CHAPTER TWO

THE ORANG ASLI OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

This chapter begins with a depiction of the landscape of indigenous people known as *Orang Asli* in Peninsular Malaysia in order to address the reality as well as the truth out there. Instead of portraying Orang Asli information in general as typical studies, the chapter places a direct spotlight on the focal point of Orang Asli as well as spices in the recipe of development with new ingredients of literature.

2.1 Introduction

First and foremost, Orang Asli is often associated with slavery and is known as Sakai, as well as being recognized as the "*original*" or "*first peoples*" in Peninsular Malaysia. According to the records, Orang Asli ancestors colonized before the Malay sultanates were established. For the most part, Orang Asli retain physical, cultural, and spiritual ties to the forest and river valley, as well as claims to be heterogeneous rather than homogeneous communities (Schebesta, 1928; Noone, 1936; William-Hunt, 1952; Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Evan, 1968; Carey, 1976; Dentan et. al., 1997; Olszewska, 1999; Nicholas, 2000; Nowak, 2000; Geoffrey, 2002; Hood, 2004; Gomes, 2007; Gall, 2009; Dallos, 2011; JAKOA, 2017).

Paradoxically, anthropologists' early period cataloguing of Orang Asli reveals a discrepancy in definitions, namely as follows (Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Wilkinson, 1971; Dunn, 1975; Wazir Jahan, 1981; Andaya and Leonard, 1982; Nicholas, 2006, 2012):

a. *Orang Hulu* - people of the headwaters;
b. *Orang Darat* - people of the hinterland;
c. *Orang Laut* - people who live by the sea;
d. *Besisi* - people with scales;
e. *Mantra* - people who chanted;
f. *Orang Liar* - wild people;
g. *Pagan* - eaters of raw food people;
h. *Orang Mawas* - ape; and
i. *Orang Jinak* - tame or enslaved people.

Etymologically, Malaysians refer to Orang Asli as "original people" to represent the late 1950s translation of "*aborigine*" (Latin for "from the origin"). The term "Orang Asli," or "indigenous people," was coined by Malaysia's colonial British government (Carey, 1976; Nicholas, 2000; Nah, 2004; Cheah, 2005).

As a result, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) on Articles 1 and 2 (Appendix A) in 2007 is also applicable as a working definition in relation to Orang Asli. It is a social category used by Malaysians to describe the disparate folk's livelihoods that have existed in close contact with the tropical rain forest in Peninsular Malaysia for thousands of years (Carey, 1976; Nowak, 2000; Geoffrey, 2002; UN, 2008; JAKOA, 2017).

Currently numbering approximately 178 197 peoples with 36,658 households according to the 2000 census (the 2015 official statistics do not have any information on Orang Asli) and accounting for 0.7 percent of the total population, the ocean of literature has divided the Orang Asli into a large number of linguistically, culturally, and ecologically distinct populations constituting *Negrito*, *Senoi*, and *Proto-Malay*.

Map 1: Distribution of the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia

Source: This map is reproduced from Robert Knox Dentan et. al. Malaysia and the Original People: A Case Study of the Impact of Development on Indigenous Peoples. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997 and was adapted from Geoffrey Benjamin's In the Long Term: Three Themes in Malayan Cultural Ecology in Southeast Asia. Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies: Ann Arbor, 1985. The historically-known maximal distributions are indicated here. At the present time, most Orang Asli occupies smaller and more discontinuous territories (Map of Orang Asli Group in Orang Asli Archive on Mason Library, Keene State College, 229 Main St., Keene, NH 03435-3201 - Circulation: 603-358-2711 - Reference: 603-358-2710 – www.keene.edu). Important note: This is an approximate map only and does not reflect the actual extent of the Orang Asli's traditional territories or their current abode.

The Negrito is divided into six sub-groups: *Kensiu*, *Kintak*, *Jahai*, *Lanoh*, *Mendriq*, and *Batek*. Following that, the Senoi is divided into six sub-groups: *Semai*, *Temiar*, *Jahut*, *Che Wong*, *Mah Meri*, and *Semaq Beri*. Finally, the Proto-Malay is divided into six sub-groups: *Temuan*, *Semelai*, *Jakun*, *Orang Kanaq*, *Orang Kuala*, and *Orang Seletar* (Schebesta, 1928; Lebar at. al., 1964; Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Hooker, 1970; Jumper, 1996; Nicholas, 2000; Hood, 2004; Nah, 2004; Cheah, 2005; Rusaslina, 2011; DOSM, 2017b; JAKOA, 2017).

Table 2: Distribution of Orang Asli Sub-Group

Major Group	Sub-Group	Location	Population	Percentage
Negrito	Kensiu	Northeast Kedah	221	
	Kintak	Kedah-Perak Border	208	
	Jahai	Northeast Perak & West Kelantan	2358	
	Lanoh	North Central Perak	360	
	Mendriq	Southeast Kelantan	307	
	Batek	Northeast Pahang & Southern Kelantan	1478	
		Sub Total	**4932**	2.8
Senoi	Semai	Southern Perak & Northwest Pahang	49427	
	Temiar	Northern Perak & Southern Kelantan	30628	
	Jah Hut	Central Pahang	5560	
	Che Wong	Central Pahang	579	
	Mah Meri	Coastal Selangor	3700	
	Semaq Beri	Southern Pahang & Southern Terengggganu	5225	
		Sub Total	**95119**	53.4
Proto Malay	Temuan	Selangor & N. Sembilan	27996	
	Semelai	Southern Pahang, Selangor & N. Sembilan	7619	
	Jakun	Southern Pahang & Northern Johor	34802	
	Orang Kanaq	East Johor	139	
	Orang Kuala	West Coasts of Johor	3527	
	Orang Seletar	Southeast Coasts of Johor	1664	
		Sub Total	**75747**	43.8
		GRAND TOTAL	**178152**	100.0

Source: eDamak Report, JAKOA (2010)

According to the constitution, Orang Asli is a distinct group of people who are not well-defined as homogenous groups. Socially, Orang Asli differs significantly

from the rest of Malaysia's larger social groups. The most uncertain term used to describe their legal status is "aborigine," which refers to a specific category of indigenous group in Malaysia. *Aborigines People Act 134* (first enacted Ordinance No. 3 of 1954, amended Act 134 with effect from 1 July 1974) defines an Orang Asli as (Refer Appendix B for detail):

(1a) any person whose male parent is or was, a member of an aboriginal ethnic group, who speaks an aboriginal language and habitually follows an aboriginal way of life and aboriginal customs and beliefs, and includes a descendent through males of such persons;

(1b) any person or any race adopted when an infant by aborigines who has been brought up as an aborigine, habitually speaks an aboriginal language, habitually follows an aboriginal way of life and aboriginal customs and beliefs and is a member of an aboriginal community;

(1c) or the child of any union between an aborigine female and a male of other race, provided that the child habitually follows an aboriginal way of life and aboriginal customs and beliefs and remain a member of an aboriginal community.

Historically, there have been three waves of Orang Asli immigration onto Peninsular Malaysia. Archeological evidence connects the majority of the Orang Asli to the *Hoabinhians*, who lived between 8000 and 1000 BC during the Middle Stone Age. Indeed, documents show that the largely nomadic foraging Negrito is a direct descendant of these early people. Later, the second major influx of Orang Asli is *Mongoloid*, descendant of Senoi. Eventually, Orang Asli are descendants of both

Hoabinhians and Neolithic cultivators who crossed the threshold to Peninsular Malaysia from the north around 2000 BC (Schebesta, 1928; Lebar at. al., 1964; Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Hooker, 1970; Jumper, 1996; Geoffrey, 1976; Bellwood, 1985; Howell, 1995; Dentan et. al., 1997; Nicholas, 2000; JAKOA, 2017).

However, between 2000 and 3000 years ago, the southern groups collaborated with seafaring people from Borneo and the Indonesian islands, and this is thought to be the earliest ancestor of the Malay. Nevertheless, a small number of Orang Asli who traded with Austronesian-speakers assimilated with southern groups. As a result, the term *Proto*, or early Malay, emerged in the Orang Asli groups as descendant of Proto-Malay (Ryan, 1976; Juli, 1990; Dentan et. al., 1997; Geoffrey, 2002; JAKOA, 2014).

As a result, as early as the fifth century, the Orang Asli becomes major players in Peninsular Malaysia as hunter-gatherers of primary commodities products. The Orang Asli was sought after by traders from India and China because they were the only groups with knowledge and skills to locate and extract local commodities. Resin, camphor, ivory, rattans, *akar bahar* (rare black branching coral), *tripang* (fame or sea slug), and even gold were bartered for salt, cloth, beads, and iron tools (Andaya and Leonards, 1982, Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

The rise of the Malay sultanates, however, has caused the Orang Asli groups to retreat and relocate to forestry areas in order to avoid outsiders. Since this time, the majority of the Orang Asli have lived in remote communities, each within a specific geographical space and isolated from the others (Malay). During this time, the Orang Asli recognized their ecological niche and lived in areas known as *tanah adat* (customary law of land). The majority of culture and beliefs are derived from close association with specific environment - tree, sun, river, sea, animal, and angels.

Hunting, fishing, gathering, foraging, swiddening (hill rice cultivation), and some trade have been the forefront of the economy for a long time (Hooker, 1970; Gomes, 1990; Juli, 1990; Dentan, 1997; Rawski and Ngah, 1998; Nowak, 2000; Geoffrey, 2002; Naim, 2005; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

As a result, ethnologists identify three major groups based on differences in physical characteristics, language, cultural traits, religion, and way of life. The three major groups are the foragers Negritos, the swidden farmers Senoi, and the horticultural Aboriginal Malay/Proto Malay. In reality, however, there is significant overlap among various linguistic, cultural, racial, and ecological criteria. Some Negritos, for example, are swidden farmers, while some Senoi foragers and some Proto-Malays are swidden farmers (Sopher, 1965; Dentan, 1993; Rawski, 1998; Geoffrey, 2002; Naim et. al., 2005; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2014).

2.1.1 The *Negrito*

Negrito is a nomadic or semi-nomadic foraging people who live in the northern and northern-eastern foothills of Peninsular Malaysia. They are known as *Semang* (the Western Negrito tribe) and *Pangan* (the Eastern Negrito tribe). Overall, the Negrito population is small, accounting for 2.8 percent of the Orang Asli population, with a population density of less than one person per square kilometre (Noone, 1936; William-Hunt, 1952; Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Evan, 1968; Mohd Razha, 1973, Syed, Jamal, 1973; Tan, 1973; Carey, 1976; Gomes, 1982; Dentan, 1997; Tachimoto, 2001; JAKOA, 2014).

Originally, the term of Negrito (meaning *little Negro* in Spanish) registered by Spaniards to classified the indigenous people of the Philippine Islands. However, the similar connotation of Negrito applicable for indigenous people of the *Andamese*

(Great Andamese, Jangil-Rutland Jarawa, Jarawa, Onge, and Sentinelese) of Andaman Island, *Aeta* of Luzon, *Ati* of Panay, *Semang* of Peninsular Malaysia, *Tapiro, Aiome, Eleari* and *Papuans* of the Papua New Guinea (Brown, 1922; Syed Jamal, 1973; Weber, 1998; Sanders, 1999; Zarine, 2002; Geoffrey, 2012).

Nonetheless, in Malaysian contexts, the Negrito belongs to the Mon-Khmer family and is primarily Austroasiatic language speakers. Due to the circumstances, Negrito borrowed some Malay lexicon as well as adapted to the local culture and setting in order to mix and socialize with Malay communities (William-Hunt, 1952; Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Schebesta, 1973; Gomes, 1976; Rambo, 1982; Sanders, 1999; Geoffrey, 2012; Salasiah, 2014).

Physically, the men of the Negrito are about 4 feet 9 or 10 inches (1.43/1.46 m) tall, while the women are about 3.5 inches (8.9 cm) shorter. The skin is a very dark brown or black color. The head is either round or a cross between round and long. The forehead is low and rounded, protruding over the root of the nose, which is short, depressed, and pyramid-shaped. The eyes are frequently wide open and round, with no obliquity, and the iris is a very rich, deep brown. Lips range from moderate to full, the mouth is large, the chin is feebly developed, and the jaws are frequently slightly projecting. The hair is a dark-brown black that grows in short, spiral tufts that curl tightly. Negrito appears to resemble African pygmies at first glance, as they are clearly related to pygmy migration (Evans, 1968; Abdul Rashid, 1976; Alias, 1976; Carey, 1976; Gomes, 1982; Weber, 1998; Geoffrey, 2002; Naim, 2005, Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Often classified as hunters and gatherers, the Negrito economy is more appropriately referred to as opportunistic foragers. The majority of the Negrito group lives isolated in the deep forest and practices autonomous societies. The forest

product is exchanged with Malays villagers in exchange for goods such as knives, clothing, salt, and foodstuffs. However, some Negrito subgroups use the foothills between the forest and the lowlands to practice swidden agriculture for cash crops such as tapioca, maize, chilies, bananas, sweet potatoes, yam, and hill paddy. Nonetheless, as a result of the twentieth century, some Negrito is no longer hunter-gatherers and work as wage laborers on Malay farms and rubber plantations (Noone, 1936; Louis de Rochemont, 1948; Mohd. Razha, 1973; Schebesta, 1973; Syed Jamal, 1973; Carey, 1976; Rambo, 1978; Naim, 2005; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2015).

Furthermore, because of their nomadic lifestyle, Negrito subgroups are small, rarely exceeding thirty people. Each group is led by the oldest and most capable man, known as the *Tok Batin*, or headman. However, the headman's governance was limited, and he led by example rather than having formal enforcement authority. The levels of status within the group were determined by age and gender differences. Meanwhile, men and women perform most tasks interchangeably, so a sex utilization is a loosely defined concept. A Negrito's men, for example, hunt, while women do housework and collect edible forest products for daily consumption (Mohd. Razha, 1973; Syed Jamal, 1973; Naim, 2005; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Because of the nomadic lifestyle and small size of social units, the Negrito has a limited inventory of cultural heritage due to a lack of information storage capacity in the social system. As a result, every adult Negrito inherited cultural knowledge of the entire group. The Negrito now live in permanent settlements in Northeast Kedah, Kedah-Perak Border, Northeast Perak and West Kelantan, North Central Perak, Southeast Kelantan, Northeast Pahang, and Southern Kelantan. *Kensiu*, *Kintak*, *Jahai*, *Lanoh*, *Mendriq*, and *Batek* are among the six sub-groups (Mohd. Razha, 1973; Syed Jamal, 1973; Naim, 2005; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

2.1.2 The *Senoi*

Senoi are the largest group of Orang Asli people who are swidden farmers. Senoi is derived from the Semai and Temiar vocabulary terms *sen-oi* and *seng-oi*, which mean human being or person, respectively. As a result of the circumstances, Senoi was also referred to as *Sakai* or the *dream people* by Kilton Stewart in 1934, prior to the Second World War. The Senoi is Mongoloid and Neolithic decedents that arrived in Peninsular Malaysia around 8,000 years ago during the second wave of migration from Laos and Vietnam's northern mountain areas. Some speculated that Senoi is the descendants of Australoid from Australia and Veddoid from South India. Although similar to the Negrito, the Senoi is physically distinguished from the Negrito by larger size, lighter skin colour, and wavy hair form (Noone, 1936; William-Hunt, 1952; Geoffrey, 1966; Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Tan Chee Beng, 1973; Rambo, 1982; Fix, 1995; Dentan, et. al., 1997; Baer, 1999; Domhoff, 2003; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Senoi typically live in small villages scattered across Peninsular Malaysia on the outskirts of the forest. Senoi's main economic activity is hunting small animals like squirrels, monkeys, and wild boar. Simultaneously, Senoi collected forest products for his own consumption as well as trade with the Malay. The Senoi grew a mix of tapioca, sweet potato, maize, and hill rice, as well as vegetables and a few fruit trees. Trade is critical to Senoi livelihood survival, particularly as a means of obtaining iron tools and salt. Not to mention, Senoi is more economically advanced than the Negrito (Noone, 1936; Carey, 1976; Rambo, 1982; Dentan, et. al., 1997; Domhoff, 2003; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Senoi is now divided into six sub-groups: *Semai*, *Temiar*, *Jahut*, *Che Wong*, *Mah Meri*, and *Semaq Beri*, who live on both sides of the main range in Southern

Perak, Northwest Pahang, Northern Perak and Southern Kelantan, Central Pahang, Coastal Selangor, Southern Pahang, and Southern Terengggganu. Although historically referred to as a swidden farmer and reliant on forest products, contemporary literature depicts Senoi participation in permanent agriculture and wage sector practices as a major transition in livelihood survival (Juli Edo, 1990; Geoffrey, 1993; Tachimoto, 2001; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

2.1.3 The Proto-Malay

Proto-Malay is an Orang Asli group known as Aboriginal Malay (*Melayu Asli*) and commonly referred to as *Jakun*. Since the Stone Age, when the ancestors migrated from Yunnan, the Proto Malay has been found in the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia. Proto-Malay was divided into three categories: tribes of *Melayu Asli* who speak Malay and wear Malay costumes such as *Temuan*; tribes with a linguistic and cultural mix of *Proto-Malay* and *Senoi*; and tribes settling in coastal areas, primarily Muslim and speaking Sumatra dialects (William-Hunt, 1952; Carey, 1976; Rambo, 1982; Gianno, 1997; Tachimoto, 2001; Hood, 2004; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Proto-Malay is taller and darker than Senoi, but fairer than Negrito, with straight and smooth hair. Proto-Malay noses are flat and thick, but slightly sharper than Negrito or Senoi noses, with square jaws and strong chins of more likely "Mongolian-type" cheekbones, oval faces, and dark brown eyes. The Proto-Malay is a distinct ethnic group with cultural ties to Indonesia rather than the rest of Southeast Asia. Proto Malays is traditionally seafaring people and farmer-traders who speak Malay dialects from the *Malayo-Polynesian* or *Austronesian* language family and are

physically distinct from Malay (William-Hunt, 1952; Carey, 1976; Ali, 1980; Rambo, 1982; Fix, 1995; Gianno, 1997; Nicholas, 2012, JAKOA, 2017).

Proto-Malay communities are typically founds in the upper side of river valleys and coastal plains in the southern section of Peninsular Malaysia. However, the majority of the Proto-Malay who used to live in the area has either been assimilated into the immigrant Malay or has sought settlement further inland in the foothills. Forest hunting, collecting forest goods, fishing, swiddening, *sawah* (paddy field), rubber tapping, fruit orchard, wage labor, and entrepreneurial and professional jobs are among the Proto Malay's economical adaptations. *Temuan*, *Semelai*, *Jakun*, *Orang Kanaq*, *Orang Kuala*, and *Orang Seletar* are the six sub-groups of the Proto-Malay today. The Proto-Malay people inhabit primarily in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Southern Pahang, Northern Johor, East Johor, and the Johor West and Southeast Coasts (William-Hunt, 1952; Carey, 1976; Rambo, 1982; Chong, 1995; Desmond, 1995; Gianno, 1997; Tachimoto, 2001; Hood, 2004; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

2.2 The Development Strategy of Orang Asli

Generally, to a certain extent, the Orang Asli lived in isolation during the colonial period as well as apart from the mainstream societies. During this time, the Orang Asli was seen as being behind in terms of politics and economics. Prior to this, while Malaysia was being colonized, the Orang Asli was organized, independent, and respected people in the early Malay kingdoms. However, the Emergency from 1948 until 1960 brought the Orang Asli into the scheme of modern government and control by Malaysian authorities (Nicholas, 2000; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; JAKOA, 2017).

2.2.1 Pre-Colonization (1390 - 1874)

Prior to colonization, Orang Asli depicted as living in dispersed settlements and camps from the coasts to the mountains, including coastal plains and off-shore islands. The main source of income is small-scale trading of forest products between Malay people and traders from India and China (Dunn, 1975; Andaya and Leonard, 1982; Endicott, 1997; Geoffrey, 2002).

The first institution was a small Malay state located in river delta settlement areas. The head of state adopted Indian governance models, such as divine kingships, and derived economic funding from trade and taxation. A ruling class of Malays, a commoner class of farmers, traders, and fishermen, and a class of slaves who became servants in ruling class families and estates comprised society (Endicott and Dentan, 2004; Nah, 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2006; 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Later, after the ruler of Malacca's west coast embraced Islam, the administration of the kingdom underwent a transformation. The language of the rulers, most likely an early form of Malay, gradually spread to people living under the kingdoms' control. However, religious freedom is practiced, allowing Orang Asli to preserve own languages, animistic religions, and cultural beliefs. Indeed, this is the point of embarking in order to end the slave trade since Islam upholds the concept of fair and square (Mohd. Razha, 1973; Andaya and Leonard, 1982; Amran, 1991; Dentan et. al., 1997; Nicholas, 2003; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; JAKOA, 2017).

However, during the eighteenth century, Orang Asli slave raiding became a little profitable industry. Malays undertook expeditions into the deep forest and coastal areas on a regular basis in order to capture Orang Asli for slavery or sale on the slave market. Normally, the king would murder the adults and take only the so-

called *jinak* (tame) or children to avoid escapism (Skeat and Blagden, 1966; Dentan, 1997; Endicott and Dentan, 2004).

In the same vein, during the nineteenth century, Sumatran immigrants raided the hinterlands, killing and capturing Orang Asli for slave markets. The scenario causes Orang Asli to retreat deeper into the interior and shun touch with anyone other than trustworthy Malays or trader friends. The west Semai, for example, becomes fugitives, hiding in little dwellings and fleeing at the first sight of violence. Distress and suspicion of Malays eventually burned into the Orang Asli's minds and passed down through oral traditions. Even today, an Orang Asli child is taught to fear and distrust *hemik* (outsider) (Dentan, 1968; Syed Jamal, 1973; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; Naim, 1987; 2005).

2.2.2 Colonization (1874 - 1957)

The British continued expansionism into the central and northern parts of the peninsula from Malacca during the colonization period in the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, this time period also demonstrates that slavery of Orang Asli has been prohibited in Perak from 1883. The government, on the other hand, seeks to protect and regulate the Orang Asli. As a result, from 1901 until 1961, Captain G.B. Cerruti, an Italian explorer with an interest in indigenous peoples, served as Superintendent of the Orang Asli. After that, H.D. Noone took over as Field Ethnographer of the Taiping Museum in 1939. However, due to the Japanese invasion in 1941, the appointment was cut short (Cerruti, 1908; Winstedt and Wilkinson, 1934; Holman, 1958; Carey, 1976; Jones, 1968; Endicott, 1997).

As a result, Orang Asli retreated to the interior during the Japanese occupation (1941-1945) to avoid the Japanese and other outsiders. The *Malayan Peoples Anti-*

Japanese Army (MPAJA), a communist-dominated guerrilla organization, was the only organized opposition to the Japanese. The MPAJA's operation bases are in the deep mountain jungles, where Orang Asli have been befriended and sheltered from outsiders in exchange for food, intelligence on enemy movements, and logistical support (Endicott and Dentan, 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2006; JAKOA, 2017).

2.2.3 Post-Colonization (1948 - 1960)

The British government's resistance to the Japanese invasion of Malaya is revealed during the post-colonial period. As a result of the subversive conduct, Japanese army so-called communists chased down and forced into the deep forest. The British authorities quickly identified communist activity in order to suppress subversive ideology. Shortly after the Japanese surrendered in 1945, the British government attempted to exclude a communist, primarily small Chinese, group that envisioned Malaya's post-independence government. The communists again returned to the forest in 1947 and launched an armed insurgency known as *Darurat*, or the Emergency, which lasted from 1948 until 1960 (Carey, 1976; Leary, 1989; 1995; Nagata, 1997; Nicolas, 2000; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; JAKOA, 2017).

The British authorities relocated Orang Asli to avoid communist reliance in order to curb communist influences. The long house, for example, was constructed with barbed wire and was constantly watched over. However, due to lacked sufficient shelters, sanitary facilities, and nutritious food, most of the Orang Asli perished of sickness, hunger, and demoralization. As result, some Orang Asli managed to escape the camps and returned into the forest with rumors of the government's brutality (Jones, 1968; Carey, 1976; Leary, 1989; 1995; Nagata, 1997; Nicolas, 2000; Endicott and Dentan, 2004).

By 1953, the central highlands' Orang Asli, primarily Temiar and Semai, turned to the communists for protection against the government. To gain the trust of the Orang Asli, the government placed the remaining Orang Asli in long houses and built jungle forts in Orang Asli districts where communists were concentrated. The forts are manned and patrolled by the Police Field Forces, who is assisted by small shops offering salt, tobacco, and metal tools, as well as minimal medical care (Jones, 1968; Carey, 1976; Leary, 1989; 1995; Nagata, 1997; Nicolas, 2000; Endicott and Dentan, 2004).

Ultimately, the government set-up the Department of Aborigines and renamed it the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) in 2011, prior to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (JHEOA) in 1963. Peter Darrel Rider Williams-Hunt was appointed as Malaya's first Federal Advisor for Indigenous Peoples as early as 1950 Later, the position was replaced in 1953 by Richard O.D. Noone. The major agenda of JAKOA is to inspire Orang Asli in order to support the government and avoid subversive ideologies (Jones, 1968; Carey, 1976; Leary, 1989; 1995; Nagata, 1997; Nicolas, 2000; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; JAKOA, 2017).

Eventually, in the late 1950s, the *Senoi Praak* (Fighting Aborigines) was formed. This force was created specifically to track down communists and is made up entirely of Orang Asli. Despite the fact that the Emergency ended in 1960, a few Communist Party members escaped back into the jungle and refused to surrender until 1989 (Jones, 1968; Carey, 1976; Leary, 1989; 1995; Nagata, 1997; Nicolas, 2000; Endicott and Dentan, 2004).

2.2.4 Post-Independence (1957 - Present)

At the opening of Parliament in 1961, the King declared that the nation would not disregard Orang Asli although the Emergency was over. His government, he said, was creating a "*long-term policy for the administration and advancement of the aborigines*" in order to "*to absorb these people into the stream of national life in a way and at a pace that will adopt and not destroy their traditional way of living and culture*" (quoted in Jones, 1968).

As a result, in November 1961, the federal government forms the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) permanent and gave it responsibility for all programmes concerning Orang Asli. One reason for the one-agency approach was that more than 60 percent of Orang Asli still lived in remote areas, far from basic government services such as education and medical care. The JHEOA staff had developed some expertise in dealing with Orang Asli. Security concerns kept the Aboriginal Peoples Act in effect, giving the Department extensive control over Orang Asli (Dentan et. al., 1997; Nah, 2004; Nicholas , 2012; JAKOA, 2014).

2.3 The Incorporation Policy of Orang Asli

The end of the emergency reveals that the Malaysian government intends to incorporate Orang Asli as one of the major players in the country. This idea was translated into the involvement of the Ministry of the Interior through the policy in 1961 by stated the goal "*ultimate integration with the Malay section of the community* demands *natural integration as opposed to artificial assimilation* with claims *special measures should be adopted for the protection of the institutions, customs, mode of life, persons, property and labor of the aborigine people*." This idea reveals that several countermeasures will be implemented in order to incorporate

the distinction between Orang Asli culture and practices with Malays. At the same time, JAKOA will be a utilization model on behalf of the government to realize the ultimate goal (Jimin et al., 1983; Mohd Tap, 1990; Nah, 2002; Nicholas, 2000; 2012; JAKOA 2017).

However, in the early 1980s, the utilization of JAKOA became authoritative in regards to addressing the incorporation of Orang Asli into the mainstream. This situation occurred due to alarming attention from the Islamic Affairs Section of the Prime Minister's Office. As a result, the Director-General of JAKOA in 1990, Jimin Idris, articulated the idea of conversion of Orang Asli into Islam by stating, *preferably as an Islamized subgroup of the Malays* as the basic idea of incorporation into the Malaysian mainstream as Malay (Malaysian Government, 1982; 1994; Halinah, 1990; Amran, 1991).

Holistically, this idea, which so-called resembles Malays makes the Orang Asli groups receive national privileges since turn out to be *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil), such as free education, opportunities for government jobs, easy approval of business licenses, opportunities for parliamentary seats, as well as ease in purchasing property (Nicholas, 2002; 2012; DOSM, 2017; JAKOA, 2017).

Finally, with the help of JAKOA, the Malaysian government was able to incorporate in a variety of ways. The technique entails repositioning Orang Asli, incorporation into the market economy, political participation, acceptance of Islam, and adaptation of certain aspects of mainstream Malay culture (Amran, 1991; Nagata, 1997; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; Nicholas, 2002; 2012; DOSM, 2017; JAKOA, 2017).

2.4 The Legitimate Strategy of Orang Asli

According to the Federal Constitution's Aborigines People Act 134, Orang Asli is Malaysian citizens. Orang Asli enjoy equal access to all resources in the country and the freedom to practice any faith, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism, as a result of this law. Any choice made by the Orang Asli must, however, be based on supervision as well as JAKOA's approval. Similarly, this law gives the Malaysian government complete control over Orang Asli and strengthens the Director-General of JAKOA and the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development's jurisdiction (Malaysian Government, 1982; 1994; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; Nicholas, 2002; 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Malaysian law, for example, recognizes the claim of Orang Asli to Tanah Adat (ancestral lands) under Malaysian land law. As a result, Orang Asli is free to occupy any area in Malaysia as long as they do not pose a threat to the government's interests. At the same time, the Malaysian government apportioned gazette land and designated sections as Orang Asli reserves. According to the 2010 census, 20 670.83 hectares of land have been designated as Orang Asli reserves. However, 26 288.47 hectares of land have been granted but not yet gazette, and 85 987.34 hectares of land have been applied for but not yet approved (Halinah, 1990; POASM, 1991; Endicott and Dentan, 2004; Cheah, 2005; Nicholas, 2000; 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

2.5 The Organization Strategy of Orang Asli: Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA)

Orang Asli systematic organizing tactics began in 1953 with the formation of JAKOA. The so-called "godfather" of Orang Asli, plays a critical utilization in developing and implementing a strategy to integrate Orang Asli into Malaysian

society. JAKOA's organizational strategy comprises educational, medical, political, Islamization, and economic change programmes (Carey, 1976; Jimin et. al., 1983; Nicholas, 2000; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nah, 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

On the record, JAKOA is the single recognized government agency in charge of the Orang Asli. The jurisdictional rationale is based on the 1961 policy that "*every effort will be made to encourage the more developed groups to adopt a settled way of life and thus to bring them economically into line with other communities in this country*." In time, the JAKOA hopes to ensure that the Orang Asli achieve a good level of socioeconomic and cultural integration with mainstream populations while conserving the sociocultural identities of all groups (Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2002, JAKOA, 2017).

The JAKOA is now deeply embedded in the Orang Asli people's daily existence. The Aboriginal Peoples Ordinance No. 3, 1954, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, was the first legislation passed by the British Colonial Government in 1954 (JAKOA, 2017).

It was renamed the Department of Museum, Archives, and Orang Asli Research in 1956 and was put under the Ministry of Education until 1959, when it was returned to the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was transferred to the Ministry of National and Rural Development in 1971 after being placed under the Ministry of Lands and Mines in 1964 (focuses on security issues) (JAKOA, 2017).

Next, it was moved to the Ministry of Rural Development in 1990 (focused on development issues), and in 1994, it was placed under the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development (focused on development and integration). It was finally

resurrected in 2001 and has remained under the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperative Development till now (JAKOA, 2017).

The JAKOA's headquarters is in Wisma Selangor Dredging on Jalan Ampang in Kuala Lumpur. In addition, the JAKOA operates a hospital, training center, museum, and library in Gombak, some twelve miles outside of Kuala Lumpur, in the foothills. Pahang, Perak Kedah, Kelantan Terengganu, Johore, Negeri Sembilan Malacca, and Selangor Wilayah Persekutuan are among the six state branch offices, four of which cover two states or districts: Pahang, Perak Kedah, Kelantan Terengganu, Johore, Negeri Sembilan Malacca, and Selangor Wilayah Persekutuan. In Peninsular Malaysia, the JAKOA branch was responsible for 36 district offices and 133 post or project offices (Nicholas, 2000; 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

2.6 The Transformation Strategy of Orang Asli

Modernization is a necessary step in the transition from a traditional to a modern civilization. This is, without a doubt, the pinnacle of Orang Asli integration into mainstream societies, as well as a step toward eradicating the stigma of being "left behind." Indeed, JAKOA has made various attempts as a modernization policy, which has been accomplished through medical, educational and political activities.

As a result of the government's rapid development initiative, most of the Orang Asli groups have been resettled, providing access to health and educational services. The policy also included efforts to integrate the Orang Asli with the greater society in general, and Malay in particular, by fostering an Islamic value system (Nicholas, 2000; Endicott et. al., 2004; Lasimbang et. al., 2010; West, 2010; Ministry of Health, 2011; Che Noriah et. al., 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

2.6.1 Health

Previous study reveals health issues swept the Orang Asli groups. As a result, JAKOA established a health programme since 1950s in order to improve the health and physical condition of Orang Asli. The effort articulates into the establishment of 3 clinics, 108 medical posts, 16 transit centers, a flying doctor (twice a month), and a hospital with 13 medical wards and 166 beds. However, due to stills reliance on traditional treatment, the Orang Asli continues to suffer from health problems (Carey, 1976; Jimin et. al., 1983; Mohd Tap, 1990, Amran, 1991; Nicholas, 2000; Endicott et. al., 2004; Hewes, 2005; Azliza et. al., 2012; Ong et. al., 2012; Samuel et. al., 2012: Kardooni et. al., 2014; JAKOA, 2017).

Basically, the Orang Asli's health record spells disaster. Previous studies reveals Orang Asli has one of the highest rates of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy, cholera, typhoid, measles, intestinal parasitic infections, diarrheal diseases, dysentery, high blood glucose (diabetes mellitus), high blood pressure (hypertension), pre-obesity, and heart diseases. For the record, the majority of ailments are caused by a lack of nutrition, a forestry lifestyle, traditional cuisine consumption, and poor sanitation in resettlement regions (Baer, 1999; Nicholas, 2000; Gomes, 2007; Al-Adhroey et. al., 2010; Hartini and Mohamed Kamel, 2010; Mohamud and Suriami, 2010; Ministry of Health, 2011; Shea et. al., 2012; Bedford, 2013; Al-Delaimy et. al., 2014; Cheng et. al., 2014; Hotez, 2014; Tengku Shahrul et. al., 2014).

Although there has been a notable improvement in the conditions and accessibility of health services, much more work need to be done. The irony of the situation is that serious health issues, like as malnutrition, continue to plague the Orang Asli. For example, prior studies conducted in 2004, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012,

2013, 2014, and 2015 revealed that the majority of *Kintak* children had a bloated stomach, which is an alarming symptom of *kwashiorkor*, or a shortage of protein caused by low food availability. Despite this, the Orang Asli mortality rate is at an all-time high of 51.7 deaths per 1000 births. Orang Asli had a median life expectancy of 53 years (52 for men and 54 for women), compared to a national average of 75 years in 2012 (Nicholas, 2000; Endicott et. al., 2004; Rusaslina, 2010; DOSM, 2017a; EPU; 2017).

2.6.2 Education

Providing educational opportunities is an important part of any community's social advancement. As a result, this issue becomes a major source of worry, as well as a vital mechanism in the JAKOA determination to enhance Orang Asli standard of living. The educational program's overall goal is to compensate for Orang Asli's lack of formal education and isolation from government schools. Impressively, the JAKOA custom and operates a three-tiered structure to prepare Orang Asli children as an entry into the national education system (Mohd Tap, 1990; Nicholas, 2000; Endicott et. al., 2004; JAKOA, 2017).

As a result, Orang Asli began the three-year programme with an in-house pre-school system taught by JAKOA staffs in Orang Asli villages. Next, students attend centralized primary schools neighboring Orang Asli settlements, for another six years. Finally, pupils who pass the end-of-primary-school tests are offered the opportunity to attend local government-funded secondary schools (Carey, 1976; Jimin et al., 1983; Mohd Tap, 1990; Nicholas, 2000; Endicott et. al., 2004; Kamarulzaman and Osman, 2008; Mohd Asri, 2012; Kardooni et. al., 2014 JAKOA, 2017).

However, in certain cases, JAKOA's educational programme raises some issues and leads to disappointment when it comes to addressing Orang Asli education. The following are the key challenges with education among Orang Asli, as well as the reasons for the program's failure:

a. Poor memory and intelligent (Sharifah et. al., 2011; Shaari et al, 2011; Hema and Firdaus, 2014).
b. Poverty (Sharifah et. al., 2011; Mohamad Anwaruddin et. al., 2014).
c. Lack of knowledge, unconfident, incapable of making decisions, dependent and lazy (Chupil and Joseph, 2003; Mohd Asri, 2012; Mohamad Anwaruddin et. al., 2014).
d. Different style of learning compared to urban students as they learn through the indigenous language, arts, rituals, folk fore and taboos which do not fixed syllabus and timetable of learning (Shaari et al, 2011; Hema and Firdaus, 2014).
e. Need to customize learning experience in order to gains beneficial from the schooling process (Sharifah et. al., 2011; Hema and Firdaus, 2014).
f. The rigid curriculum in the national school system, practiced by the teachers has placed the orang Asli students in a discouraging position (Nicholas, 2010; Hema and Firdaus, 2014).
g. Problems of reading *Bahasa Malaysia* as second language as well as conquer 3M (reading, writing and arithmetic) and third language, English (Naim, 2005; Jantan and Ahmad, 2013; Norwaliza et. al., 2014).

h. Lack of committed and experienced teachers to teach in Orang Asli schools, and not to only focus on provision of facilities (Norwaliza et. al., 2014).

i. Issues in language in relation to understanding terms and concepts that do not exist in their own social and cultural vocabulary (Shaari et al, 2011; Norwaliza et. al., 2014).

j. Absenteeism - fells boring as well as having short attention span in class due to nature and traditional way of life of Orang Asli students to be hyperactive - hunting and gathering forest products (Kamarulzaman and Osman, 2008; Abdul Razaq and Zalizan, 2009; Mohamad Johdi and Abdul Razak, 2009; Sharifah et. al., 2011; Mohd Asri, 2012; Mustafa et. al., 2013; Intan Farahana, 2014).

Even if a herculean effort has been made to bring Orang Asli to the ivory tower, the pursuit of education in a globalizing world appears unwelcoming. A dropout is a major problem that intersects with Orang Asli education. The most serious and substantial incidences of dropout occur during the transition from primary to secondary school.

Statistically, the dropout rate for primary six school leavers who were not registered for form one gradually increased by 18 percent between 1994 and 2008, while 17.1 percent of those who were registered for form one but did not finish their studies until form five increased by 17.1 percent. Furthermore, in 2013, the number of dropouts drastically surged to 25percent. Furthermore, only a small number of Orang Asli students completed public tests in primary and secondary institutions.

Between 1971 and 2010, only 880 Orang Asli students finished tertiary education (Hasan Mat Nor, 1997; JAKOA, 2011; Mustafa et. al., 2014).

To address the concerns, the government has pledged to improve the quality of education among Orang Asli tribes under the 10th Malaysia Plan. Following that, on June 21, 2012, the government announced seven programmes aimed at improving Orang Asli educational attainment:

a. To strengthen administration at the school, district education office, state education department and ministry level.
b. To put elements of basic vocational education in lower secondary schools.
c. To reduce the dropout rate of Orang Asli students by 6 per cent each year.
d. To increase the intake of Orang Asli students for the Bachelor of Teaching Special Program.
e. To improve the infrastructure for Orang Asli education.
f. To strengthen collaboration with strategic partners.
g. To create a performance detection system for schools and Orang Asli students.

In 2014, 286 Orang Asli students successfully registered in public higher learning institutions and studied overseas in Australia, United Kingdom and United State of America as a result of the Orang Asli Education Transformation Program (Mohd Asri, 2012; Intan Farahana, 2014; Tamanna, 2014; UNESCO, 2015).

2.6.3 Politic

First and foremost, an Orang Asli political building block is the introduction to cash-crop agriculture, education, and social organization reform by JAKOA through the appointment of *Tok Batin* or headman in Orang Asli communities. As a result of this programme, traditional structures and behavior in Orang Asli society have gradually strengthened, as has Orang Asli autonomy (Jumper, 1996; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas et. al., 2010; JAKOA, 2017).

Fundamentally, the political institution of the Orang Asli is unique. Due to diversity, Orang Asli adheres to a traditional political philosophy that focuses on local characteristics in settlement areas. However, the impact of globalization has shifted this traditional political practice to include political interests from beyond the Orang Asli culture. JAKOA (2017) implies, to some extent, that politics is a significant factor in the Orang Asli group's evolution.

In this framework, Orang Asli should be given political involvement and administration as a catalyst for mainstream integration. On this foundation, the government embarks and introduces legislation such as the National Land Code of 1965, the Land Conservation Act of 1960, the Protection of Wildlife Act of 1972, the National Parks Act of 1980, and, most crucially, the Aboriginal Peoples Act of 1954 (Jumper, 1996; AITPN, 2008; Lasimbang et. al., 2010; Nicholas, 2010; Nicholas et. al., 2010; Rusaslina, 2011; AIPP, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

The government's efforts to suppress communist subversion sparked political interest among the Orang Asli. Indeed, the Aboriginal Peoples Act of 1954 empowers government authorities to nominate or remove *Tok Batin* or headmen of Orang Asli communities in order to assure the effectiveness of administration.

As a result, each Orang Asli group chooses its own leaders, and if the suggested name is acceptable and forthcoming, it is formally recognized, awarded, and appointed by JAKOA. The headman earn RM 900 allowance upon appointment, contingent on his working as a liaison, relaying the group's concerns to JAKOA, and finally coordinating and inspiring the Orang Asli people to follow JAKOA policies (JAKOA, 2017).

Nonetheless, among tribes that lack an established political structure, such as the Batek, the JAKOA either appoints or encourages the community to choose a leader (Mohd Tap, 1990; Malaysia Government, 1994; Jumper, 1996, Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas et. al., 2010; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

JAKOA eventually succeeded in establishing a hierarchical political system in Orang Asli communities. Despite courageous attempts and approaches, however, JAKOA stills facing the issue such the Orang Asli headman's inability to govern the people. Due of external exposure, several traditionally Orang Asli communities appointed headman without the permission of JAKOA. As a result, the Orang Asli groups' traditional organizational structure has partially dissolved (Jimin et al., 1983; Mohd Tap, 1990; Jumper, 1996; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2010; JAKOA, 2017).

2.6.4 Economy

JAKOA has been a single-agency department responsible for all elements of Orang Asli requirements for the majority of its history. The main goal is to modernize the Orang Asli economy, shifting away from subsistence activities such as hunting, gathering, and growing crops for own consumption toward market exchange

activities such as selling commodities or labor and procuring merchandises and other supplies to alleviate poverty (JAKOA, 2017).

Obviously, Orang Asli have been designated as one of the most vulnerable and impoverished groups in Malaysia, with a disproportionately higher poverty rate. Alarmingly, the Orang Asli data in 2010 show a 50 percent poverty rate and a 19 percent hardcore poverty rate, compared to national figures of 3.8 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively (DOSM, 2017; EPU, 2017; JAKOA, 2017).

A traditional Orang Asli subsistence activity is considered primitive and backward by the Malaysian government, whereas a market-oriented activity is considered progressive and modern. Various programmes being developed and implemented to bring about transformation, as outlined in the JAKOA requirements - abandoning subsistence agriculture is a sign of economic advancement among Orang Asli people.

As a result, the Malaysian government considers economic modernization to be an intrinsically win-win situation. Since 1990s, the JAKOA has been enlisting the help of other government departments, such as the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health (MOH), and Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM), as well as federal agencies such as the Federal Land Rehabilitation and Consolidation Authority (FELCRA) and the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA), to assist the Orang Asli integrates into the modern Malaysian economy (Jimin et al., 1983; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

Apparently, in 1960s, JAKOA used in-situ land development to achieve Orang Asli economic transformation aims. JAKOA aspires and promotes peoples in Orang Asli settlements to cultivate income crops in four to six acre plots allotted by the government - primarily rubber, but also oil palm, coconut, and commercial fruits - in

four to six acre plots allotted by the government. JAKOA also offers staffs who act as the project's organizer and motivator, as well as the essential tools, seedlings, weed-killers, and fertilizers. The JAKOA provides further economic aid - primarily food - to newly settle foraging groups until their crops begin to generate cash (Jimin et al., 1983; Mohd Tap, 1990; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2012; JAKOA, 2017).

However, from the late 1970s, the JAKOA has focused its efforts on a more extreme strategy of Orang Asli economic transformation through regroupment plans. The JAKOA maintained that regrouping would allow the National Security Council to keep an eye on the Orang Asli while also allowing the JAKOA to implement economic modernization on a wider scale than before. JAKOA, with permission, declared the following particular goals for one massive regroupment project (Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2012; JAKOA, 2017):

a. Substituting settled cash-crop agriculture for swiddening (economic modernization);
b. Reducing the communist threat (security); and
c. Reuniting the Orang Asli with the other communities in the country (assimilation).

Regroupment plans, which began as a surveillance program, have evolved into JAKOA's most basic strategy for reforming the Orang Asli economy. Typically, the government established regroupment schemes, or *Rancangan Perkumpulan Semula* (RPS), outside of security sensitive areas in order to provide a comprehensive development package to address the slow pace of in situ land development from the early 1960s. As a result, by 2015, twenty regroupment initiatives had been finished

or were in the process of being completed (Jimin et al., 1983; Mohd Tap, 1990; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2012; Halilah et. al., 2013; JAKOA 2014).

In the long run, the JAKOA's general aims was (and is) to transform Orang Asli into settled, self-sufficient farmers after the five years or so needed for their rubber trees and other cash crops to become productive. In this context, RPSs should be relatively self-contained communities with an administrative center surrounded by family farms and communal plots of forest and pasture land for grazing livestock (JAKOA, 2017).

At the same time, in RPS regions, JAKOA also provides school and hostel facilities, as well as a medical facility, a cooperative shop, an administrative and management office, a multipurpose hall, and access roads. RPS also gives each family ten acres of land for rubber, oil palm, and fruit trees, as well as two acres for a dwelling and subsistence crops. JAKOA's ultimate goal is to eliminate the need for inhabitants to clear forest area for swiddening agriculture or traditional agroforestry (Jimin et al., 1983; Endicott et. al., 2004; Nicholas, 2000; 2012; Halilah et. al., 2013; JAKOA 2017).

2.6.5 Islamization of Orang Asli

In recent years, incorporation policy has taken on a new dimension, with a greater emphasis on spiritual growth. Without a doubt, institutional Islamic missionaries began to pursue Orang Asli groups as a transformation target. After the Malaysian Islamic Affairs Organization (*Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia - PERKIM*) held a seminar on Islamic Dakwah among Orang Asli in 1980, the Islamization of Orang Asli began. The program's stated a goal was twofold: Islamization of the entire Orang Asli community and Orang Asli

integration/assimilation with Malays (Amran, 1991; Sardesai, 1989; Mohd Tap, 1990).

In reality, JAKOA promotes Orang Asli evangelization by Muslim organizations and individuals. The government forced the JAKOA to vigorously promote Islam among the Orang Asli in the late 1970s, and as a result, the Orang Asli population experienced an Islamic renaissance (Toshihiro, 2007; Nicholas, 2012; Mustaffa, 2012; Tacey, 2013; JAKOA, 2014).

2.7 Summary

All in all, the descendants of the earliest known population who occupied the Malay Peninsula before the founding of the Malay kingdoms are known as the Orang Asli (original or first people). Anthropologists and administrators have long considered the Orang Asli to be made up of three primary groups, each of which is made up of multiple separate tribes or sub-groups. The Negrito (*Semang*), Senoi, and Aboriginal Malay/Proto-Malay are the three primary ethnic groups, which are formally divided into eighteen sub-ethnic groupings.

Since 1957, when the country gained independence, the government has started on a comprehensive development programs to help the Orang Asli people. The development process was divided into two phases, one to safeguard the Orang Asli community from communists and the other to focus on the Orang Asli group's socioeconomic needs. All efforts have been made by the government and a non-governmental organization is to integrate the Orang Asli into Malaysia's mainstream population.

The evolution, change, and modernization of Malaysia's indigenous populations offer distinct insights. Although the JAKOA's main focus in

modernizing Orang Asli economies has been to promote cash farming, the JAKOA has increasingly focused on health issues, the Islamization programs, and educating and training Orang Asli for salaried and wage-earning employment. Many Orang Asli communities have benefited from the process of modernization in and around traditional lands, including socioeconomic advancement, lower poverty rates, and increased confidence while engaging with mainstreams.

Nonetheless, the Orang Asli community as a whole continues to fall considerably behind other Malaysians in all indicators of well-being. This is expected to change for the better, as increased self-awareness and self-confidence have led to more Orang Asli embracing modernism as a means of improving status of lives.