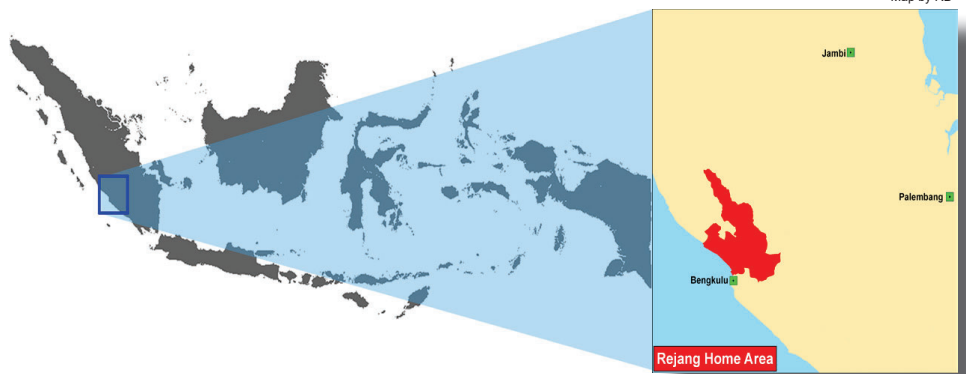


REJANG



Photo by RD

Harvest time



Map by RD

Demography	Rejang Language	Status
Location Bengkulu Population: 385.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: Parts Jesus Film: Yes Online Media: No	Believers: < 50 ⁽⁴³⁷⁾ Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Rejang people live primarily in the province of Bengkulu, mainly in Rejang Lebong Regency and its districts of Lebong Utara, Lebong Selatan, Curup and Kepahyang. Others live in North Bengkulu Regency and its districts of Taba Penanjung, Pondok Kelapa, Kerkap, Arga Makmur, and Lais.

The majority of Rejang live on the slopes of the Bukit Barisan mountain range, where the climate is cool and fresh. This area contains dense jungle. The Rafflesia flower (the world's largest flower) as well as beautiful orchids grow wild throughout this area.

The Rejang have their own language, Rejang, with four dialects: Kapahyang (Rejang Ho), Selupuh (Rejang Musai), Rejang Lebong, and Rejang Pesisir.

Society and Culture

The Rejang normally grow coffee for a living. Similar to the neighboring Semendo and Pasemah ethnic groups, the Rejang are good farmers. Some other types of work include livestock farming, wood cutting, fishing and working on rubber plantations. Some also work in food processing factories or other factories. And some do mining of coal, gold, silver, tin, platinum, and lava, using traditional tools.

The Rejang keep their living area neat and orderly. Their houses are built on stilts, 5 or 6 feet (1.5-2 m) high, made of multicolored wood with complex carvings decorating the outside. The roofs are zinc and the normal 3 or 4 rooms include a kitchen in back. Generally children who have married may not live in the same house, even if it's large and has many rooms.

The father is the head of the home and is responsible for his wife and children. The wife and children must help take care of the needs of the family. Polygamy is not permitted, although they are Muslim and in practice polygamy still takes place among them.

According to Rejang norms, the local government official is also considered the ceremonial head. In some areas, this leader is called raja penghulu (king headman). The leader who is considered most influential is the oldest person in any given village. That person is called tuai kutai (oldest in the village). Their role is to mediate any problems in the village and play an honored role in leading ceremonies.

Beliefs

The majority of the Rejang profess Islam. However, animism is an integral part of their daily life. They believe strongly in the unseen world and a wide variety of unseen spirits with names such as semat, sebebi, sebeken, orang bunian, and roh padi (spirit of the rice paddies).

In various aspect of their lives, they have taboos connected with spirits. For example, a spirit called masumai is believed to be able to take the form of a tiger or a human and is the most frightening of all creatures for the Rejang.

Needs

The Rejang area needs improved education. Unemployment is high among them because of low education, and many young people drop out of school to marry at an early age. ^(E-RD)