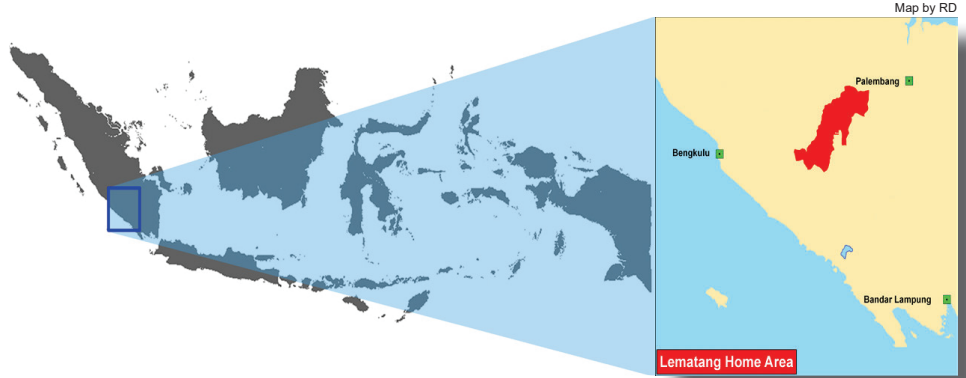


LEMATANG



Photo by RD



Demography	Lematang Language	Status
Location: South Sumatera	Bible: No	Believers: <5 ⁽²⁹²⁰⁾
Population: 300.000	Jesus Film: No	Engaged: Yes
Major Religion: Islam	Online Media: No	Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Lematang people (also call the Penukal) mostly live along the banks of the Lematang River and the surrounding area, stretching from Lahat Regency to Muara Enim Regency. In the Lahat Regency, they live in the districts of Pinang Island, Lahat, and Merapi. In the Muara Enim Regency, they live in the districts of Muara Enim, Gunung Megang, and Tebat Agung.

Society and Cultures

The Lematang people's area is about 25-100 meters above sea level. The Lematang dialect is similar to the Enim dialect. Frequent mixing of the two people groups may cause this similarity, or it may be that the two groups have common ancestors and their dialects diverged due to geographical separation. The Enim people live along the Enim River, which flows into the Lematang River, while the Lematang people live along the Lematang River. In the city of Muara Enim, where the Enim River and the Lematang River meet, it is very difficult to distinguish between the Lematang and the Enim. There, the two groups have largely assimilated. A person living in Muara Enim could be considered both Enim and Lematang. Unlike the Sunda and Jawa languages, the Lematang language does not have different levels of speech with different vocabulary connoting levels of social distance. However, there are still different ways of speaking the Lematang dialect to show familiarity or politeness. Older people usually use the more polite way of talking to one another. Children also use the polite way of speaking when addressing older people. But older people will use the more familiar way of speaking when addressing children. Younger people address one another using familiar speech. Thus, one's manner of speaking, whether familiar or polite, is a measure of the level of respect that one gives to the person with whom he or she is speaking.

Cultivation of rubber trees is the primary livelihood for the Lematang people. For the Lematang who live near

the river, wet rice cultivation is another way to make a living. One interesting characteristic of the Lematang is that they are usually more diligent in work when they live outside of their own area, for example, in the Lembak area. Lematang people who live outside their own area might sell cassava leaves, fruit, and do other small jobs to generate a small income. These livelihoods are outside of what Lematang people would do in their own area.

The Lematang consider their area to be safe. This is rare in South Sumatra, which is mostly considered an unsafe area. This is also different from the neighboring group, the Kikim, who consider their area unsafe (and others around the area say the same of the Kikim area). However in the city of Lahat, Kikim and Lematang people live next to each other. The relationship between the Lematang and outsiders is fairly amicable, as long as others are not arrogant. The same is true of marriage between the Lematang and outsiders. The Lematang have an expression: "Do not marry an arrogant person." Arrogance is largely measured by the way a person relates to others.

Beliefs

Lematang people are followers of Islam. Animistic beliefs are still held by the Lematang as well. Almost every year someone drowns in the Lematang or Muara Enim Rivers and is found a few days later. The Lematang believe that these drownings are caused by a spiritual being which takes the form of a white crocodile and lives in the river.

Needs

Tourism could be developed as an industry along the Lematang River, which is a beautiful area, especially in the upper parts of the river between Pagar Alam and Lahat. This is one way the economic level of the Lematang community could be raised.^(E-RD)