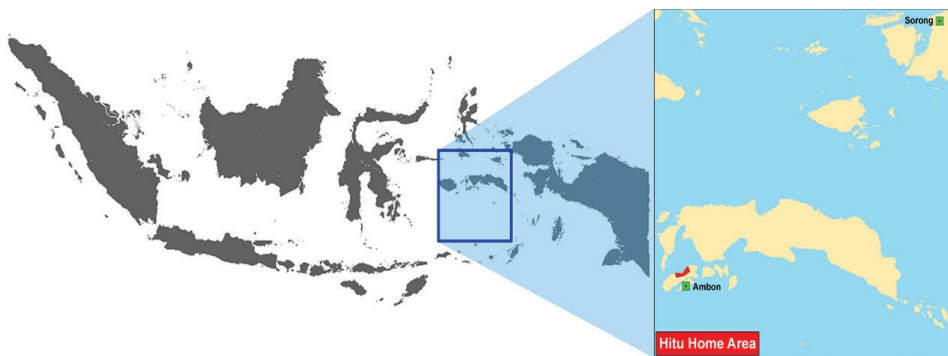


HITU



Demography	Hitu Language	Status
Location: Maluku Population: 17.500 Major religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: 0 Engaged: No Indigenous church: 0

Identity and Location

The Hitu people live in five villages along the north coast of Ambon Island: Wakal, Hila, Hitu, Mamala and Morela. These villages are in Lehitu District, Central Maluku Regency in the province of Maluku. In 1999 North Maluku province was divided from Maluku Province.

In the past, the Hitu area formed the commercial and trade centre of Ambon Island. Hitu can be reached by land or sea. Public transport is available several times a day between the five Hitu villages and the city of Ambon.

The only historical record of the Hitu people is found in their stories, which say they originally lived at the edge of the jungle. Recent developments caused them to begin moving out of the jungle and set up houses by the beach.

The Hitu people use the Hitu language, consisting of various dialects. The Hitu language is part of a larger linguistic grouping called the Seram Straits which also includes the Laha, Tulehu, Paulohi, Amahai, Elpaputih, Nusa Laut, Watu, Saparua and Kamarian languages.

Society and Culture

The Hitu cultivate cloves, nutmeg, sago palm, coconut and various other spices. Their land, although fertile, remains underutilized. Most of their land is governed by tribal law, and is regarded as tribal land. Most Hitu live near the sea in beach-side houses, but some live along the road leading to the city of Ambon.

Many Hitu combine farming and fishing as a source of income

The Hitu area has ample sources of fresh water, flowing

from fissures in limestone rocks. These water sources form rivers and cross the main roads. Many Hitu combine farming and fishing as a source of income. In addition to the main crops are cassava, taro, cloves, nutmeg and coconut. They also cultivate fruits such as bananas, guava, durian and soursop. Sago grows well without even being cultivated. Some Hitu work as teachers or other government employees. Many Hitu women work as fish sellers (jibu-jibu).

Beliefs

Hitu is the historical entry-point of Islam into the Maluku Islands. For this reason, nearly all the Hitu people are Muslim. They believe that later they will be judged on both their knowledge of the Qu'ran and their good works. Like most Muslim people in the Maluku region the Hitu are strongly influenced by traditional animistic beliefs.

Needs

Not all Hitu receive formal education. Even where schools exist, many finish only elementary school. In the whole Hitu area there is only one agricultural school, one government Islamic school and the private Islamic boarding school, Madrasah Tsanawiyah. Apart from needing formal education, the Hitu also need further education about health and public sanitation.

The Hitu people need good leadership and direction to develop their physical health and their agricultural potential. Appropriate small-scale technology could also help them become a more productive society. They have very few chances to improve their job skills. Lack of electricity and dependable clean water supply also hinder development of Hitu society.