

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY AND
PARTICIPATION OF IBAN WOMEN
IN SARAWAK**

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Executive Master of Administrative Science

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies

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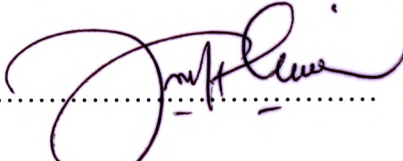
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

This research is focusing on Political Opportunity and Participation of Iban Women particularly in the State of Sarawak, Malaysia. The Iban is one of the ethnics in Sarawak and has the highest number in population or 30 per cent of its population. The Iban's migration to Sarawak from Kapuas, Kalimantan Indonesia has brought us back to the history and origin of this ethnic group. Although the Ibans comprise the largest number among the races or ethnics groups in Sarawak, the Iban Women's political participation and opportunity is considered very low due to the strong influence of its culture and traditions towards its egalitarianism societies. The idea was triggered based on observation whereby only a few Iban women were involved in politics and most importantly, there was yet to be any of them ever contested or being elected in Sarawak general election since Sarawak independence in 1963 under Malaysia. Therefore, the main focus of this research is to explore the reasons behind low political opportunity and participation and also to determine the influence of culture and tradition in Iban egalitarianism society towards Iban women's political opportunity and participation in Sarawak. A qualitative method is used in the research where it involved the gathering and collecting of data. The findings presented are supporting both of the research objectives. Among the reasons behind low political opportunity and participation were: Dayak women were not given opportunity to contest in general election; lacking of network activities; party leader were selecting family members as election candidates; lacking of awareness on the importance of education; *cake is too small* concept or limited posts; and only those with interest and patience will last long in politics. The findings also showed that there was significant influence of culture and tradition towards the Iban women's political opportunity and participation. The finding also showed one significant contribution to Sarawak politics through the making of breakthrough by electing one Iban woman as contestant in the coming general election (GE14).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi-ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii-xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1-6
1.2 Background of Study	6-9
1.3 Definition of Political Opportunity and Participation	9-11
1.4 Facts and Figures: Women's Leadership and Political Participation	11
1.5 Malaysian Women's Involvement and Participation in Politics	12-13
1.6 Previous research on Iban Women's Political Participation in Sarawak	13-14
1.7 Research Problem	15-16
1.8 Research Questions	16-17
1.9 Research Objectives	17
1.10 Delimitations of the Research	18
1.11 Summary of Chapters	18-19
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	20
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 Historical Development of Iban Women's Political Participation in Sarawak	20-23
2.3 Iban Women's in Decision Making Position	23-24