

## EMPOWERMENT OF EDUCATION ON ORANG ASLI COMMUNITY IN TERENGGANU THROUGH KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

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**Abstract:** Education is an important agenda in the design of human capital development in all countries. The Malaysian government has been focusing on the development of human capital not only to a certain group, but covers all levels of society, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion and race. In the context of Orang Asli peoples, various programs have been developed to ensure education among Orang Asli communities along with others in Malaysia. However, until now the educational achievement among Orang Asli peoples are still at a low level. A very serious problem involves the issue of dropouts, low grades in the exams, the problem of school absenteeism and problems related to the teaching-learning. Knowledge Transfer Project (KTP) have been implemented since 2013 to help alleviate the problem of education among Orang Asli especially in Terengganu. Among other objectives of the project are focused on increasing awareness of the responsibility and the importance of education among Orang Asli parents and students to reduce school absenteeism. The project is implemented by adopting organized intensive coaching classes to students, raise awareness and motivation to students, raise awareness and the importance of education to parents, school PIBG and empowering teaching and learning ecosystem. The results of the project showed increased attendance of students to the school, parents and local communities to better understand their responsibilities in managing their children's schooling. Some of them began to send their own children to school. Percentage of school attendance is increasing and students are better prepared for school.

### INTRODUCTION

Orang Asli people are one of the indigenous ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia are often also known as 'a backward community, most of them living in isolation in the jungles of the Malay Peninsular' (Hamimah, 2011). Until 2015 the entire population of Orang Asli in Malaysia amounted to almost 250,000 people (JAKOA, 2015). They consist of three races, the Negritos, Senoi and Proto-Malay (Carey, 1976). Senoi is the largest with a rate of 54.91%, followed by the Proto-Malay Negritos 42.27% and 2.81% (JAKOA, 2011).

Based on the dialect spoken in respect of each race can also be classified into six tribes. The Negrito tribes comprise Kintak, Kensiu, Jahai, Medrik, Batek and Lanoh. While the Senoi consists of the Semai tribe, Temiar, Jah-het, Semaq Beri, Ma'Betise', and Chewong. While the Proto-Malays made up of tribes findings, Jakun, Semelai, Orang Seletar, Orang Kuala and Orang Kanaq (Ramle, 1993).

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However, in between every group there is a break fairly clear in terms of area seeded because of mixed marriages among members of the clan groups (Benjamin, 1976).

Up to now there are nearly 900 Orang Asli settlements in Peninsular Malaysia. Most of the distribution is concentrated in rural villages. The classification made by JHEOA showed 37.17% of the village is located far inland, 61.45% in the suburbs, and only of 1.38% in urban areas (Zainal, 2004). The pattern of distribution of these settlements can be shown more clearly through the map in Appendix 1.

Generally the lifestyle of most Orang Asli peoples closely related to the ecological environment of their locality. The general living environment surrounded by forests, hills and the river has formed a pattern of daily activities and distinctive world view among members of the public. From an economic standpoint, they are highly dependent on forests and the natural environment by leading economic self-sufficiency, such as shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering of forest products and fishing (Endicott, 1979; Kuchikura, 1987; Ramle, 2001; Lye, 2000). At the same time there are also economic relations with the outside world, namely in the form described by Endicott (1979) as a symbiotic economy. Some goods such as clothing, some food items and others in the community get from outside. At the same time outside the community also often find them for specific needs such as medicines and other forest products are commercialized.

Up to now most of the Orang Asli still focused on such economic activities (Lye, 2002). In 1990, for example, about 86% of their working alone averaging undergoing economic concerned (Gomes, 2004). Only 14% are involved with other economic activities; an estimated 9% of them working in private companies, and 5% in government departments (Fui, 1997).

Local conditions also affect other aspects of culture, including beliefs, customs and thinking about the education community (Hood, 1993). Related education is considered a local environment that are important to young people. Every member of society learn to understand the resources that are around them and how exploitation can be done against it. The educational element is considered essential that members of the public can continue life in the local environment. Thus, in this situation are introduced to formal education they are considered as an alternative, which would be acceptable if considered relevant in the context of current and future life.

### **Issues of Poverty and Education**

The Malaysian government viewed seriously the issues of poverty and education among Orang Asli. They tried developed so that it can be shared with other ethnic groups in the main stream. Therefore, in line with the implementation of economic development programs, the government is also trying to improve the lives of Orang Asli peoples to also give emphasis to the implementation of social development

programs. Aspect of education is among the attention in social development programs. These efforts are expected to have an impact on the improvement of socio-economic status of Orang Asli peoples, where development in education is one of the mechanisms believed to open up wider career opportunities to them (Suhaimi, 2012). Economic activity is expected to Orang Asli peoples are not only focused on hunting and gathering, but also to the skill-based activities and competitive.

Various parties have played a role in the development of Orang Asli education in Malaysia. Two agencies that play a direct role are the Department of Orang Asli (JAKOA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Also taking part are the Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT), the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Ramle and Faridah, 2012). In general, the role is to provide opportunities so that Orang Asli peoples could receive a formal education. Facilities and services such as school infrastructure, teachers, teachers in rural areas and dormitories are provided (Hasan, 1997), in addition to support facilities including school equipments, school uniforms, additional food aid and stipend to students who attend school (Zainal, 2012). Do not miss out on the implementation of motivational programs to students and parents to raise their awareness about the importance of education in the context of current and future.

Following the efforts made, in recent years there has been a positive development from the point of Orang Asli student achievement in the examination taken, either in the Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR), Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). Percentage of pupil achievement in examinations had increased from year to year (Suhaimi, 2012). However, the achievements and the level of education among them is still low, and troubled mainly related to school attendance, dropout and performance in tests. According to Zainal, (2012) Orang Asli education status based on several indicators until 2010 are as follows.

**TABLE 1: ORANG ASLI EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT STATUS UNTIL YEAR 2010**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Status</i>
1.	Pre-School Education	36% of Orang Asli children still do not receive preschool education at the proper age
2.	The rate of children received primary education	9% of children who should be in primary school are not attending school
3.	Primary school dropout	5% of students do not graduate primary school
4.	The dropout rate of transition to secondary school	29% of students who completed primary school do not continue their studies to secondary school
5.	The dropout rate of students up to form five	37% of students do not continue their studies up to Form Five.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Status</i>
6.	The number of students who successfully completed their studies at higher learning institutions (IPT)	In the last 10 years (2001 to 2010) a total of 693 Orang Asli students have successfully graduated from higher learning institutions. On average, a total of 69 who have successfully completed their studies to university each year. This amount is too small compared with the overall number of students.

*Source:* Zainal, (2012)

Status of educational achievement among Orang Asli as shown in Table 1 above more clearly shows the gain required in order to implement development programs in education among Orang Asli communities, i.e. awareness program on the importance of education among parents and students. A stronger commitment from the school also is needed so that the process of teaching and learning (P & P) work better and effectively.

### **Knowledge Transfer Project (KTP)**

Knowledge Transfer Project (KTP) – Education Transformation of Orang Asli in Terengganu is a Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) community project funded by the Ministry of Higher Education to help solve the problems of education among Orang Asli students. The project was implemented in two Orang Asli villages in the state, namely Kampung Sungai Pergam, Kemaman and Kampung Sungai Berua, head Terengganu. Thus, the content of this paper is loaded findings projects implemented in the Kampung Sungai Berua. In accordance with the background of Orang Asli education issues, the project is implemented to achieve these objectives.

- (i) Increasing awareness of the responsibility and the importance of education among Orang Asli parents.
- (ii) Help efforts to reduce the school dropout rate and absenteeism Orang Asli students to school.
- (iii) Helps businesses improve academic achievement among students in primary and secondary schools.
- (iv) Foster interest and high motivation to Orang Asli students to study up to the highest level.
- (v) Increase motivation of teachers in schools to put more effort in providing education to Orang Asli students.

### **METHOD**

Research is conducted using qualitative methods that seek to answer this research issue. The use of qualitative methods can help researchers obtain comprehensive data, more accurate, clear, and allows researchers to connect descriptive aspects

of the study. More specifically, the study was conducted within the scope of the design of an ethnographic study that was conducted on Semaq Beri tribe in Sungai Pergam, Kemaman and Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu. The data collected is in the form of descriptive. Researchers have used three techniques of data collection, observation and follow, in-depth interviews and content analysis. The use of three different techniques is a triangulation technique that will strengthen the reliability of the results.

Participation observations is the main techniques used to collect data from informants study. This technique is used to understand the poverty and education issues on the local communities as a main key in the process of acceptance of all development programs planned by the government. In applying this technique, the researchers participated in all the daily activities performed by local communities, especially on the process of managing the socioeconomic affairs of the village, JKKK meetings, as well as the relations with external parties. Use this technique especially beneficial in the following areas:

- (i) Give researchers the opportunity to directly observe the number of issues or events related to the research problem.
- (ii) Obtain a clear and accurate picture of an issue may be.
- (iii) Avoid the possibility of falsification of information by informants during the interview process implemented.

Regarding depth interview technique as well, it is an important source of data intended for a complete description and explanation on the matter observed, participated and things that are not understood by researchers. The interview also aims to add as much information or data.

In addition, the researchers also used the content analysis technique, which analyzes the document associated with this study. Researchers have examined the documents relating to the results of previous studies considered relevant and can be relied on to clarify further the study of phenomena related issues. Once data is collected, analyzed and coordinated data using computer software QSR NVivo. Software to help researchers transcribe, store, coordinating, organizing, coding and making a systematic study of the theme.

As already stated, KTP has been conducted in two villages of Orang Asli people in Terengganu; (i) Kampung Sungai Pergam, Kemaman, and (ii) Kampung Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu. However, in this paper only describes the approach the project implementation involving Kampung Sungai Berua for education issues mentioned especially noticeable in the village. In Kampung Sungai Berua have a primary school is also available which can be the basis of the assessment of the implementation of the activities and achievements of the programs implemented.

During implementation of the project activities have been carried out. Among other things, related activities are as follows;

- **Intensive Tuition to Students:** Coaching classes are conducted involving students stage 1 and stage 2. However, sometimes in the presence of pre-school students also participated in the session's tuition. The coaching classes also use the methods of teaching and learning (P & P) and fun method of learning. This fun learning method is implemented by the Graduate Intern with emphasis on the concept of learning while playing through some of the subjects studied in school.
- **Raising Awareness and Motivation to Students:** Through coaching classes also infused motivation slot and advice to the students to continue attend school and participate in school sessions. Study visit program includes a visit to the university was held for the same purpose.
- **Increase Awareness and the Importance of Education to Parents:** The parents were given exposure and motivation of the importance of education to children through various programs implemented in schools in village communities. Motivation slot with their parents was conducted at SK Sg. Berua with joint organization like UniSZA KTP and school as well as the participation of several other agencies. Motivational speakers are from the UniSZA academia. In addition, the appreciation of every effort and attention of parents towards their children's education, parenting consolation also contributed by UniSZA KTP. In addition, social programs are also underway involving volunteers and UniSZA students. Programs such as universities down to the village had helped the villagers and the school in the implementation of educational interest to them.
- **Empower the School PIBG:** Parent-Teacher Association (PIBG) plays a unique role. Some slot motivation has been implemented in schools to help motivate teachers and parents about educational empowerment through methods of teaching and learning (P & P).
- **To Strengthen the Teaching and Learning Ecosystem:** As a result of several meetings with the teachers through the slot with the UniSZA KTP academia motivation has created an ecosystem to empower teaching and learning (P & P) more improved and effective. The teacher clearly more open in giving opinions and share ideas in methods of teaching that are appropriate to the Aboriginal community. Also highlighted are a few ideas in addressing environmental challenges while P & P outside the classroom involving Orang Asli peoples.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The Orang Asli community in Malaysia is estimated to begin to receive formal education in the British colonial period through the efforts made by Christian

missionaries (Zainal, 2012). Hasan (1997) in his study explains that they are introduced to formal education in the time of emergency, when Richard Noone was appointed a Commissioner of Orang Asli Affairs in 1953. The first school for Orang Asli children was founded in Batu 3, Jalan Cameron Highland is known as the William Hunt Aboriginal Memorial School.

Around 1960s more schools in the Security Post in the interior forests to Orang Asli residential area. Their goal is to introduce education; (i) allows Orang Asli literacy and numeracy. (ii) win over Orang Asli so they are not influenced by communists who are fighting against the colonial government (Carey, 1976). Initially all Orang Asli school was placed under the administration of the Department of Orang Asli (JHEOA) (now known as JAKOA). JHEOA staff stationed at the post placement prompted serve as teachers in schools in addition to the post in question perform other affairs department.

In 1970, special attention has been given to the problem of education Orang Asli children Hasan (1997). JHEOA has established Education Division in the department's role in administering the education of Orang Asli peoples, and ensure the achievement of a better quality of education. As fulfilling the function of the establishment and responsibilities, the Education Department has set its objectives as follows;

- (i) upgraded the quality of education
- (ii) reduce and eradicate illiteracy among Orang Asli
- (iii) eliminating the high dropout levels among Orang Asli children.

However, various constraints faced in the implementation because of financial problems, trained teachers to work in established schools and seeded in orang Asli pattern scattered in remote areas. Many educational matters of Orang Asli children can not be implemented properly. Including school buildings, educational facilities and other related facilities. As a measure to solve the problem and allow Orang Asli children get a better education facilities, in 1996 the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) to submit a school management over KPM authorities (Ramle and Hood, 2010). This opportunity was taken by the Ministry of Education to improve the education of Orang Asli peoples by providing the following facilities; (i) Providing school buildings fit and comfort. (ii) Sending teachers trained to teach in all schools. (iii) Provide completeness of good teaching and learning according to current needs. (iv) Provide an appropriate monitoring system is designed so that everything can be implemented effectively (Ramle and Faridah, 2012).

According to Suhaimi (2012), recent MOE also provides a range of support facilities including the Orang Asli and Penan Adult Class (KEDAP), Pilot Project Integrated Curriculum for Primary School Orang Asli Students and Penan (KAP), Special Comprehensive School Model program (K9), Orang Asli Student Outreach

Program, the Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) Joint School Orang Asli program, the Teaching Pedagogy Based on Native Perspectives (LINUS and KAP), Project Special offered to Orang Asli Students for Bachelor of Education, established a Centre of Excellence on Indigenous Pedagogy, school placements for outstanding teachers at Orang Asli school program to improve the hygiene and health of Orang Asli and Orang Asli School Sports Carnival. The latest program is creating the Orang Asli Education Transformation Plan. The programs are intended to help facilitate the teaching-learning among Orang Asli students and raise public awareness about the importance of education in the context of current and future.

Although Orang Asli education management was handed over to the MOE, but JAKOA continue to play its role to improve the standard of education among Orang Asli students alike. According to Zainal (2012), JAKOA continue with the MOE to address the problems arising in the development of Orang Asli education as a problem of low student achievement, problems of low attendance and high dropout problem. For this purpose until 2010 JAKOA has taken the following measures;

- (i) adding educational infrastructure in Orang Asli schools;
- (ii) improve and provide awareness and change attitudes among pupils and parents;
- (iii) help expand the Poor Students Trust Fund (KWAPM) to Orang Asli students to expire at the secondary level and not just Orang Asli students in primary school;
- (iv) help the Orang Asli community to increase confidence and eventually eliminate the inferiority complex to enable them to compete with the other races.
- (v) establish close cooperation with various parties and established ministries among government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and consultants.

Indeed, the measures taken have shown a positive impact on the educational achievement of Orang Asli peoples. However, until now not been able to fully solve the problem of education among them. According to Zainal (2012) until the year 2010 the serious problem is the high dropout rate in the transition from primary to secondary school, there are still about 10% of children aged 7 to 12 are not in school and achievements in all stages of the examination which is still too low. Zainal, 2012 statement was in line with the view of some researchers previously as Ramle and Faridah (2012), Juli (2012), Ramle and Hood (2010), Mustafa et. al., (2012), Ramle and Abdul Razaq (2012), Wan Omar (2012) and Ramle et. al., (2013).

Among other explanations by Ramle and Hood (2010) showed that more than 70% of Orang Asli students in Terengganu who completed primary school was drop out from their studies to the secondary level. Similarly, the performance in



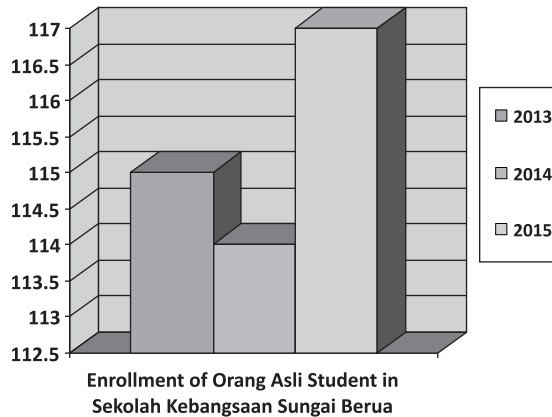
examination. For example, there are primary schools in Orang Asli villages in the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang are no candidates who passed the UPSR (Ramle and Faridah, 2012; Ramle and Abdul Razaq, 2012; Ramle et. al., 2013), Among other issues to be associated with the challenges faced in the implementation process of the development of education as described in this article.

## DISCUSSION

### Increased Awareness Level on Orang Asli Parents

As a result of efforts to help the Orang Asli students in the field of education, especially in Kg. Sg. Berua, Terengganu can be seen an interesting development through a variety of methods that have been adopted include a motivating the parents. Motivational programs conducted by UniSZA KTP academia in cooperation with the school through community programs and education. Further it has increased awareness of the responsibility and the importance of education among Orang Asli parents. The parents have also begun to react willing to talk about their children's education and began to communicate with the school about the development of children's learning. The visible result is the percentage of school enrollment has increased each year. The percentage of visits starting in 2013 until 2015 (Table 1).

**TABLE 2: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**



Source: Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua, 2015.

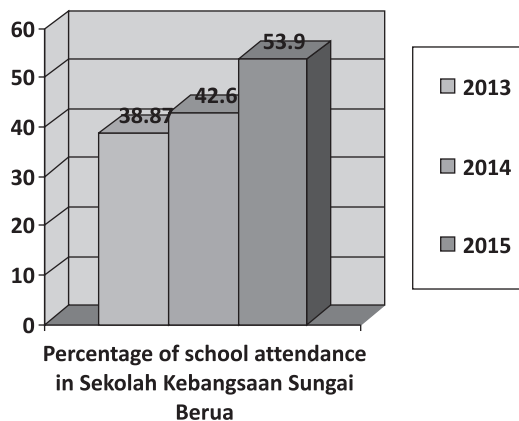
Table 2 above shows the increase in school enrollments of Orang Asli children to SK. Sg. Berua. The value is taken into account starting in 2013 with a total of 115 pupils. In 2014, there is a slight decrease in the enrollment number. However, the registry in 2015 shows an increase of 3 students with the number enrolled at 117.

### Reduction of Dropout Problem and the absence of Orang Asli Students to School

In addition, the efforts of the KTP projects and other agencies have helped reduce the problem of dropouts and absenteeism Orang Asli students to school. The parents have started sending their own children to school as a result of awareness of the responsibility and the importance of education that has existed within them. This indirectly helps reduce the dropout rate and increase the percentage of students and school attendance (Table 3). This was mentioned by teachers as a new thing.



**TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN SUNGAI BERUA**



Source: Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua, 2015.

Table 3 above shows an increase of 3.73% in 2014 as compared to the total percentage of 38.87% in 2013. The increase can be seen high attendance in 2015 (attendance until September 2015) which showed an increase of 11.3% compared to 2014 with a total of 53.9 %. These positive developments are favored by the school and the District Education Office (PPD) Hulu Terengganu.

#### 4.3. Fostering Interest and High Motivation

Programs have also been implemented to foster interest and high motivation to Orang Asli students to study up to the highest level. The diversity of the program has provided an inspiration and a different view to them about education. This has helped the parents and students of the Orang Asli community understand more clearly on education and indirectly provide encouragement and urge them to continue sending their children to school to attend learning sessions. The result is significantly higher consciousness began to emerge to the parents as well as children of the Orang Asli community. They have opened the eyes and minds to the importance of education starting from pre-school to secondary school.



#### CONCLUSION

Overall it can be seen Education Transformation Project on Orang Asli community in Terengganu has an impact and a positive improvement on the development and knowledge transfer among the Orang Asli. The results obtained show an improvement of the situation of student attendance, awareness and motivation to the parents about education, health care aspect understanding of self and self-motivation are increased among Orang Asli children. In addition, during the 2-year KTP project is implemented, student attendance can be measured through the achievement of increasing every year. Directly, the school has shown positive results in addressing the problem of school dropout. In addition, the measure has the same potential school attendance increased to reach over 50%. This is a situation that has never been achieved before in school records. Through this KTP project also has an impact on teachers where teachers are more eager to carry out teaching and learning (P & P)

as a result of the driving support KTP project either in terms of moral support or financial support for the program with the Orang Asli community in Terengganu.

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