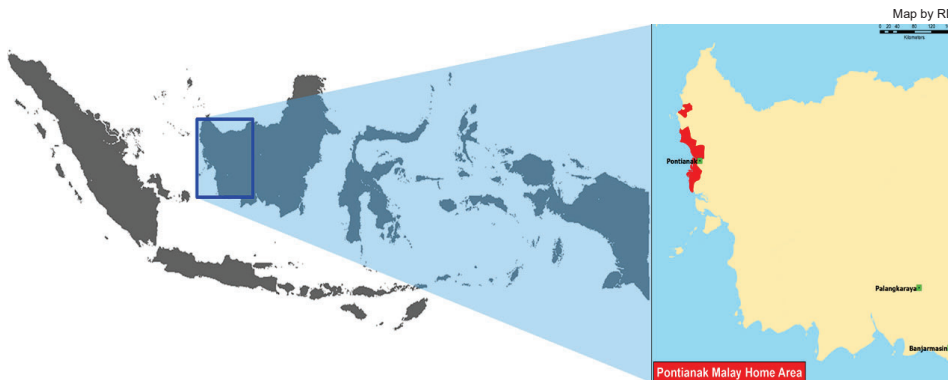


PONTIANAK MALAY



RDC



Demography	Pontianak Language	Status
Location: West Kalimantan Population: 310.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: <50 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Pontianak Malay live within a few districts in the regency of Pontianak in West Kalimantan Province. These districts include Tapok Pakedai, Sungai Kakap, Sungai Pinyuh, Siantan, Mempawah Hilir, Sungai Kunyit, and Tujuh Belas. In these areas they live together with local Chinese and Madurese. In a few other areas they live among the Sambas Malay as well.

Though they speak Malay, their dialect cannot always be understood by other Malay ethnicities even though all the dialects are called Malay.

Society and Culture

The Pontianak Malay are agrarian people, who depend heavily on crops and fish, both freshwater and marine. Their agricultural produce includes rice, coconut, and rubber. Some people also work as government employees and traders. According to legend, this area is inhabited by a female ghost of a woman who died in childbirth (pontianak), which later became the name of the city. On October 23rd 1771, the city became the center of the Malay Kingdom of Pontianak, founded under the reign of Sultan Sharif Abdurachman Alkadrie.

Their system of kinship is bilateral (lineage through both father and mother). After marriage, newlywed couples live in the home of the wife's parents until the birth of their first child. Then they move into their own home. They call their settlements a kampung. In general their homes are on stilts about two meters high to avoid disturbance from wild animals.

Customary men's clothing consists of a traditional loose long sleeve shirt with loose pants called a slawar. This is

worn with a silk woven fabric wrapped around the waist that reaches down to the knees along with a cap called a kopiah. Women traditionally wear a long intricately woven brightly colored blouse called a kebaya with a silk dress decorated with embroidered gold thread.

The Pontianak Malay live in a swamp area only 0-100 meters above sea level. Due to the swampy land, there is great difficulty in finding clean water. Pontianak is a fairly advanced area, but according to some, Pontianak is very slow in developing because there are few roads to connect it to other areas of West Kalimantan. So the people of West Kalimantan do not rely on Pontianak as the center of economic life. Even some outer areas of West Kalimantan tend to have a better economy even though Pontianak has better infrastructure.

Beliefs

The Pontianak Malay are devout Muslims. Their art and culture is heavily influenced by Islamic culture. Nevertheless, they still believe in superstitions and animism. This is seen primarily in rituals that blend Islamic culture with animist elements such as birth, marriage, funerals, working the fields, setting up new homes and so on. Shamans are still very influential in their systems of healing and medication and often give advice for such things as wedding plans, planting the fields or choosing a child's name.

Needs

The needs of the Pontianak Malay are in many ways directly related to their villages being so inaccessible. This is what often causes them as a people to lag behind the Malay people in other Southeast Asian countries in terms of education, industry and economic standards.^(RD)