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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Appraising Economic Development Programmes to Improve the Achievement of Goal 1: Malaysia's Indigenous Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The economic development programme aims to increase income and reduce indigenous people's poverty while introducing indigenous economic resources. This study appraises indigenous people's effectiveness of economic development programmes in Perak land development projects (RPS), Malaysia. The researchers adopted a mixed-method approach involving 300 respondents for the questionnaire survey and 15 interview participants in the selected locations in Perak, Malaysia. The qualitative data were analysed by thematic analysis and the quantitative data by SPSS software. Findings show different effects between RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun. The implementation can be less successful at RPS Air Banun due to the threat of wildlife such as elephants and wild boars. The findings also show that the indigenous people in the area are not carrying out rubber planting projects because of the possible damage from the wild animals. This threatens Goal 1. The situation in RPS Ulu Kinta and RPS Legap is different; the indigenous people enjoy the crop project results by receiving monthly dividends. This study will contribute to informing policymakers to develop a platform for improving Malaysia's indigenous programmes and, by extension, improve the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (Goal 1).

Keywords: Development programme; Effectiveness; Indigenous people; Malaysia; Sustainable Development Goal 1

1. Introduction

The concept of development has undergone a thorough process of transformation. In the 1940s, the idea of development also occurred as economic growth with a downward drip effect. Then, from the 1960s to the 1970s, the development concept focused on growth with distribution (Embong, 2018a). In the 1960s to 1970s, the country's population increased, and the extreme poverty of the world's population also increased. This situation increases the total income distribution in the economic upswing. For equitable growth, each development objective is equally important as economic efficiency. Development further expanded in the

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1980s to include economic growth and social development. In the 1990s, development also focused on sustainable development, human development, and development as freedom[1]. The concept of human development is the development that aims at human well-being by enhancing individual capabilities. This capability is built through the opportunities opened by the government, especially in education, health, and facilities that provide a better life.

Global economic growth increased more rapidly during the previous year, and the world economy's growth momentum. Meanwhile, the Malaysian economy also expanded in 2018 when it grew in all sectors, such as mining, agriculture, services, construction, and manufacturing[2,3]. When the economy is in good shape, the country's development will be more advanced in driving sustainable development, including care and protection to maintain natural resources. National development focuses on the economic field only but is multi-disciplinary. The action refers to economic growth and social change and differs based on their respective views[4,5]. In Malaysia, the Indigenous People consist of three parts, namely the Negrito, and Malay Senoi Promo. Negritos included Kensiu, Kintak, Lanoh, Jahai, Mendriq, and Bateq. Meanwhile, the Senoi people consist of Temiar, Semai, Semoq Beri, Jahut, Mah Meri, and Che Wong and inhabit the slopes of Titiwangsa in the interior of Perak Pahang and Kelantan, as presented in **Table 1**. Next, the Proto Malays, who make up a quarter of Kuala Kanaq, Seletar, Adam's apple, and finding Semelai lived next door to the Malays in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, and Johor[6]. An indigenous people, as defined under Act 134, as people whose mother or father or both are indigenous people, speak the indigenous people's language, follow the indigenous people's way of life, and believe in indigenous people's customs and beliefs[7].

Table 1. Indigenous people in Malaysia.

Negrito	Senoi	Malay Proto
Kensiu	Temiar	Kuala
Kintak	Semai	Kanaq
Lanoh	Semoq Beri	Seletar
Jahai	Jahut	Jakun
Mendriq	Mah Meri	Semelai
Bateq	Che Wong	Temuan

Source: *Authors work*

As many as 300 million Indigenous People (United Nations) represent 5,000 ethnicities from over 90 countries worldwide[8]. Studies show that indigenous people worldwide, in Asia, America, Australia, and Europe, are significantly poorer than other communities[9]. The World Bank also studied a similar trend in 2005, which showed that the indigenous population has the highest poverty rate[10,11]. Therefore, the government strives to implement economic development programmes and infrastructure facilities and improve indigenous people's living standards. The allocation of RM352 million through budget 2015, RM300 million for the 2016 budget, RM110 million for the 2017 budget, RM50 million for the 2018 budget, and RM100 million for the 2019 budget[12]. This shows that the government remains committed to helping improve the indigenous people's living standards. Most indigenous people no longer rely on the traditional economy of finding forest products alone[13]. Now, they have entered the industrial economy, thus improving their living economy. However, these changes in their efforts to improve living standards while maintaining traditional customs and cultures are increasingly eroded by community development and social problems[14,15]. As the story approached the indigenous people, young people began to move to new areas. They are moving to nearby towns and the industrial regions that offer more employment opportunities in the manufacturing, hospitality, restaurant work maids, and other sectors to improve the family economy.

The traditional occupation of finding forest products and hunting is no longer popular because the income from these sources is not fixed and is considered not commensurate with their fatigue[14]. Apart from continuing to move from their hometowns, young people commute to work in nearby towns and only engage in low-income jobs such as construction labour, factory work, restaurant assistants, and gardeners[16]. Migration to urban areas occurs due to the uncertain economic and social situation, the pressure of living in the indigenous people community, and the expectation that life in the city will be more secure and have good economic opportunities[15]. In addition, other factors that contribute to such migration are land grabbing, poverty, natural disasters, lack of employment opportunities, deterioration of traditional life, better prospects, and opportunities in the city. However, the socio-economic status of the Indigenous People today is still far behind compared to other communities[15], and the situation is a challenge that the government must face to develop the indigenous people community and improve achieving Goal 1. They identified four main challenges in developing their socio-economic status: the limited scope of employment, seasonal tourist arrivals, the exploitation of intermediaries, and low indigenous people identity. Mitigating these challenges are key to improve the achievement of Goal 1. Furthermore, the indigenous people community is not optimistic about the government's efforts to change their lives because indigenous people think that something negative will happen if they accept development and exposure to the outside world[17].

2. Review of literature

This section reviewed relevant extant literature. This includes the economic development programmes, state economic development programme, expansion programmes (courses), entrepreneur guidance programme, retail space guidance programme, and Income increase programme, and people's welfare development schemes (SPKR).

2.1. Economic development programmes

Economic development programme introducing indigenous economic resources has four main projects. This includes cash crop projects (vegetables), livestock projects (goats, cattle, sheep, and fish), rubber and oil palm plantation projects, and indigenous entrepreneur development projects[18]. Economic development programmes include the state economic development Programme, expansion programme (courses), entrepreneur guidance programme, retail space guidance programme, income increase programme, and people's welfare development scheme (SPKR) [19]. Majority of these programmes are tailored towards the achievement of SDG 1 (reduce poverty). Goal 1 is critical to humanity and sustainable development.

2.1. State economic development programme

This programme aims to reduce poverty among the indigenous people. The project is implemented through the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) and the Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA) to develop oil palm and rubber plantations with a focus on plantation development[20]. In the 2016 Budget, for example, the government allocated RM852 million to RISDA and FELCRA for the income and productivity programme. Meanwhile, a total of RM3.15 million is given to the economic development programme[21,22].

2.2. Expansion programme (courses)

The development programme (course) aims to provide training and exposure to indigenous people on modern crop and agricultural projects. Among the leading practices implemented for Indigenous People include training in oil palm plantation maintenance, hydroponics, rubber cultivation methods, livestock courses, etc. The programme aims to achieve the main objective of helping eradicate poverty among indigenous people[6].

2.3. Entrepreneur guidance programme

The indigenous people are known for their ability to produce various handicrafts from rattan and bamboo. Entrepreneur mentoring programme introduced to the indigenous people to promote indigenous people handicraft products to the public and provide related courses. Among the incentives offered are business equipment assistance, input material assistance, and others. In addition, through this programme, indigenous people could explore other business areas such as grocery stores business, eatery, vehicle workshops, and fruit shops[6]. There are as many as 1,000 indigenous people entrepreneurs throughout Malaysia. Among the business fields they are involved in are retail, livestock, transportation, salons, agriculture, services, textiles, handicrafts, workshops, boat building, contractors, food, manufacturing, tourism, cyber cafes, sweet potato plantations, nurseries, fishing tackle shops, kelulut honey, and wholesalers. **Table 2** shows the number of indigenous people entrepreneurs in Malaysia. **Table 2** shows the number of entrepreneurs among the indigenous people up to March 2018. The number of successful entrepreneurs generated through the indigenous people's economic development programme is 1,000. The most significant number of entrepreneurs are from Pahang, which is 393 people, followed by Johor (160 people), Selangor (156 people), Perak (100 people), Kelantan (98 people), Negeri Sembilan (77 people), and Melaka (16 people). Indigenous people women also showed a high interest in entrepreneurship, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Indigenous people entrepreneurs until 31 March 2018 in Malaysia.

State	Man	Women	Total
Pahang	239	154	393
Johor	96	64	160
Negeri Sembilan	39	38	77
Melaka	4	12	16
Perak	83	17	100
Kelantan	75	23	98
Selangor	84	72	156
Jumlah	**620**	**380**	**1,000**

Source: *Compiled by the authors*

2.4. Retail space guidance programme

Through the business space guidance programme, the department provides provisions to build business premises for indigenous people who have ventured into entrepreneurship. The guidelines stipulate the retail space guidance programme helping entrepreneurs and enterprise/industry guidance programmes for indigenous people. The programme covers craft workshops, grocery stores, motorcycle workshops, eateries, and sewing shops[23].

2.5. Income increase programme and people's welfare development scheme (SPKR)

Ministry of rural development (KPLB), through JAKOA implements this program to reduce poverty while providing an income enhancement programme (PPP). Provided include agricultural machinery equipment, fishery input materials, sweet potato crops, lime crops, village poultry, goat rearing, and so on[24].

3. Research method

This study used a mixed approach. This includes qualitative and quantitative approaches. The combined way is increasingly accepted and developed in social, medical, and health sciences[25,26]. The collaborative

method in the study is complete because it uses two types of data: qualitative and quantitative. The mixed method can make the research questions more comprehensive[25]. A qualitative approach was applied to find a more apparent meaning regarding subjective and more in-depth matters. The observations, interviews, and pictures provided more concrete answers[27,28,29]. The reality of the qualitative approach is an effort to explain and analysed the validity of the ability of indigenous people communities to engage in socio-economic development programmes Observation is essential in qualitative research[30,31]. The observation notes used a protocol format that contains columns for descriptive notes on the left and reflective notes on the right.

This study also applies unstructured interview techniques that need to explore a phenomenon to be studied to increase knowledge and add information to the survey. This technique has no right or wrong answers; the open format allows informants to voice their views freely, and there are no time constraints and length of description[30]. The informants selected to be interviewed knowledge of the topic of the study can provide insights, which aims to add information to the survey. The interview protocol contained components of (a) title, (b) introduction from the interviewer, (c) main questions of the study, (d) sub-questions following the central questions of the study, (e) space to record the message conveyed by informants, (f) space to record informant comments, and (g) space to record reflective notes[30,32].

The quantitative method used in this study can save time and money using many respondents. The quantitative approach proffers answers to the study's objectives. The questionnaire was constructed in line with and tied to the study's objectives and research questions to help make the data collection process successful. This questionnaire contains open-ended and scaled questions. The scale used in the questionnaire was the Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree).

3.1. Demography profile

A total of 15 participants were selected for interview. This study was conducted in three recollection plans (RPS). This includes RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun. Qualitative data were conducted with staff of the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA). They include RPS managers, assistants, and Tok Batin and Orang Asli. They are directly involved in three Orang Asli socio-economic development programmes. This includes the Structured Placement Programme (PPT), Economic Development Programme (PPE), and the Social Development Programme (PPS). **Table 3** shows the demographic characteristics of the 15 participants. The study investigated the perspectives of JAKOA staff, Tok Batin, and Orang Asli that may differ from each other through the qualitative data. During the interview session for the qualitative study, the informants were asked about the status of their capability, the changes that occurred after attending the socio-economic development programme, and the programme's effectiveness. The answers obtained from the study informants were recorded in the form of notes. Upon completing the interview session, the conversation was transcribed into sentence (text) form for analysis through content analysis techniques. The data obtained were categorised according to the main themes that researchers decided on based on the study's objectives.

Table 3. Demography of the participants (N=15).

Bil.	Category	Gender	Age	Employment	Period	RPS	Code
1.	JAKOA	Male	-	Assistant	2	Air Banun	R1
2.	JAKOA	Male	-	Assistant	5	Air Banun	R2
3.	JAKOA	Female	-	Manager	2	Air Banun	R3
4.	JAKOA	Male	-	Manager	2	Ulu Kinta	R4
5.	Tok Batin	Male	60	Not working	34	Air Banun	R5

Bil.	Category	Gender	Age	Employment	Period	RPS	Code
6.	Tok Batin	Male	65	Village	40	Air Banun	R6
7.	Tok Batin	Male	55	Village	30	Ulu Kinta	R7
8.	Tok Batin	Male	40	Government	2	Legap	R8
9.	Orang Asli	Male	45	Boat	-	Air Banun	R9
10.	Orang Asli	Male	25	Business & Islamic Religious Affairs Assistant	-	Air Banun	R10
11.	Orang Asli	Male	34	Village	-	Air Banun	R11
12.	Orang Asli	Female	34	Village	-	Legap	R12
13.	Orang Asli	Female	39	Village	-	Legap	R13
14.	Orang Asli	Male	43	Village	-	Ulu kinta	R14
15.	Orang Asli	Male	50	Village	-	Ulu kinta	R15

Source: *Authors work.*

The respondents involved in this study were 300 heads of households from 1,019 heads of families living in 22 villages in the Recollection Plan (RPS). RPS Legap has 10 villages, RPS Ulu Kinta (six villages), and RPS Air Banun (six villages). **Table 4** shows the total samples taken from the three RPS, namely 123 heads of households for RPS Legap, 103 heads of households (RPS Ulu Kinta), and 74 heads of households (RPS Air Banun).

Table 4. Respondents for the quantitative phase.

RPS	Households		
	Family	**Sample**	**(%)**
Legap	388	123	41
Ulu Kinta	509	103	34.33
Air Banun	122	74	24.67
Total	**1019**	**300**	**100**

Source: *Authors work*

4. Results and discussion

Respondent recommendations by JAKOA are based on the readiness of the indigenous people to answer the survey questions provided. The researchers guided the respondents because most of them had illiteracy problems. The effectiveness of economic development programmes in business and reducing poverty. The answers given by the study informants are divided into two categories, namely "successful" and "unsuccessful." Eight informants stated that the socio-economic development programme was successful, while three noted that the programme was unsuccessful. The programme is said to be successful because outsiders help. Besides, it gives positive results when it can reduce poverty, channel business capital, and provide a more comfortable life for the indigenous people. For those who said that the programme was not successful, they thought that the programme did not help the indigenous people out of poverty, besides feeling the lack of capital given to start a business, no crops to cultivate as a source of livelihood, in addition to wildlife disturbance factors on crop projects and not understanding the background of the indigenous people. The following sub-section is success information shared by study informants involved in the business.

4.1. Succeed in business

Successful business refers to informants directly involved in the industry, such as grocery stores and honey companies, engaged in entrepreneurship courses, and successful results from the field ventured. The informants found the study considered the socio-economic development programme successful because the indigenous people can already engage in business in the village, such as opening a grocery store in the RPS. They assist with business courses and finance studies to develop their respective companies. Also, JAKOA monitors the indigenous people regarding business development over time. The results of interviews with JAKOA representatives on the matter are as follows: *"Near RPS Banun, there is also a grocery store owned by indigenous people. There are 2 grocery stores that the indigenous people themselves successfully run…."* (Informant R2)**.** Interviews with indigenous people representatives involved in the entrepreneurship program are as follows: *"…like my wife and I, we are opening a grocery store in this village. I have my job. He helped us a lot, the economy, Alhamdulillah. The youths near this village also work in the state park. Some work to pick up and send tourists. That means some work with the government, the private sector and NGOs…."* (Informant R10).

Apart from being involved in sales at grocery stores, the indigenous people are engaged in the commercial sell-out honey business conducted at RPS Ulu Kinta. This company is seen as successful because of the revenue from the kelulut honey business. Findings reveal that representatives of Tok Batin and indigenous people involved in the kelulut honey industry show: *"…we are thankful to the government for allowing us to run this kelulut honey business. We were taught how to do business, such as SSM registration, company account management, but it was easy. Capital is also provided…"* (Informant R7). Also, *".....I am indeed involved with this kelulut honey company. I'm in charge. When people come to the village to buy, I will sell it. Then the sales proceeds will go into the account….."* (Informant R15). Findings show that the government involvement helps increase the income of the indigenous people who participated in the programme by providing dividends on oil palm or rubber crops every month (R4, R7, R8, & R14).

Referring to **Table 4**, it shows the programmes implemented to help increase the income of the indigenous people community according to the RPS. Of the respondents (N = 300), 224 agreed that the socio-economic development programme helped increase their income. In comparison, a total of 76 people stated that the programme did not help increase the revenue of the indigenous people. In RPS Legap, a total of 78 people out of 123 respondents answered 'Yes' and 45 others answered 'No'. Meanwhile, a study on 103 respondents in RPS Ulu Kinta found that 91 people agreed and 12 others chose not to agree. Next, at RPS Air Banun, a total of 55 people out of 74 respondents decided, and 19 people chose the answer 'No'. Overall, the study in these three RPS found that 74.7% of respondents answered 'Yes, and 25.3% said no. The findings show that the programme has succeeded in increasing the income of the indigenous people.

Qualitative and quantitative data from the interview and questionnaire show that socio-economic development programmes have successfully encouraged indigenous people to get involved in business. Thus, helping to increase their income. Although not all indigenous people are engaged in business and entrepreneurship, the programme has successfully produced entrepreneurs. This situation can help indigenous people generate monthly income through monitoring and assistance conducted from JAKOA. The indigenous people involved in the kelulut honey industry and retail have also increased the family income. Meanwhile, indigenous people who are not engaged in business earn their living by working in the public and private sectors. indigenous people's involvement in entrepreneurship can help reduce poverty in RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun.

4.2. Reducing poverty

Successfully reducing the poverty level in this study refers to Indigenous People and, by extension, improve achieving Goal 1. They have a fixed monthly income and successfully improve their economy after following development programs provided by the government. The interviews in the study also found that this program can help reduce poverty among three informants. They are involved in the economic development programme (PPE) in RPS Legap and Ulu Kinta Perak. This success is due to government assistance such as the provision of crops, the organisation of courses, and the purchase of monthly dividends. The government also does not neglect the indigenous people in the country's economic development. Below are the results of interviews with JAKOA and Tok Batin representatives. They stated that PPE has reduced indigenous people's poverty because they receive assistance and are involved in business projects at RPS Ulu Kinta. *"…. If you look at the program organized by the government for the indigenous people here. It can be said to be successful. The house is provided, the facilities are complete, only the telephone line is a little difficult. The economy in this RPS can be said to be successful. Like I told you earlier, we at RPS Ulu Kinta have a kelulut honey company and get oil palm dividends every month…."* (Informant R4). *".....I thank the government for not ignoring the indigenous people. The government assists us. The economic development programme that has been implemented gives us rubber plantations, oil palm, kelulut honey. It helps improve the indigenous people's economy in this RPS…."* (Informant R7). Apart from the results of interviews with JAKOA and Tok Batin, this success can also be seen through a quantitative study showing indigenous people's total monthly income, as presented in **Figure 1**.

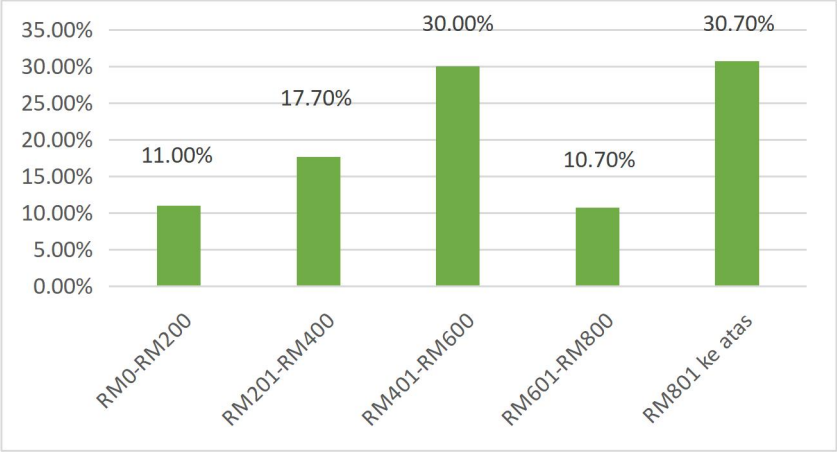


Figure 1. Monthly income.

Source: *Compilation from Authors' work.*

Figure 1 shows the level of income of the respondents, and it is divided into five categories, namely (i) RM0-RM200, (ii) RM201-RM400, (iii) RM401-RM600, (iv) RM601-RM800, (v) RM80, and above. The study shows that a total of 92 respondents (30.7%) had an income of RM801 and above, and they also received government assistance in the form of monthly dividends from PPE. The second highest income is RM401-RM600 per month, consisting of respondents entirely dependent on the monthly donation of rubber or oil palm prizes amounting to between RM450 to RM550 without other jobs. Although the total income is relatively high, respondents still earn a monthly income below RM200, while 33 people (11.0%) do not have a monthly payment. This group only expects help with daily necessities and necessities from families, JAKOA, and individuals. Findings agree with Roddin *et al.* [33], who affirmed that indigenous people are too dependent on government assistance, which is associated with the personal characteristics of indigenous people, which are seen as the cause of their backwardness.

Furthermore, the indigenous people's income data based on the Recollection Plan (RPS) shows that it is still below poverty. Referring to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019) sources, the Poverty Line Income (PGK) in Peninsular Malaysia is RM960, and in rural is RM880. Almost all indigenous people in the study area are in the poverty group, while 58.70% of the respondents are in the hardcore poor category, with less than RM580 per month. According to a statement issued by the World Bank[34], as many as 15 per cent of the world's population are indigenous people who belong to the hardcore poor. **Table 5** shows the total monthly income of respondents in RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun. Findings show that a total of 51 people (49.52%) respondents in RPS Ulu Kinta have an income of more than RM800 per month and no monthly income of less than RM200 per month, while only three people (2.91%) have a monthly payment of RM201 to RM400 per month. Furthermore, in RPS Legap, only 15 people (12.19%) have a monthly income of more than RM801, and 26.83% of the 123 respondents have a monthly payment between RM201 to RM400. Meanwhile, 32 people (26.02%) have a monthly income between RM401 to RM600. RPS Air Banun shows that most respondents have a monthly payment of more than RM801, which is 26 people (35.14%), and the lowest number of respondents, nine people (12.16%), earn less than RM200 per month.

Table 5. Monthly income respondents.

Monthly Income	**RPS (%)**		
	Legap	**Ulu Kinta**	**Air Banun**
RM0 - RM200	19.51	-	12.16
RM201 - RM400	26.83	2.91	22.97
RM401 – RM600	26.02	37.86	25.68
RM601 – RM800	15.45	9.71	4.05
RM800 dan ke atas	12.19	49.52	35.14
Jumlah	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: *Authors' work*

Findings show increased indigenous people's income after following the socio-economic development programme. In contrast, the following study results show the total monthly payment of respondents by age. This data was generated to determine whether respondents' age could achieve good family economic conditions. Referring to **Table 5**, the indigenous people communities in RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun are still poor and hardcore poor groups. This finding aligns with a study by Lee *et al.*[35]. They affirmed that although the indigenous people are involved in development programmes, they remain below the poverty line. Socio-economic development programmes helped to increase the income of household heads. **Table 5** shows the income earned every month. This income is combined with the dividends received each month. Therefore, it contributes to the ability of the indigenous people to meet the necessities of life compared to before combining his development programme, and their main job is to collect forest products.

However, study informants also stated that this socio-economic development programme was unsuccessful. This failure refers to the Economic Development Programme (PPE) because elephants and wild boar are disturbed. The unsuccessful programme relates only to the Economic Development Programme (PPE) at RPS Air Banun, as wildlife such as Elephants and wild boars destroy their crops. Although efforts have been made to address this problem, it still failed to resolve it due to wildlife disturbance. *"This programme failed help us out of poverty because we had no capital to do business, no crops. JAKOA for*

seeds, but elephants destroy. We want to eat, but it's hard. If we're going to eat, the neighbours give. Move here, sit that level too. Many indigenous people return to their original villages because it is not suitable to sit near here. Near the old town, we can plant all kinds. Plant sweet potatoes in the backyard, plant bananas, no elephants, or wild boars to damage…." (Informant R5). Findings from the indigenous people representatives who stated that there was elephant disturbance in their RPS, thus thwarting the PPE carried out, *"…If the Economic Development Programme is like the rubber plantation near the RPS, it is not successful because of the elephant disturbance…."* (Informant R10). *"….As a result of the disturbance of wildlife such as elephants destroying crops belonging to the indigenous people, no crops can do anything. For me, PPE at RPS Air Banun is unsuccessful. Indigenous people grievances about this problem are often raised with JAKOA so that this problem can't settle……"* (Informant R5) In addition, complaints about the disturbance of wild elephants damaging crops also occurred among the Indigenous People at the Air Banun RPS: *".....If the Economic Development Programme is like a rubber plantation, it will not succeed in this village because of the disturbance of elephants and wild boars…"* (Informant R10).

Indigenous people's failure to change their lives despite being involved in socio-economic development programs also influences their ability to save and pay off debts. The survey data obtained through the questionnaire, as in **Figure 2**, shows that the culture of saving is still low in the indigenous people community. Only 49 respondents (16.3%) make savings in banks or other institutions. This number for those who do not make savings is 251 people (83.7%). This shows that the indigenous people community is still entirely dependent on the assistance channeled to them. Findings agree with Azlina[36], who affirmed that the indigenous people depend on the government. Also, they are weak in managing their finances well. Indigenous people in RPS Air Banun recorded the highest number of depositors, 24 people, RPS Legap (15 people) and RPS Ulu Kinta (10 people). **Table 6** shows the estimated monthly savings made by the respondents by age in the three RPS. The respondents who made the most savings were at RPS Air Banun, 11 people aged between 30 to 39 years. In RPS Ulu Kinta, three people were aged between 19 to 29 years and 30 to 39 years, while two were aged between 40 to 49 years and 50 to 59 years, respectively. Meanwhile, for the age of 60 and above, there is only one respondent in RPS Legap. The interviews conducted gave the excuse of not having excess money to save due to the rising prices of goods and the high cost of living.

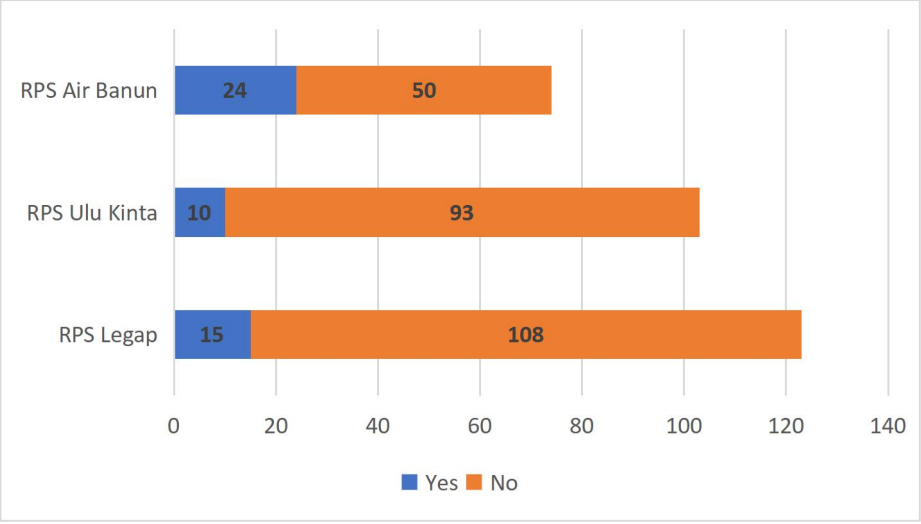


Figure 2. Saving.

Source: *Authors work.*

Table 6. Saving respondents by age and RPS.

Age	RPS Legap	RPS Ulu Kinta	RPS Air Banun
19 - 29	3	3	9
30 - 39	5	3	11
40 - 49	4	2	2
50 - 59	2	2	2
60 and above	1	-	-
Total	**15**	**10**	**24**

Source: *Authors work.*

Next is the respondents' estimated savings according to RPS. Findings reveal that 251 people (83.66%) had no protection. However, there are still respondents who make savings, even if not consistently every month. Thus, the number of respondents who save is still tiny, namely, only 34 respondents (11.33%) consisting of 15 people in RPS Air Banun, RPS Legap (10 people), and RPS Ulu Kinta (nine people) involving savings below RM100 per month. Meanwhile, the number of respondents who made savings between RM101 to RM200 was 11 people (3.67%); RM201 to RM300 (six people), and RM301 and above (two people). The results of interviews with indigenous people, who make savings of RM301 and above, found that they have permanent jobs working in the government sector and are involved in all three programmes organised by the government. The data also shows that not many indigenous people know the importance of saving. The informant stated this: "….*How do we save? We don't even want to eat enough. We eat what we have, and we cannot even garden…."* (Informant R11). *"…..I also have little savings. I work, there is a monthly salary. My wife is in business. Maybe he wants to save a little……"* (Informant R10).

As is well known, indigenous people, who have not managed to get out of poverty, are not only unable to make savings every month but are also not eligible to obtain loans from banks. Therefore, if the indigenous people wanted to buy a vehicle such as a motorcycle or a car, they had to loan to a shop owner who trusted them. Banks require the commitment and ability of the applicant to repay the loan, thus making it difficult for the indigenous people to do so, as most of them are self-employed and have no payslips to prove their ability to pay the bank. The percentage of respondents who made bank loans for personal affairs was only eight people (2.67%), while 292 people (97.33%) did not make loans. They did not need to do so other than being comfortable with their income. Those who make bank loans are indigenous people, who work full time, have salary slips and can repay the loan. RPS Ulu Kinta showed the highest number of loans at four people (3.88%) and two in RPS Legap and RPS Air Banun.

Although the number of respondents in RPS Legap and Air Banun is the same, there is a difference in the percentage of 2.70% in RPS Air Banun and RPS Legap (1.63%). The mean for Opaque RPS was four, and the standard deviation was 1.95; for RPS Ulu Kinta, the mean was 1.50, and the standard deviation was 0.502. Next, for RPS, Air Banun mean three, and the standard deviation is 1.58. The following is an interview with indigenous people regarding personal loans: *"…..There isn't. It's hard to get a loan with a bank. We don't have a payslip….."* (Informant R11). *"….I have a bank loan, a loan to buy a car. I work with the government. It's also easy to make a loan. The Indigenous People here find it difficult to get a loan, especially with a bank, because they are self-employed….."* (Informant R8).

Findings show that the indigenous people involved in socio-economic development programmes are successful and unsuccessful. The programme's success can be seen in the increase in the monthly income of the indigenous people, and the programme's failure is due to the disturbance of wildlife that still plagues their

lives in RPS Air Banun Hulu Perak. Indigenous people who manage to escape poverty or increase their monthly income can enjoy a more comfortable life. Unlike the indigenous people, who have not been able to change their lives in terms of revenue, they have no savings and cannot make any loans to meet their living needs. This study shows that the indigenous people in the study area need help and support from the government through JAKOA to increase their income and move in line with national development.

4.3. Life more comfortable

A more comfortable life refers to housing provided by the government, infrastructure facilities such as roads, surau, schools, community halls for community activities, and facilities for mobility. The success of socio-economic development programmes is assessed when indigenous people successfully change their lives in a more comfortable direction. Out of 15 study informants, One indigenous person stated that socio-economic development programs have successfully improved their lives with a more relaxed approach. The impact of indigenous people's poverty occurs due to low income and low quality of life. The following is an interview with an Indigenous People representative: *"....We are near the village where many people work near oil palm plantations. We work half a day until noon. We are paid RM40 a day, and it helped us get off the programme and move here. This programme allows me to have a more comfortable life. Can improve our standard of living....."* (Informant R13). The improvement in the indigenous people's way of life can be seen through the way they spend. The higher the income of the indigenous people. The more comfortable their lives are, the higher the level of this community's ability to pay. This data was obtained from a questionnaire distributed to the study respondents. **Figure 3** shows the monthly expenditure of respondents in RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun. Overall, the highest number of respondents is 178 people (59.3%), with the value of expenditure RM101 to RM300 per month, followed by RM100 and below (22.0%), RM301 to RM500 for 47 people (15.7%), RM501 to RM800 for seven people (2.3%), and RM801 and above (0.7%). It is understood that the indigenous people in the study area receive assistance for basic needs such as rice from JAKOA. Banquets are organised in the village and mosque areas. It can help them by issuing special provisions to buy rice and indirectly help reduce the burden on the villagers.

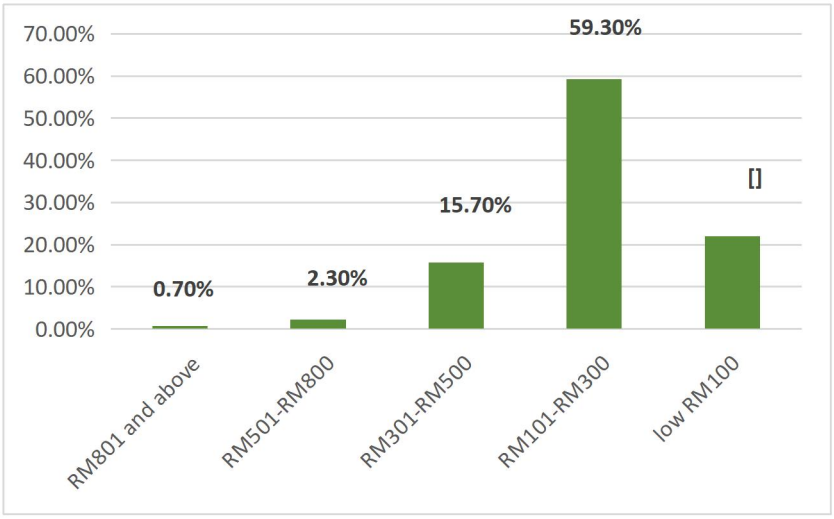


Figure 3. Monthly expenditure.

Source: *Authors work.*

4.4. Failure of the socio-economic development programme

Economic development programs that failed did not involve all the programs organised. For example, informants stated that the programme's failure resulted in wildlife disturbance and no crops to cultivate. In

contrast, one informant opined that the organizers did not understand the background of the indigenous people. The following is an interview with a representative of Tok Batin regarding the failure of PPE. *"…. Each house was given 3 acres of land but could not do anything because of the elephant attack. So, plant a rubber tree today. Tomorrow I'll pull it out on the elephant….."* (Informant R5). Furthermore, interviews' results with indigenous people representatives also stated the cause of the same failure. *"…. If the Economic Development Programme is like a rubber plantation, it will not succeed in this village because of the interference of pigs and elephants……"* (Informant R11). The problem of wildlife disturbance not solving until today is the cause of the indigenous people in RPS Air Banun having no crops to cultivate. Below are the results of interviews with JAKOA representatives and indigenous people representatives on this issue. *"….The programme failed because we had no crops. What kind of thing is there if it's fun here to destroy it….."* (Informant R5).

Findings regarding programme failure because they had no crops to cultivate as follows: "….It didn't work as I told you earlier. We don't have plants. I want to do something like that. The villagers are there for suggestions such as installing electric fences and digging holes or ditches, but JAKOA says the cost is expensive. So, we don't have any crops to cultivate…." (Informant R11). The following are the results of interviews with indigenous people representatives regarding the programme's failure due to not understanding their background: "……It didn't work, and we want a garden. We are not satisfied because we do not have a garden. It's hard for us to find food if we don't have a garden. People do not understand the background of the indigenous people……" (Informant R9). Interviews with indigenous people representatives stated that the management involved in indigenous people's community service raised the issue of not understanding the indigenous people's background[37].

Furthermore, for PPEs, the researchers found that the indigenous people could follow the program at RPS because they were grouped in one settlement area and did not have to move as before. Some indigenous people return to their original villages because the houses provided by the government are hot, and it is easier for them to get their livelihood there than in the new settlements provided. In addition, there are many original houses built behind government-provided aid houses. This situation illustrates that their original concept of life has not been completely changed. The researchers found that this community's culture and way of life are still the same, even though they have moved to a new location. Researchers also believe that JAKOA has clearly explained to indigenous people regarding PPEs because most of the respondents understand the purpose of the programme and feel comfortable with the new way of life.

There are three RPS involved in PPE, namely RPS Legap, RPS Ulu Kinta, and RPS Air Banun. However, researchers found that implementing PPE can have failed at the Air Banun RPS due to the threat of wildlife such as elephants and wild boars. This situation resulted in the indigenous people not carrying out rubber planting projects because the wild animals would destroy it. Although various suggestions have been given to overcome this problem, the management could not take any action because the wild elephants are very aggressive and capable of injuring the villagers. However, unlike the situation in RPS Ulu Kinta and RPS Legap, the indigenous people here enjoy crop project results by receiving monthly dividends. The PPE is successful in helping to improve the economy of the indigenous people and can change the way of life and increase purchasing power among the indigenous people, such as owning vehicles such as cars and motorcycles.

Meanwhile, through the implementation of PPS, the indigenous people are equipped with basic facilities such as schools, roads, and clinics. They are also given various courses to help them develop and change their lives. However, not all indigenous people are involved in the courses organized by JAKOA. The same

individual attends most courses. However, most of the indigenous people in RPS understand the purpose of organising this course. Findings show that some indigenous people showed determination to change their lives and get out of poverty, especially extreme poverty. However, these groups were few because there were still many who expected help from the government. Some were dissatisfied with the help provided. These groups also hope the government will continue assisting the indigenous people in surviving. The effectiveness of indigenous people programs is identified when communities can determine their own will. Programmes are also effective when there is involvement and cooperation from people involved.

5. Conclusion

The government strives to help the indigenous people out of poverty, especially hardcore poverty, and enable these communities to receive their development, which would improve the achievement of Goal 1. This assistance is channeled through socio-economic development programmes, which include the Structured Placement Programme (PPT), Economic Development Programme (PPE), and Social Development Programme (PPS) in Perak. Findings reveal that the total monthly income earned by indigenous people in RPS Air Banun, RPS Legap, and RPS Ulu Kinta is below the poverty line. It is because some of these communities in RPS Legap and RPS Air Banun have less than RM200 per month and these programmes will improve the achievement of Goal 1. The conclusion of the effective economic development programmes differs between RPS; every RPS has different results for indigenous people. As part of this study's implications, findings offer a comprehensive approach to enhancing socio-economic development programmes, which include the Structured Placement Programme (PPT), Economic Development Programme (PPE), and Social Development Programme (PPS) in Perak, Malaysia, and, by extension, improving the achievement of SDGs 1 (end poverty) and 2 (eliminate hunger). Firstly, in response to bringing the indigenous people out of poverty, policymakers are encouraged to prioritize programme that will assist the indigenous people in surviving. Secondly, programmes and policies should be tailored toward reducing poverty through collaboration among the stakeholders.

Author contributions

Conceptualisation, R.A.R and M.S.S.; methodology, RA.R., M.A.H., M.S.S., and A.E.; software, R.A.R, M.A.H, M.S.S., and A.E.; validation, R.A.R. and A.E.,; formal analysis, R.A.R, M.A.H., M.S.S. and A.E.; investigation, R.A..R. and A.E.; resources, R.A.R, M.A.H., M. S.S. and A.E.,; data curation, R.A.R, and A.E..; writing—original draft preparation, R.A.R, M.S.S and A.E.; writing—review and editing, R.A.R. and A.E.,; visualization, R.A.R and A.E.,; supervision, M.A.H, M.S.S, and A.E.; project administration, R.A.R and A.E.,; funding acquisition, RAR, M.S.S, and A.E... All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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