

SAMBAS MALAY



Demography	Sambas Language	Status
Location: West Kalimantan Population: 490.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: <10 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

On the fertile and mountainous island of Borneo, there are three countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, and a small country, Brunei Darussalam. The location of the Sambas people is directly adjacent to Malaysia. The historical background of the Kingdom of Sambas, which was one of the great kingdoms of West Kalimantan, heavily influenced the establishment of the Sambas Malay as a separate ethnic group. Their language is quite different from the Pontianak Malay and the many Dayak ethnicities surrounding them.

The Sambas Malay live along the coast of the province of West Kalimantan in the north, in several districts in Sambas Regency, namely Selakau, Tebas, Sambas, Sejangkung, Keramat Bay, Paloh and Jawai. In their area, the Sambas live together with Dayaks and the native Chinese of West Kalimantan.

Society and Culture

The Sambas Malay are an agrarian people, who depend heavily on crops and fish, both freshwater and marine. Their main agricultural produce includes rice, coconut, and rubber. Some people also work as government employees and traders. Citrus farmers' efforts to restore agribusiness seem to have produced brilliant results and oranges from the Selakau region usually bring a good profit. This is especially so in the month of Ramadan, when the community eagerly awaits the orange harvest.

Much like the Pontianak Malay, the Sambas Malay also live in a swamp area, only about 0-100 meters above sea level. This has also resulted in difficulties in obtaining clean water. The road from Pontianak is improving to the point that one can drive at speeds up to 100 km per hour. However some areas still require caution due to long bumpy stretches of road. The Sambas region has

plans for the future to develop trade between Indonesia and Malaysia. However there has been no infrastructure development to show that movement in this direction any time soon. Two roads connect West Kalimantan with the Sarawak region of Malaysia. Of the two, Entikong is the official border crossing with immigration offices that process entry and exit permits. The other border crossing, in Jagoi, although closer to Sambas, is not yet an official crossing. However local people can enter and exit with strict checks from soldiers of both countries.

Beliefs

The Sambas Malay are devout Sufi Muslims. Syakh Ahmad, the Islamic figure who expanded Islam in Sambas, adopted the practices of the Sunni order of Sufism and combined it with the practices of the Muslim mystic orders. His unique silent technique of dhikr (silent meditative prayers) was able to bring about a perfect balance with the vocal dhikr used by the mystic Islamic congregation. The congregation of the mystic orders voice their dhikr aloud while the Sunni order of Sufism pronounces it in the heart. Thus, the students of this combined order could gain deep spiritual experience in a way that was easier, quicker, and more practical for them.

Needs

The districts of Jawai and Paloh have experienced much mangrove forest damage, resulting in 4-5 kilometers of beach abrasion. The community as well as the government must anticipate increasing damage of this kind. Thus, awareness programs about the importance of mangrove forests and the dangers posed by its destructions must be brought to the community.^(RD)