

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**EXPLORATION OF INDIGENOUS
FEMINISM, GENDER EQUALITY,
AND LANGUAGE USE FOR
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN
MALAYSIA**

NURUL SHATIRAH BINTI ZAINOL

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ABSTRACT

The indigenous people are often labelled as the underdeveloped and backward community, and this is the same situation that the Orang Asli, the indigenous community of Malaysia had to face. Various changes have been made in their lives however, indigenous women are still facing challenges in making progress in their lives. Women empowerment is still difficult to be achieved by indigenous women and this is because most of them do not have prior knowledge and lack of awareness about what exactly women empowerment is, and how it can help them. Apart from that, due to their status, indigenous women face double discriminations due to their nature of being women and indigenous at the same time, which limit their capabilities to fully realize their potential. The aim of this study is to explore indigenous feminism, gender equality, and language among Orang Asli for women empowerment. This study employed a qualitative case study of multiple cases and multiple sites. This study utilized a semi-structured interview as the research instruments for the purpose of data collection. The gathered data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The qualitative data analysis software, Atlas.ti 8 was used to facilitate the data analysis process. The findings of the study showed that there were four themes emerged: (1) awareness on indigenous women's rights, (2) indigenous women's roles in family and society, (3) equal opportunities in family and society, and (4) language use among indigenous women. The findings also suggested that when indigenous women's rights, opportunities, and privileges, in their society are attained, indigenous women empowerment can be achieved. This study implicates that the incorporations of new insights such as feminism, gender equality, and language use can bring contributions towards women empowerment as a whole in Malaysia, which offers valuable guidance for policymakers, educators, and authorities in Malaysia, helping them to craft more culturally informed and effective strategies for advancing women empowerment in Malaysia.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pa
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Problem Statement	4
1.4 Research Objectives	8
1.5 Research Questions	9
1.6 Significance of the Study	9
1.7 Limitation of the Study	11
1.8 Operational Definition	12
1.9 Summary	14
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 The Indigenous People of Malaysia	15
2.2.1 Orang Asli Communities in Peninsular Malaysia	17
2.2.2 Orang Asli Selected Tribes of The Study	21
2.3 Women Empowerment	25
2.4 Feminism	27

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is associated to the issue of indigenous women empowerment. The following issue is explored within the indigenous women community in Peninsular Malaysia, which is the Orang Asli women community. In this chapter, the background of study as well as the problem statements are presented. The research objectives and research questions are also described in this chapter, which is then followed by the significance of the study and the limitations of the study. Finally, the operational definitions of the terminologies utilized in this study are also provided.

1.2 Background of the Study

The research on indigenous community all around the world is no longer a newly found field of study. Many researchers pursue their research in this field, and this is because as time goes by there have been more issues arising within these minority community, the indigenous people. The word 'indigenous' refers to a native people ethnicity culture rooted in a particular geographic location, which has not relocated from its original place and is distinct from settler or colonial communities (Stewart, 2018). According to Hinzo (2016) the term 'indigenous' can be defined as a collective of individuals or a community that retain their connection with their ancestral lands as well as with their culture before the settlement of the colonist. She also stated in her paper that indigenous people often identify themselves as 'indigenous' or 'aboriginal' and the other parallel term to the term 'indigenous' include the terms such as 'first people', "Native American" and other specific tribal names. Oyda (2017) on the other hand, provided the definition of 'indigenous' or 'traditional' as something that is orally passed down from the ancestors to the descendants of a community. From the definitions above, it can be said that indigenous people are the community that first reside in a certain location or land before the colonization of the settlers, and they are the community that have been