

***Juli Edo and Kama! Solhaimi Fadzil: Soda-Economic
Adjustments Of The Aborigines: Malaysia***

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Socio-Economic Adjustments Of The Aborigines: Malaysia

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" ...the Orang Asli problem has for a long time been dealt in a neo-colonialist fashion, by people from outside of the community based on their assumptions about issues and problems faced by the Orang Asli community"¹ (Rustam A. Sani, 1984:2)

"...they are all poorer than their Malaysian fellow citizens. The vast majority . of them, even the peoples in the deep jungle and they want to correct this economic imbalance. They welcome social change especially when this seems to promise some clear-cut economic benefit. " (Carey, 1976:6)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In Malaysia, the Aborigines are called Orang Asli. They are the first people of the Peninsular Malaysia, who have been occupied the peninsula since 13,000 years ago. These people are traditionally scattered all over the peninsula, except in Perlis and Penang. Today, however, they are found all over the peninsular with approximate population number of about 130,000 (see Appendix A). The Orang Asli is not a homogenous society. They are varied in most aspect such as physical appearance, residential location, cultural practice, economy activity, etc.

2. ORANG ASLI DIVISIONS

2.1 The Orang Asli are administratively divided into three major groups, that is Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malays. Each of these major groups is then divided into six or seven sub-groups, consisting of 19 sub-groups all together (see Table 1).

Table 1: ORANG ASLI DIVISIONS AND ITS DISTRIBUTION.

MAJOR GROUP	SUB-GROUP	TRADITIONAL DISTRIBUTIONS (ACCORDING TO STATE)
Semang-Negrito	Bateq Jahai Kensiu Kintak Lanoh Mendriq	Kelantan and Pahang. Perak and Kelantan. Kedah. Kedah. Perak and Kelantan. Perak, Kelantan and Pahang.
Senoi	Chewong Jah Hut Mah Men Semai Semaq Beri	Pahang. Pahang. Selangor. Perak, Pahang and Selangor. Pahang and Trengganu.

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	Temiar	Perak and Kelantan.
Proto-Melayu	Jakun Orang Kanak Orang Kuala Orang Seletar Semelai Temoq Temuan	Pahang dan Johor. Johor. Johor. Johor. Pahang and Negeri Sembilan. Pahang and Johor Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor and Pahang.

Source: HQ Department of Orang Asli Affairs, 2000.

2.2 The Negrito, also referred to as Semang, is the oldest inhabitant of Peninsular Malaysia. According to archaeologists, the Negrito people is the direct descendant of the Hoabinhian people who inhabited the peninsula since 13,000 ago (Zuriana, 1989; 1994), or earlier than that as suggests by some that this people were already in place 25,000 years ago (Carey, 1976: 13). The term Negrito originated from "little Negro", which is basically based on the description of their physical appearance in which majority of them are short; have broad noses, round eyes and low cheekbones; and are skinned and have woolly hair. Such features resemble some people of Africa and of New Guinea (Carey, 1976). These people, except the Batek who live in southern Kelantan dan Pahang, predominately occupied the northern part of the peninsula and southern Thailand. They speak a language a branch of Austro-Asiatic family. Today, the Negrito represents four percent of the Orang Asli population with the population number of about 4,150 people.

2.3 The Senoi is the largest group of the Orang Asli population with the approximate number of 72,871 or 54 percent out the total population. The Senoi people originated from the intermarriage between the Hoabinhian and the Neolithic people, who brought along Ban Kao culture from central Thailand to the peninsula in about 2,500 years ago (see Bellwood, 1997: 255-267). The Senoi also speak a branch of Austro-Asiatic language and are prominently occupy central part of the peninsula, especially in the Main Range areas. The term 'senoi' derives from a Semai and Temiar word, *seng-oi* or *sen-oi*, which means people. The Semai and Temiar use this word to identify themselves and to appose others, either aliens or non-Orang Asli ethnic groups. In a wider contact, the Semai and temiar used the word senoi to serve their sense of ownership (or sense of belonging), the word which exclusively means, "indigenous inhabitants of the peninsula".

2.4 The Proto-Malays represents 42 percent of the Orang Asli with the approximately number of 55,852 people. This people primarily live in the central and southern part of the peninsula. According to Carey (1976: 220), the seafarer Proto-Malays came to the peninsula about 5,000 years ago. Since they speak Austronesian languages, some scholars have concluded that they may have originated from Sumatra, Borneo and other islands in Southeast Asia (see Bellwood, 1993: 54). The Proto-Malays is originally divided into seven sub-groups. However, they were reduced into six by the administrator in order to standardise it with the other two groups to make it six sub-groups each. In the reclassification made in the 1970s, the Temoq have left out and their census has sub-merged with the Jakun and Semelai.

3. TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC MODE

3.1 The traditional Drang Asli has inherited various mode of economy activities, based on their ethnic classification. The Negrito, who is nomadic, inherited the hunter-gatherer mode of economy from their ancestors, the Hoabinhian people. They move in a small group (or camp), mainly consisting of the conjugal family, from one area to another within their defined territory (which means each conjugal family have their own inherited territory and it is ruled by mutual understanding between the groups). They will stay in one are for an uncertain period of time until the food in that area is getting scarce, then they will move to another area in which food is available. During their stay in the area, they carry various activities such as gathering jungle fruits and roots, especially wild yam, collecting bees max, fishing and hunting. Every one involves in the activity, except old and ill citizens and babies, but they only collect sufficient quantity of food for that day. In another word, everyday they will carry activities only to get sufficient supply for their daily need. Such an approach in their economic activity allows them to maintain their food supply for a longer period and is ecological friendly (see Endicott, 1970: 1-32).

3.2 The traditional Senoi society also inherited both the Hoabinhian and the Neolithic cultures consisting of a mixture between hunting and gathering and swidden farming. However, the Mah Meri people who live in the coastal of Selangor involve in small-scale fishing. According to their oral traditions, the Senoi were also nomadic in the early days, just like the Negrito. Every season they, in a conjugal family, move from one place to another to open rice field. Later, a few group get together to form a bigger group in order to encounter external threats, especially were-tiger, giants (gergasi), supernatural beings, etc. In addition, since they were 'farmers', they have had adopted the believe in the supernatural protection from land guardian, which need communal participation in any ritual dealing with it. From that time onwards, the Senoi people have lived in permanent settlements but shift their farming sites every season. In 1st - 19th century, however, as experienced by the Semai in Perak and Temiar in Perak and Kelantan, they have to break-up from the main group into smaller groups due to the threat posed by the Rawa and Siamese slave raiders. These people live in hardship until British intervention in Perak, during which slave raiding activities was banned. Although they regain peace, the people could not track down their long-lost relatives and therefore, they remain in small groups (until today). Each group become the founder of their village and continue swidden farming activities. Every season, they grow hill rice and vegetable. While waiting for the harvest season, the Senoi men carried hunting and gathering activities while women maintain their rice field, gather vegetables from their garden and if they are free, they will go fishing. The activities carried by both men and women were mainly for meir own families subsistence.

3.3 The traditional Proto-Malays were seafarers and involve in maritime based activity of economy. The people who live along the coastal area were fulltime involved in fishing and gathering other maritime products such as shell fishes, crabs, prawns, etc. However, they were also Proto-Malays people who live in the interior such as the Jakun, Semelai, Temoq and Temuan. In the interior, most of them lived nearby the lakes, swamps and river banks. These people involve in mix economy between fishing (or maritime based), farming and hunting and gathering. Although the Orang Asli have their own mode of traditional economy, they were alsp involved, either directly or indirectly, in free-trade activities since long time ago. Their contjibution has been acknowledge by Chinese traders in their records, in which they mention that the peninsula is one of the most important source of jungle products such as bird nest, bees max, rhino horn, resin, gaharu wood, rattan (cane), pandan mat, etc (see Dunn, 1975; Giano, 1990). In addition, there were three trade routes across the peninsula

from west to east coast, along which the Orang Asli battered their producers with iron items, especially machetes, axes, etc. Therefore, despite their traditional activities, the Orang Asli also involved in trade activities since the very early days.

4. ECONOMIC TRANSITION PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE: THE SEMAI EXPERIENCE

4.1 The Semai communities of Perak have experienced the transition in their economy activities since the early days and continue to adapt and change in the face of modernization forces. Prior to British intervention (1874), the Semai have had establish contact with the ruler of the ancient Malays state of Perak. Through this contact, the Malay rulers advised the Semai leaders to resettle permanently in certain areas and grow fruit trees. That advised taken by the Semai positively as they start growing fruit trees in the jungle. Despite maintaining their swidden farming, they involved in agro-forestry. During the early British era in Perak, local Malay rulers lost their administrative power over the state, except on Malay culture and religion. Using the provision provided by the British, Malay rulers regard the Orang Asli (including the Semai) as their subject and has the right to rule them. Malay rulers also posed their silent struggle by allowing the Semai to carry modern economy activities, such as mining and planting rubber, which is regarded as 'British-controlled' activities at that time. Since then, the Semai had involved actively in rubber planting in small scale, especially prior to World War II.

4.2 About five years after WWII ended, Emergency declared in Malaya. The Communist change their struggle to guerrilla war against the British. The Communist went back to gain support from the Orang Asli who previously support the MPAJA. As a result of that approach, the Communist had controlled about 30,000 of Orang Asli in Perak in 1953. That situation had endangered the British Military Administration and forced them to introduce ad-hock development programs for the Orang Asli. One of the program was to resettle the people and provide them with permanent economy activities, so that the government can prevent the people from going to the jungle looking for food, which indirectly means that they can prevent the Orang Asli from being expose to Communist influence. The policy continue during the post independent era.

5. SECURITY, THE NEMISTATE ANIXTJBP& RETORIC OF MODERNIZATION

"... policies on the Orang Asli appear tp be reactions to current crises or attempts to keep in line with prevailing national trends or needs. Invariably, however the majority of policies pertaining to the Orang Asli are decided for them rather than by them although in recent years thej;e have been sporadic attempts by the state to solicit Orang Asli input in their development strategies." (Nicholas, 2000)

5.1 The main catalyst that affected colonial policy towards the Orang Asli was, the communist insurgency. The growing threat from the Communist Party of Malaya (fyiCP) began shortly after the Second World War and quickly escalated into an emergency by the late 1940's. In the 1950's, the nature of the conflict was largely focus in the thick of Malaysian rainforest, thereby forcing the Government to review their policy towards the Orang Asli. Living in the interior, Orang Asli's were often used to assist the communist, supplying food and^cjing as guides. Hence, government forces were well aware of the need to address the Orang As^j^they were to be successful in subduing the insurgents².

5.2 At the height of the insurgency, the colonial forces adopted the Briggs plan, which called for resettling peripheral communities located near or within "black" areas to designated "safe" areas. The measures that were adopted were meant to prevent any form of assistance to the communist forces in a bid to defeat them. However, unlike the resettlement exercise of the Chinese and Malay communities, movement of Orang Asli from their traditionally occupied land was disastrous. The "safe" areas they were sent to lacked proper shelter, and adequate supplies. As a result many Orang Aslis died. It is approximated that the death toll was 7000 of the 25000 resettled (Nicholas, 1990:69). Iskandar Carey, an Anthropologist and retired Director General of Aboriginal Affairs Department³ commented that the fatalities were not the result of "overt cruelty-just ignorance and stupidity" (Leary, 1995:44).

5.3 Realizing their mistake, the government took measures against pushing the Orang Asli away. In 1954, the Aboriginal Peoples Act 134 was enacted, giving JO A almost absolute jurisdiction over the indigenous minorities. Combined with this piece of legislation, the revived Aboriginal Affairs Department worked closely with the army and forest police to gain acceptance among the indigenous peoples⁴. Abandoning their initial approach, the army instead moved in, building forts near Orang Asli settlement and provided services to improve living conditions in these villages. In part, due to the success of this strategy a decade later the emergency was declared over.

5.4 The communist insurgency had forced the government to reassess its previous policy or lack of coherent policy regarding the Orang Asli community. In 1961, the government stated its official policy regarding the Orang Asli community in the 'Statement of Policy Regarding the Long Term Administration of the Aboriginal Peoples in the Federation of Malaya'. The main thrust of the policy was regarding the integration of Orang Asli community into mainstream population by means of "adopt(ing) suitable measures designed for their protection and advancement" (Colin, 2000:94). Colin notes that among the most significant aspects of the 1961 Policy Statement is that it accorded the Orang Asli some special privilege as indigenous people -recognizing their special position in respect to land usage and land rights. Also, the policy establishes the need to apply affirmative actions so that the Orang Asli's were able to benefit from the fruits of development as other communities have.

5.5 With the revival of the communist threat in the 1970's, the government position regarding the indigenous minorities took another turn. As a means to prevent a possible resurgent, the government was quick to identify the Orang Asli as possible allies. In 1971, they proposed a resettlement scheme that was to be known as the Regroupment scheme. This scheme referred to the formation of development schemes within, or close to, the traditional homeland of the Orang Asli concerned (Nicholas, 2000:95). The development of regroupment schemes or *Rancangan Penempatan Semula* (RPS), modeled after the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) scheme was meant to develop the Orang Asli through agricultural based programs. The scheme provided wooden houses, access to schools, health centers and shops. The agricultural activities included animal husbandry, palm oil as well as rubber trees. Today there are around 25 RPS throughout Peninsula Malaysia⁵.

5.6 By the mid 1990's government approach to development of the Orang Asli had shifted from a single agency approach to a multi-dimensional agency approach. It should be noted however, that JHEOA continue to play a significant role as gate-keeper to any dealings with the Orang Asli. The state also appears to have replaced the 1961 statement of policy with a

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ten-point strategy. The ten-point strategy as outlined in the *prudence summary* is listed below:

1. modernising their way of life and living conditions by introducing modern agricultural methods and other economic activities like e-commerce and industry.
 2. upgrading medical and health services, including having better equipped clinics in interior areas, to bring about a healthy and energetic Orang Asli community.
 3. improving educational and skill development facilities including programmes to provide better hostel facilities for both primary and secondary students.
 4. inculcating the desire among Orang Asli youth to become successful entrepreneurs by showing and sometimes opening doors of opportunity for them.
 5. getting Orang Asli in interior areas to accept regrouping schemes as an effective means of improving their living standards and turning their settlements into economically viable units.
 6. encouraging the development of growth centers through the restructuring of forest-fringe orang asli kampungs, including the establishment of institutions such as area farmers organizations and co-operatives.
 7. gearing up Orang Asli culture and arts, not only to preserve their traditions but also as a tourist attraction.
 8. eradicating poverty or at least reducing the number of hardcore poor among the Orang Asli.
 9. introducing privatisation as a tool in the development of Orang Asli areas
 10. ascertaining a more effective form of development management in line with the direction in which the Orang Asli community is progressing,
- (adapted from Nicholas, 2000)

5.7 The overall objective of the policy has not drastically shifted from earlier policies, i.e., to improve the economic and social wellbeing of the community as well as to integrate the Orang Asli with the larger society, namely the Malay community. Nevertheless, Nicholas notes, there were significant changes in the specific means by which these goals were to be achieved namely, the introduction of privatisation as a tool for the development of Orang Asli areas, participating in tourism and inculcating an entrepreneurial class among Orang Asli youth. The Ten-point strategy also does not provide or expand on recognition of land rights or on rights over settlement and the need to seek community permission before resettlement.

6. ISLAMIZATION AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY⁶

"From the point of view of public administrators, Islamisation establishes greater homogeneity in ideological orientation since this could, theoretically speaking, ensure greater success in assimilation with neighboring Malays."
(Wazir, 1998:17)

6.1 It is noted by scholars that whilst for most parts, Malaysia's development policies attempt to celebrate cultural pluralism, the Orang Asli are subjected to assimilation into the dominant Malay community (Colin, 2000; Wazir, 1995; Dentan, 1997). Wazir writes, "With the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia, most of this (systematic program to integrate indigenous minorities into nation-building) has been in the form of mainstreaming Orang Asli groups into economic development, through large scale integrated farming by agencies like FELDA and FELGRA and conversion to Islam." (Wazir, 1998:3). While it is claimed that Islamic programs are held at communities which have already converted, for example in

Berita Marian dated 4th March 1999, Datuk Dr. Zainal Abidin Ahmad who was chairman of a state committee in charge of Education and Human Development states "efforts to spread the teaching of Islam among Orang Asli who are new converts is necessary to ensure they have a strong 'akidah' and is not easily influenced by groups who try to deviate them from their conviction." (B.Harian, 4th, March 1999), based on personal observation however, the process in which Orang Asli are enlisted for conversion remains open to query. What these activities all add up too is simply to remind us that development of the Orang Asli community is dictated largely by other people and that their policies and actions often do not reflect the community needs. It should be noted that if current trends persist, enforcement of Islamic law, particularly the practice of Islam and the legislation of anti-apostate law, may create new scope for exercising control over the Orang Asli. The practical aspect of it cannot be neglected, an unintended implication of Islamisation is that the state not only intervenes in the material existence of their life, but has legitimate rights to enter the private domain and dictate in one sense, their entire life.

6.2 The process by which Islamization occurs denies the community an opportunity to be heard and to raise the level of both public awareness and recognition of its own indigenous based-religions. By denying this voice by dismissing their religious expressions as primitive or incomplete forms of beliefs, we uphold a frame of thinking dominant in the early twentieth century in which societies, social systems and cultures were seen divided along an upward evolutionary scheme. In this sense, intervention was argued as necessary an even morally justifiable.

7. DEVELOPMENT POLICY: THE JAHAI EXPERIENCE

7.1 Post Rual is under the district of Jeli in the state of Kelantan. It consists of three hamlets, Kg. Manok, Kg. Rual tengah and Kg. Kalok. The administrative center, located at Kg. Rual tengah, offers a brick primary school, a kindergarten, a medic depot, a prayer hall and a community hall. Almost all the houses today have access to electricity and there are communal water pipes every few houses developed using a gravitational system by the waterworks department. About thirty minutes by road to the East-West highway and about forty-five minutes or some 30 km from the administrative seat of Jeli town, Pos Rual is no longer the isolated post established in the interior thirty years ago.

7.2 The present villages was established by the JHEOA on 1972 as part of government efforts to develop and modernize the community, although as noted by Gomes, the main reason for relocating the community stem from fear that the Orang Asli may aid the communist insurgents in the jungles. Today the village is a far cry from the way it was, when it was first established with a wooden house designated for the *Penghulu* (other members of the community continue for some time to stay in traditional *Hayeks'*), a health depot and wooden school block. In the last five years the pace of development has increased rapidly, making this once interior community accessible by motor vehicle. RPS Sg. Rual today boast a metal road reaching to the doorstep of the village, a modern school, PPRT houses for every family in the village, piped water served by a gravitational water system, electricity and a palm oil plantation, ensuring a basic salary for the future. Also on the drawing board is a road linking the main highway and Jeli town that cuts across the village. For better or worse, the proposed road will make RPS Rual a town along the National highway grid from West to East Peninsula Malaysia.

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7.3 People who settled in in RPS Sg. Rual came from various parts around the District of Jeli, stretching out from areas around Batu Melintang, Kok Lanas, and the surrounding areas, almost all now occupied by Malay settlers. They consist of a mix of Batek, Jahai and Medriq groups divided into bands as socio-political organizations. Memberships into these bands were formed along kinship ties and today they number approximately 365 members. Every band has a leader normally known as *Penghulu*. Gomes observations on the political organization thirty years ago, that they are divided into six bands continue to hold true. Today, group interest continues to be based on affiliation to the bands, and nominal head of the village still places band interest ahead of the village interests. This has created some tension between the bands in the village.

7.4 The Orang Asli settlement in RPS Sg. Rual, consists of three Hamlets, Kg. Sg. Manok, Kg. Sg. Rual Tengah and Kg. Sg. Kalok. These hamlets are situated along or close to the Rual river. The administrative center of the community is based at Kg. Sg Rual Tengah. The center consists of a JHEOA house, a school, a kindergarten, a clinic, storage facility, a prayer hall and community hall. Kg. Rual Tengah has the second largest hamlet with about 28 houses. About one hundred meters from Kg. Sg. Rual Tengah is Kg.Sg. Kalok with about 23 houses. Further away, the first hamlet we encounter community is Kg. Sg. Manok with 29 houses. RPS Rual is nestled in the Sg. Rual valley, surrounded by thick forested mountain tops. Several kilometers to the north is Thailand, to the west is Perak and approximately 150 kilometers east is Kota Bahru, the capital of Kelantan.

7.5 RPS Rual has a relatively small population of approximately 365 people or approximately 0.96% of the total polulation of Jeli. The population is relatively young with about 70% below thirty years old. Based on interviews with the community, there were 283 births among the female respondents interviewed, of which approximately 37% of these children died (it was ascertained when or how they died, but it is assumed the majority died at infancy)⁷. Nevertheless, population growth trends done by Gomes over thirty years indicate a growing population. This can be interpreted in many ways, for example the number of childbirth and death may reflect the community reaction and strategy to environmental pressures.

7.6 Nevertheless, what is certain is that development has created both the environmentally stresses as well as providing to some extend effective health services, here represented by the survival and growth of the community.

Distribution by age and gender 1998 (source:collected by Albert Gomes)

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
0-4	40-45*	35*
5-9	30	30*
10-14	10	15*
15-19	15*	15
20-24	15	20*
25-29	15*	15
30-34	10*	10

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35-39	10	10 *
40-44	10 *	10
45-49	10 *	5 *
50-54	5 *	5
55-59	5	5 *
60 and above	10 *	5 *

(*Most figures are approximates)

7.7 Employment opportunities in the village continue to be link to seasonal employment opportunities. Education attainment is still low, with almost everyone below the age of 35 years old having had up to standard six education⁸. Despite the fact that few have made it pass standard six (probably only one or two) other forms of non-traditional occupation have begun to take root here, for example joining the Army, Forest Police or in one instance, as a religious teacher⁹. Generally, the villages continue to rely on exploiting the natural resources in their environment as source for income. Today many are dependent on seasonal occupation, working with logging companies, collecting soft shell river turtles, large frogs, fishing, etc. as means to earn wages. They also grow tapioca as well as tend to fruit orchards to supplement their needs. Although in times when food is hard to come by, it isn't uncommon for families to take leave from the village for up to a month, to forage for food in the jungle. Although many programs started since the 70's, many of the residence in RPS Rual continue to work as wage laborers or to take opportunistic measures to forage the natural resources around them either as a subsistence strategy or as commodity to be sold to middlemen¹⁰.

8. CONCLUSION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

8.1 What are some the main areas affected by these policies and in what ways do they relate to socio-economic adjustment of the Orang Asli community as a whole? The widely held view of the Orang Asli as being incomplete and economic development as a means to achieve a political end has so far created an environment that invariably threatens much of Orang Asli traditional life. But it also does more than that, it threatens to do away with an economic system and established survival strategy and replace it with another that is currently incomplete. If the persisting image of the Orang Asli is one which he is ignorant, nomadic and unable to be self sufficient, we feel that these distorted look at a people is in danger of becoming self prophetic, in that it is appearing partially true as a result of modern development practice. The Orang Asli are often forced to give way to development projects which in some cases are purely commercial, for example the Sepang airport, a golf course in Bangi, a housing estate in Bukit Lanjan are just to name a few.

8.2 The argument of development as a moralizing mission, one that is primarily responding to a moral dilemma, argues for progress and change emotionally obscuring the reality of conditions. Despite development efforts since the fifties, the Orang Asli community continue to live largely in abysmal poverty. They have among the highest minority group drop out rates in the formal education system and have higher maternal related health incidences such as infant mortality, high numbers of TB infections, high numbers of victims suffering from low iodine deficiency and high malaria infected cases. While the are generally experiencing what we would associated with marginalised communities in terms of both access to facilities, political autonomy and infrastructure development, what is probably a pressing issue today centres around issues related to their ancestral land. While the JHEOA objective

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includes expediting land claims, the current status of Orang Asli land ownership as a reservation is below 20%. Formal recognition of rights over their ancestral land is in many ways at the heart of the problem. Without the land, the community is cut off from its source of spirituality, social identity and economic autonomy. As such it should come as no surprise that today the Orang Asli are taking several measures to ensure that these rights are recognized. Their actions can be divided to both passive and active resistance. In the former, the Orang Asli have taken several measures which include, fielding a candidate in the last elections, taken the government and private companies to task by going to court, holding demonstrations and sending memorandums to local authorities. In the latter, the Orang Asli continues to exploit the land and show poor participation in development programmes.

8.3 The current development policies so far have focus more at controlling resources and people. For the Orang Asli, the experiences of modernization has been one of dislocation; from the community, from their basic source of livelihood, encouraging values that promote individualism as oppose to community based exploitation of resources, fragments and divides them on the basis of their identity. Through modernization they have also experienced exploitation. The exploitation includes of the natural resources, human labour and knowledge/intellectual property. Encouraging market economy without proper enforcement of regulation has led to haphazard means to extract resources and over exploitation of the natural environment by all actors, able members of the community, the state and private interest groups. They are also exploited of their labours in many ways, among these include, working and placing their lives at risk without insurance coverage, health benefit, minimum wage, no instruments to guarantee they are not being cheated, etc. They are also often used to identify specialised fauna or flora without due recognition of intellectual property rights. Currently there is no demand or pressure for fair compensation and recognition of authorship or ownership of intellectual property.

8.4 In short efforts at modernizing these communities on the argument of assimilating them with more dominant Malay population, appear to reflect trends toward political and social homogeneity that goes against their needs and aspirations, both as individual communities with particular needs as well as a community with shared interests. The effects of which we feel only encourages dependency relationship between the state and the community and making them more vulnerably to external economic forces, as well as being left on the fence if they remain to be politically unrepresented. Therefore, we feel the need to have a paradigmatic shift among policy makers as well as government officers in perspective and attitude towards the Orang Asli, development policy is crucial and long overdue. Today policy makers must accept the Orang Asli aspirations and dreams, and this means there is a need to take into account community needs as the basis to guide the formulation, implementation and evaluation of development policies.

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NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

- Berita Harian, 4th March 1999, 'Program Keagamaan Orang Asli' _____, 31st May 1999, 'Dakwah Islam Masih Lemah, Tidak Selaras' Harian Metro, 20th April 1999, 'Ramai Anak Orang Asli Tidak Bersekolah' New Straits Times, 16th February 2000, 'Catching Em' Young' _____, 11th May 1999, 'Ensuring Orang Asli Future' _____, 16th June 1999, 'High Drop Out Rate Among Orang Asli' Straits Times, 19th July, 1954, 'Jungle Battle for Hearts and Minds of the Aborigines' Utusan Malaysia, 23rd August 2000, 'Sekolah Orang Asli Perlu Lebih Kajian Demi Kemajuan'

"...persoalan Orang Asli ini terlalu sering dan lama diperkatakan secara 'neo kolonialis' oleh orang dari luar kumpulan itu, berdasarkan andaian mereka sendiri tentang persoalan yang dihadapi oleh orang -orang asli" (Rustam A. Sani, 1984:2)

Harry Miller from the News Straits Times wrote an article titled *Jungle Battle for the Hearts and Minds of The Aborigines*, published 19th July, 1954. In it he writes that by 1953 the government realized that the communist were using Orang Asli to provide assistance, and as a result, General Templer ordered constructions of jungle forts, and the creation of a counter- intelligence networks among friendly Orang Asli as well as developing a long termed planning which included providing schools, medical and trading centers. These actions form the basis of development for the Orang Asli.

In the early parts of its history Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli (JHEOA) was referred to simply as Jabatan Orang Asli (JOA). Here we also use Aboriginal Affairs Department and JOA intermittently, and they represent the same thing.

This security organization also included the *Senoi Praaq* and the Police Aboriginal Guard (PAG)

The RPS include; Air Banun, Kemar, Dala, Legap, Ulu Kinta, and Jernang in Perak, Pasik, Pulat, Balar and Kuala Betis in Kelantan, Terisu, Batau, Rubchang, Pos Iskandar, Kedaik, and Bukit Serok in Pahang, Kudong in Johor.

Giving a name to an Orang Asli group by people who are not indigenous to the groups is not new and in fact can be found in colonial practices. Nevertheless, recognizing these actions as being more then merely administrative function or simply practical and expedient, exposes a more contentious relationship between the state and Orang Asli. The issues relating to these, such as recognizing the Orang Asli as a people, with their religions, cultures, etc. represent as important an area of study as any, in that it tells us a

lot more about the modernization process, state expansion and contest over resources. Sometimes this becomes expose as rather comical as in the case when in the Sunday Star, 2nd June, 2002, JHEOA claimed to have 'found' a new Orang Asli group, the Temoq. However, as Colin notes the group was in fact recognized by the JHEOA but in the 1980's had dropped the group from the formal list of Orang Asli groups.

- 7 The statistics of infant death is only an approximation. Data was collected from interviews with over 260 people from the village, detailing children they have had both alive and deceased. No records were taken of when or how they died, however from the interviews it was understood that these children mainly were deceased from a very early age. Official death records kept by the JHEOA in Jeli were not complete.
- 8 In line with MOE, in 1996 the school facilities and teaching staff were improved. Some of the new changes included better qualified teachers as well as programs to motivate them to enjoy schooling.. Under the Ministry of Education, the objectives primary were to reduced truancy, and to teach children the 3 M (to read, write and arithmetic). This policy is reflected by the relax atmosphere, where discipline takes a back seat and students are encourage to identify with schooling. There are more 'fun' activities such as morning sports, breakfast and lunch provisions as well as shorter study periods. Students are not admonished for tardiness, poor performance or indiscipline behavior. It was not uncommon to see students walk in and out of classrooms. It was also the same with teachers. Generally, teachers would start the school late on the excuse that it was the local culture, according to a teaching staff "memang kena ikut budaya mereka suka tidur dan bangun lewat". But this view contradicts observations made. Nevertheless, despite a rather open door environment and less pressure old problems persists for example, truancy, low performance problem and almost a hundred percent drop out before completing their first year secondary education. It interesting to note that among the older generations of school-goers, there were already three examples of men in their early forties that remembers, having gone to secondary schooling at Gua Musang and accomplishing at least up till the early if not middle level secondary schooling. One man in his mid twenties had only recently completed his form three education at a religious school in kota Baru. This bring into the current educations measures and perception towards the previous education attainment and attitude among the educationist and to what extend are current policies constructive towards improving education attainment among them.
- 9 There was only one case I met in the village, where a young man had completed up to form three in a religious secondary school in Kota Bahru. He had come home in hope of getting a job as the ustaz or at east as his deputy.
- 10 JHEOA have initiated several agricultural projects in the village. Among these that continue till today is the fruit orchard project. This project organized by JHEOA covers 32 acres, and has been carried out annually since 1975 with varying degree of intensity. Currently, land set aside for this program is allocated along site of Sg Rual and in the surrounding area of Kg. Sg. Manok. The villagers have also recently revitalize cultivation of tapioca. In the past they also planted hill rice, coconut trees, and reared chickens and goats. However, being unsuccessful, either in the endeavor or in finding means to the market, these projects have all stop.

The state has initiated a development project with FELCRA to plant palm oil for the villages. There were several complaints at the start of the program with the community members unhappy at FELCRA for hiring labor force from outside the community. They felt this

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deprived them of a source of income. Other problems associated with this appear to be that the project appears out of their hands. Decisions are made between JHEOA and FELCRA with local participation at a minimal. There appears as with other programs a general sense of being cheated off their land. The school, FELCRA office and a recently suggested road construction will force them to be relocated from the current settlement. These developments against the memory they have about the boundaries of their land and the neighboring Malay communities, remind them (and they constantly reminded me) that their land is shrinking in size.

Also, they were fitted with new houses. The PPRT/Melati housing project was carried out in three phases. The first phase began in the early nineties and the third phase was completed in 1996. Today the community has a total of 74 houses of both Melati and PPRT design. Both house designs are made of wood with corrugated aluminum as roof, and comprises a bedroom, living/dinning room and kitchen. The Melati design differs slightly from the PPRT in that it is marginally larger.