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Social Mobility of Orang Asli:
Kampung Sungai Raya, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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Abstract
Social mobility impacts the Orang Asli's employment, education, and danger of exclusion. Hence, this study intends to explore the factor that affects the social mobility of Orang Asli, which are health, education, work possibilities, social and cultural capital, technological access, social security, and area-based factors, which previous research has not explored. For data collection, face-to-face interviews are conducted using Google Meet. The target groups of the study are Orang Asli from Sungai Raya Village. Findings show the importance of social mobility and how the Malaysian government initiative to help the Orang Asli is visible.

Keywords: Indigenous people; Orang Asli; social mobility; socio-economy

1.0 Introduction
Malaysia's indigenous people make up a significant portion of the country's population. They are a small minority, with between 140,000 and 180,000 people. Ethnolinguistically, the Orang Asli are divided into three groups: Senoi, the Proto-Malay or Malay First, and the Negrit (Masron, Masami, and Ismail, 2013). In Malaysia, indigenous people make up a small minority, accounting for less than 1% of the total population (Department of Orang Asli Development, 2018).

The first people to settle in the region were the Orang Asli. It is a community among the first to settle in a specific place and has supplemented its income by growing diverse crops. The Orang Asli have different sources of income, culture, spirituality, customs, and laws than the majority society. The Orang Asli people still maintain a close connection to their original homelands' land, woodlands, rivers, and other natural resources. Because they rely on natural resources, they have lived in the same region for generations.

The Malaysian government has taken several initiatives to improve the living conditions of the Orang Asli. JAKOA, for example, has established many social development projects aimed to improve the Orang Asli community's well-being. JAKOA was established in 1953 under a new law called "Aboriginal Peoples" Ordinance No.3 1954. It was formed to protect the Orang Asli and their way of life from the rapid development of civilization and exploitation while providing appropriate education and development facilities (Sejarah JAKOA, n.d).

JAKOA has worked on physical aid projects such as home renovations, public facility building, and infrastructure projects like halls, mosque, and water tanks (Manaf, Omar, Razali, Abdullah & Saputra, 2021). Hence, the Orang Asli has achieved success in athletics, education, entrepreneurship, leadership, and various fields. JAKOA is also dedicated to strengthening its partnership with the Ministry of Education to increase the Orang Asli community's access to continuing education (Maria, 2019). Education is the most crucial area where the Orang Asli people, who are still poor, can make a difference.

However, the greatest challenge facing the Orang Asli people today is the high poverty level. The Orang Asli people are still being left out of mainstream economic progress. Orang Asli's other concerns include losing and preserving their culture and language, land ownership, natural resource ownership and exploitation, political and autonomous issues, pollution, health, and prejudice (Syed Hussain, Krishnasamy, & Golam Hassan, 2017). Thus, a research is necessary to explore the factor that affects the social mobility of Orang Asli.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Indigenous Peoples: An Overview
According to Iskandar Carey (1976) , 'Orang Asli' is derived from the Arabic 'Asali,' which means 'original,' 'wellborn,' or 'aristocratic,' while 'Asli' is derived from the Arabic 'Asali,' which means 'original,' 'wellborn,' or 'aristocratic'. Before the word Orang Asli was coined, the term "aborigines" was used. The Malaysian government feels the word "Orang Asli" should be used instead of "aborigines," which connotes "backwardness," "underdevelopment," and "primitiveness" (primitive). The name "Orang Asli" does not imply "backward," "underdeveloped," or "primitive" in any way.

The Orang Asli are divided into three ethnic groups, according to Carey (1976): Negrito, Senoi, and Proto-Malay. The Kensiu, Kintak, Jahai, Lanoh, Mendrik, and Batek sub-groups belong to the Negrito ethnic group, whereas the Semai, Temiar, Jahet, and Che 'Wong sub-groups belong to the Senoi ethnic group. Temuan, Semelai, Jakun, Orang Kanak, Orang Kuala, and Orang Seletar are Ma' Betis (Mah Meri) sub-groups, while Ma' Betis (Mah Meri) sub-groups are Temuan, Semelai, Jakun, Orang Kanak, Orang Kuala, and Orang Seletar (Department of Orang Asli Development, 2018). Each ethnic language or sub-group did not comprehend the other ethnic languages or sub-groups, according to the author's experience with the Indigenous population. In summary, Malay has replaced English as their primary language.

The Orang Asli's activities include foraging and harvesting agricultural commodities. On the other hand, their manner of life has undergone significant changes. Development is causing changes in the forest environment, and government policies favor agriculture and resettlement, resulting in changes in the local economy. Indigenous people also work in agricultural fields such as rubber, tea, oil palm plantations, and manufacturing (Nobuta, 2008).

Economic, physical, and capital development and other social developments have had a wide range of beneficial effects on Orang Asli's lives. The government's initiatives have improved the economy, religion, education, communication, and health of these minorities (Masron, Masami, and Ismail, 2013).

2.2 Past Studies on Orang Asli Social Mobility
According to Korea Development Institute (2014), social mobility is a multidimensional word that refers to a person's standing within a society shifting. One's financial situation influences his or her social reputation and authority. It is linked to the idea of economic mobility, which is based on earnings, profits, and riches (Korea Development Institute, 2014).

Social mobility can also explain a situation in which an agent's relative economic standing is not dictated by baseline conditions such as parental income or family history. Therefore, we are looking at educations, formal laws, skills, opportunities, and work ethic, to mention a few, as well as the drivers of an offspring's economic mobility concerning that of its parents (Galiani, 2010).

In the past years, few studies were done on indigenous people regarding land acquisition compensation (Anuar, Kamaruzzaman, Daud; 2010), family planning (Rosniza Aznie, Lyndon, Sharifah Mastura, Selvadurai, Mimi Hanida, Syahiran, & Mazrin Rohizaq, 2018), poverty (Kari, Masud, Yahya, 2016), education (Kamaruddin, 2006; Rosniza Aznie et al., 2018). Therefore, this study will enable us to fill in the lack of literature related to the social mobility of indigenous people, and other scholars can reference it at present and for future academic works.

2.3 Factors Influencing Social Mobility
Social mobility is a complicated and multi-faceted phenomenon. Social mobility works in various ways for different people and different situations. Nunn, Johnson, Monro, Bickerstaffe, and Kelsey (2007) had elaborated seven factors influencing social mobility as refer in Table 1, which are:

Table 1. Factors Influencing Social Mobility

Factors Influencing Social Mobility	
Social capital	Social mobility can be hampered by a lack of positive role models, peer pressure, a lack of motivation, risk aversion, worklessness societies, anti-social behavior, and substance abuse. On the other hand, middle-class households have access to a wider variety of social networks, which are more beneficial for upward mobility and preventing downward mobility.

Cultural capital	It depends on a particular level or class of a family. For example, middle-class families confer social advantages on their children, raising their chances of moving up the social ladder and preventing them from falling behind.
Early childhood influences	Early childhood influences are crucial in influencing subsequent life outcomes. Early experiences such as the nature of the home atmosphere, family structure, pre-school care, and relationships with caring adults create a pattern of growth in later life that is difficult to change, except through education, according to compelling evidence.
Education	One of the most critical factors of social mobility is education. Middle-class families, for example, want to take advantage of educational opportunities.
Jobs and labor market experiences	Significant levels of unemployment and long-term economic inactivity can affect social mobility.
Health and well-being	Illness can be linked to social and environmental factors associated with lower socioeconomic status, resulting in its decline.
Area-based influences	Inequalities in access to private transportation, such as the lower quality provision of certain essential public services in disadvantaged areas, can leave lower socioeconomic groups unable to make effective access to these services.

Source: Nunn, Johnson, Monro, Bickerstaffe, and Kelsey (2007)

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method, in which it explores the factor that affects the social mobility of Orang Asli, which are health, education, work possibilities, social capital, cultural capital, technological access, social security, and infrastructure. The respondents were two (2) Orang Asli from Kampung Sungai Raya, Batu 5 Seremban, 71150 Linggi, Negeri Sembilan. The reason to choose only two respondents is that only they can answer the interview questions based on their experiences that influence social mobility.The phone numbers of respondents were specifically given by JAKOA. The data collected through online interview (Google Meet) due to COVID-19 pandemic. Open-ended questions had been utilized to gain more complexity of answers from the interviewee. Purposive sampling was used in conducting the research.

3.1 Data Collection Methods

Qualitative research generally explores attitudes, behaviors, and experiences using interviews or focus groups for participants' in-depth opinions. Specifically, the qualitative research design utilized face-to-face and semi-structured interviews with the chosen individual residents.

Individual face-to-face and semi-structured interviews were employed to avoid deviations from the study theme. Semi-structured interviews also allowed informants to express opinions on the subject matter liberally. Furthermore, the interview sessions were conducted in Malay. The duration of each interview ranged from one to two hours. Overall, the data collection process was completed in one month.

A face-to-face interview may give rich data, build connections with respondents, and investigate and comprehend a complicated topic. The data collected through online interview (Google Meet) were thematically analyzed. The audio recorded during the interview sessions was transcribed verbatim and manually coded for analysis. Furthermore, the research questions were thematically classified into themes and sub-themes. This study used a single embedded case study design comprising Orang Asli from Kampung Sungai Raya, Batu 5 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Following the interview sessions, data transcription and the subsequent verification by experts were performed within one month.

3.2 Development of Interview Questions

Before the interview sessions were conducted, the proposed interview questions were validated by experts from the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Since the interviews were bilingually conducted (using both English and Malay), the clarity and consistency of the translations were evaluated by language experts.

3.2.1 Research Themes

This study aims to explore the factor that affects the social mobility of Orang Asli. Thus, the central theme is categorized into eight main themes (demography, social capital, cultural capital, family and community support on educational aspect, fair work opportunities, health, infrastructure and technology).

3.2.2 Thematic Analysis

Data were collected using face-to-face interviews between the interviewer and the interviewees. The question is asked based on semi-structured questions that were prepared earlier. The interviewer used Google Meet to record the interview sessions. The data are transcribed into written form. Data collected are analyzed using thematic analysis. The data recorded are transcribed and later coded manually for analysis. The research questions are arranged into themes and sub-themes in the thematic analysis.

3.2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were asked in this study:

1. Do you lived here? How many siblings did you have?

2. To what extend is your relationship with your friends, neighbors, village leaders, or the community? Is it close? How far could the closeness of this relationship help you in your life?

3. Does your culture accept or reject changes in life (social mobility)?

4. In your opinion, how important is education for your family or next of kin? How has the government assisted in the educational aspect of your family?

5. How has the government provided your family with employment opportunities?

6. Are you receiving treatment from a government hospital?

7. Are infrastructures such as paved roads and public transport available in your area of the house?

8. Does your job use any technology? Can you explain specifically about the technology performed in your job?

4.0 Findings and Discussion

Table 2. Response from the Interviewee

No.	Theme	Response
1.	Demography	I have lived in this village since I was a little girl. I lived with my family. I have six siblings. All of my siblings live elsewhere. Only 3 of my siblings live near my area (Madam T) I am originally from this kampung. My family is not significant in size. I have five siblings. My siblings live on their own now. They live nearby my house (Madam S)
2.	Social Capital	Definitely, I am good with the neighbors and the head of the village. They are my relatives too. I am also close to my friends. Sometimes we need friends to share each other's information. For me, friends are essential to help us in need and to motivate us when we are down (Madam T) Yes, we are a very close-knit community. My cousins, brothers, aunties, and uncles lived here. We need help from this community. There is never a problem between us here. We are never in a situation where we are against each other. We feel better and have greater personal satisfaction in our life when we are strongly linked to the people we love (Madam S)
3.	Cultural Capital	There is no clashing between culture and changes in my life. The culture is moving in the same direction as my life (Madam T) To be honest, there is no limitation. There are no issues such as this cannot, this can. I felt more appreciation towards my culture and tried to blend in with my daily activities (Madam S)
4.	Family and Community Support on Educational aspect	All my three children went to school. Education is essential for their future. The government does help the children here in terms of education. There is also training in terms of improving skills for Orang Asli here (Madam T) Yes, all of two children go to school, but they are just average in their performance...they are not bright. Also, because of education, my children have a better job than me. (Madam S)
5.	Work Opportunities	I work in a factory. Although it is not easy to get a job, all my children have a job (Madam T) I work in the same factory as Madam T. All my children are working. Two of my children received technical training from the government to assist them for their current job (Madam S)

6.	Health	The government does assist us in having vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all of us here have got the 3rd vaccine booster shot (Madam T)
		There are free medical fees, and the health officer comes and does medical checkups here for us (Madam S)
7.	Infrastructure	The infrastructure here is quite good. The bus is also available here. There is no problem if we want to go to town because most people here have cars and motorcycles. For me, infrastructure is very important for the betterment of our lives. Especially the internet, we need to use it every day (Madam T)
		All of the basic infrastructures have been provided by the government. The government also helps in terms of house and road repairs. The government also provided us with a community hall to hold meetings (Madam S)
8.	Technology	I know how to drive a car. In my line of work also required me to use computers all the time (Madam T)
		I have to use a computer to key in data. Basically, we are using technology every day. (Madam S)

4.1 Demography
Based on the interview, both respondents have lived in the same area since they were little until now. They have about three to five siblings. Orang Asli has traditionally spent a few years in one location at a period, as they have for many generations (Radu, 2019).

4.2 Social Capital
All respondents have a close relationship with their communities. Most of them are families (cousins, brothers, aunties, and uncles) who live in this village. Indigenous peoples in Ecuador, for example, are well endowed in social capital (for example, organization, solidarity patterns, and shared social and cultural values), despite their economic disadvantage (Uquillas, 2003).

4.3 Cultural Capital
Both of the respondents agreed that their culture does not clash with life changes. The culture is moving in the same direction as their life. Beyond capitalism, cultural capital can promote social integration and cohesiveness, create new social interactions, and establish an equal society with higher social welfare (Gregorčič, 2009).

4.4 Family and Community Support on Educational Aspect
Both of the respondents emphasized the importance of education in their children's lives. It is seen as all of the respondent's children going to school. The government also had assisted in improving the educations and skills of children of Orang Asli. Since 1995, the Ministry of Education has implemented many policies and programmes to improve Orang Asli children's educational outcomes. These policies and programmes have progressed from mainstream integration to a more indigenous-focused education. However, more effort is required to ensure that these policies are appropriate for the type and scope of Orang Asli's situation (Wan, 2020).

4.5 Work Opportunities
Both respondents are working, and all their children have a job. The government usually provides educational assistance to Orang Asli. For instance, the Orang Asli Development Department (JAKOA) sponsored a registration drive for its Orang Asli Skill-based Career Training Programme (SCTP). Skills include industrial automation engineering, air-conditioning maintenance, and green-keeping to cosmetic services, hair styling, baking, plumbing, and tailoring for Orang Asli (Aznan, 2017).

4.6 Health
There is much assistance from the government in improving the life of Orang Asli in Kampung Sungai Raya. Assistance includes free medical fees, COVID-19 vaccination jab, and medical check-ups. If necessary, the government of Negri Sembilan plans to open a hospital in Tampin to help existing health facilities treat Covid-19 patients in the state (New Straits Times, 2021).

4.7 Infrastructure

Due to the development in the particular area, the respondents benefit from a proper infrastructure such as safe road conditions. All of the communities there own a vehicle; hence, there is no problem going from one place to another. The government also repaired Orang Asli's houses and provided them with a community hall.

4.8 Technology

Both of the respondents use computer technology in their work. There is much assistance from the government in improving the technological skills of Orang Asli. For example, an information and communications technology (ICT) literacy programme called CT Literacy Cultivation Program and Orang Asli Community Service in New Norms, organized by the International Institute of Strategy (ISI) was recently completed by 789 residents from the Orang Asli Village Kampung Jeram, Kedah. The Orang Asli are trained to learn about and use Internet technology (New Straits Times, 2021).

5.0 Conclusion

Social mobility does affect the community in Kampung Sungai Raya, Batu 5, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. They are a very close-knit community as most of them are relatives (cousins, brothers, aunties, and uncles) who live in the same village. Social mobility also moves smoothly as their culture does not restrict or limit the changes in their life. The respondents have a job that has required to use computer technology. The current and future generation knows the importance of education as all children go to school. The government played a significant responsibility in accommodating social mobility among Orang Asli in this village. Their assistance in terms of education, health, and infrastructure positively affects Orang Asli's lives in the village. Future studies should focus on social mobility challenges towards Orang Asli. In addition, there should be a comparative study between the Orang Asli that live in a different state or area (city, municipal, and district). This can contribute to the body of knowledge in Orang Asli studies.

Acknowledgement

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper may contribute to anthropology, humanities and social sciences fields.

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