

Gender Equality in Indigenous Community: A Case Study of Jahai Women in the Royal Belum State Park, Malaysia

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Abstract

The issue of gender equality is a complex issue that has given rise to several policies in countries all over the world. Indigenous women face significant challenges to the full enjoyment of their human rights, and they also experience multiple forms of discrimination. In the context of indigenous women in Malaysia, they face double discrimination for being indigenous and women. This study focuses on the traditionally nomadic Jahai people who now live in permanent settlements in parts of the Royal Belum State Park as a tourist attraction. The Jahai people is one of the smallest Negritos are believed to have migrated to Southeast Asia since 60,000 years ago. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the Jahai women's perceptions toward gender equality in the Royal Belum State Park in Malaysia. The study employed a qualitative case study. The data was collected from a semi-structured interview on Jahai women in the Royal Belum State Park, Malaysia. The findings revealed that Jahai women play a disproportionate role in responding to their responsibilities for housework, finding a source of income, practicing traditions and customs of belief. The findings of this study provide new insight into the gender issues among indigenous women in communities. Hence, this study is significant for future research in expanding knowledge on indigenous women issues and gender equality knowledge corpus.

Keywords: gender issues, women rights, Orang Asli, responsibilities, traditions