

**ASSESSING DIGITAL LITERACY AMONG ABORIGINES: A CASE OF
THE SEMAI TRIBE IN KAMPUNG BUKIT TERANG, KAMPAR,
PERAK**



**RESEARCH MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE (RMI)
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
40450 SHAH ALAM, SELANGOR
MALAYSIA**

BY:

**Rugayah Hj. Hashim, PhD
Kartika Sari Idris
Yus Aznita Ustad
Zulkifli Baharud-din**

JANUARY 2012

1. Letter of Report Submission

15 January 2012

Dr. Oskar Hasdinor Hassan
Head
Social Science & Management Research
Research Management Institute (RMI)
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
40450 Shah Alam
Selangor

Dear Dr. Oskar

Report Submission: "Assessing Digital Literacy Among Aborigines: A Case of the Semai Tribe in Kg. Bukit Terang, Kampar, Perak" (600-RMI/SSP/DANA 5/3/Dsp (303/2011))

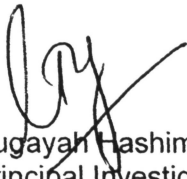
The above is referred.

Enclosed, please find the said report for your attention.

Please note that we were able to complete the project six months before the due date which is 16 June 2012.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Rugayah Hashim, PhD
Principal Investigator

5. Report

5.1 Proposed Executive Summary

Driven by the Digital Era, the Malaysian government's goal of a computer literate society by the year 2020 is the basis of this study. In addition, the Prime Minister's immediate focus or key thrust called the 1Malaysia (One Malaysia) concept of 'People first, Performance now' (Razak, 2009) strengthens the need for the conduct of this research. Furthermore, the government's quest for a knowledge society through digital inclusion and social inclusion, has been part of the national plans such as the recently tabled Budget 2011 (Razak, 2010) and prior to that, the Tenth Malaysia Plan (Razak, 2010). In fact, "All ongoing programmes on closing the digital divide in Malaysia need to be completed by 2010, according to Datuk Joseph Salang Gandum, Deputy Minister of Malaysia's Energy, Water and Communications Ministry." (Li, 2009). However, certain segments of society, the minorities, have obtrusively been left behind in the digital quest. A case in hand is the aborigines (*orang asli*) of Malaysia. Hence, the objective of this cross-sectional survey research is to assess the level of digital literacy among minorities in Malaysia, specifically ,the Semai tribe at Kg. Bukit Terang, Kampar, Perak. A simple questionnaire will be designed and administered to 130 *orang asli* Semai. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the data. The research report will help the Dept. of Orang Asli Affairs, Perak to strategize their annual plans to include these minorities in line with the federal government's goals for an inclusive, literate society as well as enhancing the country's social capital. Furthermore, in preparation for the 13th General Election, the state will have the relevant demographic profiles of minority-voters readily available for that constituent.

5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to assess the level of computer literacy among the indigenous Semai tribe in Kampung Bukit Terang, Kampar, Perak, Malaysia. Forty questionnaires were distributed to the respondents who were conveniently available at the time of the visit. With the help of forty university students, 39 (97.5%) completed sets were returned. The descriptive analyses showed that 30.8% of the respondents have never attended school and are considered illiterate. Only 5.2% are computer literate and this finding suggests that the digital divide is wide among this minority group, thus, the argument on digital exclusion is substantiated. The implication of the research provides justification for policy analysis on technology for social inclusion. It then draws on the political environment that has resulted in this tribe being marginalized and the need to promote access for social inclusion and citizen development.

Keywords: computer literacy; digital divide; social inclusion; policy; indigenous; minority; disadvantage group, marginalized society

5.3 Introduction

To propel Malaysia to be an ICT savvy nation, the task fell in the hands of the National Information Technology Council (NITC). The first move was to set up the information and communication technology strategic roadmap for Malaysia with the objective of transforming Malaysia's economy to a knowledge-based one (MOSTI, 2010). Currently, Internet accessibility is focused on wireless channel or broadband, hence, the National Broadband Initiative (NBI) was implemented by the Malaysian communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) with a target of 50% penetration by 2010 (National Broadband Initiative, 2011). That said, the government's aim for a knowledge society has been part of the national plans as stated in the sixth premise of the 10th Malaysia Plan (MP) (Najib Razak, 2010a). Furthermore, Chapter Four of the 10th MP outlined the general direction of an inclusive socio-economic development for all Malaysians but fact and reality have indicated a paradox. Digital exclusion still exists for citizens living in rural areas, particularly the natives (Morse, 2004; Hashim et al, 2011; Li, 2009; Malek et al, 2009; Razak & Malek, 2011). No matter the issue, the Government Transformation Plan (GTP), the Economic Transformation Plan and the One Malaysia (1Malaysia) Concept remain utmost in the government's quest to ensure that the citizens are taken care of first and at the same time, the governments' services and performance are of high quality (Najib Razak, 2010b & 2010c). Together, these arguments provided the impetus for the research project.