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SCHOOL DROPOUTS: A CASE STUDY OF THIRTY  
ORANG ASLI CHILDREN OF KAMPUNG SUNGAI  
RASAU HILIR, PUCHONG, SELANGOR

BY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Human  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to find out the factors associated with school dropouts among the students of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir, Malaysia. Dropouts are generally associated with many factors which differ from one place to another. Students may leave school because of personality, societal and economic problems. This study is significant because it shed some light on the immediate and remote causes of school dropouts among the children of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir. By investigating the problems associated with school dropouts in Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir recommendations can be made to overcome the problem. In the case of the Orang Asli many of them left schools because parents failed to support them financially. Other major factors that led children to leave school are laziness and lack of enthusiasm; they prefer learning skills in handicrafts and mechanics than formal learning. It was also found that many of the Orang Asli students failed in their final examination because they did not understand major subjects (i.e. subjects taught in English and Malay languages), while others wanted to work to support their parents. Divorce of parents is also another factor contributing to school dropouts. Many students of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir left school because their parents abandoned them while their mothers could not control them. Besides that the youths are not dedicated to their study because parents who should encourage them are not aware of the importance of education. Parents are found unconcerned about these issues due to their level of illiteracy.

## ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة العوامل المرتبطة الفاقد (التسرب) التربوي بين طلبة كامبونج سونجاي راسو هيلير ( ماليزيا). يرتبط التسرب المدرسي عموماً بالعديد من العوامل التي تختلف من مكان إلى آخر؛ فقد يرجع التسرب المدرسي الى مشاكل شخصية، اجتماعية أو اقتصادية. تكمن أهمية هذا البحث في معرفة الأسباب المباشرة و غير المباشرة في تسرب هؤلاء الطلاب من المدارس و تحليل المشكلات المرتبطة بهذا التسرب وكيفية علاجها. أوضحت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن عوامل التسرب المدرسي بين الأورانغ أصلي (سكان ماليزيا الأصليين) تتمثل في عجز الوالدين عن دعم أبنائهم مالياً. كما كان للكسل وعدم الحماس بين الطلبة الدور الرئيسي في تركهم المدرسة مفضلين تعلم بعض المهارات، مثل الحرف اليدوية ، والميكانيكا، على التعليم الرسمي . واتضح أيضاً أن العديد من هؤلاء الطلاب فشلوا في الامتحان النهائي لأنهم لم يفهموا المواضيع الرئيسة (أي المواد التي تلقى باللغتين الانكليزية و الملايوية) ، في حين أن آخرين يرغبون في العمل لدعم والديهم مادياً. ووجد أن الطلاق من العوامل الأخرى التي تسهم في التسرب المدرسي. فقد ترك هؤلاء الطلبة المدرسة لأن آباءهم تخلوا عنهم ولم تتمكن الأمهات بالإعتناء بهم. إلى جانب ذلك، فإن الطلبة وجدوا أنهم غير مهتمين بدراساتهم لأن أوليائهم غير مدركين لأهمية التعليم. كما وجد أن الآباء غير مهتمين بهذه القضية لإرتفاع مستوى الأمية لديهم.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Sociology and Anthropology).

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Mohamed Aris Othman  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Sociology and Anthropology).

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Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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**SCHOOL DROPOUTS: A CASE STUDY OF THIRTY ORANG  
ASLI CHILDREN OF KAMPUNG SUNGAI RASAU  
HILIR, PUCHONG, SELANGOR**

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*I humbly dedicate this thesis to*

*My father Moussa Ahmed,  
your invaluable guidance and lessons will lead my life forever  
May Allah (SWT) bless and reward you with His Firdaus*

*My wonderful Umi, Naiima,  
Who has always been there with sincere love, affection and compassion in my entire  
life*

*My beloved wife, Aichat  
Your support and delicate love have been sources of endless inspirations*

*My brothers,  
Ahmed, Abdallah, Mohamed, Mahmoud, Youssouf,*

*My beloved 'uncle'  
Hassan Ahmed*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this research is to find out the causes of dropouts among Orang Asli children. The research is based on a sample of thirty students in Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir. Many of them go to school but do not complete their school education. This may be due to laziness, divorce of parents, and lack of interest in education. Economic factors and the lack of interest in interacting with the other ethnic groups may be the other factors that lead them to drop out from school. They prefer studying in a school situated in their own community. Economic factors can also be the cause of dropouts. Their parents are poor, they prefer working than schooling. School dropouts<sup>1</sup> are related to poor students who lack financial assistance or children from broken families, who have lost their balance due to the death or separation of the parents.<sup>2</sup>

It is generally observed that school dropouts among Orang Asli are due to economic factors. At present, books and other materials have to be provided by parents. Parents do not have enough resources to meet these requirements. Financial assistance for the children, if any, normally comes very late. Apart from this, the *Imam* of the *Surau* (small prayer house) observed that dropping out of school is still common among the children of Orang Asli and one of the reasons is that the authorities do not take interest in improving the conditions of the Orang Asli community. Many of the youth left school because they prefer working or learning the

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<sup>1</sup> A school dropout is a person whose schooling interrupted without completing or having any intention to continue.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond Mélanie, *High School Dropouts Returning to School*. (Ottawa: Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics, 2001), 12.

skills that help them to earn their livelihood. Some are interested in studying probably because they are brilliant while others are not interested, simply because they have difficulties in understanding, or because it is easier for them to learn other skills. More opportunities for vocational education should be available to reduce problems of dropouts.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the immediate and remote causes of school dropouts among the children of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir?
2. What are the problems associated with school dropouts?
3. What should be done to curb the problem?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the immediate and remote causes of school dropouts among the children of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hiler.
2. To investigate the problems associated with school dropouts in Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir.
3. To suggest how the problem can be overcome.

## **1.4 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

This part will present the location of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir, nature of population, facilities provided, and views on Orang Asli's education in Malaysia. Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir is situated in Puchong, a part of the district of Petaling

Selangor of Malaysia. It was established in 1900.<sup>3</sup> It used to be a rubber estate and a tin mining town forty years ago. After a rapid industrialization it has become a residential and commercial center. It is about 29 km from Kuala Lumpur.<sup>4</sup>

Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir is a small village of 80 hectares located between Saujana and Bandar Bukit Puchong 1 with a population of 334 people of which about thirty (30) of them are Muslims and the rest are non Muslims. It has about 200 houses. Thirty (30) of these houses are made of brick, and 170 of wood. Due to the scarcity of the basic needs in the *kampung*, villagers depend more on their neighboring *kampung* for schooling, shopping, internet café and other facilities which the village lacks. *Batu 14* is an area situated in Puchong where Orang Asli youth of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hulu and Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir go for schooling. It is about 1 km from Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir

In this *kampung*, there are different schools. For instance, one may find Islamic, Chinese and Malay schools. Those who have finished their elementary education from Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir may continue their studies in *Batu 14*. They may get education from primary level til secondary level without paying school fees. Besides these, there are *Pasar Malam* (Night markets) and some boutiques to meet some of their necessities. Saujana Puchong is a new area located between Kampung Sungai Rasau Hulu and Sungai Rasau Hilir. In this area, there are some mini markets, a bus station, a branch of Petronas, and some restaurants.

Kampung Sungai Rasau Hulu is another settlement of the *Temuan* tribe which is situated close to Saujana Puchong. Behind it is University Malaya (UM) which is about 1 km from Saujana. Saujana is on the left side of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir. It has very limited facilities; 2 elementary schools, 3 school buses, 1 stadium, 3 shops,

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<sup>3</sup> See "Puchong" < <http://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puchong> > ( accessed March 23, 2009).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

and one *Surau*. There are no hospitals, education centers, or any clinic in the area. The government, perhaps, does not consider it necessary to provide these social amenities because they are available in the neighbouring *kampung* and town.

## 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Albert Cohen (1950) found that school dropouts are obviously related to the young people of working class. It has been assumed that their failure and poor academic performance are related to the poor position of the family (low income, lack of verbal skill and parental education).<sup>5</sup> Others highlighted that the failure of working class students is due to working part time during their study in order to support themselves and their families.<sup>6</sup>

Lee and Burkam (1992) observed that changing school can be one of the factors of leaving school. The continuity or the interruption of the study is conditioned by family or school's status. Students are more likely to drop out of school because of lack of parental financial assistance for the family with many children. Moreover, students can leave school due to large population of the students.<sup>7</sup>

Rumber (1995) and his team found that dropping out of school (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades and middle school) is associated with demographic factors, school structure and the school environment. Students merely leave school because of workload of take home assignments, the large population of the students compared to the number of teachers, poor administration, and the absence of economic support.

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<sup>5</sup> Larry J. Siegl, Brandon C. Welsh, & Joseph J. Senna, *Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law*, (Canada: Thompson Wadsworth, 2003), 273.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Valerie E. Lee, David T. Burkam, "Dropping Out of High School: The Role of School Organization and Structure", *Harvard Graduate School of Education*, January 13, 2001, 7. <[http://www.inpathways.net/dropping\\_out.pdf](http://www.inpathways.net/dropping_out.pdf)>.

Teachman, Paasch, & Carver (1996) stressed that family is responsible for the problem of dropping out of school among the young children.<sup>8</sup>

Farmer and Payne (1992) reported that dropping out of school occur in a family in which there is a misunderstanding among its members (parents and children), and lack of the importance of the school to the child.

Generally, dropping out of school is related to children with single parents, poverty and the inability to assist the child. Another study revealed that the interruption of the study is mostly associated with children whose parents did not receive higher education. In other words, educated parents play a vital role to the continuity or stopping of the child's education (Goldschmidt, 1997).<sup>9</sup>

Caterall (1998) conducted researches on the causes leading students to leave school. He found that half of the students left school due to teacher lack of proper care towards the students. The same result was also found by Fine (1986), Lee, Ready, & Ross, (1999) and MacLeod (1987). According to them, students are more likely to abandon school if there is bad relationship between the teacher and students, specifically if the teacher is not cooperative or does not pay attention to what the students do.<sup>10</sup> According to Carneval (1998) dropping out of school is viewed as the result of negative personal, social, and economic consequences.

Patterson et. al. (1989) found in their investigation that the youth's deviance is related to parental and social factors. Children's academic failure is associated with

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>9</sup> William E. Davis, Roxanne M. Lee, "Reducing the Dropout Rate for All Maine Students with a Particular Emphasis Upon Students with Disabilities Who Drop Out of School", *Institute for the Study of Students At Risk College of Education and Human Development The University of Maine*, January 24, 2003. <<http://www.umaine.edu/issar/reducingdropoutrate/preintroduction.pdf>>.

<sup>10</sup> Valerie E. Lee, David T. Burkam, 4.

poor parental discipline.<sup>11</sup> The tendency of leaving school is associated with lack of time or lack of parents' ability to control their children.

A study showed that 82 percent of American prisoners are youth of high school with one single parent; they drop out of school after committing diverse crimes and getting jailed.<sup>12</sup>

Education also plays a vital role in society. It is the way to acquire moral and ethical elevation in one's personality. When one is deprived of it or failed to achieve it, it can lead to dissatisfaction in social life.<sup>13</sup> A study shows that students are likely to drop out of school because they have the tendency to feel alienated if the school provides an irrelevant curriculum which can not motivate students.<sup>14</sup> Kakar et al. (2000) in their analysis of factors that promote female involvement in delinquency found that there is a relationship between chaotic family environment and academic failure. Most delinquent girls who misbehaved had a miserable life, were poor and maltreated during their childhood. At the end, they dropped out of school.<sup>15</sup> Keilitz and Dunivant (1986) carried out a research on the causes that can influence young people to drop out of school. They found that an average of 81 students dropped out of school due to learning disability.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Quinsey Veronica L, Skilling Tracey, A. La Lumiere Martin L, and Craig Wendy M, " Juvenile delinquency, Understanding the Origins of individual Differences" *American Psychological Association*, January, 2004, 129. <<http://psychservices.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/56/1/115>>.

<sup>12</sup> Schargel, F.P, Smink, "Dropout Prevention", *U.S. Department of Justice*, 1998. <[www.ihdi.uky.edu/dropout-prevention/viewarticle.as](http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/dropout-prevention/viewarticle.as)>.

<sup>13</sup> Singer, Simon, Jou, Susyan, *Specifying the SES/ Delinquency Relationship by Subjective and Objective Indicators of Parental at Annual Meeting of American Society of Criminology*, (New Orland: Routledge, 1992), 18

<sup>14</sup> Larry J. Siegl, Brandon C. Welsh, Joseph J. Senna, *Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law*, (Canada: Thompson Wadsworth, 2003), 275.

<sup>15</sup> Barbar Sims and Preston Pamela, *Handbook of Juvenile Justice Theory and Practice*, (United states: CRC Tailor and Francis Group, 2006), 100.

<sup>16</sup> Deyanira Zamora, "Levels of Academic Achievement and Further Delinquency among Detained Youth", *Southeast West Journal of Criminal*, vol. 2 (1), 2005, 53 <<http://www.utsa.edu/swjcf/archives/2.1/Zamora.pdf>>.

Several studies about Orang Asli and the issue of schooling have been conducted by local as well as foreign scholars. Statistical data relating to Orang Asli's education in Malaysia from 1994-2008 show some improvement. In 1994, the number of Orang Asli students registered in primary school in Malaysia was 13,200, and by 2003 the number had increased to 23,807.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise in secondary schools, in 1994 the total number of registered Orang Asli students was 2,694 and by 2004 their number had risen to 6,675. Despite this, school dropouts remain the primary concern for administration because it adversely affects development of Orang Asli's education. JABATAN HAL EHWAL Orang Asli (JHEOA) stated that for every 100 students who entered primary 1, only 6 of them might reach level 5 and the rest (94%) would dropout. School dropouts among the Orang Asli students occur considerably from Primary 6 to Form 1. In 2003, out of 3,333 Orang Asli schoolchildren who completed Standard 6, only 1,869 of them reached Form 1 and the rest 1,464 (43.9 percent) dropped out after primary school.<sup>18</sup>

In Pahang alone as reported in The Star newspaper, from 2000 to 2004, 2,304 of 5,168 Orang Asli students who entered Primary school did not reach Form 1. The State Health, Social Welfare and Orang Asli Affairs committee chairman Dato' Ishak Mahmud stressed that school dropouts among the young Orang Asli are due to laziness, boredom, and harshness of teachers in dealing with the students.<sup>19</sup> Besides, their parents are poor. Students wanted to help their families; working and studying sometimes can affect one's study because there is very minimal time to study. At the

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<sup>17</sup> Colin Nicolas, "The State of Orang Asli Education and its Root Problems", *Human Right Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam)*, July 2006, 2.  
<<http://www.coac.org.my/codenavia/portals/coacv2/images/articles/OA%20Education.pdf>>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 1.

end, they prefer to leave school. For this reason, Dato' Ishak emphasized that all related parties should<sup>20</sup> come together to help the young Orang Asli and their families.

School dropouts among the Orang Asli youth are related to various factors. Some of them can be related to the children themselves. According to Khor (1985)<sup>21</sup>, economic factors, high rate of failure, lack of educational assistance, cultural factors and absenteeism are related factors that contributed to drop out. The failure to provide financial assistance is another factor. They choose to work in order to help their parents. A study showed that without taking into account other basic needs to be met, parents should have at least an amount of RM100, 00 or RM 150, 00 for every child at the beginning of school. This amount is too much for poor parents.<sup>22</sup>

The inability of the young Orang Asli to perform well in their studies compared to other children from other ethnic groups like the Malays, Chinese and Indian could also be another reason that leads them to leave school. According to a 1998 report out of 2000 candidates who sat for the public examination, only 13% qualified to enter Primary 6 and 28% out of 580 students passed Secondary 3 examination in the same year.<sup>23</sup>

Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli (JHEOA, 2006) found that many of the young Orang Asli failed at the secondary level because they do not have an adequate basic knowledge in writing and reading from primary school. In their primary school

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Geok Link khor and Zaliha Mohd Shariff, "The Ecology of Health and Nutrition of "Orang Asli" (Indigenous People) Women and Children in Peninsular Malaysia", *Health and Nutritional Problems of Indigenous Populations*, 2008, 67-77. <<http://www.krepublishers.com/06-Special%20Volume-Journal/S-T%20&%20T-00-Special%20Volumes/T%20&%20T-SV-02-Hlth-Nut-Problems-Web/T%20&%20T-SV-02-067-08-08-Khor-Geok-Lin/T%20&%20T-SV-02-067-08-08-Khor-Geok-Lin-Tt.pdf>>.

<sup>22</sup> Colin Nicolas, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Geok Link khor and Zaliha Mohd Shariff, 70.

evaluation in 2005, only 55% of the Orang Asli children passed Bahasa Melayu, 21% passed English language, Mathematics 32% and Science 37%.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the lack of interest in schooling for the young Orang Asli, there are also other factors responsible for dropping out of school such as transportation, delay of text book delivery, school uniform, lack of understanding of Orang Asli's culture and absence of parents in the student's school committee.<sup>25</sup>

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, Suhakam (2006) reported that many students who are living in the remote villages frequently miss school and some have left because of lack of transportation. Some parents also complained that their children who were studying in town were not provided hostel facilities although they were intelligent and could pursue their studies further.<sup>26</sup> Apart from this, lack of understanding Orang Asli's culture by the teachers is another obstacle that makes the young children worry and escape from school.

Dato' Ishak Ismail reported that many of the young Orang Asli were not interested in their study because teachers were strict, and they used to "beat and to scold them". This is uncommon in the Orang Asli's culture.<sup>27</sup> To avoid a misunderstanding, if teachers are not from the Orang Asli community, at least they should have a little background knowledge of their culture. Nines (1996) argued that every society has its own culture which should be respected. Saljo (1991) indicates that culture can restrain or compel one to behave in a particular way.<sup>28</sup> Hatano and

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<sup>24</sup> Zuria Mahmud, Salleh Amat, Mohammad yaacob, "Education issues of Orang Asli in Malaysia", *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations*, vol. 8, 2009. 122. <<http://www.diversity-journal.com>>.

<sup>25</sup> Colin Nicolas, 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Gillian M. Boulton-Levis, Frence Marton, David C. Lewis, Lynn A Wilss, "Learning in Formal and Informal Context: Conceptions and Strategies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander University Students", *Learning and Instruction Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 5, October 2000, 393-414. <[http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_udi=B6VFW-40XNWN1->](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VFW-40XNWN1->)

Miyake (1991) stated that culture plays a vital role in formal or informal education.<sup>29</sup> A study shows that knowledge can be effectively spread through understanding of people's cultures (Pintexten, 1991).<sup>30</sup>

In the case of the young Aborigines of Australia, school dropouts, failure and absenteeism were linked to political problems which originated from the socio-cultural conflict between the native Australians and the whites. Earlier, the Aborigines rejected school because it was viewed as a western product which was used to inculcate western values. They were afraid that the spread of those values will enable them to dominate others.<sup>31</sup>

The elders of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir accepted education without any problem. This is because they were told that they will go to learn how to be clean, and to be a good person; they were also taught how to do calculation. Although, they were not taught many things, they welcomed the idea very much. Likewise for their children, although they were lazy and left school before completing, most of them viewed school as the way to success. This is because when one is educated, finding job will be easy and the salary will also be good. Otherwise they would lead a miserable life like their parents if they are not educated.

Christie (1980, 1982, 1983) showed that among the factors causing their failure in school one is Aborigine's culture that considers school as "a kind of ritual or ceremony in which every one plays a set role and where personal achievement or effort" is insignificant.<sup>32</sup> Another factor related to their failure in school as stated by

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Radolf folds Kintore, "A Socio-Cultural Approach to the Bilingual Curriculum in Central Australian Schools", *The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*, 1989, 38. <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/1179465>>

<sup>32</sup> Gillian M. Boulton-Levis, Frence Marton, David C. Lewis, Lynn A Wilss, 396-397.

Haris and his co-author (1985) is that the young Aborigines lead independent life and parents give the young aborigines much freedom.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast, the objective of schooling for the current generation is to get skills needed to develop their own community. They want to live independent lives instead of depending on the Europeans for the administration of their community.<sup>34</sup> Generally, most factors influencing the young Aborigines in Australia to leave school differ from the causes of school dropouts of the Orang Asli in Malaysia. For instance, none of the youth of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir left school because of political problem, lack of interest in Malay culture, or because schooling is less significant. Most of the Orang Asli children left school because of economic and socio cultural factors. Their lack of interest in school is because they want to learn a skill.

Freedom is one of the causes of their failure because they believe that school is complicated and requires long duration of time which makes them feel burdened and hard to respond. Other remarkable objectives for the young Aborigine in Australia that cannot be found among Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir community is that many of them are interested in schools because they want to learn skills to enable them develop their own community. In Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir, those who are still schooling do not have these kind of ideas. Their parents also do not have such ideas. They are not well organized. They do not have a clear vision about how to improve themselves.

In Australia, the cultural conflict between the Whites and the Blacks were actually due to the Whites inhuman treatment towards the Aborigines for centuries. Many of the Aborigines were forced to leave their settlement without any reason.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Radolf Folds, "The Social Relationship of Tribal Aboriginal Schooling in Australia", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 8, no. 4. 1987, 1 <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/1392700>>

They opened fire on them and their dogs.<sup>35</sup> This bad memory could be one of the reasons why they do not want to mix their culture with that of the Whites in schools. Parents wanted the use of the Aborigines' language in school as a medium of instruction or at least both languages (English and Aborigines) instead of English only.

The 1953 UNESCO conference on "The use of Vernacular Language in Education" reported that communicating with students in their local language is the best way of teaching.<sup>36</sup> For a good arrangement, and to solve the problem of the indigenous, the education system has included aborigines' culture in the curriculum. But yet aborigines' culture is still not welcomed. Bourke, Burden and Moore (1996) indicated that the university system in Australia does not value Aborigines' culture considerably.<sup>37</sup>

Among the indigenous people of Malaysia, particularly those of Sungai Rasu Hilir such a concept did not exist. Residents did not refuse to interact with the other Malays because they are discriminated or excluded from their lands. What the researcher observed was that parents do not want their children to interact with others for fear of such problems, as drug abuse, stealing and prostitution. In school, however, some of the young Orang Asli claimed that they left school because their colleagues disturb them or they just want to stay with their own community.

The researcher observed that this was normal for children specifically in a country of diverse multiracial culture. But at the higher level, the Orang Asli communities are much respected. Since the emergency, the government pays much attention to them. For instance, their education and sanitation; none is allowed to take

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<sup>35</sup> Radolf Folds Kintore (1989), 38.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>37</sup> Gillian M Boulton-Levis, Frence Marton, David C. Lewis, Lynn A Wilss, 396-397.

over their property. A land that belongs to Orang Asli cannot be sold or taken without their permission. This is even when the government wanted to build the *Taman Indah* shopping mall in an area which was a part of Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir land. They first sought permission from the residents of the *kampung* and after the agreement, the people were compensated for the land.<sup>38</sup>

In terms of language, the Orang Asli's language cannot be taught in Malaysian schools as is the case of the Aborigines in Australia because they do not speak one and the same language. Different tribes have different languages. Another reason is that the government wants that they interact and strengthen their relation with the Malays in order to develop the Orang Asli community. Fishman (1971), Ogbu (1982), and Cummins (1986) observed that in Australia a strong relationship between the majority and the minority groups can reduce the failure rate of the minority groups in school.<sup>39</sup>

It was argued that paying much attention or giving a higher priority to the minorities is the way to solve the problem of cultural conflict.<sup>40</sup> Despite the rejection of the White culture in schools, a study showed that the young Aborigines were skilful in the informal learning (Klich, Haris, and Davidson, 1984; Christie, 1985)<sup>41</sup>. In Kampung Sungai Rasau Hilir, despite the fact that the youth are not interested in school, the researcher found that some of them are skillful in informal learning. They prefer apprenticeship to schooling so that they can save time and gain money to help their parents.

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<sup>38</sup> Muhamed Mustafa (one of the elder residents of Sungai Rasu Hilir), Interview by Author, Sungai Rasau, August 15, 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Radolf Folds Kintore (1989), 34.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Gillian M. Boulton-Levis, Frence Marton, David C. Lewis, Lynn A Wilss, 396-397.

## 1.6 METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used three types of data collection methods. They are questionnaire, interview and observation. This research employs ethnographic method which utilizes the in-depth interview and participant observation as means to obtain meaningful data. By using these techniques, the researcher conducted fieldwork in the kampung and stayed in the community for three months.

The sampling consists of students of primary and secondary schools. A sample population of thirty (30) students was randomly selected as the main respondents of the study. These students were aged between eleven(11) and nineteen(19) years old. Twenty one (21) were males while nine ( 9) were females. The years of study are divided into two periods that is between 2001 to 2004 and 2005 to 2008. In the primary level, the total number of school dropouts was seventeen (17), and in the secondary level the number of school dropouts were thirteen (13). Apart from students, the researcher also interviewed parents and other villagers of the *kampung*. Other than the in-depth interviews and participant observation, the researcher also conducted library reseach by collecting published and non-published materials which were relevant to the area and scope of the study.

The researcher, in the course of observation and his interaction with villagers, actively participated in two major events namely; weekly Qur'an teaching in the *surau* and pre-Ramadan activities in which people came together and brief sermons were delivered. The occasion was also to present gifts to outstanding students in their studies. At the end of the day, food and drinking were served. Every one was happy with the program.

The researcher observed that the villagers came out in large numbers; old and young, male and female to grace the occasion and fully participated in making it a