



Analysis of the relocation of the Sakai Anak Dalam tribe to Madani housing in Lubuk Jering village, Air Hitam sub-district, Sarolangun regency

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh Relokasi Tempat Tinggal Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Perumahan Madani Desa Lubuk Jering, Kecamatan Air Hitam, Kabupaten Sarolangun. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis: 1) Karakteristik Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Desa Lubuk Jering, Kecamatan Air Hitam, 2) Faktor-faktor Penghambat Relokasi Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Perumahan Madani Desa Lubuk Jering, Kecamatan Air Hitam, 3) Peran Pemerintah terhadap Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Desa Lubuk Jering. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di Desa Lubuk Jering, Kecamatan Air Hitam, Kabupaten Sarolangun. Informan penelitian ditentukan dengan teknik Snowball Sampling, dengan tokoh masyarakat Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) sebagai informan kunci dan Aparat Desa sebagai informan pendukung. Pengumpulan dan analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan perangkat lunak NVivo versi 15.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan: 1) Karakteristik Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Desa Lubuk Jering adalah mayoritas bermata pencaharian sebagai pengumpul hasil hutan. Pakaian laki-laki Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) menggunakan cawat (koteka), sedangkan perempuan menggunakan kain (sandang). Sebagian besar Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) menganut kepercayaan terhadap roh halus dengan bahasa sehari-hari Melayu dan Kubu. 2) Faktor-faktor yang menghambat relokasi Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Desa Lubuk Jering dipengaruhi oleh tradisi budaya melangun (budaya meninggalkan tempat tinggal sementara waktu setelah anggota keluarga meninggal), serta ketergantungan mereka terhadap hutan yang menyulitkan untuk menetap di satu lokasi. 3) Peran pemerintah terhadap Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) di Desa Lubuk Jering adalah menyediakan fasilitas perumahan gratis dan jaminan kesehatan bagi Suku Anak Dalam (SAD). Namun, upaya ini belum optimal karena tidak diiringi dengan penyediaan lahan pertanian. Padahal, masyarakat Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) sangat berharap adanya lahan pertanian sebagai sumber mata pencaharian utama mereka.

Keywords: Suku Anak Dalam (SAD), Relokasi, Perumahan Madani, Desa Lubuk Jering

Abstract

This research is based on the Relocation of Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) Residences in Madani Housing in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam District, Sarolangun Regency. This research was conducted to analyze: 1) Characteristics of Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam District, 2) Inhibiting Factors for Relocation of Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Madani Housing in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam District, 3) The Role of the Government towards Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Lubuk Jering Village. The type of research used is qualitative. This research was conducted in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam District, Sarolangun Regency. Research informants used the Snowball Sampling technique, with Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community leaders as key informants and Village Officials as supporting informants. Data collection and analysis were carried out using NVivo software version 15. The results of the study show: 1) The characteristics of Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Lubuk Jering Village are that the average livelihood is food gathering. The clothing of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) for men uses a loincloth (koteka) while women wear cloth (sandang). Most of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) have beliefs in spirits who speak Malay and kubu. 2) Factors inhibiting the relocation of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Lubuk Jering Village are influenced by the cultural tradition of melangun (a culture of leaving a residence temporarily after a family member dies), in addition to their dependence on the forest making it difficult for them to settle in one place. 3) The role of the government towards the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Lubuk Jering Village provides free housing facilities and health insurance for the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD). However, these efforts have not been optimal because they are not accompanied by the provision of

agricultural land. Even though the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community really hopes for agricultural land as their main source of livelihood.

Keywords: Suku Anak Dalam (SAD), Relocation, Madani Housing, Lubuk Jering Village

Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a vast diversity of ethnic groups spread from Sabang to Merauke, including indigenous tribes. These ethnic groups exhibit highly diverse lifestyles and behaviors. Several tribes still live in forests and remain isolated, such as the Sakai Tribe in Riau, the Polahi Tribe in Gorontalo, the Baduy Tribe in West Java, the Dani Tribe in Papua, and the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD). Additionally, they possess distinct identities and unique languages. Many tribes in Indonesia still adhere to traditional ways of life, as seen in their customs inherited from ancestral culture and the syncretism of religious beliefs. Religious syncretism often involves a blend of Islam with Hinduism, Buddhism, Animism, Dynamism, and Christianity (Husnita, 2018).

Sumatra, for instance, consists of several provinces including Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, Bengkulu, South Sumatra, Bangka Belitung, and Lampung. Each province is home to different ethnic groups, such as the Batak, Minangkabau, Malay, Acehnese, Nias, and many others. Moreover, there are numerous minority tribes residing in vast forest areas between large rivers and coastal swamps who still maintain traditional ways of living (Lailatul, 2021).

Jambi Province, located on Sumatra Island, covers an area of 50,160.05 km² and is home to a diverse range of ethnicities and cultures. For hundreds of years, the province has been inhabited by Proto-Malay communities such as the Batin, Kerinci, Duabelas, Penghulu, and Suku Anak Dalam (SAD). One of the oldest tribes in Jambi Province is the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD), who, according to historians, have lived there since their ancestors settled in the region hundreds of years ago (Mukti, 2022).

Currently, there are two groups of Suku Anak Dalam. The first group maintains a traditional lifestyle, refusing to adapt or integrate with mainstream society. The second group receives assistance and guidance from the government and other institutions. Many Suku Anak Dalam communities are located in the Air Hitam Sub-district of Sarolangun Regency, consisting of nine villages: Lubuk Kepayang, Baru, Semurung, Jernih, Lubuk Jering, Pematang Kabau, Bukit Suban,

Mentawak Baru, and Mentawak Ulu. The largest populations of SAD are found in three villages: Lubuk Jering, Pematang Kabau, and Bukit Suban. The Madani Housing area, located in Air Hitam Sub-district, has received significant attention from both central and local governments (Parmata, 2023).

The Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) are a group of people who live deep in the forest and rely heavily on nature for their survival. They are also referred to as *Orang Rimbo* (forest people) and “Sanak,” meaning family. Their livelihood depends on forest resources such as gathering tubers, hunting forest animals, and harvesting rattan, gambier, and other natural products. The SAD community is small, closed, and homogenous, typically consisting of extended families. They live in remote, hard-to-reach areas, use simple tools, and are highly dependent on nature for sustenance. Additionally, they face significant limitations in accessing social, economic, and political services (Sidik, 2016).

The Suku Anak Dalam wear traditional attire. Men wear loincloths (*koteka*) made from long fabric covering the groin and waist, unmarried women wear sarongs wrapped around their chest, while married women wear sarongs from the waist down. Their philosophy of life is encapsulated in the saying “atap cikai, dinding benir, tikar gambut” (roof from leaves, walls from tree bark, and mat from peat). Their traditional houses are built with walls made from tree bark, floors of packed earth, and roofs of leaves. Depending on their purpose, SAD houses vary in shape. Temporary shelters such as *Bolalapion*, *Sengsudungon*, and *Di Tano* are simple structures without walls (Syahrowi et al., 2021).

As reported by Saputri (2020) in Kompasiana, the government has focused on empowering the SAD through various programs. Empowerment efforts must start with securing suitable locations and land where they can live comfortably and safely. Consequently, the government built special settlements for the SAD community on approximately 10 hectares of land. The settlement comprises 57 houses, a main hall, places of worship, two communal sanitation facilities (MCK), a football field, three volleyball courts, livestock areas, fish ponds, and farming plots.

In addition, the government has carried out development programs under the coordination of Kodim 0420/Sarko, including health education, primary school-level education, as well as training in farming and animal husbandry. These activities take place in the Bukit Dua Belas National Park (TNBDB) in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam Sub-district, Sarolangun Regency. This settlement has been named *Kampung Madani*. The construction began in February 2018 through a collaboration between the Sarolangun Regency Government and the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR). The goal of this settlement project is to improve the quality of life and welfare of the SAD community. Traditionally, they have lived a nomadic lifestyle, moving from one area to another based on the availability of natural resources like rattan, game, and fruits, which they rely on for their livelihood. However, many SAD members prefer to build huts beneath the provided Madani housing—structures made of wood with leaf roofs and no walls. Some even return to their ancestral homes deep within the forest.

Based on the researcher's observations conducted on January 18-19, 2025, there have been noticeable shifts among the SAD community regarding their unwillingness to occupy the provided housing. The researcher suspects several factors: First, climatic differences—the SAD prefer cooler temperatures. Second, livelihood factors—the SAD rely on forest resources for food. Third, spiritual factors—although they now possess ID cards identifying them as Christians or Muslims, the SAD still practice animism and feel that government interventions threaten their cultural identity. Fourth, environmental factors—the SAD are reluctant to integrate with mainstream society due to significant differences in language expressions (proverbs) and lifestyle characteristics.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the relocation of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) to the Madani Housing in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam Sub-district, Sarolangun Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to depict complex social realities based on the interpretation of data found in the field. The research location is focused on Lubuk Jering Village, where the SAD relocation takes place. Informants in this study were selected using a snowball sampling technique,

starting with key informants, namely the *Jenang* of the Suku Anak Dalam, who has a comprehensive understanding of SAD life and culture. The process then continued with main informants from within the SAD community itself, as well as additional informants from village officials.

Primary data sources were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation in the form of photos and videos, while secondary data were gathered from archives and other supporting documents. Data collection techniques included participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. All data were systematically analyzed using NVivo software version 15. The data analysis steps included: collecting and importing interview data into NVivo, coding and identifying key themes, visualizing data through word clouds and graphs, and compiling the final report. The use of NVivo aimed to facilitate the interpretation and structured presentation of data in-depth, thereby supporting accuracy in drawing conclusions regarding the inhibiting factors of relocation, the characteristics of the SAD, and the role of the government in the relocation process.

Result and Discussion

Results

The analysis of the relocation of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) to Madani Housing is based on interviews with several informants and can be summarized as follows:

1. Characteristics of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) in Madani Housing

The research findings indicate that the SAD have unique characteristics distinguishing them from the general population in terms of social, cultural, economic, and worldview aspects:

a. Livelihoods

The majority of the SAD community still relies on forest resources for their survival. They engage in activities such as *ngerotan* (harvesting and processing rattan for weaving), hunting, foraging, and gathering fruits as their primary sources of food and income. The absence of a stable occupation makes them economically vulnerable in a permanent settlement system.

b. Religion and Beliefs

Although some SAD have converted to Christianity due to interactions with outsiders and government initiatives, ancestral spiritual beliefs remain deeply rooted. There are also those who

identify as atheists. This indicates diversity and dynamics in the SAD's religious practices.

c. Clothing

The traditional clothing of the SAD reflects simplicity and adherence to customs. Men wear loincloths (*koteka*), while women wear long cloths (*sandang*). However, within the context of Madani Housing, some have begun adopting modern clothing as a form of social adaptation.

d. Language

The SAD primarily speak the Kubu language, which is oral and lacks a written system. In interactions with outsiders, they also use Jambi Malay, resulting from language assimilation processes.

2. Factors Inhibiting the Relocation of the SAD to Madani Housing

The relocation process is not simple, as it involves cultural, social, and environmental dependencies. The three main inhibiting factors are:

a. Tradition

The SAD still maintain their *bedeng* (sudung) houses as traditional, temporary dwellings that reflect their nomadic lifestyle. Traditional healing practices using herbal medicine, incantations, and the role of shamans or elders remain integral to their lives. This strong attachment to tradition makes it difficult for them to adapt to the facilities and lifestyle offered in Madani Housing.

b. Melangun Culture

Melangun is the cultural practice of relocating after the death of a family member, posing a significant barrier to permanent settlement. This tradition encourages the SAD to continue their nomadic lifestyle, which conflicts with the concept of permanent relocation.

c. Dependency on Nature

The SAD's way of life is heavily dependent on the forest as a source of food, medicine, and other necessities. Relocation to settlements far from these resources results in the loss of access to basic needs, creating high adaptation pressures.

3. The Role of the Government in Supporting SAD Relocation

The government plays a strategic role in facilitating the SAD's relocation through two main approaches:

a. Socialization and Empowerment

Village authorities and related agencies conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of education, health, legal identity (ID cards/Family Cards), and healthy living habits. Empowerment programs aimed at enhancing the SAD community's capacity and independence have

been implemented, though still limited in scope and scale.

b. Supporting Facilities

The government provides basic facilities such as:

Land and simple housing

Free health insurance in collaboration with community health centers

Issuance of ID cards and Family Cards to ensure legal access to public services

However, challenges remain, including the lack of long-term assistance, limited understanding among officials regarding SAD cultural characteristics, and misalignment between programs and the community's cultural needs.

Discussion

Based on research conducted in Lubuk Jering Village, Air Hitam Sub-district, Sarolangun Regency, the following findings emerged:

First, the characteristics of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community still heavily rely on nature for their daily survival. Their primary livelihoods include hunting, foraging, harvesting rattan, and gathering fruits, reflecting a nomadic lifestyle and high dependence on the forest. In terms of clothing, SAD women typically wear *sandang* (cloth wraps), while men wear *koteka* (loincloths), especially when in the forest. This illustrates their deep connection to ancestral cultural values. However, with government assistance and interaction with external communities, some SAD members have begun adapting to modern clothing such as shirts and trousers.

Regarding language, the SAD speak a mix of local languages, namely Kubu and Jambi Malay, indicating language assimilation due to inter-community interactions. In terms of belief systems, most SAD still adhere to animism and the worship of ancestral spirits, although a small number have begun converting to formal religions such as Christianity.

Triana (2022) noted that the physical characteristics of the SAD include tan skin, with a worldview that regards their homeland as a place for hunting, foraging, and gathering fruits. Their daily attire consists of *koteka* (loincloths) made of long cloth tied between the thighs and waist for men, while women wear sarongs (*sandang*) tied up to the chest. The SAD believe in deities who bring happiness if they live according to prescribed rules, and vice versa.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the SAD's characteristics include livelihoods based

on hunting, foraging, *ngerotan*, and fruit gathering. In terms of clothing, they traditionally wear *koteka* (loincloths) for men and *sandang* (cloth wraps) for women, although some have started adopting modern attire. The SAD believe in spirits and have begun embracing Christianity, while their spoken languages include Kubu and Jambi Malay.

Second, the primary factor inhibiting SAD relocation is the *melangun* culture. *Melangun* is a hereditary tradition practiced by the SAD, where they move to a new place after the death of a close family member. For the SAD, death is not merely a biological event but also a spiritual occurrence that leaves emotional imprints and negative energy in the place of death. Thus, to honor ancestral spirits and maintain emotional balance, they feel compelled to leave that location and move to a spiritually "clean" area. This tradition has accustomed the SAD to a nomadic lifestyle, making it difficult for them to settle in permanent housing such as Madani Housing. They perceive permanent settlement as conflicting with their long-standing cultural values. The SAD are known for their strong adherence to ancestral customs and local wisdom passed down through generations. Their lifestyle, belief systems, and relationship with nature are integral to their identity. Consequently, any form of change, including relocation to permanent settlements, is often viewed as a threat to their established traditional life structure.

Sidik (2016) explains that the *Melangun* tradition involves temporarily leaving a place of residence after a family or group member passes away. The SAD believe that the spirit of the deceased remains around the site of death and can bring misfortune or disturbances if they continue living there.

From the above, it can be concluded that the inhibiting factor is the *melangun* culture, which requires leaving their residence temporarily after a family member's death.

Third, the government's role in supporting the welfare of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community involves a socialization approach. The government not only provides physical or material assistance but also conducts awareness campaigns to build the SAD's understanding of fundamental life aspects such as health, legal identity (ID cards), free health insurance, and a more settled lifestyle. This approach is crucial, given that the SAD generally maintain a semi-nomadic way of life.

In addition to socialization, the government has provided support in the form of physical facilities, such as permanent housing and free health insurance to ensure they receive proper medical services. Socialization aims to increase the SAD's awareness of the importance of health, legal identity, and a more settled lifestyle to facilitate access to public services.

Bakhtiar (2020) stated that government-led socialization serves as a platform for the SAD, acting as both a facilitator and a means to address their needs while fostering the development of skills among this underprivileged community. Programs have been designed to align with the SAD's lifestyle, including settlement areas, educational initiatives (*Rumah Pintar*), empowerment programs, and health services.

Based on the above findings and previous research, it can be concluded that the government's role includes providing facilities for the SAD, such as housing, free health insurance, and legal identity (ID cards).

Conclusion

The characteristics of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community are closely intertwined with a traditional lifestyle that is heavily dependent on nature, where their livelihoods are dominated by activities such as hunting, foraging, gathering rattan, and fruits as a form of adaptation to the forest environment. In terms of clothing, they continue to preserve their traditional attire, such as loincloths (*koteka*) for men and long cloths (*sandang*) for women, reflecting their strong adherence to ancestral cultural values. However, changes have begun to emerge with the introduction of modern clothing, influenced by interactions with external communities and government assistance. Linguistically, the SAD speak a mixture of the Kubu language and Jambi Malay, indicating a process of language assimilation resulting from social interactions with surrounding communities. Meanwhile, in terms of belief systems, the majority of SAD still adhere to animism and the worship of ancestral spirits. Nevertheless, a gradual shift towards formal religions, such as Christianity, has been observed among a small portion of the community, signaling a slow but ongoing process of social and cultural transformation in their lives.

The primary factor hindering the relocation of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) to permanent settlements such as Madani Housing lies in the deeply rooted cultural tradition of *melangun*. This

tradition requires them to move to a new place after the death of a family member, reflecting a spiritual worldview and cultural values wherein death is perceived as an event that leaves behind negative energy, necessitating the abandonment of the location to maintain inner and spiritual harmony. Their nomadic lifestyle, which is reinforced by customary laws, belief systems, and a deep attachment to nature, makes it difficult for the SAD to embrace the concept of long-term settlement. For them, permanent relocation is not only contradictory to their ancestral way of life but is also seen as a threat to the preservation of their collective social and cultural identity, which has been built and inherited across generations.

The government's role in enhancing the welfare of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) is carried out through a socialization approach aimed at building their awareness and understanding of fundamental life aspects, such as health, legal identity (ID cards), and the importance of adopting a more settled lifestyle. This approach is highly relevant given the semi-nomadic lifestyle that is still prevalent among a large portion of the SAD community, thus necessitating continuous educational efforts to facilitate their adaptation to social changes. Additionally, the government provides support in the form of physical facilities, including the construction of permanent housing and free health insurance, to ensure their access to public services is adequately fulfilled. Through a combination of education and the provision of basic needs, the government strives to encourage the SAD community's transition towards a more stable life while respecting their identity and cultural needs.

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