Applying territorial approach to rural agribusiness development in Malaysia’s aboriginal (Orang Asli) settlements: A comparative study of Pos Balar, Kelantan and Pos Sinderut, Pahang

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Abstract

Multiple factors may contribute to poverty among Orang Asli, namely, traditional, consumption oriented ways of crop cultivation which depend largely on family labour, inconsistent returns of cash cropping, the presence of middle traders which prevent their direct access to market, lack of transportation network and information, lack of access to basic infrastructure, low education, insufficient skills and limited opportunities to change. The Territorial Approach to Rural Agribusiness Development (TARBD) envisages eight stages of meeting the twin goal of food security and poverty reduction, viz. 1) planning and initiation by building strategic partnership 2) mobilization through participatory diagnosis and community visioning, 3) formation of participatory market research, 4) participation programmes, 5) evaluation of enterprise options, 6) design and implementation of agro-enterprise projects, 7) support services for enterprise development, and 8) strengthening of local institutions. This study compared the situations in two Orang Asli settlements - Pos Balar in Kelantan and Pos Sinderut in Pahang - with respect to the TARBD’s eight stages. The findings revealed some real limitations with the TARBD approach and pointed to the need to adapt it to actual local conditions and contexts of the Orang Asli settlements.

Keywords: agribusiness, food security, Orang Asli, poverty reduction, rural development, Territorial Approach to Rural Agribusiness Development (TARBD)