

THE DAMAGE OF ECOSYSTEM DUE TO UNCONTROLLABLE MINING IN BANGKA BELITUNG PROVINCE, INDONESIA

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Bangka Belitung is one of newly formed provinces of Indonesia. This province was officially formed in 2001, and it has been a largest tin- producing province in Indonesia. Initially, tin was a particular commodity that could be mined or exploited only by Indonesian government. However, the government issued a new regulation in 1999, which stated that tin was not a particular commodity and it could be minded by anyone. This regulation brought positive outcome especially to the resident of Bangka Belitung Island, so they could reap the benefit of their own natural resources. In addition to positive outcome, the regulation also brought more dangerous negative outcome because traditional or conventional tin miners tend to use dangerous material or chemical substances in the process of their mining activities. The usage of dangerous material or chemical could lead to threatening environmental damage such as mining holes, polluted ground water, and accumulated acid chemical substances, which all contribute to the impairment of water quality. Such activities also produced other chemical substances such as zinc, copper, arsenic, and lead, which all of them could be dangerous to human health and forest environment. The illegal and conventional miners were initially the labor of previous mining company who tried to freely conduct uncontrollable mining activities, and they searched their own mining sites to forest without official permits. These illegal miners exploited in unregulated mining sites without thinking its long term effect, and it brought damage to the ecosystem of forest.

Since the government ratified the system of regional autonomy, which delegated the authority to the local government, the controlling role of the local government was automatically increased. The condition negatively allowed small and middle scale of mining companies in Bangka Belitung to produce pollution, which damaged the environment. The corrupt government tended to be tolerant to bribery, and the condition favored irresponsible companies to conduct dangerous mining activities. On the other hand, mining is one of the most potential economic sources for the people who live in Bangka Belitung province, and if their mining activities must be regulated with stricter rules, then economic life of the people could be disturbed or interfered. The central government of Indonesia has repeatedly tried to deal with the issue, but the problems still remain because tin mining is a complicated economic life for people or residents of Bangka Belitung, the companies, and the government itself. In addition to the root of the problems, some presume that there are foreigners' interventions in this industry because most of the notable companies are owned by foreigners.