

The Constraints Of Indigenous Community (Jungle People/Orang Rimba) In Accessing Formal Education

Alfian

UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi

Email: alfian@uinjambi.ac.id

Abstrak

Isu tentang komunitas adat terasing yang unik (Orang Rimba) di Jambi, Indonesia adalah perampasan dan pengasingan tanah dan sumber daya mereka sebagai akibat dari ekspansi kelapa sawit (industri pertanian) dan penebangan liar. Akibatnya, Orang Rimba terpaksa pindah ke kawasan hutan lain karena pemukiman dan sumber daya untuk hidup menjadi langka. Selain pindah ke kawasan hutan lain, komunitas adat tersebut harus tinggal di dekat komunitas arus utama. Namun, salah satu masalah terbesar bagi mereka yang memilih untuk hidup dalam komunitas arus utama adalah bahwa mereka tidak dapat berbicara bahasa, mereka tidak dapat membaca, menulis, dan mereka tidak tahu apa-apa tentang dunia modern, seperti pendidikan, politik, uang, pakaian, kendaraan, dll. Akibatnya, hal ini tidak memungkinkan mereka untuk memiliki "masyarakat yang sangat terintegrasi dan berfungsi dengan baik". Dengan demikian, Pendidikan adalah salah satu cara untuk mengembangkan mereka. Namun, mereka memiliki banyak kendala dalam mengakses pendidikan formal. Beberapa kendala dikategorikan menjadi kendala eksternal (tidak tersedianya sekolah di dekat daerah mereka, guru, dan kurikulum) dan kendala internal, seperti Melangun-meninggalkan tempat tinggal masyarakat adat, seragam sekolah dan penolakan untuk pergi ke sekolah). Kendala dalam mengakses pendidikan formal ini dapat diatasi dengan membangun kemitraan (pemerintah, LSM, dan Perusahaan Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit) dan pendidikan alternatif. Penelitian lebih lanjut untuk mengetahui pendidikan yang cocok untuk orang Rimba harus dilakukan.

Kata kunci: *Orang Rimba/orang rimba, masyarakat adat yang unik, kendala, pendidikan formal, akses, alternatif, hambatan*

Abstract

The issue regarding a unique isolated indigenous community (Orang Rimba/ Jungle people) in Jambi, Indonesia is the dispossession and alienation of their land and resources as a result of the expansion of palm oil (farming industry) and illegal logging. Consequently, the Orang Rimba has been forced to move to other forested areas as their settlements and resources for living become scarce. Besides moving to the other forested area, those indigenous communities have to live near the mainstream community. However, one of the biggest problem for those who choose to live in the mainstream community is that they cannot speak the language, they cannot read, write, and they do not know anything about modern world, such as, education, politics, money, clothes, vehicle, etc. As a result, this will not enable them to have "a highly integrated, well-functioning society". Thus, Education is

one way to develop them. However, they have many constraints in accessing formal education. Some of the constraints are categorized into external (unavailability of school near their area, teacher, and curriculum) and internal constraints, such as Melangun- leaving the place where indigenous community live, school uniform and refusal to go to school). These constraints in accessing formal education can be solved by building partnership (government, NGO, and Palm Plantation Company) and alternative education. The further research to find out the suitable education for orang Rimba should be conducted.

Keywords: *Orang Rimba/ jungle people, unique indigenous community, constraints, formal education, access, alternative, barriers*

INTRODUCTION

A common issue regarding the indigenous population in the world is the dispossession and alienation of their land and resources as the consequences of colonisation, expansion of farming industry and illegal logging (wikipedia, n.d; Voyle & Simmons, 1999). These alienations and dispossession have destroyed” the community identity, social cohesion, self-esteem and economic survival” (Sutton, 1975; White, 1983; Murchie, 1985; Williams et al., 1992; King, 1997 in Voyle & Simmons, 1999, p. 1035). In Indonesia, the expansion of farming industry and the illegal logging have created a big problem for Orang Rimba (People of Jungle) – a very unique isolated indigenous community who live in the forest, especially in the conservation area in Jambi province. The forest in which Orang Rimba community live has been changed into palm plantation and other farming industries. Based on data at the Taman Nasional bukit Dua Belas/ national park (TNBD) Center, it is only 30% of 60,500 hectares of the park that is still intact, while the other 70 percent has been damaged or changed into palm plantation (The Jakarta Post, 2013). Hence, the Orang Rimba are forced to move to other forested areas as their settlements and resources for living become scarce because it is hard for them to hunt animals and seek for tubers or other food resources (The Jakarta Post, 2012). Besides moving to the other forested area, those indigenous communities have to live near the mainstream community in the village surrounding the forest.

However, one of the biggest problem for those who choose to live in the mainstream community is that they cannot speak the language, they cannot read, write, and they do not know anything about modern world, such as, education, politics, money, clothes, vehicle, etc. because they used to live in the forest. Thus, they need education in order to enable them to have “a highly integrated, well-functioning society” and to maintain social order, social cohesion, and harmony in a modern and democratic society (Sadovnik, 2007, p. 4). In another word, this community needs to be developed through education because education could develop their intellectual, social, and personal potency to the higher level (Nieto & Bode, 2008 and Bennet, 2003) which will enable them to have “a highly integrated, well-functioning society” and to maintain social order, social cohesion, and harmony in a modern and democratic society (Sadovnik, 2007, p. 4).

The Indonesian government had given the equal right for their citizen aged 6-15 years to have free basic education through nine years compulsory education (UU, No. 20/2003). This free education has extended to the 12 years compulsory education program (16-18 years) started this new school years in July 2013 (Jakarta post, 2013). This means that all the children of orang Rimba should participate in the education. In fact, some of their children have been sent to the formal education. However, it is argued that orang Rimba children who want to have formal education face variety of barriers to access formal education. Therefore, this study is attempted to explore the nature of barriers that of Orang Rimba community faced when they want to access formal education. In addition, this study would identify the solution to overcome the barriers for Orang Rimba to have the education.

Defining “Orang Rimba” as indigenous community

The term “indigenous community” in Indonesia is highly debatable. The concept of indigenous people may not applicable for Indonesian, as almost all Indonesians (with the exception of some certain ethnic groups, such as Chinese) are indigenous (IWGIA, 2011). However, Indonesia has many unique isolated indigenous communities- a community who has special characteristics, such as live in the forest, has long ears etc. Among of them are Dayak, baduy, bajau, kubu, suku anak dalam, orang rimba, etc. (Manembu and Sunito, 2009). The Orang Rimba is one of a unique semi-nomadic isolated indigenous communities of Indonesia who live in forested area, in Jambi, central Sumatra - Indonesia. This indigenous community can be categorized into community based on the territory and relations ((McMillan & Chavis, 1986) because they live in certain area. There are around 3,000 of them scattered in the forests of Bukit Duabelas and Bukit Tigapuluh, two national parks and the Barisan Mountain. Conservation Community of Indonesia (KKI) Warsi Jambi in the Jakarta post (2013), stated that around 1,700 Orang Rimba tribespeople live in the TNBD area, 450 others live in the southern part of the Bukit Tigapuluh National Park, while 1,800 people live in a number of areas across Jambi (the Burning Season, 2008; The Jakarta post, 2009, 2013; Wikipedia, n.d).

Originally, the orang Rimba was also called ‘Anak Dalam’ (children of the forest interior) tribe. Traditionally, they have been identified by the derogatory name ‘Kubu’, which can be interpreted as ‘savages’ or stupid people (Burning season, 2008). Their unique cloth, nomadic lifestyle and seems less healthy is considered by the mainstream community as backward. Consequently, the villagers dominate them the lowest rank or caste of other cultures although they have their own caste based on their age and culture (Prasetijo in the Jakarta post, 2012).

The Orang Rimba community is completely dependent on the forest for their livelihood. They live in the group as a small community. The ways that they do for living are swidden farming and a very nomadic life based on looking for sweet potato. Traditionally, they went hunting, trapping, fishing, damming and poisoning the fish in the rivers, and collected some forest products for selling or trading (Burning season, 2008; Sager, 2008; Wikipedia, n.d).

Several cultural practices have been disappeared among orang Rimba. Originally, orang rimba was used to wear lointcloths for man and topless for woman. Today, since they have been exposed to the outsider, they wear common cloth like mainstream community in which woman wears bra and clothes to cover their body. The other cultural practice is called Melangun. Melangun is, leaving their place because one of their family member dies. A long ago, Melangun could last several years to put their sorrow behind them. They would return to the previous place when they feel that the sorrow has passed. However, this Melangun will no longer last several years due to the little forested areas to occupy (KKi Warsi, 2000; the Jakarta post, 2012).

At present, the Orang Rimba exist in several different situations. Their life has been changed very significantly due to the deforestation and illegal logging. They live near the community and they start a new life although there are still some Orang Rimba who live in the forests. The Orang Rimba in Bukit Duabelas National Park (TNB12) can still practice their hunting and gathering activities, their rituals and their livelihoods. Some of them have motorbikes to help them to go hunting or to obtain health services, and hand-phones to connect them with other people (Manembu and Sunito, 2009). As it was introduced above that orang rimba community need to be developed through education. However, they face a lot of barriers or constraints to access the formal education which will be discussed after access in formal education in Indonesia.

Access in Formal education in Indonesia

According to Law No. 20 Year 2003 on national education system, all Indonesian citizens have the equal right to have education. Thus, the Indonesian government had given the equal opportunity for their citizen aged 6-15 years to have free education through nine years compulsory education since 1994 and the 12 years compulsory education program (16-18 years) was started this new school years in July 2013 (Jakarta post, 2013). This means that basic education for Indonesian children is mandatory according to the Law No.

20 year 2003 and now it was also mandatory for high school level. They may choose whether to attend Islamic school or public school since there are two ministries involved in the education administration, Ministry of National education (MONE) and Ministry of Religious affair (MORA) (Alwasilah,& Furqon, 2010). The curricula of the schools also reflect the two systems. MONE offers secular subjects, whereas MORA offers subjects related to Islamic knowledge (Thomas 1988; Frederick and Worden 1993).

A lot of school and resources are built in the urban and rural area in order to accommodate the school aged children. This shows the government commitment to improve the quality of human life in Indonesia. Although according to the data, from 90 % of Indonesia's children have access to primary school, this number is mainly found in the developed province while the enrolment still remains very low in underdeveloping province (Granado, et al, 2007). The disparities are even greater between rural and urban area in which 41 % in Papua, 20 % in Sulawesi Barat etc. This seems that communities who live in rural areas are more disadvantaged compared to that of their urban counterparts. This rural area community may find many constraints and barriers in accessing the education. This includes the constraint of the Orang Rimba community to access formal education. however, limited studies focusing on the constraints or barriers of orang Rimba in accessing education. Some studies on accessing education is conducted by Anwar & Marmoah (2018). Their study focus on the Women problem of Education in Rimba Tribe. Thus, this study focus on the barriers and the alternative solution for accessing formal Education of orang Rimba in general.

METHOD

The purpose of this study is explore the nature of barriers faced by Orang Rimba community and to identify the solution for overcoming the barriers for Orang Rimba to have the education. Thus, this study employed library research by using secondary data from the previous researchers. Bryman (2016) suggests that library research is an important tool for social researchers because it allows them to access existing information that has been collected and analyzed by others. By reviewing the existing literature, researchers can identify gaps in knowledge, explore different theoretical perspectives, and gain a better understanding of the existing research on a topic. In addition, Moser and Kalton (2018) argued that researchers might choose to use secondary data is because it can be accessed quickly and at a relatively low cost compared to primary research methods. The data of this study relies on the use of secondary data sources such as books, academic journals, and other published works. Thus, the method used in analysing the data is content analysis, which involves a systematic and objective analysis of the content of texts or other written material (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis can be used to identify patterns, themes, and other meaningful information in the literature, which can be used to develop a better understanding of the research topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1. Some barriers or constrains to access formal school for orang Rimba

Orang Rimba community face the constraint in accessing formal education including external and internal constraints. The concept of access in education has been discussed by several experts in the field. According to Braun and Kanjee (2006) access could be understood as a mean of entering and approaching something, in this case formal education. Access incorporates three elements in accessing formal education, namely: "getting to school, getting into school, and getting through school" (Braun & Kanjee, 2006, p.307). These three elements can be described as follow. The first is getting to school / physical access- how students go to school, how far they have to travel, and how long it takes. The second is getting into school - related to what barriers and odds that they face to attend and participate at school schools (safety, resources, fees, tests, and available schools). And the last is getting through school - promoting "policies and practices, both influenced by the quality of education provided" (Braun & Kanjee, 2006, p. 307).

From the concept of access above, Jha (2002) suggested that there are two type of barriers - external and internal barriers that might be faced by the children to access the school (Jha, 2002). Jha argued that the external barriers may include everything that the children faced before coming to and getting enrolled in school. These barriers may include physical location, unavailability of school near the area, social stigmatization, or economic conditions of children.

1.1.1. External barriers

The major external barriers for orang rimba to access education are: first, the unavailability of formal school near their area. The orang rimba needs to walk very far away to get to school. As a result, there are not many children of Orang rimba attending school, due to the far distance from schools to their community (Rokhdian, 2008). In addition, to the distance, the facilities of the school are far from being perfect like those in the urban area. This can be categorized into the constraint in getting to school" (Braun & Kanjee, 2006. Second, the availability of teacher is often very hard to meet without mentioning the quality of the teacher who is teaching these children. This can be categorized into getting into school.

Another external barrier with related to getting into school is that within schools and the classroom that might be faced by the orang rimba is that the curriculum and teaching methodologies. According to Jha (2000) curriculum in developing countries is not child friendly or relevant to the need of children. Indonesian curriculum has many subjects to be learnt. Orang Rimba only needs to learn how to count, read and write (KKI Warsi, 2013). However, if they only know these three areas, they may not able to cope with the challenge of modern life. So they need special curriculum. In terms of teaching methodology, the teacher uses Indonesian language in teaching which made them confused because they do not understand that language.

1.1.2. Internal barriers

Beside the external barriers, there are many internal barriers that faced by orang Rimba community to access formal school. One of the internal major barriers for Orang Rimba to take part in the formal education is that the death of their relative or the member of their group. When one of them died, they will leave the place which they called Melangun (KKi Warsi, 2000; the Jakarta post, 2012). This means that there will move to the other places which made it more difficult for them to continue their education. This melangun can be categorized into nomadic life which is also the internal barriers to access the school. According to Rokhdian (2008), nomadic life style and the view of parent that school is less important are the major issues for many of isolated indigenous community to have education.

Other internal factors are early married, ignorance, culture, belief (Anwar and Marmoah, 2018). Their culture consider that school is not useful makes orang Rimba refuse to be taught or going to school which is previously the significant barrier for the Orang Rimba to take part in formal education. This happen because they felt worried if one of orang Rimba can write, read and counting, she/he becomes (orang dusun/ orang terang- villager/ light people- calling addressing for Mainstream community) who was accused to damage and sell forest (Siaran Pers Warsi, 2000).

Another internal constraints to access the formal school is that school uniform. They may find very difficult to wear the uniform for formal school in Indonesia. They used to wear only a piece of cloth that covers part of the body or even they do not wear clothes every day. Using uniform made them feel hot and it is very difficult for them to concentrate in learning (KKI Warsi, 2013). Given the fact that there are many barriers or constraint faced by Orang Rimba in accessing formal education, several alternative solutions might be helpful to solve these barriers and to provide them with education which will be discussed in the following section.

1.2. Alternative solution for Orang Rimba to access education

The government and non-government organization has carried out several programs that may help orang Rimba to access education. Two of the programs in education are: offering alternative education as informal schooling and providing more access to formal education. Since there are several constraints faced by orang Rimba to access the school, some actions probably need to be taken into account.

The first, the government should build the partnership with the Plantation company to provide access to school by providing access for orang Rimba by building more school and access such road to the school. The plantation company which has damaged the forest should have social responsibility to the community, which is generally known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). According to L'Elang (1994), the term corporate responsibility reflects a sense of duty or obligation of the corporate to the community. The company could also provide much kind of resources for Orang Rimba to have education. This can be done by providing teacher, donating funding for revising the curricula that will be appropriate for the Orang rimba needs in which the integration of education into the structure of the Orang Rimba community, "according to their local customs and in a manner that fits into their daily lives" (SOKOLA, n.d), and building multi-function building for Orang Rimba.

The second, providing alternative education as non-formal education for Orang Rimba may be an effective way to improve their access to education. The basic need for orang Rimba is that reading, writing and counting (KKI Warsi, 2013). These are the important elements for orang Rimba which foster their intention in learning (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004). Warsi has been started teaching Orang Rimba through the program name SOKOLA (school) which aims to teach them how to write, read and count because these are their basic need for living with the modern people around them ((Veramu, 1998). Sokola has been established by a non-government organization. It developed an alternative education program which purpose to prepare the community to live in mainstream community and to face the invasion form outsider. Sokola is conducted by visiting the group of orang rimba in their places although they need to walk for 1 -6 hours from one place to other places (KKI Warsi, 2013).

The third, the local community or Orang Rimba community and the mainstream community should be involved in educating the Orang Rimba children since they are a unique isolated indigenous community. This uniqueness of the social background of the Orang Rimba should be identified to encourage the engagement of the mainstream community, government, NGO do help them with education. This can be done by encouraging the mainstream community to be voluntarily teaching orang Rimba how to read, count, and write. In terms of the refusal to participate in education, the government and NGO also need to encourage and support the Orang Rimba to participate in education by giving them understanding that education is very important. In this way, they will be encouraged to participate because they feel that education is important and they are being supported in participating in education (Tesoriero, 2010).

Another solution that can be done in providing the Orang Rimba for Education is that by having the children of Orang Rimba who has got the learning and teaching process to teach other orang Rimba Children. In this way, it will not be very difficult for their children to learn how to write, count and read since the orang Rimba children can teach by using their own language. This program has also been done by some NGO who encourage the children of Orang Rimba to teach other children. Anwar and marmoah (2018) also suggest that to overcome problems in Rimba tribe women education, terminate early marriage, empower the Rimba women, provide equal opportunity for education, change their mindset, provide scholarships, establish government policy for Rimba education, cooperate with private companies, and build a good communication with the leaders of Rimba tribe. Kustati (2022) also suggests that education that takes place in the social life of SAD is due to the leadership role of the Tumenggung, and it must be brought by the da'i of the Komunitas Adat Terpencil (KAT), as well as related volunteers. The education should also introduce orang Rimba how to

read, write, and count, instilling education on clean and healthy living, environmental education through forest area conservation, and utilization of forest products, political education through involvement in political activities. Kustati (2022) regards this as “education model”. This educational model grew because of the leader called Tumenggung and his staff’s willingness to let KAT da’i and other volunteers into SAD’s life and educate them.

CONCLUSION

The issued that has been addressed in this paper is the constraint and the solution to the development of orang Rimba community through education. There are many constraints that faced by orang Rimba Community which can be categorised into external and internal barriers. The government and non-government organisation have carried out alternative education as informal schooling for them. This needs to further developed by incorporating NGO, Palm Plantation Company and government. The government and the company through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund could provide more resources such as building, teachers and all the facilities that are needed to improve the education of Orang Rimba. The alternative education such as Sokola is required to develop since this may solve the problem for education for them. A research needs to be conducted to have a clear picture about what other possible ways to develop this unique isolated community through education.

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