

## **The Life of the Indigenous People in West Malaysia: Integration of Orang Asli into Malays**

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### **Introduction**

The Orang Asli is one of the indigenous communities in Malaysia and it is believed that they are the earliest settlers in the country. In most past studies, the Orang Asli were descended from the Hoabinhians, stone tool-using hunter-gatherers who occupied the peninsular Malaysia as early as 11,000 B.C. Today the Orang Asli comprise at least nineteen culturally and linguistically distinct groups (Bellwood 1997). The largest are the Semai, Temiar, Jakun (Orang Hulu), and Temuan. In 2005 they numbered about 140,000, less than 0.5% of the total Malaysian population (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, 2006). Orang Asli once were thinly scattered throughout the peninsula, but most were pushed back into the interior montane forests as the Malay population grew on the coastal plains and major river valleys. Most Orang Asli still live in rural and remote areas. Until recently they lived by various combinations of hunting, fishing, gathering, swidden farming, aborigiculture, and trading forest products. Nowadays land development projects and government programs have turned many into rural peasants or day laborers.

The term *Orang Asli* has been used as the official designation, refers to all aboriginal tribes that inhabit Peninsular Malaysia. Originally, the words are derived from Malay language and when literally translated mean, *the original inhabitant of the land*. This term has also found been accepted by the aborigines themselves, when they need to refer to themselves collectively. Those days, during the Malay kingdom in Malacca and also to some of the Malays today, the Orang Asli is known as Sakai. According to Dentan (1997), the word *sakai* means dark skinned who are stupid, nomadic, wild, uncivilized, and fit only to be exploited in trade, driven off their land, or enslaved. They were economically important as collectors of jungle product. They are also regarded as infidels and to some of Malays, they would have represented people trapped in the heathen culture and was basically evil and inhuman. Of course, the Malaysian government regards this people as at risk and they needed to learn the ways of modern civilization.

In the Malaysian administrative system today, the Orang Asli are placed under the administration of Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, or JHEOA), and JHEOA is a Federal government agency. Therefore Orang Asli falls under the administration of the Federal Government entirely. The state governments are not directly responsible for this group of people. Since the establishment of Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, or JHEOA), Malaysian government has expressed a desire to “integrate” Orang Asli into the Malaysian “mainstream.” This has come to mean bringing them into the market economy, asserting political control over them, and assimilating them into the Malay ethnic category. Yet, despite continuous efforts by the JHEOA, most Orang Asli still live on the fringes of Malaysian society, cut off from most social services, poorly educated, making a meager living. A 1993 census showed 80.8% of Orang Asli in poverty, 49.9% among the “poorest of the poor” (Ikram Jamaludin 1997; Mohd Tap 1990). Their health and nutrition are at about the same level as in 1960 (Khor Geok Lin 1994; Baer 1999). These discrepancies has caused more problems than facilitating development for the Orang Asli.

### **The Problems of the Orang Asli Today**

Although it is thirty five years after the declaration of the statement of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Orang Asli, they still clearly occupy a unique and disadvantaged status in Malaysian society. If we were to ask the agency responsible for developing the Orang Asli why the situation remained as it was before, the most common answer we would receive would be that they are reluctant to change and keen to preserve their traditional way of life. Despite being indigenous people, they are still not accorded any of the binding special privileges that are provided in the Constitution to the other indigenous people unlike the Malays, and the native peoples of Sabah and Sarawak (Sothi Rachagan, 1990). The perception towards Orang Asli may be negative because the most common answer we would receive about the development of this people would be:

*‘the Orang Asli are reluctant to change’. They are keen to preserve their traditional way of life – i.e. living in the jungle as hunters, gatherers and swiddeners. Their social system, their mental capability, their religious belief, their world views are not compatible with modernization. They cannot change because they refuse to change. Such answer in particular are trying to put the blame on the victim.*

(Williams-Hunt & Hasan, 1993)

But on the other hand, if we were to ask the victims why they failed to change, we will be given different answers. It is not that they refuse to change, but the agencies involved failed to deliver the goods to them. To understand this situation more, let us analyse the present relationship that exist between the Orang Asli and the government. Understanding government provisions and policies toward the Orang Asli require us to examine the role of JHEOA. The JHEOA is a federal government agency, now under the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperative Development. Under the Department, there are various divisions: i.e. the Administration and Personnel Division, the Finance and Supply Division, the Transport and Communication Division, the Socio-Economic Development Division, the Research and Information Division, the Training Division, and the Medical and Health Program. Therefore, the obligation of developing this people become the responsibility of JHEOA alone. In other words, the Orang Asli falls under the administration of the Federal Government entirely. The state governments are not directly responsible for this group of people. These discrepancies has caused more problems than facilitating development for the Orang Asli. Looking at the problems, we should reviewed the implementation of provisions and policies such as legislative, the administrative system, health care, education, research, infrastructures development, economic development and other affairs of the Orang Asli.

Under Section 4 of the Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954, it is clearly stated that the Commissioner for Orang Asli shall be responsible for the general administration, welfare and advancement of the aborigines. This specific definition has preclude other government agencies from participating in development activities for the Orang Asli. They came to understand that Orang Asli do not fall within their scope of administration. The onus of developing this people become the responsibility of JHEOA alone. What make it more difficult for JHEOA to implement any development programme successfully is, it does not have any trained expert in the field of development working in the Department. This situation is further worsened, when most of the lower rank officers were under qualified and not trained in any specific development programme. The style of administration by JHEOA is still oriented towards providing protection for the Orang Asli rather than development. The responsibilities they carry were various. It includes providing health care, education, research, infrastructures development, economic development and other affairs of the Orang Asli.

According to Hunt & Hasan (1993) since the responsibilities, and doing it all alone, JHEOA has become a patron to the Orang Asli which created a form of dependency relationship between the Orang Asli and the Department. As most of the helps from JHEOA came in the form of subsidies, Orang Asli tend to see JHEOA more like a welfare agency that

took care of all their urgent needs. Therefore, with that relationships, the Orang Asli felt psychologically secured. They are not worried for being unable to develop economically or to improve their living standards. They knew JHEOA will be there to help them and take care of their well being. With such attitudes and perceptions Orang Asli are not motivated to change.

Another challenging task to be resolve in the JHEOA administrative system, most of the employees and all in policy-making in the department are Malays. Malay culture is adopted in administrative system whereby the top-down procedure fits the feudal Malay idea that government services are favors that superiors do for their inferiors. In 1997 there were only 30% of the Department's staff were Orang Asli and they were none at management-level (Ikram Jamaludin 1997; Todd 1990). The other employees are almost all Malays. Apparently the Department no longer hires Chinese or Indian Malaysians, except occasionally as doctors. Thus, Orang Asli see themselves as ruled by a Malay department acting for Malay interests. After all, who would be better to understand their problems/welfare and be more eager to solve them? JHEOA officials admit that they cannot have Orang Asli in policy-making positions in the Department because Orang Asli might resist the government's plans for their people, such as its plan to assimilate Orang Asli into the Malay population. Besides, the government's policy that four of every five bureaucrats must be Malays applies even in the JHEOA. The attitudes of Malay JHEOA officials toward Orang Asli are also affected by their positions as bureaucrats. In traditional Malay patron-client hierarchies, bureaucratic services were favors that social superiors, at their discretion, bestowed on their inferiors. In return they expected elaborate shows of humility, respect, and gratitude. JHEOA officials regard themselves as giving Orang Asli numerous services, programs, and opportunities. Therefore, whenever Orang Asli resist Department programs, officials complain about their "ingratitude." The fact that dispossession and displacement have left many Orang Asli dependent upon the Department reinforces these patron-client attitudes (Endicott & Dentan, 2004). No wonder, the Orang Asli have minimal influence over projects intended for them. Except for regroupment schemes and Muslim religious facilities, the Department does not force Orang Asli to accept programs. It offers projects consistent with the government's overall goals. Asli communities can accept or reject them. Although Orang Asli can accept or reject some projects, no mechanism exists for feedback from Orang Asli to modify projects during either planning or implementation. For example, planners think Orang Asli should have "modern" houses. The JHEOA standard-issue house is a small version of rural Malay houses, a rectangular box on short posts with a veranda at the front, one or two living/sleeping rooms, and a kitchen at the back. It is prefabricated from cheap wood, with

corrugated iron roofing. The Department does not modify the plan to suit local conditions, cultures, or wishes. Some features of the standard house are undesirable for anyone, like the corrugated metal roof, which makes the house unbearably hot on sunny days and rattles violently during rainstorms (Dentan, 2001). Top-down Malay-centered planning necessarily generates unsuitable, unpopular, and unsustainable programs. This situation is worsened with low ranking JHEOA staff fear criticizing even bad programs, because their employment prospects depend on their not rocking the boat (Mohd Tap 1990). When Orang Asli resist JHEOA plans no matter how detrimental, as in the case of regroupment schemes officials berate them. Blaming Orang Asli for the failure of programs is the common denial answer from staff.

One of the main problem regarding the status of Orang Asli in Malaysia. The Malaysian Constitution makes Orang Asli citizens; therefore they are entitled to all the rights and protections of citizens, including freedom of religion (Malaysian Government 1982). Under Section 4 of the Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954, it is clearly stated that the Commissioner for Orang Asli shall be responsible for the general administration, welfare and advancement of the aborigines. This specific definition has preclude other government agencies from participating in development activities for the Orang Asli. However, the Act which was established during the Emergency to remove Orang Asli from communist influence, remains in effect. This act gives the government, in the person of the Director-General of the JHEOA or the Minister responsible for the JHEOA, extraordinary control over Orang Asli. Officials can even determine who can visit Orang Asli and what they can read (Malaysian Government 1994). Government officials, the Malaysian public, and Orang Asli themselves assume that Orang Asli can do nothing without JHEOA guidance and permission. What make it more difficult for JHEOA to implement any development program successfully. It does not have any trained expert in the field of development working in the Department. This situation is further worsened, when most of the lower rank officers were under qualified and not trained in any specific development program. The style of administration by JHEOA is still oriented towards providing protection for the Orang Asli rather than development. The responsibilities they carry were various. Because of such wide responsibilities, and doing it all alone, JHEOA has become a patron to the Orang Asli which created a form of dependency relationship between the Orang Asli and the Department. As most of the helps from JHEOA came in the form of subsidies, Orang Asli tend to see JHEOA more like a welfare agency that took care of all their urgent needs, therefore, they felt psychologically secured. They should not worried for

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In relation to that, Political integration is another problem that should be considered in bringing up the Orang Asli as respected status in the community. In fact, the government's aspiration to care the Orang Asli has not decreased as the threat of communist subversion has over. The Aboriginal Peoples Act gives government officials the authority to confirm or remove headmen. Department officials use this authority to ensure that only compliant leaders are to be established (Endicott & Dentan, 2004). It is said that the Orang Asli do not take the JHEOA's contention of control lying down. The Peninsular Malaysia Orang Asli Association (POASM), which began as a grievance committee for Orang Asli employees of the JHEOA (Mohd Tap 1990), is now a broad-based organization with thousands of members. But this is not enough because their representative in politics should be given in order to voice out their needs, problem and aspiration. At present their representative in politics is only through a Senator, and he or she faced with various constraints, unlikely the person who are effective representation of Orang Asli interests. Therefore, this is another area that requires reform. The electoral system adopted in this country has singled out their involvement in politics. Many Malay politicians often make promises to the poor shortly before elections, as in mid-1999, only to forget them afterward. Orang Asli also lack the special privileges that the Constitution guarantees to Malays and Native Peoples of Sarawak and Sabah on the grounds that they are indigenes (bumiputera) (Malaysian Government 1982). By denying those privileges to the undeniably indigenous Orang Asli, the government has put Orang Asli in a position in which the only way they can attain the rights of other indigenous citizens is by becoming Malays.

Another problem related to the difficulty in developing and improving the life of the Orang Asli is their rights to land ownership. Until 2002, Malaysian law acknowledged no Orang Asli rights to their ancestral lands and therefore, not a single Orang Asli has been alienated a piece of land under his own individual ownership. The land they occupied now are mostly aboriginal reserves, aboriginal areas state land or Malay reserves. In these areas they are only treated as tenant at will. The problem pertaining to land ownership is very much related to Orang Asli's perception towards land and also Act 134 by their culture land are not supposed to be owned privately. Land are considered as communal property. Everyone should be given the right and access to use land to earn his living. What he owns privately are only the crops he cultivated on the land. Act 134 reinforced this belief, by allowing State authorities to

gazette land as Orang Asli Reserve or Orang Asli Area only, but never alienating the land to individual Orang Asli.

What is the implication of such status of land ownership on the economic life of the Orang Asli? Hasan (1991) has dealt with this issue in his article *Orang Asli and Dasar Tanah*. In his opinion, since they are deprived from the right of landownership, they are unable to control and plan the kind of land use they desire for their own development. They also failed to turn the land into capital assets which could be useful to develop other economic enterprises. For example, a case was brought to Selangor State High Court in early 2002 that ruled that seven Temuan Orang Asli in Kampung Bukit Tampoi, Dengkil, Selangor, must get adequate compensation for lands originally theirs by custom but taken by the government to be used for a road to the new international airport (Endicott & Denton, 2004). Of course, at anytime when the government need the land for development, the Orang Asli can be moved and relocated to another place. Under clause 7(3) Act 134, it is clearly stated, that the State Authority is given the power to revoke wholly or in part or vary any declaration of an aboriginal reserve. Under clause 10(3) of the same act, is also stated that the State Authority may be order require any aboriginal community to leave and remain out of any such area and may in the order make such consequential provisions, including the payment of compensation, as may be necessary. The compensation paid to them was usually based on the number and kinds of crops planted on the land only. The loss of lands were never compensated. It remains to be seen whether this courageous and democratic decision will survive the inevitable challenges and constitute a precedent for future cases involving land rights or it needs to create a law which protect them against any unnecessary eviction. Act 134 do not provide any clause that provides such protection. Although the Statement of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Aboriginal Peoples, states clearly regarding recognizing Orang Asli traditional land rights, but the policy was never adhered to in the implementation of any development project.

The status of land ownership gives a negative implication on the economic life of the Orang Asli. Hasan (1991) concluded that the Orang Asli are deprived from the right of landownership, they are unable to control and plan the kind of land use they desire for their own development. Therefore, they also failed to turn the land into capital assets which could be useful to develop other economic enterprises. According to JHEOA statistics in 1999 shows that 19,507.4 hectares have been gazetted as Orang Asli reserves, another 28,932.2 hectares have been approved but have not been gazetted, and 78,975 hectares have been applied for gazettement but have not yet been approved (Rashid Yusof 1999). The acreage gazetted as reserve has actually declined by 5.6% since 1990

(Hasan, 1991). The 127,415 hectare total is only what the JHEOA has asked for and is far less than the actual amount of Orang Asli traditional lands. In fact even in Orang Asli reserves land rights are neither secure nor adequate to support the people. State governments can revoke the area's reserve status for any reason without notice or compensation. They do not hesitate to take over Orang Asli reserve land for such things as roads, dams, airports, commercial plantations, and golf courses, any use that is for the "greater good". In other words, the good of non-Asli. State governments also retain all timber and mineral rights in Orang Asli reserves; they routinely sell logging and mining concessions without consulting the inhabitants. The JHEOA and the Orang Asli residents cannot prevent their reserves being logged off, dug up, and turned into wastelands. Because fully 99.8% of Orang Asli lack individual land titles, they cannot get loans or assistance from banks or government agencies to make their land more productive. JHEOA and other federal officials claim they are helpless to force states to establish Orang Asli areas and reserves (Jimin et al. 1983). But Article 83 of the Constitution gives the federal government ample power to acquire land from the states. It exercises this power frequently for purposes it considers important, like airports and roads, but not to create Orang Asli areas and reserves (Sothi Rachagan, 1990).

Another JHEOA program is to "modernize" Orang Asli economics, to change them from subsistence activities like hunting, gathering, and growing crops for their own consumption to activities directed toward market exchange selling commodities or labor and buying food and other necessities (Mohd Tap 1990). Officials view traditional Orang Asli subsistence activities, like swiddening, as backward and embarrassing, while they see market-oriented ones as "progressive" and "modern" (Endicott & Dentan, 2004). For the JHEOA, to abandon subsistence farming is a sign of economic progress (Jimin et al. 1983). Officials do not explain why Orang Asli economies should be modernized in this way, believing, perhaps, that the advantages are self-evident. Malaysian policy-makers in general think that economic "modernization" is inherently good. Of course, our expectation towards the Government's programs for Orang Asli are intended to ensure that they are not left behind in development that would improve their way of life.

The land developments, either by the government agencies or by private sectors have also reduced the areas in which Orang Asli worked to earn their living. This has resulted in reducing their earning capacity. The marketed systems for their goods are unable to protect them from unscrupulous exploiters. At the same time they are unable to participate in the modern economic sectors because of their low level of education. Their lives are getting harder and more difficult. It is now time for the



government to forge a new and dynamic relationships with the Orang Asli to enable them to integrate with the wider Malaysian communities.

Another program that should be considered in improving the life of the Orang Asli is to provide health and medical service to the Orang Asli. The JHEOA medical program was originally intended to upgrade and sustain the health standard of the Orang Asli. After the Emergency was over, the government continued and expanded the service because many Orang Asli still lived far from clinics and other medical facilities. According to Endicott & Dentan (2004) the JHEOA medical service is a qualified success, although the quality of care has not improved appreciably since the 1960s. The survey shows that the overall health standard of the Orang Asli is generally good and comparable with that of the main community i.e Malays. It is reported that many diseases, like ringworm and yaws, have declined dramatically since the 1950s. The infant mortality rate appears to be down, and the total population is increasing. Yet malaria and tuberculosis are still serious problems, respiratory diseases are common, pollution-caused diseases have increased, and malnutrition is widespread (Khor Geok Lin, 1997; Baer, 1999). Most rural Orang Asli now seek medical care at government clinics instead of JHEOA facilities.

Providing education to the nation is another important agenda in country's development. Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) is fully committed in providing education for all even to the Orang Asli children at all levels of education. Until now education is a key mechanism in the JHEOA campaign to assimilate Orang Asli and to improve their standard of living by giving them new occupational opportunities. Therefore, the JHEOA's educational program is to reduce illiteracy among the orang Asli, increasing the school attendance, reducing the student dropout rate, increasing percentage of passes and increasing hostel facilities. Specifically, the program was to supplement, not replace, the national educational system, to compensate for the Orang Asli's isolation from government schools and their lack of familiarity with formal education. The problem with transportation and communication affected the sending the educational facilities and services to the Orang Asli the school because most of the school resided in rural and remote areas. There are schools taught by JHEOA field staff, some Malays and some Orang Asli and some with none were trained teachers, and most had a low level of education themselves. In 2005, JHEOA maintained 24 hostels in the urban areas to accommodate these children. Although steps have been taken by JHEOA but most studies show that the JHEOA's educational program was a dismal failure. According to MOE statistics the dropout rate in the 2000 was extremely high, especially in the lower grades. On average 62.0% of the children dropped out during primary school

(Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 2005). According to a study in October 1994, about two thirds of Orang Asli children (47,141 out of 70,845) between the ages of five and eighteen were not attending school at all (JHEOA, 2005). The few Orang Asli who made it to the tertiary level of education had most or all of their schooling in ordinary government schools. In 1995, recognizing the ineffectiveness of its efforts, the JHEOA turned over the responsibility for all Orang Asli education to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry allocated M\$45.5 million for “developing” the schools, but an official said that they expected problems because “many qualified teachers are reluctant to teach in Orang Asli schools due to the lack of facilities and because the environment is not conducive to learning” (de Paul, 1995). Recently, Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperative Development is taking serious effort as JHEOA is under the ministry. The ministry is expanding the preschool education aims to provide a firm foundation for the children. Another reason which contribute to the poor performance of Orang Asli children is a clash between some features of Orang Asli cultures, like their abhorrence of corporal punishment, and Malaysian formal education, but many problems derived from the educational program itself (Endicott & Dentan, 2004). One major difficulty was that all primary education was in Malay, a language many Orang Asli children do not know when they begin school. In regular government schools Orang Asli students face another set of special problems. Although the teachers are generally better and possibly more sympathetic, they do not know much about Orang Asli. Orang Asli students at secondary schools and some in primary schools have to live in hostels far from their families. The hostels are basically at best but parents often refuse to send their children to school if it requires them to leave home (Williams-Hunt & Hasan, 1993).

It is the government aspiration to raise the living standards of Orang Asli by converting them to Islam. In the late 1970s, the government began to encourage the Department to actively promote Islam among Orang Asli (Mohd Tap 1990). The JHEOA therefore formed a special *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) unit to “develop” Orang Asli “spiritually” and to coordinate with other Muslim missionary groups (Mohd Tap, 1990). The staff are muslimized Orang Asli trained as missionaries. By 1993 government agencies had built 265 combination multi-purpose halls and religious schools in Orang Asli settlements at a cost of M\$20 million (*Berita Harian* 1993). The Islamization activity among the Orang Asli may be answered in many ways. It can be observed that some surau in the communities are the never-used structures in disrepair, and no religious officer has ever appeared. Elsewhere, a Malaysian observer remarks that most of the time the [religious officer] is nowhere to be found and is always out of the village (Endicott & Dentan,

2004). Still, the policies of Islamization and “positive discrimination” for Islamized communities remain in place, although the department has become less forthcoming about them. The failure of the program in masjid or surau suggests one reason for the more general failure of Islamization among Orang Asli (Dentan, 2003). Bureaucratizing and politicizing religion benefits bureaucrats and politicians, not religious people. Perhaps the major underlying reason Orang Asli resist Islam is that they simply do not want to “become Malays” (Endicott & Dentan, 2004). Most Orang Asli prefer living among their own people, and they feel safer surrounded by their own relatives. Conversely, they do not particularly like Malays or enjoy associating with them. Islamization has not only largely failed to achieve its goal, it has also caused great resentment toward the government and the JHEOA in particular.

### **Setting the Novel Life for Orang Asli**

It is clear then that the life of Orang Asli is full with an unpleasant experience and legacy and this needs to be discarded. The changes for new orientation, centering more on forging of a new heritage of respect, cooperation and freedom must be from now on. Now, Orang Asli are suppose to be treated as equal members in Malaysian society to be given the chance and opportunities awarded to others and to be seen as contributors to the process of building the nation. Today, they have seen themselves as Orang Asli and part of a larger group which shares a separate identity from Malays. Therefore, they should have been invited to involve in structural reform to the establishment of laws, policies and institution which would have directed to Orang Asli affairs. First and foremost is the recognition of special position of the Orang Asli as the earliest inhabitants of Malay Peninsular. Although such recognition is given under Article 8 of the Federal Constitution, but unfortunately its implementation is often discretionary and not enforced. Bear in mind that the Orang Asli population has grown steadily from about 44,000 in 1960 to 105,000 in 1999 and 140,000 in 2005 (JHEOA, 2006).

Next, Orang Asli land rights are to be recognized and their lands should be protected immediately. But inspite of giving such importance to the land, Orang Asli position today should not be questionably insecure. If the status of land ownership is not protected and their land is concluded as Malay reserves, forest reserves, national park and other categories of land use, no doubt it gives a negative perception of Orang Asli towards the Malays. Without right of beneficial interest over much of their land, the Orang Asli look set to continue lead a vulnerable survival.

We have discussed some reasons particular JHEOA programs is not quite successful. These breakdown stem is in part from fundamental contradictions in the Department’s programs and between its various

programs. One contradiction is that, although the goal is to assimilate the Orang Asli into the Malay population, using a special agency to administer them formalizes a distinct Orang Asli identity and increases the sense of difference Orang Asli feel between themselves and members of other ethnic groups. Another contradiction is that federal and state governments refuse to recognize secure land rights for Orang Asli, thus undermining JHEOA efforts to convert them into self-sufficient cash crop farmers. Leaving aside the question of whether this goal is desirable, it will never be achieved as long as people suspect that they will not benefit from their labor. Therefore, the development of Orang Asli should not be entrusted solely to the JHEOA. It should be made the responsibilities of other agencies such as MARA, FELDA, FELCRA, KISDAR etc. Besides that, NGOs should have been invited to work alongside with the JHEOA.

The present efforts in improving the life of Orang Asli in terms of modernizing the way of life, regrouping scheme, eradicating poverty, improving health and education, human capital support, infrastructure etc. must be continued and enhanced. Likewise, the approach to Islamize the Orang Asli should be improved. Undoubtedly, the effect of the Islamization will change way of life of Orang Asli into a better lifestyle. Providing electricity and building *surau* are not enough but more important than that is monitoring and program that fill in. It is no surprise, then, if the Orang Asli now turned over to traditional belief and way of life.

Another legacy that needs to be reformed is pertaining Orang Asli representation in politics. Their representation in politics is only through a senator, which is not enough to voice out and advocate the Orang Asli's interest. Their representation in politics should be more and should cover both Federal Parliament and the State Assembly. Of course, through general election system, the Orang Asli will definitely not get any representative. Therefore, there should be other ways and mechanism to choose or appoint the representative.

### **Conclusion**

After more than forty years of establishment of JHEOA, their efforts to change the Orang Asli into a better life or be Malays need to be reviewed. Since they were earliest inhabitant in this country special privilege and advocacy should be given, therefore laws or ordinance and constitution regarding the right of Orang Asli must be amended immediately. Representative from Orang Asli community to voice out the Orang Asli's right through electoral system will not come true. Election can only be made among the Orang Asli only otherwise appointment from Yang diPertuan Agong. As for the Orang Asli, there should not be any worry about them being not responsive or assertive to the good signs method out to them in the broader national order. From our observation show that

many of them in fact want to be involved actively in the wider mainstream. The JHEO has drawn strategies to improve the Orang Asli way of life and it should be continued and supported.

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