

Negligence of Primary School Education among the Orang Asli's Students of Hulu Terengganu

Nik Nur Azizah N.H.¹, Nurunsadah S.²

^{1,2}Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Nerus, 20300 Terengganu, Malaysia

Abstract— The community of Orang Asli Semaq Beri in Hulu Terengganu is still experiencing the negligence in education although a formal education system had been introduced on 1974. Thus, this research is done to study the contributing factors of inadvertency in education among them. This research utilised a few data collection methods in field study such as observation, participation observation, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The data on the achievement of Orang Asli's students were taken to observe the negligence in education among them more precisely. The respondents were chosen among the teachers and students of Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua. The results of this study showed a few factors contributed to the negligence in education of Orang Asli's community. The factors identified can be classified into two; internal and external factor.

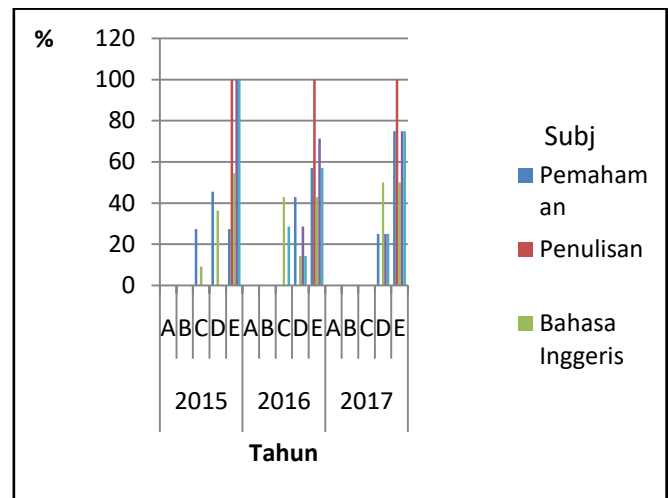
Keywords— Negligence, Education, Orang Asli, Primary School

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Orang Asli's students are being depicted as being way far from reach especially in the education sector in Malaysia¹. Although various ideas being suggested and initiatives being executed, the academic achievement of Orang Asli's students in Terengganu is still below the average. The policy of Ministry of Education Malaysia via Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) published on 2012 established a hope to minimise the gap between location, socioeconomic and student capability. Parallel with that, the government intended to advance the quality of education for the minority community of Orang Asli along with the modern society.

According to², in achieving such goal, the gap in education needs to be minimised. This is to ensure the access, equity and quality can be improved either in the gap of location between urban and rural areas, the gap of student capability between normal students and special needs students and the gap of socioeconomic. However, ironically these days, this issue of negligence in education among Orang Asli community is still unmanageable in Terengganu.

Orang Asli community consist of various ethnic group with various physical features, identity and culture⁶. Semaq Beri is one of the ethnic groups living in Terengganu. Their lifestyle is almost similar with other Orang Asli communities in Malaysia⁷. Semaq Beri is the largest ethnic group living in Terengganu with the number of 951 people or 96.2% of total Orang Asli population in Malaysia.



Graph 1: UPSR's result of Sekolah Kebangsaan Sg. Berua Year 2015-2017^{3,4}

This ethnic group lives in two areas; Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu and Sungai Pergam, Chukai⁸. This study is aimed to focus on the factors of negligence in education which happens continuously among the children of Orang Asli from the ethnic group Semaq Beri and living in Sungai Berua, Hulu Terengganu.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to⁹ conducted a research to analyse the negligence of Orang Asli's students in Malaysia because they are way behind in education sector in Malaysia. With this research, there are various factors identified as contributing factor to the negligence in education among Orang Asli's students. One of the factors is the lack of accessibility to the school among Orang Asli in Tapah. The research was conducted on the Orang Asli attending SMK Seri Tapah and SMK Tapah which are two schools with the most Orang Asli's students. In addition, this research also utilised questionnaire, observation, and interview with the teachers as well as collecting information from Student Information System¹⁰. The findings of this study found the quality of public transportation was not satisfactory in the term of quality, quantity and service. Moreover, in average, the distance caused them to go through more than 45 minutes commute for a 15 KM trip. Thus, a few solutions had been suggested in this study to improve the education quality of Orang Asli.

The reality about the awareness to change their life among Orang Asli had been cultivated long ago and they realised that only education can help them improving their life. However, the low literacy level among the parents of Orang Asli caused them unable to help their children with school¹¹. This phenomenon encouraged them to send their children to study at the city and trusted to the teachers to educate their children to the school. Nonetheless, there is a gap in the interaction between Orang Asli and the outside society because of the difference in language and culture causing them to receive less exposure in education development. In addition, this caused the negligence in education and problem in literacy increased. Next, there are a few factors causing the low literacy level among the Orang Asli's students including parents, native language problem in reading, home environment, poverty or socioeconomic, teachers or absence in school.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted in one of the schools of Orang Asli which is Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua. This school is located at Kampung Sungai Berua, Kuala Berang, Terengganu Darul Iman, Malaysia. The school session of this school started on 1974 for the Orang Asli community lives at Sungai Berua's area. At that time, External Relations Officer of Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) stepped in as the teaching instructor for 15 registered students. During 1988, this school was moved to a half-brick building built by City Council where the teaching instructors were still from JAKOA and assisted by Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) in syllabus and textbook for the 25 registered students. In 1995, this school was fully operated under MOE¹².

This research involved both primary and secondary data. To collect the primary data, various methods had been utilized including observation, participant observation, interviewing the teachers and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The observation and participant observation conducted to inspect the daily studying pattern of the students with the teachers, the accommodations provided in school, and the problems faced by the Orang Asli's students. By using the qualitative method, the researcher can develop a greater understanding on the students' capability in academic and the factors contributing to the negligence in education happened in Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua.

With the reference from the secondary data such as academic achievement collected from the administration office of the school, it is considered as the base of this study because the negligence in school can be analysed closer and the aim of this study can be rationalized. In addition, information gathered from the book, internet and past studies enable the researcher to collect the information on the education background of the Orang Asli community in Malaysia as well as the factor contributed to that issue. This information is beneficial to the field work when meeting the respondents, as in the researcher can identify the appropriate questions to ask.

IV. RESULTS

Internal Factors

(a) Nutritional Factor

Based on the observation done, the researcher found that the Orang Asli's students possessed an unhealthy eating habit. They acquired a liking to the junk foods such as snacks and carbonated drinks which effecting their memory and thinking skills. The junk foods consumed by them are purchased from the peddlers from the outside who set their business in Sungai Berua. The students are not exposed with the implication of over consuming the junk foods which can cause a lack of nutrition in body. This eating habit leaves an impact to their intelligence (Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Abdul Razak Ahmad, 2009). When the body did not receive enough nutrition, their brain cannot actively function and causing them unable to understand and memorising the lesson delivered.

According to Respondent 1, the children of Orang Asli did not acquire enough nutrition even before they are born. Their parents did not prioritise the nutritional needs of their unborn child. In addition, they were not educated on how balanced diet and nutritional value will benefit their child. Thus, as these children did not acquire enough nutritional value since the beginning, they will be acquiring a negative effect to the development of their brain, physical and emotion. Mohamad (2006) stated that intellectual development revolved around every day eating habit.

On the other hand, Respondent 2 revealed that Orang Asli community in Sungai Berua still practicing the habit of eating exotic animals such as squirrel and tortoise. This caused the negative effect to the body as well as weakened the brain function. Additionally, the students of Orang Asli also tend to eat any plants they found. Following that, the only source of nutritional and healthy food is provided by the school. The government noticed this and instructed the school to provide food thrice a day for Orang Asli's students. The food provided by school can be categorised as a balanced meal which consisted of all vitamins and minerals needed by their body. Furthermore, when they went home, there were no nutritional food prepared at home and they accepted whatever given by their parents. According to the teachers, there are some parents who did not provide any food when their children went home from school. They only provided some money for their children to buy junk foods. In this case, instant noodle became a choice for the children of Orang Asli every day. This was because of no exposure towards the importance of food pyramid and pressuring economic factor in their community.

(b) Absence of Parents' Role

Parents play a huge role in improving the academic achievement of their children. However, the role of parents among Orang Asli community is still obscure due to the high level of illiteracy among them. According to Respondent 2,

there are parents whom still unable to read and have negative perspective towards education. They considered all jobs which bringing in money is more important and implemented the 'materialistic' attitude to their children, thus, planting such idea into them. Research also found that there are many among the community of Orang Asli in Sungai Berua practiced marriage at young age. This caused the parents to be lacking in knowledge either in academic or familial value to educate their children accordingly.

Furthermore, according to Respondent 2, the failure in playing a role as parents is a huge factor of negligence in education among Orang Asli. They think more about the jobs which bringing money in instead of the education needed for the future of their children. They are only hoping that their children are able to read and left that role for the teachers at school.

(c) Students' Attitude and Personality

Students of Orang Asli have a different personality and attitude compared to the same aged students living in the urban area. Based on the observation, the students in Sungai Berua had problem in concentrating and focusing on their lesson for a long time span. They favoured to do activities on their own and ignored the teachers. They also wandered around the outside of the school and their housing area nearby the school.

According to Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Abdul Razak Ahmad (2009) in their study, the Orang Asli's students easily get bored and disinterested with their lesson in class. They only managed to give attention for only 15 minutes. However, this issue can be handled with an adequate application of teaching and learning styles by the teacher where the formal education such as classroom lesson should be varied as fun learning.

The attitude of the students in the classroom were also noted as they were being passive, not wanting to ask question, shy and sensitive. Besides, it was hard for them to accept the outsiders, thus, making it harder for them to accept the lesson given in the class. This situation leads to the same syllabus applied by the teacher every day and causing them a bigger problem as they are not able to pass the LINUS module as well as low achievement level in examination.

External Factors

(a) Environment and Culture

The factor of environment and culture also gives a negative impact to the academic achievement of the students in Sungai Berua. Although they accepted a lot of developments and incentives from the government, their lifestyle and culture are still tied back to their ancestors' practices. Till these days, their life revolved around the nature. Respondent 1 stated that Orang Asli community still depends on the nature and the jungle for their source of income. Thus, they are comfortable with their way and unable to accept the modernity in their life,

especially in education.

Moreover, their life is isolated from the urbanisation due to their housing area way far in the rural area. They are not exposed to the development of science and technology as well as the educational transformation. Besides, they have no role model in education as an icon in their life because the number of successful students among Orang Asli community is very low. According to the teachers, majority of the students are unable to pass the LINUS module. However, their community feels their education level is enough because there is no challenge facing by them these days. Due to their location, they do not feel the need to compete with the urban society which keeps growing and this attitude can cause a 'cancer' in educational level of Orang Asli community if no solution take place to prevent this from happening.

Discussion and Recommendations

(a) The Role of Ministry of Health Malaysia

Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) is responsible to solve the issue of eating style and health which cause the students of Orang Asli unable to give their full focus in learning. This is because there are a number of students observed to be low in energy and having health problem. Since there are lacks of awareness in this aspect, it is a factor that causes the students looking tired and unable to understand the lesson delivered in the class which required a maximum effort to ensure the students become active in class. MOH should do a frequent inspection on the eating habit of the Orang Asli's children to prevent them from any disease. Additionally, MOH should be exposing them to the negative implication faced by the students with their poor eating habit. This should not be targeted only to the students but also to the parents where guidelines about the nutritional menu in preparing daily food at home need to be given to them.

(b) Application of Creative Teaching

Among the Orang Asli community, education is not viewed as a priority because of the gap in their culture. Thus, the teachers should utilised creative ways in their teaching and learning style to attract the attention of Orang Asli community. With this research, the approach using their environment is a good initiative to be applied. This is because the environment in the classroom can be substituted with outdoor learning environment. The favourable environment for Orang Asli community is by being close to the nature because they cannot be separated with the nature. This also should be applied to the mediums and instrument in teaching and learning, for an example, usage of bamboo or plants as musical instruments. On the other hand, effective teaching and learning method for them is by utilising fun learning in the classroom.

(c) Awareness among the Parents

To tackle this issue, the government and school should spread awareness to the parents about the importance of education.

The parents should be playing a role in encouraging their children to school as they should be indicating how important knowledge and education to help their family in the future. Additionally, the parents should be involved with the activities organised by the school such as parents-teachers conference to discuss about the children's performance at school. However, many parents overlook this aspect in their children's education.

V. CONCLUSION

This research concluded that the Orang Asli community is still left behind in pursuing the development of education in Malaysia. Although, Malaysians are here and there making names internationally, there are so many gaps in Orang Asli community for them to fill especially in education field. Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) released on 2012 aspires to bring the gap in education closer either the gap in location, socioeconomic or student capability. Thus, the issue of negligence among Orang Asli community can be handled properly if all responsible parties play their roles to ensure no such issue arise in Orang Asli community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research has been conducted to meet the requirement of completing a Master Degree

REFERENCES

- [1]. Mazdi, M., Jabil, M., & Rosmiza, M. Z. (2014). Mengupas keciciran pelajar Orang Asli Malaysia: Suatu tinjauan ke dalam isu aksesibiliti sekolah. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*,

- 10(2), 189–198.
- [2]. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. (2012). *Laporan awal Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013-2025*. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.
- [3]. Sektor Penilaian dan Peperiksaan. (2015). *Keputusan Peperiksaan UPSR Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua*. Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Terengganu.
- [4]. Sektor Penilaian dan Peperiksaan. (2016). *Keputusan Peperiksaan UPSR Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua*. Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Terengganu.
- [5]. Sektor Penilaian dan Peperiksaan. (2017). *Keputusan Peperiksaan UPSR Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua*. Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Terengganu.
- [6]. Zakaria, K., Mohd. Rasdi, S., & Hajah Ramlah, Abd. Rahman Mazlan Zaharuddin, Mat Arof Mohd Hanifah, M. (2004). Lagu-lagu Tarian Sewang di Kalangan Masyarakat Orang Asli: Tinjauan Dari Aspek Intrinsik. *Jabatan Pengajian Melayu*, (Maktab Perguruan Tengku Ampuan Afzan).
- [7]. Abdullah, R., Acciaioi, G., Hafizah Ramle, N., & Sukhairi Mat Rasat, M. (2014). Forest Significant and Conservation among the Semaq Beri Tribe of Orang Asli in Terengganu State, Malaysia. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences Malaysia*. *Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci.*, 8(87), 386–395.
- [8]. Mohamad, N. (2006, Februari 13). *Harian Metro*. Ibu bapa Antara Penyebab Masalah Berat Badan Berlebihan: Artikel.
- [9]. Mohamad Johdi Bin Salleh, & Abdul Razak Ahmad. (2009). Kesedaran pendidikan dalam kalangan masyarakat orang asli. *Masyarakat Orang Asli: Perspektif Pendidikan Dan Sosiobudaya*., 47–58.
- [10]. Pejabat Pentadbiran Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua, (2007).
- [11]. Yaakub, A. I., Mat, A. C., & Pa Taib, M. (2012). Membina kemahiran pertuturan menerusi aktiviti lakonan dalam pengajaran bahasa arab. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 12(1), 325–337.
- [12]. Sumarwati, S., & Yunos, J. M. (2013). Tahap Kreativiti dalam Kalangan Pelajar Politeknik Metro, Politeknik Premier dan Politeknik Konvensional di Malaysia. *International Conference On Management*, (June), 212–234.