

**INVESTIGATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD IN  
EAST COAST, PENINSULAR MALAYSIA**



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### 3. Acknowledgements

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## **b) Knowledge Utilisation**

The research would establish a model for sustainable socio-economic development of rural community. This provides the framework for building a stronger rural community in psychological, social, economic and physical development to enable them to maintain their sustainable advantage in facing challenges.

## **c) Presentation and Publication**

The research output will be presented in national and international conferences. It would also be sent for publication in referred journals in order to gain wider readership.

## **5.2Enhanced Executive Summary**

A Malay master craftsman design and produces his magnificent craft based on his excellent skill, knowledge, photographic memory and dedication. Today, these hand-made traditional crafts appear to fade into oblivion. The indigenous knowledge is fighting a losing battle with knowledge economy, a cohort of globalization. Indeed, globalisation has been knocking our doors long before the days of Parameswara in 1400's. The difference then and today is on the conduct of the visits. The merchants from the West Asia brought their religion, Islam and knowledge, together with their goods. Today, globalization enters ones home through cyber technology. It demolishes borders, redefines rules, creates new culture and challenges a sovereign political power. It constructs new markets and wealth as well as discontents. Globalization brought employment opportunities to the needy. Yet, multinational corporations, due to their aggressive promotion through the media have created new consumerist culture, screaming rock music, punks and ecstasy pills. The global economy, supported by globalization, changes the way the local population views their traditional livelihood and ways of life.

Indigenous knowledge is facing extinction. Once a flourishing trade, traditional boat-making and repair work is facing serious problems with regards to its sustainability. Foreign craftsmen from Thailand are flooding the job-market in Kelantan and Terengganu. The research attempts to address the issues on the existing situation on indigenous knowledge among the Malay communities, taking into example in both cases of *keris* making and boat-building in Kelantan and Terengganu. This research ascertained that:

- a) there is no effective mechanism of indigenous knowledge transfer within the community, which could be utilised to improve the quality of life of the population;
- b) the roles of the state, agencies and interest groups in building the indigenous knowledge and sustainable livelihood of the indigenous community are unclear; and
- c) There is limited opportunity for the members of the indigenous community to ascend into the economic mainstream and improve the quality of their lives through knowledge sharing and utilization.

The output of this research is to be disseminated via:

#### **a) Knowledge Sharing**

Codification of tacit knowledge from the experts involve in this indigenous knowledge. They were interviewed face to face.

#### **b) Knowledge Utilisation**

The research suggests a model for sustainable livelihood of rural community. This provides the framework for building a stronger rural community to face challenges brought about by externalities of globalization and knowledge economy.

#### **c) Presentation and Publication**

The Research output has been presented in:

**2nd International Conference On Sustainability Science "Values And Sustainability" (21 -22 December 2010), Kuala Lumpur and Asean Conference On Environment-Behaviour Studies (15-17 June 2011) Bandung.**

### **5.3 Introduction**

The Malays have "existed as a society for thousands of years (S. Husin Ali, 1981: 11). In 1991, a human skeleton of a man was found at Gua Gunung Runtuh, Lenggong, in the state of Perak in Malaysia. The skeleton, which was dated around 11,000 BC, confirmed that a civil society had existed long before the westerners arrived in this country. This discovery debunked the theories, which suggest that the early settlers were the Mesolithic groups who arrived from Indo China between 5,000 BC to 3,000 BC. The Malays are the indigenous population of this Malay Archipelagos. The United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 2004 define the indigenous communities, peoples and nations as:

"those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them."

Indeed, the Malay Archipelagos have been invaded by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Spanish and the British. The land has welcome immigrants from China, India, Middle East, Turkey and West Asia as traders and professionals. The Malays live mostly in the rural segment of the country, where they are doing agricultural activities and practicing their own *adat* (customary law) and *adab* (code of conduct). Traditionally, they are known to be capable and skilled in the arts and crafts of wood, bamboo and metal, as well pottery, *batik* printing, *songket* weaving and so forth. In this paper, we are going to investigate two particularly unique Malay craft: traditional ironworks and the traditional boat-making.