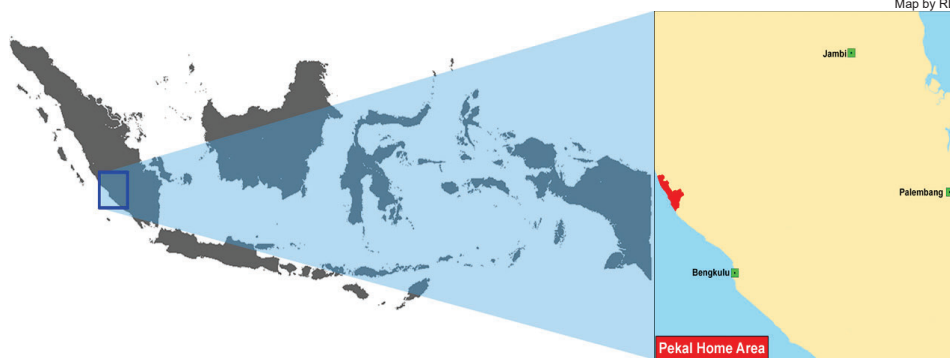


PEKAL



Demography	Pekal Language	Status
Location: Bengkulu Population: 33.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: < 5 ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Pekal people live in Sumatra, along the southwest coast of the Indian Ocean and on the slopes of Bukit Barisan mountains. They live in the south part of Muko-Muko district in Bengkulu Province, especially in the Teramang River valley. Some of the Pekal people are spread throughout the district of Muko-Muko Selatan.

Pekal people are often called Ketahun people because some of them live in the Ketahun area. The western part of the trans-Sumatra highway (which connects Bengkulu to Padang) now passes through the Pekal homeland in the Ipuh area.

The Pekal language (the everyday language of the Pekal) is part of the Malay language cluster. It has undergone some change, such that it's now different than the original Malay language. It has been influenced by the Minangkabau language and Indonesian.

Society and Culture

The majority of the Pekal work as farmers or plantation workers during the rainy season, and as fishermen in the dry season. They use traditional, home-made devices and tools in their work. They grow coffee, rice, chocolate, tobacco, tapioca, spices, peanuts, and various vegetables. Some Pekal also work as teachers, government workers, military personnel, construction workers, basket weavers, brick makers, and merchants.

The women work in the rice fields and process dried fish and shrimp. The traditional market is a cultural event involving many people. Merchants from other areas come just once a week to the bazaar. Pekal houses are long and narrow, on a raised platform.

If a newcomer wants to live with the Pekal, this person has to cook a meal to share with his/her chosen clan as well as other nearby clans

If a newcomer wants to live with the Pekal, this person has to cook a meal to share with his/her chosen clan as well as other nearby clans. After this, the person will be formally considered a part of the clan and will be treated like all other Pekal, without distinction for ethnicity, religion, education, or economic status. In the Pekal culture, all people have the same rights. The newcomer must fulfill customary and traditional obligations and fulfill the duties of a Pekal community member.

The Pekal have a tradition of giving mutual aid, both socially and materially. They feel obligated to help others because each person relies on others. Although their own income is low, they willingly give help to those in need, like victims of natural disasters. They also contribute to help build mosques.

Beliefs

Almost all Pekal profess Islam but still believe in spirits. This can be seen when they use mantras to call down rain, drive out evil spirits, and purify their village from immoral acts.

Needs

Creativity is needed to create new jobs, as many young people do not have employment. The Pekal are still underdeveloped economically compared to other areas of Sumatra and ethnic groups that have moved to this area from other places. The Pekal need professionals to help them in economic development, education, health, and farming.