

# Local Community Partnership in Social Development Program: National Community Case Study in Terengganu

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**Abstract:** *The Orang Asli community is among the indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia who majority of them reside in the remote areas and is still behind the flow of national development. Although various development programs have been implemented, the community's well-being level is still low compared to other communities in Malaysia. Based on this issue, two objectives have been developed in this study; to identify the level and factors of the Orang Asli community's participation in social development programs. This study was conducted in two Orang Asli villages namely Kampung Sungai Pergam, Kemaman and Kampung Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu by using qualitative method. Data was collected using participating observation techniques and interviews. The findings show that the status of Orang Asli's participation in social development programs is at a low level as most of them are only participating in programs implemented on certain factors. This is because the cultural and environmental factors of this community have influenced the status of their participation in the social development program implemented. These factors are attitudes or behaviours, norms, family factors, cognitive factors, nutritional factors and technological factors. The results of this study can benefit the management of the agency in the implementation of development programs that can improve the status of the livelihood of the Orang Asli community in Terengganu. The important thing to be aware of in order to enhance the effectiveness of the programs and the participation of the Orang Asli communities in development programs is to get members of the Orang Asli involved at the planning stage to ensure that programs are being implemented according to the needs of the community[7].*

**Index Terms:** *Orang Asli in Terengganu, Participation Factor, Participation Status, Social Development Program*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Development programs can be classified into three, namely the Economic Development Program, Structured Resettlement Program and Social Development Program (JAKOA, 2011). There are two forms of development programs that have been implemented in the Orang Asli community, namely economic development programs and social development programs (Zainal Abidin Ali, 2006). According to Ramle Abdullah (2014), economic development programs focus primarily on the development of land for commercial crops such as rubber and oil palm[9][11]. Additionally, agricultural subsidies, skills and training, are among the provision of assistance to improve the socio-economic status of the community. Meanwhile, social development programs focus on the provision of infrastructure, housing, as well as health and education facilities. In general, the goals of these development programs are to integrate suburban Orang Asli communities into the mainstream society.

Various policies have been set up and allocation of funds has been provided by the government in ensuring the development and the well-being of the Orang Asli community (Seow Ta Wee et.al. 2003). However, community culture is one of the factors contributing to the issue of low community participation in any development programs. Their hard-to-accept change attitude, lack of confidence, low competitive attitude, cautious with practices and unwilling to undergo risky lifestyles are among the factors that fall into this category (Ramle Abdullah, 2014).

Participation is an important element in community development. The determination of success in building a community depends on the participation of the community itself. This includes their participation in drafting plans, making decisions, participating in the implementation activities, enjoying the benefits of their participation and evaluating the programs or activities that they participate in (Azlizan Talib et.al, 2009). The involvement of community groups or community participation is intended to train and familiarize them with their own work to facilitate them to continue the work and to follow-up actions later. It is also to ensure that the community is involved and participate in the process of planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement of work at every level. Through participation in an organized development program, it can create a common



sense and responsibility for the development program implemented (Azlizan Talib et al., 2012). This is consistent with the findings of Haliza Abdul Rahman (2010) that suggested the community should be directly involved in every development process planned and implemented in their area in order to achieve sustainable development[2][3][4].

The JAKOA has implemented various programs to address and combat issues such as poverty, education, infrastructure and health facilities which serve as a basic guide to socioeconomic status. For the poverty issue, this can be seen from the monthly average income of the Orang Asli community in Terengganu. The monthly average income for the Kampung Sungai Berua community is RM 400 and below while the monthly average income for Kampung Sungai Pergam community is RM 820. This makes the poverty level for Kampung Sungai Berua community be extremely poor while the poverty level for the Kampung Sungai Pergam community is poor (JAKOA, 2015).

Among the factors that cause a community not willing to engage in the development program that has been implemented is the attitude of those who are easily discouraged, easily get tired and bored, easily felt mentally hurt or sensitive, shy, low learning skills, truancy, hyperactivity, parents' low socioeconomic education levels, uncomfortable homes, parental and child awareness levels, financial problems, community's mentality, language differences, and unhealthy food intake for body and brain (Abdul Razaq Ahmad and Zalizan Mohd, 2009). The other factors are genetic factors (James D. Watson 1985; Papalia and Olds, 1985)[1]. Ramle Abdullah's study (2014) stated that the Orang Asli also have their own custom and beliefs and most of the Orang Asli Semaq Beri believe in supernatural and superhuman powers[8]. For the Orang Asli community, the belief system in society is a tool to control, reward and punish the society.

This study aims to identify the level and factors contributing to Orang Asli community participation in social development programs undertaken by agencies so that agencies can modify the program framework based on the needs, wants and culture of the community itself.

**II. RESEARCH METHOD**

**A. Area of study**

This study was conducted in Kampung Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu and Kampung Sungai Pergam, Kemaman. This study focuses on social development programs that have been implemented by the agency for the Orang Asli community in the state of Terengganu. This study focuses on the level and participation factors of the Orang Asli community in the social development program.

**Table 1: Distribution of Orang Asli**

Location	No	Tribes	Male	Female
Kg.Sungai Pergam, Kemaman	130	Semaq	305	251
		Beri,		
		Batek		
Kg. Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu	107	Semaq	306	224
		Beri,		
		Batek		

Source: JAKOA (2015)

**B.Informants**

The informants in this study were divided into two; namely, the Orang Asli communities involved in social development programs implemented for them and the agencies that planned and implemented these development programs. On behalf of the agency, the selected informants are JAKOA, JAKIM, schools for Orang Asli and government health clinics that involve in planning and implementing the development programs for Orang Asli communities in the state of Terengganu.

**C.Data Collection**

This survey was conducted to identify the actual problems and needs of the community in development programs undertaken by the relevant agencies. Observation and interview methods were used to gather the information from agencies and communities in the effort to identify the level and participation factors that motivate the Orang Asli community to be involved in the social development program. Researchers paid several visits from time to time to the researched sites to strengthen the community's linkages in order to facilitate the research process. Researchers also participated in development programs implemented to internalize the participation process of Orang Asli communities in the development programs. During the implementation process of the social development programs, the researchers used the observation form and recorded the events or subjects systematically or structurally. The researchers took 24 months (2016 to 2017) to conduct observations. Most of the observations were done during the implementation of social development programs for Orang Asli communities conducted by the agencies. This allowed researchers to perform data collection better and more accurately.

**D.Data Analysis**

Nvivo software (NVIVO8) was the researchers' choice for data analysis because Nvivo software has a visual representation function in the form of flow charts or tree diagrams and this will make it easier for researchers to know the relationship between data, prepare report and present research findings. This software helps researchers to copy, store, coordinate, organize research data in a more systematic, easy and orderly manner and construct a study model based on information obtained from research informants. This software not only helps to present findings but also helps researchers to interpret and explore the findings better and more deeply.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**A. Participation level of Orang Asli in the Social Development Program**

In order to obtain information on the level of participation of Orang Asli communities in social development programs conducted, researchers interviewed the agencies and the Orang Asli community in both villages in the State of Terengganu. Through interviews with these agencies, the researchers



obtained the following information.

"Based on what I observed among the participants who joined the program, some of them understood the program and some didn't understand it. Most of the time, the elders will only come for the goodies and they rarely understand the points of the program. The youth will most probably get the inputs but for the children and teenagers, they only come just for fun. Even though they do not understand what we are saying, but if there is something for them, they will like it. But for the KEDAP program, it is a different thing. The program is for them to know the alphabets and how to read. We can see the progress and changes throughout the program. However, only the women join this program as the men have to go into the forest to support their family".

Based on interviews with informant 1, the researchers found that most Orang Asli either from the elderly, youth or children who participated in any development programs conducted by any agency, they were merely to get souvenirs or goodies from the agencies. However, the community participation for KEDAP classes that is mainly participated by women or mothers of Orang Asli is very good. Their participation in this class is not merely to receive rewards or gifts but to increase their skills in particular reading skills. In addition, the Orang Asli community, either children or adults, do join 'sewang' activities which are their cultural and traditional activities.

Further, researchers also interviewed 13 informants from the Orang Asli community to obtain information on their participation level. Based on interviews with some informants from Kampung Sungai Pergam, they informed:

"There are 25 participants for KEDAP program and all of them are women. Participants will receive RM15 allowance per day, and in a month, they can get RM200 plus. We also join health programs if any. If we are sick we will go to the clinic on our own, and we also join some sport activities. The agencies that always do these kinds of programs are JAKOA, FELCRA and the school's community. Even if the programs do not offer free goodies, we will still join in. Most of the time, the programs will provide us food. When FELCRA conducts any sport event, everyone will join in. They also do the spring cleaning program, but that would be rare. JAKIM also comes to teach us how to read Quran but there is only a few that would join. They also offer allowance for fardhu ain classes, but still the number of participants is low because they are too lazy to join."

Through the interviews, the researchers found that the Kampung Sungai Pergam Orang Asli community have involved more in any form of development programs provided for them. Majority of attendees for most programs are women. This is because men are not interested and are lazy to participate in the programs organized. The community still participates in the programs even though no gifts or rewards were promised to them. In addition, the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Pergam is more interested in telematch or recreational activities.

Furthermore, to identify the level of the Orang Asli community participation in Kampung Sungai Berua, researchers interviewed some informants. They stated:

"There is a program where you have to clean the area, then you'll get a hamper. The people from clinic also come to our house. We have started to use the medicine from clinic now."

"There is also a meeting."

"We also have educational program."

"Cultural program like singing Orang Asli song and banana tree plantation about half an acre are also conducted here."

"There was also a workshop on how to plant the banana trees."

"A lot of people joined. It's good because we got socialized in the community."

"But if there's a program like this, the Orang Asli will keep on joining because it's for the sake of the villagers. The response is good and lively."

"They will surely participate in this kind of program, because they like it."

Overall, through observations and interviews with the Sungai Berua Orang Asli community, researchers found that during the interview process, the informants had to take quite some time to recall the programs that the agencies have done for them. The researchers found that most of them participated in development programs. However, the community does not involve in the planning process of a program, they only involve in the implementation of a program.

Through the observation too, the researchers also found that the Orang Asli community would only attend a program if they were promised a reward such as food, hamper, and lucky draws and so on. Researchers also noted that the Orang Asli community in the Pergam River, Kemaman, had paid more attention to the programs implemented compared to the Orang Asli community in the Kampung Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu. This could be seen from the program's atmosphere, the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Pergam responded in such a way that they could applaud and laugh when listening to interesting and funny stories while the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Berua showed no response as if they did not understand what they were told about.

Apart from discussing the level of Orang Asli participation in development programs, the study also discusses the factors that influence the participation of the Orang Asli community in the Social Development Programs which have been implemented by the agencies involved.

## **B. Factors Influencing participation of the Orang Asli Community in the Social Development Program**

To identify the factors that influence participation of the Orang Asli community in the Social Development Programs (PPS) in both Orang Asli villages, Kampung Sungai Pergam, Kemaman and Kampung Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu, researchers interviewed 7 staff of the implementing agencies who were directly involved in the planning and execution of the programs.

Based on interviews with the first informant, researchers found that among the challenges faced by the agencies was the Orang Asli community was less interested or feeling bored when participating in the development programs.

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Therefore, agencies should always be more creative to attract them and not to make them feel bored like

putting elements of fun or entertainment in any lectures and briefing. In addition, other factors that cause the Orang Asli community to discontinue to participate in the development program is their easily give-up attitude. One such example is that when their farming project produced the results not as expected, they would no longer pursue with that project. Another factor is they are comfortable with what they already have which make them not willing to put more effort or to work harder. This can be seen as true when Orang Asli community at Sungai Pergam, Kemaman who receive fairly high dividend payouts for their palm oil, thus, they are reluctant to do any other extra work to support their cost of living. Through interviews, researchers also found that Orang Asli has talent in various skills such as sewing, cooking and traditional practices to maintain their beauty. For those who have taken the skills certificate courses, they usually have to stay far away from the village to complete their studies. The duration required to complete the skill course is at least three months up to a year depending on the type of skills. The researchers also found that the Orang Asli community in both villages, namely Sungai Pergam and Sungai Berua are experiencing health problems. Some of the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Pergam have obesity problems as they practice unhealthy eating habits compared to the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Berua whereby some of them are experiencing mal-nutritional problems as they have financial problems.

Education level is another factor that contributing to low participation of Orang Asli community in the social development. Parents are not really concerned about the education of their children, thus the level of participation in social education program is not that encouraging, especially in Kampung Sungai Berua. Another challenge faced by the agencies in terms of getting the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Berua to participate in the social development program is that they seem not to focus and do not fully understand the message and goals of the development programs implemented. Besides, their high dependency on forest products as their source of income make them feel that the implementation of development programs have slightly disturbed their daily work routines and disrupted their source of income. Thus they expect the agencies that implementing these development programs to provide them with some financial compensation to replace the income that they have let go because they must participate in the program. In addition, if there's a problem with the program for example giving them gifts or rewards that does not meet their needs and expectation, this will bring a bad effect on the relationship of both parties in the future.

Time factor can also be seen as another factor especially for the program called the KEDAP program. The KEDAP program is held in the afternoon when the men are still in the forest in search of forest resources for family usage or income and they usually go home late in the evening. Similarly, like other programs that are implemented, this program is perceived as interfering with their daily work routines, and disrupting their income gaining activities. If any

party wants to do a program with them, then they have to provide token or gifts or reward that can replace their income.

For the school administration, the difficulty that they face is to maintain the number of students attending the secondary schools. Normally the school will receive a number of students from the Orang Asli community for form one registration at the beginning of the year. However, gradually the number will decrease. This is because the Orang Asli students will experience inferiority complex when they were teased by other students who are not from their community and talked bad about their appearance. In addition, they also have problem in getting up early for school.

Through the interview with the second informant in Kampung Sungai Pergam, the study found that the level of Orang Asli participation in these programs is still low. This is due to some social factors. For example, if they join Islamic programs or practice the teachings of Islamic religion, they will be boycotted by their friends. They also feel the need to care for their friends' feeling or sensitivity and some of them have inferiority complex. In addition, parents also do not allow their children to practice the teachings of Islam and to join Islamic programs or activities.

Through the interviews too, researchers also found that infrastructure facilities are not the main problem for this community to participate in the Islamic programs or attending religious activities. The main problem is the technology factor like mobile phones and the internet that makes them neglect the useful programs offered for them. The study also found that the Orang Asli in Kampung Sungai Pergam are involved in a very serious social problem such as the use of harmful pills, *ketum* abuse, drug abuse and other social problems. Based on interviews with third informant, researchers found that low self-awareness, being too sensitive, easily get bored and always expecting for rewards from agencies are among the factors that contribute to lower level of participation of the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Berua in social development programs.

The results of the interview with the fourth informant found that the participation of the Orang Asli community in Kampung Sungai Pergam is good. However, for every program implemented at schools, the schools need to provide meals and lucky draws as a tool to attract them to participate in the program. The programs also need to be interlaced with various other activities such as fun activities so they will not be bored and tired. Based on the results of the interview, it can be concluded that the factors affecting their participation are mainly attitudes and behaviours.

The results of the interview with the fifth informant found that the lack of participation of the Orang Asli communities in the development programs implemented by the school are the role of the family who does not encourage their children to go to school, lack of self - awareness to improve their livelihood, inferiority complex and shyness , demanding for reward, low motivation, and unhealthy lifestyle practices. Through observations, for example, at the KAFA class conducted in Kampung Sungai Berua, the study found that participants were not fully focused and lost focus during the learning session. They were also hyperactive, easily got bored and tired and still using their language while



communicating with each other in the classroom.

The interview with the sixth informant found that the Orang Asli participation in Kampung Sungai Pergam, especially women, can be categorized as good. Those who do

not participate in the program are because they are still shy to see outsiders or agencies. Therefore, in this case, agencies need to provide programs to improve the Orang Asli's self-confidence. In addition, this study also found that most mothers in Kampung Sungai Pergam now have better awareness and trust in agencies especially in relation to health issues although their education level is still low.

Through the interviews with the seventh informant, this study found that Orang Asli participation in these programs is still low. This is because they are still practicing traditional way of life, still uncomfortable with outsiders who come to their place; they will run into the forest or hide in their house when outsiders come. However, they will come out and deal with outsiders if the outsiders offer goods as reward to them. Their awareness towards good livelihood is still at a very low level that they are still having bad urinating habit (urinating wherever they feel like), having inferiority complex, anti-social or have low social skills, low level of education and unhealthy food intake. Based on the interviews and field observations, the number of women participation is more encouraging than men in these social development programs. That is because most men need to go to the forest to find wood, plants, animals and other kinds of natural resources for them to generate income for their family to meet their daily needs.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study found that the level of participation of Orang Asli communities in social development programs is still at a low level. This is because most of them only participate in the development programs that are being implemented just to obtain a short term financial benefits, namely token of appreciation, rewards or gifts. Besides, the Orang Asli community is also not involved in the planning process of a program; they are only involved in the implementation stage of a program.

Overall study has also found that the factors that influence the participation of Orang Asli communities in social development programs include the attitude factors such as easily give up attitude, laziness, easily get bored, lack of self-esteem, shyness, feeling comfortable, fear to unknown, too much care for other people's sensitivity, too sensitive, always expect for rewards, low motivation, not focusing and losing focus during the program, hyperactive, anti-social and low social skills[6]. In addition, norm factor is also included whereby they are still practicing traditional way of life. Family factors such as social problems, less encouragement from parents for children to go to school, low level of education and the nature of work they involve in. Cultural factors that include mentality (cannot live far away from their village) and use their native language while communicating with each other in the classroom also can influence their participation level in any development programs. Nutrition

factors include obesity problems, nutrient deficiencies, lifestyle habits and unhealthy food intake. Finally, technology factors mainly the use of cell phones and the internet.

Generally, the results of this study can benefit the management of the agencies in implementing the development programs that are meant to improve the status of the livelihood of the Orang Asli community in Terengganu. Based on the findings of the study, among the important points to be taken into account in order to enhance the effectiveness of the programs and improve the participation of the Orang Asli community in development programs is to include members of the Orang Asli community at the planning stage to ensure that the programs will be implemented according to the needs and wants of this community

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