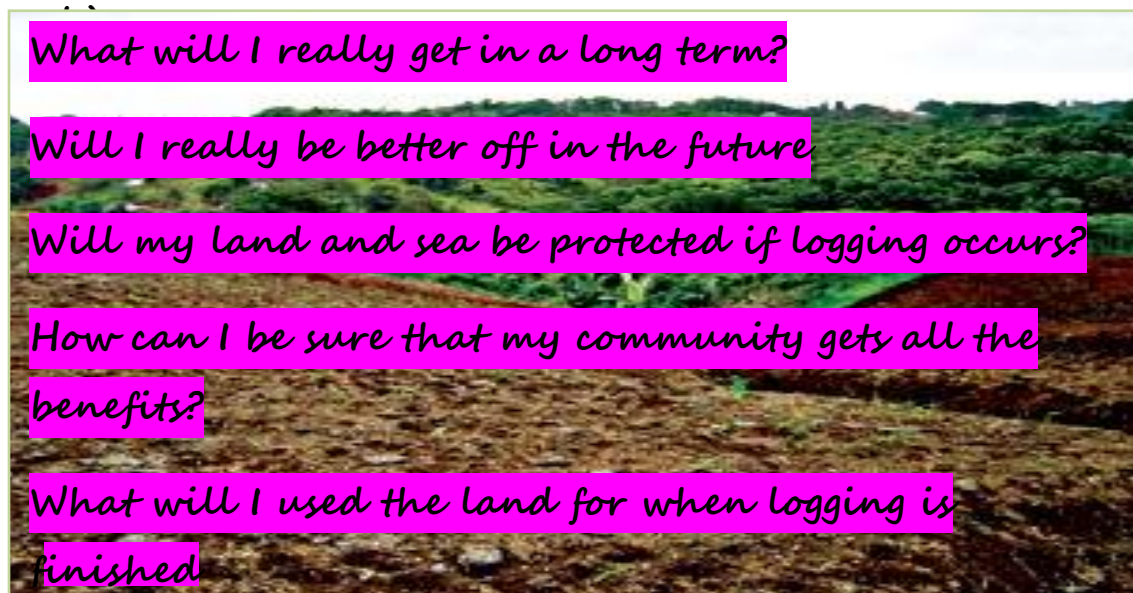
### ***OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES***

There are other social issues onset in areas and places where logging took place such as;

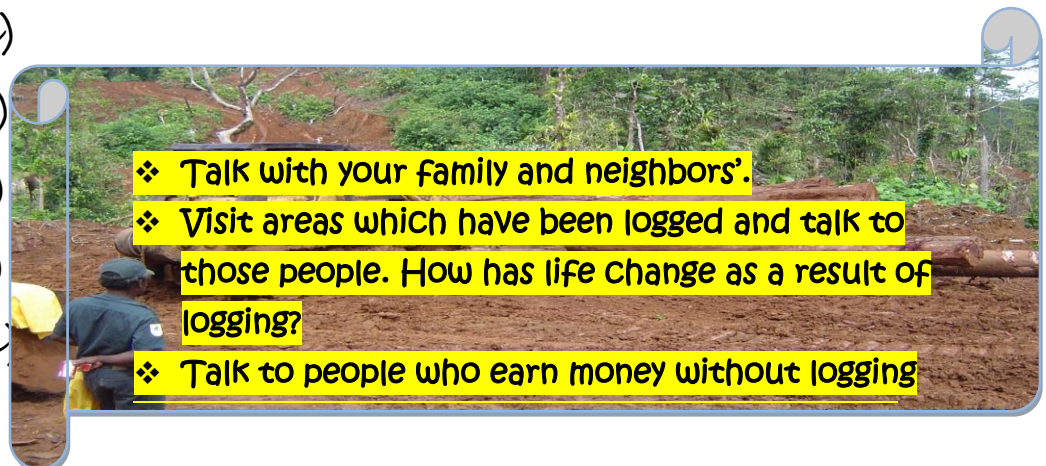
- a) Increase in social and criminal activities
- b) Influence to new cultures which resulted in loss to values of our tradition

- c) Increase in teenage unwanted pregnancy
- d) Creates the tendency for resource owners to adapt and expose to life style that ruins their integrity and character as respected leaders as a result of royalties from log export.
- e) Dispute over sharing of royalties giving rise to hatred and tensions between close family members.
- f) Permanent lost of culturally protected areas such as tabu sites and other sites of cultural significant and
- g) Many other fragments of anti-community issues.

**ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT LOGGING**



- q)
- r)
- s)
- t)
- u)



***Remember that it took many years for our forest to be where it is and it can be all gone within a very short time if we make wrong decisions.***

