

## The Impact of Development on The Petalangan Habitat

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### ABSTRACT

This article deals with the changes in the habitat of the Petalangan Malay in the Pelalawan District, Riau, Indonesia. This article will describe and analyze the changes in the Petalangan habitat which came about as a result of the implementation of development programs by the government of Indonesia and of the Riau Province. It focuses on the aspects of communication and transportation, settlement patterns, demography, and livelihood. In the contemporary socioeconomic context of Indonesia and Malaysia, the phrase "the continuous struggle of human beings in their quest of achieving better quality of life", which is one of the objectives of this seminar, can be understood as "development." Thusly, the title of this article is "The Impact of development on the Petalangan habitat."

**Keywords:** *Petalangan, Pelalawan, shifting cultivation, palm oil estates, the Sumatera Highway.*

### THE PETALANGAN MALAY

Petalangan is one of the first Austronesian groups in Riau. The others are Orang Talang Mamak in Indragiri Hulu, Orang Laut-Duano in Inderagiri Hilir, Orang Talang Sakai in Bengkalis, Orang Talang Bonai in Rokan Hilir, dan Orang Akit in Rupat (Rab 2002).<sup>1</sup> The Petalangan is the most advanced among these groups and the population is dispersed throughout several village communities in the District of Pelalawan.

The term "Petalangan" stems from the word "talang" which means "small hamlet in the fringe of the forest" (quoted from W.J.S. Poerwadarminta 1966 by Hamidy 2005). The Petalangans are thus the inhabitants of the forest hamlet. Such pattern of settlement is related to their main economic activity which is shifting cultivation.

According to Yoonhee Kang (2005), a Yale-educated Korean anthropologist, the Petalangans are hardly known in Riau. In fact, when we visited the department of Social Welfare in the District Office of Pangkalan Kerinci in 2012, noone there knew about the Petalangans.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms Talang Bonai and Talang Sakai are quoted from Tenas Effendy (1988). Tenas Effendy sometimes interchange the term Orang Petalangan with Orang Talang (Effendy 2002).

## THE PETALANGAN HABITAT

Up to the 1980s, the habitat of the Petalangers in the District of Pelalawan was characterized by a dense tropical forest, flat contours, and swamps here and there. Since the 1970s certain areas of the forests had been contracted by the government of Indonesia to logging companies, such as PT. Dwi Marta (57,873 acres), PT. Hutani Sola Lestari (45,990 acres), PT. Nanjak Makmur (48,370 acres), PT. Siak Raya Timber (38,560 acres).

However, since 1990s, most of the forests had been converted into palm oil estates. The rest is planted with rubber and palm oil by small farmers. In the Subdistrict of Ukui, the forest is designated by the government of Indonesia as natural conservation area. It is called Tesso Nilo National Park (Taman Nasional Tesso Nilo).<sup>2</sup>

Recently, parts of the Tesso Nilo National Park has become a conflict area between the government and local inhabitants. The government claims that the entire area of the national forest is under their control, due to its designation as forest conservation area, while the local inhabitants insist that certain parts of the forest is theirs by customary rights.

## TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Transportation infrastructure was poor in the District of Pelalawan. Up to the 1980s, there were no roads available for motor vehicles. Communication and transportation between one village and another was mostly pathways, which could only be done in the dry season using bicycles. Bicycles and canoes were two important transportation modes in Pelalawan.

In 1981, the oil company PT. Stanvac Pacific Indonesia built a solid earth road connecting Lirik in the south to Buatan in the north, passing through the Pelalawan District. When Tenas Effendy and others were conducting field research in the village of Betung (the Subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras) in 1987-1988, this road could not be passed through by any vehicles in the rainy season (Effendy nd: 15).

In 1990, the Stanvac Pacific Indonesia road became the Sumatera Highway, even though the condition of the road was still poor. It is said by an informant, Bapak Dugang, that it took 2 days and 2 nights to travel through this road from the province capital, Pekanbaru, to the village of Betung in the subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras. Now the same distance takes only 3-4 hours.

After the declaration of the act of regional autonomy in 1999, everything seems to have changed in Riau. The Sumatera Highway has been widened and asphalted and it is now a lively and busy line connecting Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, and Pekanbaru, the capital city of Riau Province. From this highway, small roads spread out connecting the highway with remote villages throughout the

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the Minister of Forestry's Decrees Nr 255/Menhut-II/2004 and Nr 663/MENHUT-II/2009, as quoted in Dugang 2013).

District of Pelalawan. It is followed by the provision of electricity facilities to the villages, making the area bright in the evening and allowing the residents to use modern electrical amenities and means of communication.

Furthermore, the highway has impacted several small villages and towns along its corridor. These small villages are now small towns and one of them even turned to become the capital city of the District of Pelalawan, namely Pangkalan Kerinci. The development of economic activities, transportation networks and electricity facilities has attracted peoples from other provinces to immigrate to Pelalawan, and now several of these villages are inhabited by multiethnic population.

### POPULATION

According to estimates by Tenas Effendy in 1992, the total population in Petalangan is approximately 30,675 peoples, consisting of 6,885 in the Subdistrict of Langgam, 8,824 in the Subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras, 9,230 in the Subdistrict of Bunut, and 10,736 in the Subdistrict of Kuala Kampar (Effendy 2002: 367).

These days it is difficult to be precise about the exact number of Petalangers, because a number of villages have been influxed by new immigrants from different ethnic groups. Most of the newcomers are Javanese from Central Java, Minangkabaunese from West Sumatera, and Bataknese from North Sumatera. Intermarriages between individuals of different ethnic groups, yet of the same religion, frequently happen.

The first migrants are Javanese who came under the program of "transmigration" in the 1960s. The others are voluntary migrants, particularly the Minangkabaunese, the Bataknese, the Niasnese and others who came after the 1990s. The migrants mostly live in small towns and palm oil estates. Below is a table describing the population in the villages of the Subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras in 2013.

**Table 1.** Population of the Subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras (2013)

No	Villages	Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )	RT	RW	Family	Total Population		
						Men	Women	Total
OLD NATIVE VILLAGES								
1	Sorek Satu	8.00	29	9	2713	6060	5173	11233
2	Sorek Dua	115.00	11	5	617	1211	965	2176
3	Dundangan	81.60	12	6	652	1882	1678	3560
4	Terantang manuk	105.53	13	5	689	1221	1088	2309
5	Palas	95.00	9	4	365	875	802	1659
6	Kemang	95.00	12	4	547	1115	1062	2177
7	Betung	50.00	8	3	282	693	665	1358
8	Kesuma	100.00	26	4	1125	3120	2632	5752
9	Talau	83.00	6	3	224	1012	887	1899
10	Tanjung beringin	17.00	7	2	332	615	562	1177

EX-TRANSMIGRANT VILLAGES								
11	Surya indah	11.97	18	4	465	904	821	1725
12	Beringin indah	12.50	20	4	350	802	714	1516
13	Sialang indah	17.63	18	6	609	1126	1066	2192
14	Meranti	10.46	14	4	370	696	575	1271
15	Harapan jaya	13.52	16	4	327	620	601	1221
16	Batang kulim	16.80	19	6	818	1566	1524	3090
17	Sido mukti	6.78	14	4	356	792	762	1554
JUMLAH		847.37	252	77	10841	24290	21575	45865

Soure: : *Demographic Report, Pangkalan Kuras, August 2013.*

Table 1 shows 17 villages in the Subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras. Seven villages were developed by the government of Indonesia for the transmigrants from Java in the 1960s. While 10 are old native villages, most are now inhabited by multiethnic population. The Bataknese, the Niasnese, and some of the Javanese transmigrants live in small villages near palm oil estates and they work as estate laborers. Meanwhile the Minangkabaunese mostly live in small towns and work as small entrepreneurs and teachers.

### LIVELIHOOD: SHIFTING CULTIVATION

Up to the 1990s, the Petalangans had mainly been living on shifting cultivation system. This mode of cultivation consists of two types, namely *ladang kasang* (cultivation on the dry land) and *ladang tabur* (cultivation of the swamp areas). The main crop was 9-month old rice (Effendy nd: 12). Other sources of livelihood were small game hunting, catching fish in the streams, and collecting honey and other non-timber forest products.

Shifting cultivation on a field used to be carried out by a group of husbands and wives. This group would usually work cooperatively with two neighbor families, whose wives were linked by matrilineal kin. They worked on the customary forest of the wives' clan.

Politically, Petalangan used to be divided into 29 chiefdoms, and each chiefdom was divided further into a number of matrilineal clans. Each clan lived and worked in its customary forest, and are totally dependent on its forest land and forest products. According to the Petalangans, shifting cultivation was not only done for livelihood, but it is also the symbol of parents' responsibility to their children.

In the past, when a family planned to clear a patch of forest for a rice field, they had to ask permission from the chief (*batin*), because the forest belongs to the chief. In case they could not find the chief, the permit may be asked from the chief's assistant (*ketiapan*).

There were four requirements for a person who wants to cultivate his or her land:  
 a) Ask for a permit from the chief.

- b) Pay a portion of the harvest to the chief as tax.
- c) Not to cut *sialang* tree.
- d) Not to cultivate land already opened by other families three years prior.

The Petalangans also believed that the opening of forests for rice fields should be done under the permission of supernatural beings (*orang bunian, hantu, jin*), who invisibly controlled the forests. The farmer should perform certain magic rituals guided by a field healer.

Farming activities that needed rituals among others were:

- a) Learning whether the forest area is good for ricefield.
- b) The planting of the first rice seeds.
- c) Guarding ricefields from pests and harmful animals.
- d) The initiation of harvesting.

Belows are the process of farming in shifting cultivation system.

- 1) The first thing that a farmer should do is to ask permission from the chief to open a patch of forest for cultivation. Secondary forest, which has been left fallow for 7 to 10 years, is preferable to a virgin forest.
- 2) The farmer ties a branch of trees to a big tree in the forest patch as a sign to other villagers that the patch has already been reserved by someone. This is called *tawa*.
- 3) The farmer observes the composition of the astronomy to learn whether the dry season has come, which would be the time to initiate the burning of the forest.
- 4) The farmer learns whether the forest is under the influence of certain supernatural beings. If this is the case, the farmer should ask their permission. This is called *manotou*. Then the farmer performs a magic ritual under the guidance of a land healer. Below is the magic spell/charm (recited three times) by the land healer before the first cutting of the plant in the forest.

*“Assalamu’alaikum ibuku bumi,  
Waalaiakumsalam bapakku langit,  
Siang dan malam saudaroku,  
Anak dikandung jangan binaso,  
Nabi Nuh nabiku kayu, nabi Lud nabi hakim,  
Nan kapalo hakim punyo tanaman kayu,  
Aku bamohon kayu sabatang ko tuk baladang,  
Ba tumpuk, ba umah ba tanggo, ba anak ba pinak,  
Nak badusun balaman”*

- 5) The farmer clears the underbrushes with a machete (*menobe*), then cuts the trees with an axe (*beliung*). The first tree should be cut and felt completely from the top to the bottom. Should this fail, it is believed that the farmer will find many obstacles when cutting the rest of the trees. There is a particular mode of cutting developed by the Petalangan. The brushes and trees are left dry for 3-4 days.

- 6) The farmer burns the dried brushes and trees. This is done cooperatively with 5-7 close neighbours. They have to prevent the fire from spreading and burning the forest.
- 7) The farmer builds a hut in the fringe of the field, facing the sunrise. It is made of wood and is about 5-6 meters tall (*pondok basulai*). If the hut is not finished on time for the planting season to start, the work of building the hut is left for a while. The farmer starts planting the seeds (*manjojak boneh*). This is done when the *kalo* star (*bintang kalo*) appears in the sky. The work is guided by a land healer and helped by neighbours. Below is the magic spell recited 3 times by the land healer.

“*Suai diri, suai ka diri,  
Padi sa ikat dengan nyawo,  
Suai nyawo, suai tubuh ku,  
Indak bacoai jago diri sampai akhirat,  
Slamat nak menyandang pondang,  
Slamat ba buluh-buluh,  
Slamat ka pulut dagang,  
Poi oso pulang tujuh, pulang ka kopuk padi kito,  
Pulang jangan batuke-tuke, pulang jangan batimbang-timbang,  
Kok ado ba sangkut ba sampang,  
Burung somut, burung balam, katitiran,  
Sampai ompat bulan ka limo dikau balik,  
Balik juo, pulang ka bangkiang,  
Pulang ka bangkiang tujuh sateji,  
Pulang ka kopuk padi kito”*

(The supernatural being who supposedly controls the land is a woman called *sememo tanah*).

- 8) After 2 months, the rice in the field have ripened. In order to protect the ricefield from pests and harmful animals, such as insects, birds, monkeys, and wild boars, the farmer builds a sturdy fence surrounding the field. In fact the fence is not only to protect the rice field from harmful animals, but also to protect the farmer and his family from wild animals such as tigers and bears.
- 9) The next activity is harvesting. The first cut will be done by the land healer who previously did the first planting. Before the cutting, the land healer will perform magic ritual and recite magic spells. The ritual process is as follows.
  - The land healer selects the best rice plants to cut.
  - The land healer burns incense and showers the rice plants with purified water.
  - The land healer recites the magic spell.
  - The land healer cuts three bunches of rice plants, tied with *bonang tigo ono* (a three-colour thread).
  - The bunches are brought to the rice barn (*kopuk*), covered with coconut shells. Then the land healer put *ibu-ibu* plants on the coconut shells.



Below is the magic spell performed by the land healer before doing first cut.

"O... padi jantan, padi batino, padi cahayo nagori,  
Putih gadih dayang indap,  
Putih gadih dayang dipah, gadih si putih haluih,  
Dikau poi ka laut, aku tunggal di rumah,  
Janji kito ompat bulan kalimo, sampai ompat bulan kalimo  
Aku manjompot biduk ka pangkalan,  
Menunggu dikau balik pulang,  
Kok kalau dikau bajudi, tang manyabung galeh putih,  
Putih unduk dagang panjang,  
Dikau manikai labu panjang,  
Dikau pulang, pulang juo,  
Kok ado panjut palantean, basopit pado tunggul,  
Basopit batang kuluk,  
.....  
.....  
Pulang ka kopuk padi kito,  
Pulang ka bangkian tujuh sajeji.  
(Source: Pak Jasa)

- 10) The last activity is *menginyik* padi (separating the grains from the stalk) and pounding. In the past *menginyik* was done on a rattan mat (*tike jemboan*), while pounding in a mortar made of jackfruit wood. Pounding was done on the platform behind the hut. Pounding is a cheerful season. Everyone is happy.

#### PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT

The Petalangan used to be a shifting cultivator group, who lived in simple huts in rice fields near the forest.<sup>3</sup> A neighbourhood normally consisted of 3-field families, linked by matrilineal line. The term "*petalangan*" is indeed referred to a way of life, living temporarily in simple huts near the forest. A family would live in the hut for three years. Then the family would move to the newly-built hut on the new rice field.

The size of the hut was approximately 4 x 4 square meters, supported by 4 wood pillars of 50 centimeter circumference, mounted 5-6 meters above the ground. There is a small kitchen in the rear, and in the back, outside the house, there was a platform made of plant sticks, where the farmer washed the dishes. The wall of the hut was made of the bark of *jangkang* trees, the roof of sago palm leaves, and poles of *samak* plant.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The hut is called *pondok basulai*.

<sup>4</sup> According to Ja'afar, in the 1960s, the height of the hut was at the average of 5-6 meters. Despite of its height, in the rainy season the floor of the hut could be submerged by flood (Munir 1995). Such height was made to prevent the dwellers from the jeopardy of wild animals, such as tiger, bear, elephant and snakes.

According to two informants, Bapak Kundang and Bapak Alum of Desa Betung, the first *dusun* (small permanent hamlet) built by the Petalangan in the Subdistrict of Pangkalan Kuras was *Tanjung Perusa*, which was also called Dusun Tuo. It was built in 1931.<sup>5</sup> The *dusun* was located around 2 kilometers from the village of Betung. The first inhabitants of the *dusun* were the family of the late Monti Ajo Munir, the family of Monti Ajo Munir's father in law, and the family of Bapak Buyung (the hamlet chief). This *dusun* was followed by the *dusuns* of *Banje Melintang*, *Kampung Tonge*, *Kampung Baru*, dan *Salangkawan*, which were built around *Tanjung Perusa*. Each *dusun* was inhabited by around 5 families.

Initially, the families did not live in the *dusuns* during the whole year. They went back and forth between the hamlet (*puun*) and the ricefield (*ujung*). Most of the time was spent in the ricefield and forest, because they were still mostly dependent on the forest for livelihood. They made houses in the *dusun* only for basecamps, especially after the harvest. *Dusuns* were usually built near the river. Such way of life lasted until the 1950s.

The change of settlement pattern to *kampung* (big hamlet), inhabited by many families, occurred after Indonesia's independence in the 1950s. The inhabitants built bigger houses made of wood. The height of the houses were still the same, because the threat of wild animals was still present. It is said by an informant, Pak Jasa (64 years old), in the 1950s there were seven houses in Tanjung Perusa and three in Talau. If each house was inhabited by approximately 5 members, there should have been 35 inhabitants in Tanjung Perusa and 15 persons in Talau.

The *kampung* is called *pangkalan* (small port), located near the river. Usually a *kampung* has a boy hut (*pondok bujang*), where male youngsters spent their leisure time. Nowadays, a hut such as this can hardly be found.

In 1955, the government of Indonesia distributes clothes made of cheap textiles for the Petalangan families to replace their traditional clothes made of the bark of *terab* trees. In 1960 the Petalangan chief, Monti Ajo Sutan, summoned all the household heads from all *kampungs* located near Tanjung Perusa to a meeting. The chief persuaded all families to flock to Tanjung Perusa and make Tanjung Perusa the principal *kampung*. The name of the community was then changed to Kampung Betung, and new *kampung* head was appointed.

In 1962, the head of the Subdistrict of Kuala Napuh encouraged all *kampung* heads in Kuala Napuh to participate in a 3-year adult education to enable them to read. In 1965, three adults succeeded the course, those were Bapak Syamsunir (village head), Bapak Pendek (religious leader), and Bapak Kundang (village security head/ *Monti Dubalang*).

Still in 1965, the head of Kampung Betung offered a piece of customary land in Tanjung Pasir to the Subdistrict of Kuala Napuh. The Subdistrict used it to relocate the inhabitants of Kuala Napuh village. Afterward the name of Kampung Tanjung Pasir changed to Kampung Kesuma, and the Subdistrict constructed a dirt road from Kesuma to Betung, and furthermore to Kampung Sorek in the east.

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<sup>5</sup> Interviews took place in February 2014.



In 1970, according to the Act of Village Government of 1969, Kampung Betung changed to become Desa Betung, and Bapak Samsunir who previously was called Kepala Kampung Betung became Kepala Desa Betung. The Subdistrict changed its name from Kuala Napuh to Pangkalan Kuras. The center of the Subdistrict was moved from Kuala Napuh (Desa Kesuma) to Desa Sorek. Consequently, Desa Kesuma was left by its inhabitants, who mostly moved to Desa Sorek. Its population decreased from 165 to 40 families.

In 1984, Bapak Munir was appointed as Monti Ajo, replacing his father in law, the late Monti Ajo Sutan. In 1985, Desa Betung was planned to be the center of Petalangan Cultural Affairs. In 1995, the center was accomplished and celebrated by the Governor of Riau, Soeripto.

In 2003, it was said by an informant that almost all Petalangan families quit from shifting cultivation activities, and converted themselves to small palm oil and rubber farmers. The Petalangan farmers organized themselves in KKPA and made particular business relationships with large palm oil estates. This new livelihood has in fact improved the welfare of the Petalangan families.

Many Petalangers are now able to build new modern houses made of cement, concretes and tile roofs, and they are also able to purchase motor vehicles and electrical kitchen amenities. Old houses with the height of 5-6 meters are not found any more. Houses made of wood are still there, but some of them have been left unkept and unoccupied by their inhabitants.

After 2000, a number of new villages were opened, mostly located near estates' roads and therefore are accessible by motor vehicles. Almost all villages are provided with a mosque, a *surau*, a Primary School, and a public hall. Some villages also provide a home for its village head. All are built with cement and concrete and tile roofs, and provided with electricity.

Some villages, due to different reasons, are divided into two, and some others changed their names. Desa Sorek, for example, which formerly was called Pangkalan Kue, now is divided into two villages, namely Sorek Satu and Sorek Dua. Desa Kesuma formerly was called Kuala Napuh, and before that was Pangkalan Pasir. Desa Talau split from dusun Tanjung Perusa in 1960, while Tanjung Perusa changed its name to Desa Betung.

Furthermore, before 1999, Pelalawan was a Kawedanaan (Sub-district) in the District of Kampar, the Province of Riau. After the declaration of the Act Number 53 Year 1999, Pelalawan was administratively upgraded into a District. Afterwards, subdistricts in Pelalawan were split: each of four subdistricts was split into three subdistricts. In 1914, there are a total of 12 Subdistricts, 106 villages (*desa*), and 12 small towns (*kelurahan*) (Kabupaten Pelalawan, BPS, 2010).

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

### a. The Change of the Environment

Up to 2000, it seems that the Petalangan group was still in the list of "Kelompok Adat Terpencil" (*traditional isolated group*), or isolated shifting cultivator

tribe. Now the group has been excluded from the list. However, as stated before, noone knew about this group in the Office of Social Welfare of the District of Pelalawan in 2012.

The first change to the habitat of the Petalangan took place in the 1970s when the government of Indonesia contracted some forests in Pelalawan to a number of logging companies. This policy has disturbed the way of life of the Petalangan. The government prohibited the Petalangers from conducting shifting cultivation in the logging concessions. Secondly, as in other places, at the end of the contract the concession forests were generally left barren by the logging companies.

The next change took place around the 2000s, when large forests areas in Pelalawan, which traditionally were customary forests of the Petalangan, were contracted by the government to palm oil estates (*Hak Guna Usaha*). Again, the forest areas available for shifting cultivation were becoming more limited or scarce. The situation made the Petalangers rethink their way of life. Most of them decided to leave traditional shifting cultivation to become palm oil and rubber small holders. The change in the mode of production will consequently affect everyone's entire way of life.

#### **b. The Change in Transportation and Communication Systems**

Eventhough the Stanvac road had been built in 1981, the most influencing factor to the development of transportation and communication systems in Pelalawan District was the regional autonomy act of 1999. This act made Riau one of the most wealthy provinces in Indonesia. Regional revenue comes mostly from oil and gas and palm oil estates.

The Provincial Government started building roads and providing electricity to all areas of the province, including villages in the District of Pelalawan. Secondary roads spread from the Sumatera Highway to villages in the interior of Pelalawan. Eventhough most of the roads are not yet asphalted, they are accesible by motor vehicles. Most of the villagers can afford to buy a motorcycle, some even manage to buy a car.

This is also the case with electricity. Most of the villages have been accustomed to electricity. If a village is not provided electricity by the government, the inhabitants of the village organize themselves to purchase an electric generator.

There are lot of small vans, operated by small transportation enterprises as public transportations, from Pekanbaru to small towns along the Sumatera Highway. Some of the vans may directly connect passengers from small towns to Pekanbaru airport. From the Highway, passengers may continue their journey to isolated villages by *beca motor* and *ojek*.

#### **c. Demographic Change**

Up to 1960s, the District of Pelalawan might be a region populated by a single ethnic group, that was the Petalangan. A small group of Malay aristocracy live separately in their own compound in the capital city of the then kingdom of Pelalawan.

The first change to demographic composition took place in 1960s when a number of transmigrants from Java opened new villages in certain areas in Pelalawan. The structure of multi ethnic population in Pelalawan communities appeared significantly after the influx of the Minangkabaunese, the Batakese, the Niasnese and others. It happened as stated before after the economic boom in the 2000s.

#### **d. The Change of Means of Livelihood**

The livelihood of the Petalangan has gradually changed from shifting cultivation to palm oil and rubber small holders. The Dutch colonial government first introduced rubber plants to the Petalangan in 1930. In 1950s, almost all Petalangan families have mainly lived on two sources of livelihood, shifting cultivation and rubber garden. In the 2000s, palm oil was introduced to the Petalangan. After that, the Petalangan have totally left shifting cultivation and depend on rubber and palm oil plantations.

Some families are involved in other additional work, such as catching fish in the streams, collecting non-timber forest products, petty traders, animal rearing, and estate laborers. A number of individuals who accomplish high school and university work as government clerks.

#### **e. The Change of Settlement Pattern**

The change of settlement pattern from a semi-nomadic small forest community to a small hamlet (*dusun*) was initiated in about 1930, after the introduction of rubber plant. Since then the Petalangan lived in dual settlement pattern, in the forest during the farming activities and in the small hamlet after the harvest. However, since this change was not supported by other facilities, such dual settlement pattern lasted until about the 1980s. In 1980, the government introduced modern village system (*desa*). It doesn't affect the settlement system very much. It is only after the introduction of palm oil in the 2000s that all the Petalangan left shifting cultivation entirely and live permanently in a modern village community.

#### **f. The Future of the Petalangan**

It is not easy to predict the future of the Petalangan. More involved research is needed to comprehend the real socioeconomic condition of the Petalangan. However, after learning about the progress of economic development of the Province of Riau in general, and the responses of the Petalangan to development, it can be said that the Petalangan could obtain a bright future.

Nowadays there are two main problems facing the Petalangan: unemployment and poverty. The aspect of development that should be emphasized is education. The government needs to build new schools, especially middle vocational schools of different specialization. The government also need to develop entrepreneurial attitude among the Petalangan. The Petalangan need to develop themselves in order to reap new economic opportunities outside the agricultural sector.

That is what I can say temporarily and tentatively about the socioeconomic changes among the Petalangan in the Pelalawan District of Riau Province. I have related these changes to development programs implemented by the government.

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