

# The Impact of Income Increment Program toward Socioeconomic Changes of Orang Asli in Perak, Malaysia

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## Abstract

The Income Increment Program (IIP) is one of the programs introduced to the Orang Asli in 2014 to reduce hardcore poverty rates among indigenous community in Malaysia. This study aims to identify the participation of Orang Asli in the IIP and examine the impact of IIP toward socioeconomic changes. This study involved 110 Orang Asli who participated in the IIP in the state of Perak, Malaysia. The study showed that majority of the respondents involved in agriculture and farming as their main income, while collecting forest produce and rubber tapping as part-time jobs. Among the IIP projects undertaken in the state of Perak are vegetables, calamansi and banana plantations, as well as cattle farming, tilapia farming and stingless bee farming. The findings showed that there was an increment of the income among respondents although majority of them earned less than RM1000 per month. Findings also revealed that the highest impact of IIP is the empowerment in decision making, followed by changes in lifestyle, economic aspects and ownership. Overall, the level of impact is high in empowerment and changes in lifestyle, while moderate in other aspects discussed. Suggested recommendations were discussed for future improvement of IIP.

**Keywords:** Income Increment Program, Orang Asli, Socioeconomic, Development, Poverty

## Introduction

In Malaysia, indigenous communities refer to the original tribes and ethnicities in Sabah and Sarawak, and the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia. The word 'Orang Asli' refers to the original people or first people that live in a particular location (Abas et al., 2020). The Orang Asli community is among the minority group in Malaysia and resided in Peninsular Malaysia. There are three main Orang Asli tribes; Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malay who are further divided into 18 sub-ethnics groups. The Negritos consist of six sub-ethnics group namely the Kensi, Kintak, Lanoh, Jahai, Mendriq and Bateq. As for the Senois, there are six sub-ethnics

group which are Che Wong, Mahmeri, Jahut, Semaq Beri, Semai and Temiar. While the Proto-Malays consist of Kuala, Kanaq, Seletar, Jakun, Semelai and Temuan (JAKOA, 2020). Almost all of Orang Asli have no religion or are animists who lives are influenced by nature-based superstitions, such as the hills, rivers, stones and caves and thus natural forests still have a big influence in their daily life (Man et al., 2013). Only small portion of them have converted to Islam, Christianity or other religions due to inter-marriage. These communities are typically categorized as communities that need to be developed as they live in remote areas, left behind from development progress, practicing traditional lifestyles, and low well-being (Bon et al., 2003).

It has been reported that the Orang Asli community recorded 83.4 percent poverty rate in 2000 (JAKOA, 2011). A total of 10,085 (39.8%) Orang Asli households head were in the poor group and the remaining 11,046 (43.6%) were hardcore poor. The incidence of poverty among Orang Asli reduced to 50 percent in 2007 indicates one out of two Orang Asli are poor. Then, by 2010, the poverty rate among Orang Asli people had been successfully reduced to 31.16 percent. Despite the relatively high rate of decline, that is 52.24% over the ten-year period, however the percentage of Orang Asli poverty rates are still high and worrying. Noor (2012) enlightened that their settlement area is the primary reason of poverty in the Orang Asli community. In addition, other factors are dependence on forest products as a major economic resource, lack of land ownership and dependence attitude towards government assistances (Ali, 2008). Poverty is also associated with factors such as feelings of inferiority and isolation from other communities, low level of education, little or no savings, lack of skills and modern work ethic (Edo, 2008).

Since independence, Malaysia government has announced numerous socioeconomic development programs to improve the life quality of Orang Asli such as provision of electricity, village resettlement, water supply, construction of rural, and education program. However, various issues are often debated within the Orang Asli community in terms of socioeconomics and poverty. This is due to their poverty rate which is still high at 31.16 percent in 2010 (JAKOA, 2011). Numerous economic development programs have been implemented by the government through the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) to achieve better quality of life, improving socioeconomic status and eventually break out of the poverty cycle (Khir et al., 2018). Among the most active programs are the State Economic Development Program, Extension Program, Entrepreneur Guidance Program, Construction of Retail Space Program and most recently the Income Increment Program (IIP).

IIP is a program organized by the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKLW) designed to reduce hardcore poverty rates in line with the government's aspirations. It was introduced by JAKOA in 2014. Among the assistance provided through this program are agricultural machinery, equipment, fishery input materials, fishing equipment, vegetable projects, sweet potato crops, lime plants, tilapia fish farming, village poultry, and goat farming. Over the four years, a total of 394 participants received assistance of up to RM10,000.00, depending on the scope of the projects, individually or as a group (Khir et al., 2019).

Many past studies have been conducted to identify the impact of the development programs such as resettlements and land development program, as well as impact of commercial

agriculture crops program (Idris et al., 1983; Man et al., 2013). However, the specific research on the impact of the income increment program towards socioeconomic changes introduced to Orang Asli was less emphasized. Latane (1981) defines the impact of socioeconomic changes refer to the influence on individual feelings, thoughts, or behavior that is exerted by the real, implied, or imagined presence of others. In addition, socio-economic changes related to the measure of ones combined financial and social status (House, 2002; Galobardes et al., 2006). In the present study, the impact of IIP is measured in term of changes in lifestyle, changes in economic related issues, changes in ownership and empowerment in decision making. Such socioeconomic changes will be measured retrospectively based on the perceptions of participants who have been involved with the IIP program.

## **Literature Review**

### *Socioeconomic Program among Orang Asli Community*

In Malaysia, various community development programs well implemented to promote the well-being of the Orang Asli and equal attention in this respect. The Agriculture Land Development Program (ALDP) is one of the programs under the Economic Development Program realized by Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) to address the high incidence of poverty among Orang Asli. Rubber Industry Smallholder Development Authority (RISDA), Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA) and Farmers' Organization Authority of Malaysia (LPP) which act as the focal agriculture agencies in realizing the ALDP. The establishment of Resettlement Program (RPS) is in the system of grant and this indicates that such program does not require the expenses to be paid back by them. In addition, FELCRA and RISDA act as an operation arm of JAKOA from clearing, planting and harvesting that undertaken by an agriculture agency. Pahang has the highest number of projects, participants and dividend distribution of Orang Asli farms. The Orang Asli received various benefits from this alternative such as each family in RPS gets ten acres of land for rubber, oil palm, and fruit orchards, and two acres for housing and subsistence crops under ALDP (Idris et al., 1983). Holistically, JAKOA focused on the development program through commercial crops (oil palm and rubber) and the participants not only received dividends through plantation produce but were also given job opportunities by getting the chance to become directly involved as plantation workers (JAKOA, 2010). Accordance to FELCRA (2011), there are 125 projects under RISDA and FELCRA which carry benefits to 6,001 participants through a total dividend distribution of RM 47.8 million.

The Orang Asli Resettlement Program (RPS) is one of the introductory efforts by the government to improve the socioeconomic development of the settlements of Orang Asli in Malaysia (Suki, 2006; Omar, 2009). The program that officially started in 1980 under the 4th Malaysia Plan (KPLB's Official Portal, 2017) is based on an integrated development approach that involves the restructuring of the Orang Asli community at a new or existing site. This effort is to enable them to be more easily governed so as not to continue to lag behind in development (Omar, 2009). The RPS program has a vast implication in terms of socioeconomic aspect to the Orang Asli Jahai community in RPS Air Banun. Through the RPS program, the lives of Orang Asli Jahai in terms of hygiene, health, safety and education are found to be better and secured with access to basic facilities provided such as roads, schools, electricity supply, piped water, systematic sanitation system, police patrol and mobile health clinics. The status of health in the community could be perceived through the increase in the population in the area from past decade. In addition, networking with the outside community

is also easier and safer with the availability of roads and transportation facilities. Yusoff et al (2019) directly, this condition indirectly exposes them to the modernization. The existence of integrated schools also allows children of Orang Asli Jahai achieve the education till the secondary level without having to leave their settlements and further reduce the number of dropouts among the community. Besides, Darus (2010) has conducted a study in looking at the level of policy success and development of RPS. This study revealed that the health plan was one of the most successful plans compared to the other two plans during the study period 1970 to 1990. Zei et al (2012) mentioned the implications of RPS could be seen from the shift of hunting for forest products to the agricultural, government and private sectors. The agricultural program implemented by JAKOA in collaboration with FELDA and FELCRA has offered dividend initiatives as well as employment opportunities to the villagers as stakeholders. In terms of health, Orang Asli community located near the city such as the village of RPS Runchang is more likely to seek treatment from modern medicine compared to traditional medicine. However, notwithstanding many years of ALDP implementation, Orang Asli community still remain in poverty.

#### *The Impact of Socioeconomic Program among Orang Asli*

Holistically, the impact of social development program to the socioeconomic must encompass various aspects of human well-being such as psychological, social life, and economic. The existing objective is to accomplish the need for an individual and thoroughly outwardly health, education, housing, and income. Meanwhile, the impact also must get into subjective life's well-being thoroughly satisfaction and favour of living. Individual senses grateful for having a stable job and happy family (Abdul Ghani, 2003). Lundstedt (1950) in his study mentioned the impact also must cover minimum material situations of life such as protection and title, guarantee to act freely and eligible pursuers, protection of spiritual importance and all the extended pleasures. According to Romanyshin (1971), the social development program represents as a social intervention to improve human well-being and control social problems. Thus, the area that need to be discovered is social mobility opportunities, social problem management, and the fulfilment of living needs. These three areas would serve society with maximize social mobility opportunities, safe environmental, and inclusive satisfaction on basic needs. Sangha et al (2015) conducts studies on Aboriginal well-being in Australia through natural resources. Subsequently, Wee et al (2013) researching on the Orang Asli environment of Jakun in Kampung Peta and revealed the settlement programs' operation created conflicts between Aboriginal people and development progressions because their economic resources are exaggerated their lives' well-being. Hence, a development program planning should highlight the social development and environmental to ensure the new settlement areas are more comprehensive because slightly form of changes realized will have a positive or negative outcome on them.

In Malaysia, government defines poverty as a lack of financial means to acquire basic needs including food and non-food components (Economic Planning Unit, 2002). Being an intervention measure, microfinance institutions (MFIs) play a crucial role in reducing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability among Orang Asli through microcredit and training programs. There are few main MFIs in Malaysia and one of them is the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA). IIP was introduced by JAKOA in 2014 that designed to reduce hardcore poverty rates in line with the government's aspirations. Holistically, the implementation of IIP demonstrate several impacts among Orang Asli especially in Perak. The impact of IIP could

be seen in term of impact of development initiatives, household income, and economic vulnerability.

In aspect of development initiatives IIP have a critical role to play in poverty alleviation among Orang Asli. IIP programs have been proven to improve rural enterprise and social standing among rural women (Chan & Abdul Ghani, 2011). Besides individual improvement, it could increase entrepreneurs' income and fulfil their basic needs (Hassan & Ibrahim, 2015). In terms of the quality of life among the new participants, they use permanent housing materials and environmentally safe cooking fuel and enjoying healthy toilet facilities, and own refrigerators, washing machines, and televisions. Therefore, the mean for quality of life of the respondents differs significantly (Al-Mamun et al., 2010). Literature highlights that employment is vital for poverty alleviation (Bikbaeva & Gaibnazarova, 2009) through increase in self-employment, productivity, real wage, labor productivity, wage employment, and exchange of the outputs. Besides, the implementation of IIP brings impact on household income among Orang Asli. Household income denotes to the average monthly income acquired by all members of the household from all sources in the last 12 months. The implementation of IIP is parallel with the Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia microcredit on household income has been well documented. For example, Al-Shami et al (2017) explored the impact of AIM's productive loan on women household welfare and empowerment. Their study surveyed 495 old and new borrowers, and the result presented that microcredit positively affected borrowers' household income and personal assets procurement. Likewise, Al-Shami et al (2018) studied the outcome of AIM on women empowerment in urban Malaysia. The finding discovered that microcredit positively influenced household monthly income. Samer et al (2015) in their study based on the data collected from 780 old and new AIM clients from both rural and urban borrowers in Selangor and Melaka. The findings mentioned that microcredit had a positive impact on household income.

Poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability are challenging features in developing economies. Governments in evolution economic continuously recognize the vulnerable to poverty and safety nets programs to protect low-income households. Apparently, microcredit loans are invested in income-generating activities such as micro-enterprise, farming, and small-scale production. When these activities are simplified by enterprise development training, it may lead to a reduction in the level of economic vulnerability among the low-income households. Research on microcredit and economic vulnerability by Zaman (1999) claimed that microcredit helps in extenuating a number of contributively aspects that cause vulnerability. In Malaysia, Al-Mamun et al (2014) studied the impact of AIM's microcredit program on the level of economic vulnerability among 333 poor households in Peninsular Malaysia. The result exhibited that participation in AIM programs decreased the level of economic vulnerability. Al-Mamun and Mazumder (2015) in their study that focusing on the eight randomly selected AIM's urban branches and seven randomly selected AIM's rural branches, demonstrated that AIM's microcredit programs reduced the level of economic vulnerability. Based on the above discussion the implementation of social development programme such as AIM brings an efficient impact to the Orang Asli and IIP is the continuous programme to improving the socio-economic of Orang Asli.

Globally, in the South Africa, through the National Development Plan 2030 has recognized to improving access of resource poor farmers to land, water and institutional support such as

extension and advisory services as a supporting rural economies and lessening poverty (Davis & Terblanche, 2016). Nevertheless, notwithstanding the positive attempt to institutionalize participatory extension system (Duvel, 2004) and the increasing public expenditure on agriculture (Black & Gerwel, 2014) its impact in guaranteeing equity among farmers in terms of racial and gender, access to land, inputs and agricultural information services has been miserable (Aliber & Hall, 2012). The result for this situation indicates to employee additional extension officers and increase the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in extension services (Davis & Terblanche, 2016). Consequential a significant shift in the involvement of the private NGOs, semi-private sectors and stakeholders towards supportive varied delivery of extension services that responsive to farmers' information needs gradually increasing (Terblanche, 2013). Baiyegunhi, et al., (2019) mentioned the participation in an extension program follows a systematic decision-making process especially in the Lima's Abalimi Phambili (farmers' first) and positively influenced by farm size, awareness, household heads' education, membership of a farmers' group, trust and participation incentives. Increased participation in an extension program necessitates a reassuring social and institutional setting that would generate institutions favorable for participation within a social system. Baiyegunhi, et al (2019) revealed that participation in the extension program had a positive impact on farmers' net farm income. Definitely, the results specified that net farm income would be about R2700 less had farmers not participated. This is a significant increase in net farm income seeing that smallholder farmer is cultivating 0.4ha of land in the sample survey.

Nevertheless, in ensuring the economic development and growth, sometimes lack attention given to the socioeconomic development. Higgs (2002) stated that socioeconomic is an individual's wealth, resources, education level and degree of urbanization. Socioeconomic also focusing to the jobs and incomes, population, distribution of job opportunities, other aspects of wellbeing, and resource-based recreation activities (British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2007). Numerous previous studies were done to recognize the impact of the development programs such as resettlement and land development program, but the specific research on the impact of income increment program toward socioeconomic changes of Orang Asli was never observed clearly. Generally, the objective of the present study is to evaluate the impact of IIP towards socioeconomic among Orang Asli participation in Perak, Malaysia.

## **Methodology**

### *Population, Sample and Location of Study*

The study was conducted in Perak involving four districts, namely Batang Padang, Kuala Kangsar, Kinta and Hulu Perak. Based on statistics given by JAKOA, 46 Orang Asli received IIP allocations in Perak between 2015 and 2017. Thus, an estimated 138 Orang Asli (46 x 3 person per project) were involved as project leaders and project members. From the population size (N = 138), the sample size as suggested by Krejcie and Morgan was 103 people. However, the study obtained a total of 110 respondents. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents involved in this study. Most of respondents were from Kg Orang Asli Pos Bersih, Slim River (27.3%) followed by Kg Orang Asli Air Bah, Lawin (18.2%) and Kg Orang Asli Sungai Merbau (12.7%). Respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique based on the IIP listing provided by the Perak State Department of Orang Asli Development. The most

important consideration was given to the IIP project leader. If the IIP project leader is not available, then the IIP project member was responsible for participating in the study.

Table 1:

*The Distribution Number of Respondents by Location*

District	Location	n =110 (%)
Hulu Perak	Kg. Orang Asli Air Bah, Lawin	20 (18.2)
Batang Padang	Kg. Orang Asli Sungai Merbau	14 (12.7)
	RPS Jernang, Sungkai	7 (6.4)
	Kg. Orang Asli Tersusun Kinjang, Chenderiang	2 (1.8)
	Kg. Orang Asli SEK. Temoh	12 (10.9)
	Kg Orang Asli Pos Bersih, Slim River	30 (27.3)
Kinta	Kg. Orang Asli Suak Petai	10 (9.10)
	Kg. Orang Asli Chadak	4 (3.6)
Kuala Kangsar	Kg. Orang Asli Lanar, Pos Perwor	5 (4.5)
	Kg. Orang Asli Lawai	4 (3.6)
	Kg. Orang Asli Ulu Bekor, Manong	2 (1.8)

**Procedure and Instruments**

The impact of Income Increment Programme toward socioeconomic changes of Orang Asli instrument was entirely developed by the researchers, as there had been no standard instruments. This instrument, thus, was constructed by adapting the Impact of Agricultural Land Development Programme Instrument by Hamid et al (2013). For the present study, the socioeconomic changes questions related to IIP contains 29 items which represent four dimensions namely 1) Changes in Economic Related Aspects, 2) Changes in Ownership, 3) Changes in Lifestyle, and 4) Empowerment in Decision Making. The Likert Scale was designed to examine how strongly subjects agree or disagree with the statements on a 5-points scale (1=strongly disagree, to 5=strongly agree). The level of socioeconomic changes was calculated based on minimum and maximum values scores which divided into a mean (weighted mean) of 1.00 until 2.33 indicated low level, a mean of 2.34 until 3.67 is moderate level and a mean of 3.68 to 5.00 indicated high level. This instrument has an internal consistency within an acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha values, 0.846 to 0.935 for all dimensions.

**Analysis of Data**

Data were analysed by descriptive statistics based on frequency, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum to determine impact of IIP toward socioeconomic changes.

**Results and Discussions***Socio-demographic Profile*

Table 2 presents the distribution of frequencies and percentages of respondents based on their background. As mentioned earlier, this study only involved the respondents who participated in the Income Increment Programme (IIP). Most of the respondents are male with 77 (70%) compared to 33 are women (30%). For the age level distribution, respondents

are 17 to 75 years old, with the average age is around 40 years old. In addition, majority of respondents are married (80%) with less than five number of households (75.5%).

According to the Orang Asli sub ethnic distribution, majority of the respondents were from Senoi sub-ethnic groups which comprise of 69 Semai (62.7%) and 22 (20%) Temiar. While 19 (17.3%) were sub-ethnic Lanoh from Negrito tribe who live in Gerik, Perak. This study revealed that majority of respondents were Muslim (35.5%) followed by Animism (34.5%), Christian (28.2%) and Bahai (1.8%). Besides, 46 respondents or almost 41.8% did not attend formal education. Almost 36.4% or 40 of respondents attended primary school and 21 of respondents (19%) attended secondary school. Lastly, only a small number that is 3 (2.7%) achieved tertiary level of education.

Table 2  
*Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents (n=170)*

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	77	(70.0)
Female	33	(30.0)
<b>Age</b>		
<20	4	(3.6)
20-39	47	(42.7)
40-59	49	(44.5)
>60	10	(9.1)
Mean: 39.90; S.D.: 12.00		
Minimum: 17; Maximum: 75		
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	15	(13.6)
Married	88	(80.0)
Single Mother/Father	7	(6.4)
<b>Number of households</b>		
4 people and below	83	(75.5)
5 people and above	27	(24.5)
<b>Sub Ethnic</b>		
Lanoh	19	(17.3)
Semai	69	(62.7)
Temiar	22	(20.0)
<b>Religion</b>		
Bahai	2	(1.8)
Islam	39	(35.5)
Christian	31	(28.2)
Animism	38	(34.5)
<b>Education Level</b>		



No education	46	(41.8)
Primary school	40	(36.4)
Secondary school (lower)	16	(14.5)
Secondary school (upper)	5	(4.5)
Tertiary	3	(2.7)

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Table 3 shows the distribution of employment and income of respondents. From the results, majority of respondents (33.6%) working as a cash crop farmer as their main job followed by 25.5 percent of respondents were breeders, 17.3 percent are rubber tappers and 9.1 percent are forest product supplier. Then, there are respondents who work in oil palm plantations, salary worker and do business. A small proportion of respondents (1.8%) are unemployed, particularly among housewife.

Regarding part time jobs, most respondents 35 (31.8%) working as forest product suppliers which proved that Orang Asli was still attached to the forest as their traditional source of income. The distribution of average monthly income among respondents before joining the IIP was RM578.18. The majority of respondents (49.1%) had less than RM500 per month, followed by 39.1% having between RM500 and RM999 and 11.8% having monthly income above RM1000. However, after joining the IIP the average income of respondents increased to RM671.36, where the majority of respondents (43.6%) earned monthly income of less than RM500 followed by 37.3 percent of income between RM500 to RM999, while the remaining 19 percent earned more than RM1,000. Overall, the average of monthly household income among respondents after joining IIP was RM929.54 (S.D. = 745.51). A higher average monthly household income compared to the average monthly income of respondents showed that family members also work to cover the cost of living among the Orang Asli. Moreover, 75.5% of respondents have less than five households.

Table 3:  
*Employment and Income of Respondents*

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Main Job</b>		
Oil palm worker	4	(3.6)
Cash crop farmer	37	(33.6)
Businessman	2	(1.8)
Rubber tapper	19	(17.3)
Forest product supplier	10	(9.1)
Breeder	28	(25.5)
Salary worker	8	(7.3)
No job	2	(1.8)
<b>Part Time Job</b>		
Oil palm worker	6	(5.5)
Cash crop farmer	3	(2.7)
Rubber tapper	21	(19.1)
Forest product supplier	35	(31.8)
Breeder	3	(2.7)
Salary worker	14	(12.7)
No job	28	(25.5)
<b>Respondent Income before IIP</b>		
RM499 and below	54	(49.1)
RM500 – RM999	43	(39.1)
RM1000 – RM1999	9	8.2)
RM2000 and above	4	(3.6)
Mean: 578.18; S.D.:544.93		
Minimum: 0.00; Maximum: 4000		
<b>Respondent Income after IIP</b>		
RM499 – below	48	(43.6)
RM500 – RM999	41	(37.3)
RM1000 – RM1999	16	(14.5)
RM2000 and above	5	(4.5)
Mean: 671.36, S.D.: 594.14		
Minimum: 0.00; Maximum: 4200		
<b>Household Monthly Income</b>		
RM499 and below	25	(22.7)
RM500-RM999	44	(40.0)
RM1000-RM1999	33	(33.0)
RM2000 and above	8	(7.3)
Mean: 929.54; S.D.: 745.51		
Minimum: 150; Maximum: 5000		

#### **Participation in Income Increment Program (IIP)**

Table 4 shows information on the respondents' participation in the Income Increment Program (IIP). More than half of respondents that is 62 (56.4%) were involved in crop projects

such as vegetables, bananas and calamansi farming, while the rest (41.9%) were involved in livestock project such as tilapia, goats, cow and stingless bee farming. Only two respondents (1.8%) were involved in the pastry project. For most projects, the duration was one year (42.7%) and only 21.8 percent of respondents were project leaders. After joining the IIP, the average respondent earns an increase of RM96.81 per month, with a maximum increase of RM550. However, some of the respondents (51.8%) had no increase in their income as the project was just started as a vegetable crop, and there was also a project that failed to run such as the banana plantation.

Subsequently, respondents were asked about how strongly they agree or disagree with their successful project on a 4-point scale that are strongly disagree (SD = 1) to strongly agree (SA = 4). The survey found that majority of respondents (44.5%) agreed that the project they were working on was successful. In contrast, 22.73 percent disagreed and 8.18 percent of respondents strongly disagreed with the project they were working on. Based on observations and conversations with respondents during the data collection, as long as the project was still running and could be continued, the average respondents perceived and believed that their project was successful. A number of respondents who were newly involved with the vegetable and calamansi farming felt that their project was successful because they managed to plant well even though they had not yet harvested the crop. Moreover, the increasing income from the project also certainly influence the respondents' perception toward the success of their project. For most respondents, even though the slight increase in their income, it still showed success. However, respondents who considered their project unsuccessful were among those who were unable to proceed with the project. For example, the banana plantation project failed because the type of soil was not suitable for the plantation. In addition, some of the respondents who were involved with cattle and tilapia farming also felt that their project failed when their livestock died and did not get any income.

Table 4

*Participation in Income Increment Program (IIP)*

Variables	n	(%)
<b>Type of Project</b>		
Pastry	2	(1.8)
Calamansi farming	12	(10.9)
Banana plantation	20	(18.2)
Vegetable crops	30	(27.3)
Tilapia farming	10	(9.1)
Goat farming	7	(6.4)
Stingless bee farming	11	(10.0)
Cow farming	18	(16.4)
<b>The Year of Project Begin</b>		
2014	33	(30.0)
2015	31	(28.2)
2016	3	(2.7)
2017	43	(39.1)
<b>The Duration of Project</b>		
Six months	17	(15.5)
One year	47	(42.7)
Two years	15	(13.6)
Three years	8	(7.3)
Four years	23	(20.9)
<b>Role in IIP</b>		
IIP project leader	24	(21.8)
IIP project member	86	(78.2)
<b>Number of Group Members</b>		
4 people and below	54	(49.1)
5 people and above	56	(50.9)
<b>Income Increment</b>		
No Increment	57	(51.8)
Less than RM200	23	(20.9)
RM200 – RM399	24	(21.8)
RM400 above	6	(5.5)
Mean: 96.81, S.D.: 128.91		
Minimum: 0.00; Maximum: 550		
<b>Perceived of IIP Successful Level</b>		
Strongly disagree (SD)	9	(8.18)
Not agree (NA)	25	(22.73)
Agree (A)	49	(44.55)
Strongly Agree (SA)	27	(24.55)

### Impact of Income Increment Programme (IIP) toward Socioeconomic Changes among Orang Asli

This part discusses the impact of IIP of respondents in socioeconomic changes related to income and economic, property holdings, assets, lifestyle and empowerment in decision making. The results in Table 5 shows the changes in economic related aspects of the respondents. The finding revealed that the respondents have more job opportunities as the highest mean score (3.65). The IIP also let the respondents to provide higher educational opportunities for their children (3.63), can purchase more grocery (3.55) and increase their cash income (3.51). However, IIP has a low impact on increasing their total savings (3.34). These findings indicated that IIP brings a positive impact in increasing the income and economic status in order to fulfil their daily needs. However, this is more for the short-term benefit compare to the long-term benefit where respondents cannot make enough saving for future.

Table 5  
*Changes in Economic Related Aspects*

Changes in economic related aspects	n	Mean	S.D.	Minimum	Maximum
Afford monthly house bills	110	3.48	0.91	1	5
Purchase more grocery	110	3.55	0.84	2	5
Cash income is increases	110	3.51	0.96	1	5
Able to provide higher educational opportunities for children	110	3.63	0.98	1	5
Total savings increased	110	3.34	0.96	1	5
More job opportunities	110	3.65	0.91	2	5

Changes in respondent's ownership are presented in Table 6. According to the data, respondents agreed that IIP gave them opportunity to have an own farm with highest mean value that is 3.60. Next are the statements that IIP can help them to get their own vehicles and increased the ownership of household appliances with a mean score 3.54 respectively. However, the lowest mean score indicated that respondents claimed that IIP did not facilitate them to build their own business. The findings of this study are inline with the study conducted by Man et al., (2013) who found that the ALDP did not bring many changes in property and asset holdings of the Orang Asli respondents except for vehicle and household utensils. No or less extension was found in another asset such as farm or house size and other agriculture activities.

Table 6

*Changes in Ownership*

<b>Changes in Ownership</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Have own vehicle	110	3.54	0.95	1	5
Increased the ownership of household appliances	110	3.54	0.94	2	5
Increase in house size	110	3.23	0.97	1	5
Construction of new homes	110	3.28	1.01	1	5
Size of land owned increased	110	3.20	1.08	1	5
Have own farm	110	3.60	0.99	1	5
Involved in livestock	110	3.15	1.01	1	5
Building own business	110	2.95	1.07	1	5

From a social aspect, IIP also impact and bring changes to the respondents' lifestyle. Table 7 shows the aspects of changes in lifestyle influenced by IIP. The highest mean score of 4.09 indicated that respondents agreed IIP encouraged them to get involved in community activities such as *gotong-royong* and social welfare. Besides, respondents were also concerned about education and knowledge, maintaining good health and aware of the important of having a healthy and balanced diet with a mean score of 4.05, 4.03 and 3.99 respectively. Furthermore, the study showed that respondents were also changed in fashion style (mean= 3.81) and practiced technology use such as mobile phone and computer (mean= 3.83). These findings are in line with the study done by Man et al., (2013), in which Orang Asli participants for the ALDP also gave a meaningful balance to their lifestyle through social, health, education and appearance as other communities have already done. Nevertheless, the use of technology in daily life such as mobile phones was higher for IIP respondents compared to ALDP respondents in 2013. This indicates that recently the Orang Asli are also exposed to the technologies and applied it in their daily life. However, the lowest mean score of 3.55 discovered that respondents were less agreed that IIP encouraged them to have many friends from other races. This is because, participation in the IIP only involved community of Orang Asli from the same village.

Table 7

*Changes in Lifestyle*

<b>Changes in Lifestyle</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
I like to get involved in community activities such as <i>gotong-royong</i> and welfare	110	4.09	0.60	2	5
I am more concerned of the importance of good health	110	4.03	0.66	2	5
I am more concerned about eating a healthy and balance	110	3.99	0.70	2	5
I am concerned about education and knowledge	110	4.05	0.71	2	5
The way I dress changing due to fashion trend	110	3.81	0.81	1	5
I still practice the Orang Asli traditional	110	3.67	1.10	1	5
My friends from other races are increased	110	3.55	1.01	1	5
I practice the technology of life such as mobile phone (and computer)	110	3.83	0.87	1	5

Table 8 shows the impact of IIP on empowerment in decision making among Orang Asli. The study discovered that the respondents participated in assessing and presenting proposals to improve income-generating projects in their village with the highest mean score 4.02. Next, they also agreed that IIP encouraged them to seek opportunities of economic activities (mean= 3.98), involved in planning (3.94), expand knowledge to develop projects (3.97) and encourage others in their community to involved in the economic projects (3.97). Nevertheless, findings revealed that IIP has less impact on making decisions without relying on anyone else with the lowest mean score, 3.78. In shorts, the IIP brings a positive impact in increasing empowerment among Orang Asli participants. Through the IIP, empowerment can be enhanced at the individual, small group and community levels. According to Rappaport (1987), at the individual level, empowerment is the experience of gaining increased control and influence over daily life. At the small group level, empowerment involves the shared experience and influence of the group on their own efforts. Moreover, empowerment at the community level revolves around the ability of community members to master the use of resources and strategies to achieve their goals.

Table 8

*Empowerment in Decision Making*

<b>Empowerment in Decision Making</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
I take part in the planning of economic activities in this village.	110	3.94	0.71	2	5
I seek opportunities for the implementation and development of economic activities in this village.	110	3.98	0.69	2	5
I participated in assessing and presenting proposals to improve income-generating projects in this village.	110	4.02	0.76	2	5
I encouraged other residents to get involved in this project.	110	3.97	0.70	2	5
I attempted to expand my knowledge to develop/ advance projects in this village.	110	3.97	0.64	2	5
I can make decisions in my life without relying on anyone else.	110	3.78	0.92	1	5
I can share my experience with others.	110	3.88	0.93	1	5

**The Level of IIP Impact toward Socioeconomic Changes among Orang Asli**

The results in Table 9 below shows the scores and level of IIP impact toward socioeconomic changes of Orang Asli. As discussed earlier, IIP impacts consist of four dimensions namely changes in economic related aspects, changes in ownership, changes in lifestyle and empowerment in decision making. The level of IIP impact is divided into three which are low, moderate and high. From the results, the impact of empowerment in decision making showed that the majority of respondents reached a high level followed by a moderate level ( $M = 27.54$ ,  $S.D. = 3.88$ ). IIP brings a positive impact in increasing empowerment among Orang Asli participants especially in planning, assessing, seeking opportunities of economic activities, expand knowledge to develop projects and encourage others in their community to participate in the economic projects.

Besides that, the majority of respondents had moderate impact followed by high impact level towards lifestyle changes ( $M = 29.67$ ,  $S.D. = 3.75$ ) and changes of economic related aspects ( $M = 21.16$ ,  $S.D. = 4.83$ ). The IIP encouraged participants to get involved in community activities such as *gotong-royong* and social welfare. IIP also gave a meaningful balance to their lifestyle through social, health, education, appearance and technology use such as mobile phone, as other communities have already done. However, the IIP is not encouraged participants to have many friends from other races due to projects carried out among Orang Asli community. The changes in economic revealed that the respondents have more job opportunities and IIP brings a positive impact in increasing the income and economic status in order to fulfil their daily needs. However, this is more for the short-term benefit compare



to the long-term benefit where respondents cannot make enough saving for future. Next, the IIP impact on the changes in ownership showed moderate level followed by a low level (M = 26.48, S.D. = 6.02). Respondents agreed that IIP gave them opportunity to have an own farm, help them to get their own vehicles and increased the ownership of household appliances. However, IIP did not facilitate them to build their own business.

To determine which dimension is the most impactful to the socioeconomic changes of Orang Asli, an analysis of weighted mean values was used. Weighted mean was used due to the different number of items for each dimension. As shown in Table 9, the highest impact of IIP is the empowerment in decision making (weighted mean = 3.93), followed by changes in lifestyle (weighted mean = 3.71), changes in economic aspects (weighted mean = 3.53) and changes in ownership (weighted mean = 3.31). Overall, based on the weighted means, the level of empowerment in decision making and changes in lifestyle is high, while changes in economic aspects and changes in ownership is moderate.

Table 9

*Level of IIP Impact toward Socioeconomic Changes among Orang Asli*

IIP Impact	n	%	Mean	S.D.	Weighted Mean
<b>Changes in economic related aspects</b>			21.16	4.83	3.53
Low (6-14)	12	(10.9)			
Moderate (15-23)	60	(54.5)			
High (24-32)	38	(34.5)			
<b>Changes in ownership</b>			26.48	6.02	3.31
Low (8-20)	23	(20.9)			
Moderate (21-33)	72	(65.5)			
High (34-46)	15	(13.6)			
<b>Changes in lifestyle</b>			29.67	3.75	3.71
Low (8-20)					
Moderate (21-33)	91	(82.7)			
High (34-46)	19	(17.3)			
<b>Empowerment in decision making</b>			27.54	3.88	3.93
Low (7-16)					
Moderate (17-26)	41	(37.3)			
High (27-36)	69	(62.7)			

## Conclusion

The present study revealed an overview of the participation and impact of the Income Increment Program (IIP) towards socioeconomic among Orang Asli in the state of Perak, Malaysia. The study involved 110 Orang Asli from the Semai, Temiar and Lanoh sub-ethnics who joined IIP in Hulu Perak, Batang Padang, Kinta and Kuala Kangsar districts. The main projects carried out were crop projects such as vegetables, bananas and calamansi farming, while the rest were livestock project such as tilapia, goats, cow and stingless bee farming. The majority of respondents have an income below RM1000 per month and they still depend on agriculture and forest to survive.

Overall, the IIP give a moderate impact on the socioeconomic changes of the Orang Asli community. This is a good sign show that the minority group is also in the mainstream of the development process and getting a positive impact from their participation. Since the IIP program show the higher impact towards empowerment, the formation of Orang Asli based groups and cooperatives should be highly encouraged in reaching a large number of communities in promoting an efficient development in their area. The availability of skills and competent extension service support is critical to the success of IIP program by providing information dissemination and training. Thus, to ensuring the effectiveness of IIP services participation incentives such as credit access, input subsidy and market information should form an integral component. This alternative delivers an innovative direction to operationalize IIP policies of Orang Asli that can be helpful for indigenous policy-makers in devising programs of extension services.

Future recommendation needs to emphasizing on how to ensuring the efficient impact of ownership in IIP program. The researchers believe that emphasizing on the impact of ownership will affect the degree of success of IIP and other development economic program for Orang Asli. By increasing this dimension, they will increase the acceptance toward IIP and directly contributing to the socio-economic level among "Orang Asli".

Many respondents perceived that the IIP program has ability to make change in their life. This positive impact also portrays that they achieved not only economic matters but also in social aspect. Thus, responsible parties such as JAKOA must play a role in providing support and encouragement to these community so that they remain motivated, open to innovation and striving to improve their socioeconomic status and quality of life. The JAKOA with help from other agencies must empower the Orang Asli in a variety of economic endeavours to improve their source of income. Related information should be more frequently introduced and diffused for Orang Asli, other than knowledge about management and value of money in order to avoid being taken advantage by the middle man. Moreover, JAKOA with the assistance of government agencies should strive to enhance the IIP program in order to achieve the objectives of the program and provide a more significant impact on their socioeconomic improvement. It is hoped that the impact of IIP will be of better importance to the participants than at the present. It is the government's aspiration that the Orang Asli community will come into the mainstream of the national economic development while simultaneously obtaining the capability to compete with other races.

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