



(hardening of arteries), besides increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke. This study aims to document and identify plants used by Melanau people of Mukah Sarawak for hypertension remedy. Traditional healers of the study area were selected randomly and interviewed with the help of translators to gather information on the knowledge and use of medicinal plants used as a remedy for human ailments in the study area. Fast disappearance of the traditional culture and natural resources due to urbanization and industrialization suggests that the unrecorded information may be lost forever. Thus there is an urgent need to record this valuable Melanau medicinal knowledge for the next generation and these species can be used as the starting point the discovery of new drugs.

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PHYSICO-CHEMICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF BIO-MATERIAL PRODUCT FROM *KAPPAPHYCUS ALVEREZII*

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Kappaphycus Alverezii commonly known as brown seaweed has the highest natural polymers content red in algae family. The exceptional quality of the polymer enables them to be used as bio-material precursor. Seaweed is a natural abundance resource that contains gelators as the primary source of commercially available refined gelator. Its production cost is significantly low compared to existing commercial bio-materials due to simple solvent removal method. In order to improve end-product qualities, their density and physico-chemical properties have to be controlled. Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) and X-ray diffraction spectroscopy (XRD) were employed to study these changes besides other physical tests including Thermal Gravimetric Analysis (TGA), moisture absorption and tensile strength characterizations.