

Acculturation of Consumerism among the *Orang Asli* Community in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on the research results which were intended to identify consumerism trends among the *Orang Asli*, particularly with regards to purchase of luxury goods and management of their finances. The concept of consumerism refers to the motivation of an individual to identify himself or herself by means of a product or service, especially one which is commercially branded and denotes status. A total of 215 *Orang Asli* from five settlements in the district of Jelebu were involved in this study. Gathering of information was done by means of both qualitative and quantitative data collections. These include in-depth interviews and observations along with the simple random survey technique using questionnaires. Research findings show that consumerism among the *Orang Asli* does not differ much from other mainstream communities. They employ luxury items and services in very much the same way as done by other mainstream communities. From the aspect of financial management, however, they occupy the lowest rungs, and a substantial portion of their income is allocated for the purpose of procuring luxury goods. This is done to such an extent that it denies them the means for other more important and needed purposes. The implication of this research finding is that knowledge and information regarding the utilization and management of finances ought to be assimilated by the *Orang Asli* community, so that they do not become victims of modern-world hedonism and luxury brought about by the mainstream society.

Keywords: *Orang Asli*, consumerism, financial management, luxury goods, luxury services

INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the acculturation of consumerism within the *Orang Asli* community, specifically in the District of Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan. The *Orang Asli* has long been in contact with the mainstream society and as a result, there have been changes among them in the realm of their consumer culture. The influence of globalization, which has accentuated consumerism, is difficult to be blocked from seeping into this community. As with other communities, the *Orang Asli* has been exposed to cash economy and consumerism. This

influence has crept, and continues to seep into this community's settlements, even though they are located in remote areas. Thus, consumerism culture among the *Orang Asli* can no longer be seen as being different from that of other communities. Yet, what has become a problem is that this community, which has been categorized as a minority and has long undergone consumer acculturation processes, has embraced the utilitarian culture which had previously been alien to them.

Consumerism among the *Orang Asli* society needs a different yardstick compared to the mainstream society. This is not only due

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to the isolated location of the *Orang Asli*, but also because the majority of them are classified as poor, not only financially but also from the standpoints of empowerment and knowledge. The obsession to indulge in the world of consumerism has caused this impoverished and weak community to fall victim to consumerism themselves. They often purchase goods at excessive prices due to their remote location. They have also been associated with having lack of knowledge and experience in managing their incomes, especially in planning their expenses. Moreover, exposure to the mass media and other socialization consumer agents has caused them to develop a need for these goods and services.

The underpinning research for the writing of this paper was conducted with the aim of analyzing the patterns of knowledge and behaviour pertaining to buying and using luxury services in the daily lives of the *Orang Asli* society. Beside that, it was also aimed at identifying the pattern of financial management among the *Orang Asli* community. This article is divided into three main parts. The first part deals with literature analysis, that is, exploring the background of the *Orang Asli* community within the context of development. This is important to survey the development of the *Orang Asli* community and their economic standing. Following this, the second part concerns with the methodologies of this study, and the third part consists of research findings in relation to the patterns of knowledge and behaviour pertaining to buying and using luxury services, taking into account the objectives of this study, and a discussion of the research findings from the viewpoint of purchasing and financial management.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The *Orang Asli* forms the minority community, be it from location, social, psychological or economic aspects. However, a small segment of this community has been assimilated into the mainstream Malaysian community. The 2006 population survey showed that the population of the *Orang Asli* totalled to 141,234 in Peninsula

Malaysia (JHEOA 2006). They are made up of three tribes, namely Senoi, Proto-Malays, and Negrito (Source JHEOA, 2008). The Senoi forms the largest group with a total population of 78,884 (58.85 percent), followed by Proto-Malays, numbering 58,675 (41.55 percent) and Negritos at 3,671 (2.60 percent) (JHEOA, 2006). In terms of numbers, they can be categorized as a minority group based on the fact that they make up only 0.5 percent of the total Malaysian population. In terms of the distribution of their settlements, it was found that 8.9 percent of the *Orang Asli* live in cities and towns, 2.4 percent in small towns, and 88.7 percent still live in the rural areas (Statistics Department, 1997; Nicholas, 2000: 18). Meanwhile, there were 576 *penghulu/batin* (headmen) in the *Orang Asli* society in 2004 (JHEOA, 2004, p. 6).

Research on the acculturation of consumerism process among the *Orang Asli* has given a better understanding of the dynamism of the culture which underlies their consumer behaviour. Acculturation, as defined by the Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, refers to the modification of individual or group culture, or people, whereby they adopt or borrow traits from other cultures. It also refers to the fusion of cultures due to prolonged contact. Likewise, acculturation as defined by the Online Dictionary of Social Sciences refers to a process of cultural transformation initiated by the contacts between the different cultures. According to Liu (2000), acculturation is the changes in an individual's value, attitude, and behaviour due to his or her direct contact with a culture other than his or her original culture. Acculturation influences consumer behaviour in two ways, namely through consumer re-socialization and through the acculturating individual's self-management.

Meanwhile, consumerism is a concept used to describe a situation in which the happiness of an individual is linked with the purchase, ownership, and usage of goods. Consumerism is used to describe the desire of people to identify themselves with products and services which they use, particularly commercially branded goods which can elevate their status, as in the case of luxury goods (Ma'rof and Sarjit, 2008).

In short, a culture that has been pervaded by consumerism can be referred to as a utilitarian culture.

The acculturation of consumerism represents one aspect of acculturation and socialisation. While acculturation is more general, acculturation of consumerism is more specific and it refers to the process of utilitarianism (Ma'rof and Sarjit, 2008). The acculturation of consumerism may be viewed as a socialization process, in which an individual learns consumer behaviour patterns, attitudes and values of a culture which differ from those of their own (Lee, 1988). At the same time, acculturation refers to a phenomenon which results when groups of individuals, having different cultures, undergo continual contact between them and the consequence is that there is change in either one group or in both the groups (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits, 1936, p. 149).

Changes may occur in the dominant culture, the sub-culture or in both the groups. According to Berry (1997), in practice, acculturation is more inclined to produce greater significant changes in one of the groups. The acculturation of consumerism of the minority group is typically determined by the extent to which they are able to adapt to the new consumer culture (as suggested by Magna *et al.*, 1996) and results in behavioural changes that arise out of this contact (Ward and Arzu, 1999). Culture does not only influence the method of producing but also influence the ways in which it is used. Moreover, culture plays an important role to determine product usage (Husniyah and Zuroni, 2002). According to Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun (2009), the acquirement of new cultural traits and the loss of traditional ones vary from trait to trait. The consequence is that ethnic groups or individuals can demonstrate one acculturation pattern for certain customs and situations, while exhibiting another pattern for others. Selective acculturation helps to explain the tendency of minorities to adopt certain strategic traits in order to improve their

living prospects while retaining other native cultural values and traditions. Following these perspectives, cultural adaptation can be considered as flexible or heterogenic rather than fixed. Likewise, it focuses on identifying which acculturation patterns will result from what consumption contexts.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative approach, together with the simple random survey technique using questionnaires to obtain descriptive information, was used in this study. The questionnaire was divided into six main sections, namely background of respondent, economic capital, ownership and purchase, value, behaviour and financial management, and resolving of financial problems. However, this article is concerned with only three of the aspects, namely respondents' background, ownership and purchase, and behaviour and financial management. On top of that, this research also utilized a qualitative approach which included in-depth interviews and observations.

The study was carried out in five *Orang Asli* communities living in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan. These communities were from Kampung *Orang Asli* Bertam, Kampung *Orang Asli* Jeram Lesung, Kampung *Orang Asli* Parit Gong, Kampung *Orang Asli* Putra, and Kampung *Orang Asli* Tohor. A total of 215 respondents from the five *Orang Asli* villages in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan, were involved in the present study. The selection of these respondents was done through a simple random sampling, namely the head of the family or the father who managed the expenses of the family, working mothers who managed the family finances, non-working mothers who made frequent purchases, working youths who managed finances as well as non-working youths who made frequent purchases. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 70 years. The data gathered were descriptively analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences *SPSS 13.0 for Windows*.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Background

This research was carried out in five *Orang Asli* community settlements situated in Jelebu district, Negeri Sembilan. These communities were the *Orang Asli* residents of Kampung *Orang Asli* Bertam, Kampung *Orang Asli* Jeram Lesung, Kampung *Orang Asli* Parit Gong, Kampung *Orang Asli* Putra, and Kampung *Orang Asli* Tohor. Kampung Parit Gong and Kampung Putra can be categorized as suburban areas, i.e. the areas which are within 10 kilometres from the main roads and have the characteristics such as being neighbours to Malay villages, experienced marked social changes, and their dependence on the forest for economic resources is less than 10 percent (Ramlee, 2001; JHEOA, 2004). Based on these features, these two areas were chosen as the research locations. Meanwhile, Kampung Jeram Lesung, Kampung Bertam, and Kampung Tohor were categorized as remote areas, as they are located more than 10 kilometres from the main roads. Remote areas are classified as those that are situated more than 10 kilometres from the main roads and these villages are classified as backward (JHEOA, 2004).

The main sub-tribe that resides here is the Temuan, which belongs to the Proto Malay tribal group. According to Nicholas (2000), the Proto Malay tribes are the people who live a settled life (as compared to the Negrito), and they are mainly involved in farming, rubber tapping, and fishing. There are also a considerable number of them who are engaged in commercial and professional activities, especially in Kampung Putra which is classified as a developing area by the JHEOA, Jebebu District (JHEOA, 2008). The information from the JHEOA Jebebu district census of 2008 reveals that the population of Kampung *Orang Asli* Bertam comprises of 76 residents, Kampung *Orang Asli* Jeram Lesung (47 residents), Kampung *Orang Asli* Parit Gong (321 residents), Kampung *Orang Asli* Putra (202 residents), while Kampung *Orang Asli* Tohor has 214 residents. Therefore, the total number of *Orang Asli* residents in the Jebebu

district was 1123 people (JHEOA Jebebu District, 2008 Census). As for the sub-urban areas, even though its location is close to the jungle, the *Orang Asli* community in this area has a relatively good accessibility to such amenities as piped water, electricity supply, primary schools, mosques, and roads that connect these areas with other surrounding areas.

As for the remote areas, however, the basic facilities such as schools and clinics are not provided. Thus, the school dropout rate here is apparent. Through interviews and observation, it was found that the children in these areas do not have the motivation to attend school and the attendance at school is quite unsatisfactory. Meanwhile, the quantitative data from this research show that 49.5 percent of the children here have never attended school, 31.6 percent are attending primary school, and 18.9 percent are attending secondary school. Those who have never attended school consist mainly of adults. They claimed that the children in these areas prefer helping their parents at the rubber smallholdings, and collecting fern shoots and banana leaves. In terms of faith, the majority of the residents here generally practice animism, although there are some amongst them who have converted to Islam and Christianity.

Financial Management and Spending Behaviour

Even though the majority of the *Orang Asli* in the research area has low income, this study was done to determine if they are practicing financial management. Financial management encompasses four main aspects, namely financial management has to be based on a holistic financial planning, income needs to be sufficient for meeting expenses, expenses have to be controlled, and financial management must be able to solve financial problems (Jariah, 1987). The average income of the *Orang Asli* society in this research area ranged between RM300 and RM450 per month.

In general, the researched *Orang Asli* community did not have good financial planning. This situation is understandable given the fact

that the majority of them do not have a high income. Thus, a careful planning is necessary to ensure that their income is able to cover their needs. Most individuals are aware of the facts such as the importance of managing limited resources (Bertisch, 1994; Garmen and Fogue, 2007), that financial management is a vital aspect in household life (Karen, 1988; Garmen and Fogue, 2007), and that financial problems can arise due to failure to control financial affairs (Hallman *et al.*, 1993). Research findings show that only a small portion of the *Orang Asli* has this realization. For example, 82.9 percent of the *Orang Asli*, especially those in the remote areas, believe that their income is not sufficient to meet their daily needs so they have to obtain their necessities on credit. Meanwhile, the data show that 52.6 percent of the *Orang Asli* is in debt. They reasoned this as resulting from their limited income, no time for income management, and most of it tends to get used up. Based on observation, the *Orang Asli* in this research has a strong desire to possess luxurious things which then urge them to accept loans and debt. In order to possess any electrical items, for instance, the people can make a full payment or via instalment.

At the same time, the data reveal that 67.4 percent of the *Orang Asli* do not possess or perform savings, while 56.3 percent stated that they use up all their income for daily needs and to repay debts. Even contingency savings are neglected, whereby 70.7 percent do not have savings to meet emergency expenses. This shows that the majority of the researched *Orang Asli* lives in dire conditions with financial problems. This financial problem comes about when the wants and desires of the individuals constantly influence spending decisions (Danes and Haberman, 2007). Money is a means for people to obtain food, shelter, comforts of life, happiness, and peace while leading their lives (Mate, 1991). Thus, without an adequate amount of money, man can be at a low level of happiness or contentment. In the remote areas, the level of income is only sufficient for the family to subsist. In this situation, it is impossible to have

savings as there is simply no extra income to put aside for savings. Furthermore, when it comes to possession of luxurious things, the *Orang Asli* community has failed to differentiate between necessities and desire. Therefore, due to lack of relevant knowledge, they end up purchase things that are merely based on their desire and have to bear financial burden.

Consumerism Acculturation among the Orang Asli

Consumer utilitarianism among the *Orang Asli* community shows a socialization process, whereby they, as consumers, are marginalized. They learned behaviour patterns, attitudes, and utilitarian values from the mainstream culture that are quite different from that of their original culture. As a community that exists in the researched areas, the *Orang Asli* occupy a position which is easily recognizable by other communities (based on the way of life and physical traits). They have continuously acculturated their utilitarian or consumer culture according to the mainstream culture of the majority group (particularly Malay culture). This has taken place in one direction only, in which the consumer culture of the *Orang Asli* has altered towards accepting the consumer culture of the larger society, but not the other way around.

Throughout the study, it was found that the *Orang Asli* communities in the researched areas have already undergone a lot of changes that similar to those of *Orang Asli* elsewhere, especially with regards to material possessions. This is particularly true among those who are living in the urban areas. Based on the interviews conducted with the *Orang Asli*, the concept of luxury goods and services as perceived by them are electrical items (refrigerator, television, rice cooker, etc.). Although the general society may consider these to be necessities, for the *Orang Asli*, these are luxury goods because they have not been able to afford to possess these goods. Meanwhile, ornamental items like jewellery, watches, and cameras are also considered as luxury goods by them.

Now, they are increasingly exposed to goods from the outside which have been brought into their community by vendors or by certain members of the *Orang Asli* themselves. Possession of these goods, which are considered as 'luxuries', is in line with the acculturation process which they have undergone. Along with this, there are many other factors which contribute towards the hastening or slowing of the consumer acculturation process, besides the financial aspect. Among them, as stressed by Godwin and Carroll (1986), as well as Baily and Lown (1993), are demographic factors

such as age, sex, occupation, knowledge of consumerism, level of education, and attitude towards goods purchased. If analyzed closely, all these factors would be found to play a role in moderating the relationship between acculturation and consumer behaviour among the *Orang Asli*. Undoubtedly, these factors determine or influence the acculturation process and utilitarian culture among them. This can be seen in the instance whereby consumer acculturation is more clearly evident in Kampung Parit Gong and Kampung Putra, where the people are more exposed and open in terms of

TABLE 1
Percentage distribution of respondents according to knowledge and purchased of luxury goods (N=215)

Luxury goods purchased	Knowledge		Have purchased	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Food				
KFC	66.5	33.5	15	85
McDonald	67	33	10.2	89.8
Pizza Hut	65.1	34.9	8.4	91.6
'Mamak' shop	74.4	25.6	26.6	73.4
Restaurant	75.2	24.8	28	72
Furniture/Electrical goods				
Singer	69.8	30.2	21.4	78.6
Seng Heng	53.3	46.7	3.3	96.3
Courts Mammoth	57.2	42.8	7.9	91.6
Beauty & health				
Avon	56.7	43.3	12.1	87.9
Spa	41.9	58.1	-	100
Saloon	41.9	58.1	3.3	96.7
Daily necessities				
7-Eleven	54.9	45.1	11.6	88.4
Tesco	53.5	46.5	11.6	88.4
Giant	54	46	14.9	85.1
Carrefour	45.1	54.9	6	94
Eonsave	44.1	55.9	6	94
Mydin	46.5	53.5	8.4	91.6

Note: All figures are percentages

location as compared to other villages which are comparatively more remote and where villagers are relatively more bound to their traditional lifestyles

The luxury services mentioned in the study include banks, trains, post offices, and some other services. The *Orang Asli* feel these are luxury services as these services do not exist at their villages. The possession and use of goods and services that are considered as luxuries reflect the occurrence of consumer adaptation processes in this community. The goods that they possess have been purchased from nearby towns like Pekan Chennah, Pekan Simpang Durian, and Simpang Pertang. The goods bought at these towns include furniture, electrical appliances, and vehicles. Table 1 shows the data of purchases and their knowledge of these goods.

Apparently, the *Orang Asli* community has awareness and knows of the luxury goods which are available. These data show that the *Orang Asli* community is aware of the higher end eating outlets like restaurants (75.2 percent), McDonald (67 percent), and KFC (66.5 percent). They know of these establishments through the mass media like television, radio, and others. Beside these, they also come to know of these places through social contacts, such as friends, neighbours, colleagues at work, and other means of information broadcasting. However, the *Orang Asli* society does not spend much at these places due to cash shortage and the remoteness of their settlements. These constraints cause them not to spend much in such places. Research data also show that the *Orang Asli* purchase furniture at Singer (21.4 percent), beauty products at Avon (12.1 percent), and daily necessities at Giant supermarket (14.9 percent). It can be deduced that consumerism among the *Orang Asli* has begun to expand, along with the mainstream developed society. They already have the knowledge about the luxury goods available, even though financial and location constraints cause a majority of them to be unable to spend money and own goods from these establishments.

Among the *Orang Asli*, there are also those who have already used modern banking

and health facilities. There is a small segment of them who save in banks and use banking services for certain financial transactions, such as repayment of loans. A large portion of them have used medical services, such as the government hospitals and clinics. The data show that 91.6 percent of them have been to the hospital which is located at the nearest town and have visited the government clinic which is located near their settlement. There are also amongst them those who have also used private clinic services (by paying); this figure stands at 58.1 percent. Though they have stated that there is a bomoh (traditional medicine man) at their settlement, they only resort to the bomoh for remedy of disorders related to 'spirit'. Ailments which are obvious from the biological aspect, such as physical injuries, are usually referred to clinics or hospitals.

The *Orang Asli* has also been known for using Astro (satellite television), especially those who reside in remote areas. This is because in remote areas, it is difficult to receive normal television station broadcast, so they resort to using Astro services. The data revealed that 23.7 percent of respondents have used Astro services. Meanwhile, the use of cellular phones has also become a matter of necessity, especially among the youths. This communication system has seeped into the lives of the *Orang Asli* community. The gathered data showed that 50.2 percent of the *Orang Asli* use handphones. Thus, luxury services have fundamentally started to be developed among the *Orang Asli*. However, financial problems remain a constraint in the ownership and using of these services. Table 2 shows the knowledge and usage of luxury services among the *Orang Asli* community.

The adoption of consumerism among the *Orang Asli* community in the research areas was derived from many factors, aside from the factor of cash possession. Among them, as emphasized by Godwin and Carroll (1986) and Baily and Lown (1993), are the factors such as age, sex, occupation, consumer knowledge, level of education, and attitude towards goods and services. Based on the observation carried out in this research, these

TABLE 2
Percentage distribution of respondents according to knowledge and usage of luxury services (N=215)

Usage of luxury services	Knowledge		Have purchased	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Telecommunication				
Astro	78.1	21.9	23.7	76.3
Internet	45.3	54.7	1.9	98.1
Handphone	89.8	10.2	50.2	49.8
Transport				
Express bus	94.4	5.6	45.1	54.9
LRT	52.6	47.4	7	93
Commuter/Train	62.4	37.6	8	92
Taxi	93.5	6.5	46.4	53.6
Medical				
Clinic/ Govt. hospital	100	-	91.6	8.4
Clinic/ Private hospital	87	13	58.1	41.9
Dental clinic	86	14	52.8	47.2
Despatch				
Express post	50.2	49.8	20.1	79.9
Fax	22.3	77.7	2.8	97.2
Savings and Mortgage				
Bank	88.8	11.2	40.8	59.2
Pawn shop	76.5	23.5	6.5	93.5

Note: All figures are percentages

factors play roles in moderating the relationship between consumerism and consumer behaviour. Besides, the location clearly plays a part in facilitating the embracing of consumerism. The observation in the research area also found that consumerism has become more apparent in *Orang Asli* villages that are located at the outskirts of towns or suburban areas compared with those in the remote areas. This is because the suburban community lives in an area where it is organized, with the presence of facilities, such as roads, housing, water and electricity supply, and shops which are reasonably stocked. Meanwhile, the interaction between these *Orang Asli* communities and the outside community

occurs with greater ease here and thus, the *Orang Asli* tends to be more exposed to the consumerism of the mainstream community.

Along with that, the adoption of consumerism among the *Orang Asli* happens through contact, whereby they manage to gain information through contact with others. Adoption is positively associated with the action of the individuals in seeking various information sources pertaining to products and it is also closely and positively related with the motivation of one to find advertisements in order to get that knowledge and also using friends as a means of getting information regarding a certain product (Gordon, 1964; D'Rozario

and Douglas, 1999). Due to this, the exposure factor plays an important role. However, one interesting fact is the dawning of realization among the *Orang Asli* who are bold enough to assert that the mass media often attempts to portray certain social realities in a distorted and false manner. The mass media rarely present knowledge related to consumer skills, such as the information on prices and knowledge of specific product. To them, the mass media is more interested in portraying easy applications and also the lives of the wealthy. Views of this nature have actually been forwarded by O'Guinn and Faber (1987). For example, the interviews revealed that individuals who are freshly exposed to new products have the perception that the social reality of the mainstream society (as depicted by the television programme) is biased towards the lives of the wealthy. This realization is quite apparent amongst the adult *Orang Asli* who are not much interested in mass media advertisements, especially television advertisements. Based on the interview with one of the informants, the following was obtained:

"I am satisfied with everything I have now. Those things they advertised on the television are too expensive and I can't afford". (Nyak Bin Lagan)¹

The older group displays lack of interest in aping and accepting what is being promoted by the mass media. However, the negative effects of advertisements shown by the mass media have had a considerable impact on the lives of some of the *Orang Asli*. There have been cases where they have sold their products, such as chicken eggs and vegetables, solely to purchase food that is inferior in nutritional value such as instant noodles, which is widely advertised on television. According to one of the informants:

"I am selling vegetables and eggs. Then, the profit I will use to buy Maggie (instant noodles) to these kids." (Satam Bin Ilak).²

The *Orang Asli* children also spend a lot of money buying food stuff which is less nutritious especially junk food and snacks.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has focused on acculturation of consumerism among the *Orang Asli* community in the Jelebu district, Negeri Sembilan. The *Orang Asli* community, just like any other communities, has found itself being absorbed into the Malaysian mainstream culture. On the whole, the *Orang Asli* has increasingly been exposed to consumerism, which has resulted in them adopting a consumerist culture. However, they do not have the ample knowledge related to financial management and at the same time, they have become 'victims' of the business community who have attempted to maximize their profits at the expense of the position and vulnerability of the *Orang Asli*. Moreover, they have become the targets for luxury goods but they do not have the means of buying these goods and end up being trapped in debt. Thus, it is necessary to expose to this society, which has been termed as a marginalized society, to consumerism-related knowledge.

In the past, the *Orang Asli* community depended on goods which they produce themselves and they led a self-sufficient, subsistence life. At present, however, they have adapted themselves to the use of industrial products which have come from outside their community. This situation has made them more and more dependent on commercially made products. In this regard, money has come to play a major role as a medium of exchange to procure the needed goods. Consequently, their traditional goods and services have been sidelined. Their involvement in the consumerism and market economy has eroded their cultural domain and has finally brought to the extinction of their traditional knowledge. If this situation was to continue, the *Orang Asli* would lose their culture and subsequently, their identity as well. At the same time, portions of the *Orang Asli* are fast becoming victims of consumerism. They are not equipped with the knowledge related to financial

management. They frequently fall victim to traders who always try to make easy gains at the expense of the weak position of the *Orang Asli*. In addition, they have become the targets of luxury goods advertising but do not have the financial means to buy them with cash payment. That being the case, most of them are trapped and saddled with debts. The factors of lack of money and the overwhelming desire to possess certain goods have caused them to choose goods which are inferior in quality and ended up being exploited by traders. It is an undeniable fact that consumer adaptation is an unavoidable process in any community and the *Orang Asli* is no exception to this. However, what is more disturbing is that this minority community has frequently fallen victims to consumerism because of their vulnerable position.

ENDNOTES

¹Nyak Bin Lagan, 48 years old, rubber tapper, no educational background.

²Satam Bin Ilak, 38 years old, farmer, receive education until Standard 5.

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