

SUMBAWA

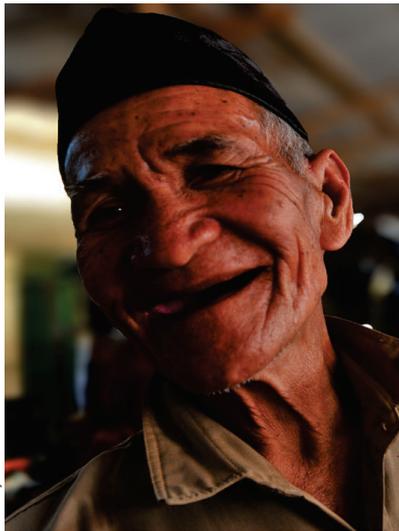
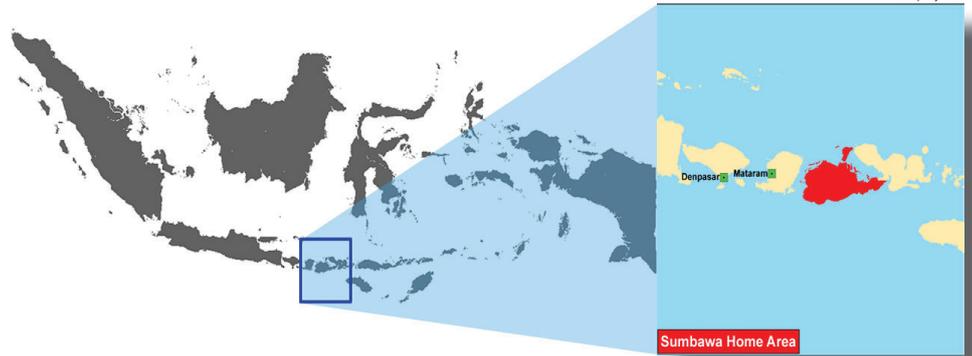


Photo by GP & BW



Map by RD

Demography	Sumbawa Language	Status
Location: NTB Population: 440.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: Parts Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: <150 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 1

Identity and Location

The Sumbawa live on Sumbawa Island in West Nusa Tenggara Province. The name "Sumbawa" originally referred only to the western part of the island and the Sumbawa sultanate, while the eastern part was called Bima.

Today the whole island is called Sumbawa, although the Sumbawa people don't inhabit the whole island. The Sumbawa are spread throughout 14 districts in western Sumbawa. In the past, some Sumbawa people have also moved to Lombok.

Society and Culture

Farming is the primary means of livelihood for the Sumbawa. They work the ground in both wet rice fields and dry fields, irrigated by rainfall. Raising water buffalo, cattle, goats and horses is another very important means of income. The Sumbawa have two types of communal work. Basiru is where everyone works together in the fields on a rotating basis as the field owners request workers. Saleng Tulong is where individuals help one another with various needs in exchange for food that will be given at a future time.

The Sumbawa trace their ancestry through their fathers (patrilineal). A newly wedded couple lives with the husband's family. A father will usually be greeted using the name of his first child.

The Sumbawa community is called a kampung or karang. They live in groups spread throughout the whole land area of the village, which makes it hard to tell where the village boundaries are. Some villages are bordered by a wooden fence, with a gate called a jebak. Most homes are built up off the ground. Homes of common people are called bale, and homes of the upper

class are called bala. Each village usually has a mosque, a village meeting hall, and a rice barn.

The village leader is chosen by the people, and he is then inaugurated by a higher leader called a demong. The village leader and his assistant watch over the life of the village with help from a malar, who oversees village land issues, and a lebeh who is responsible for religious activities. The lebeh is assisted by an isi mesigit, a group made up of several religious administrators (rura, modum, katib and martabat) who each have their own responsibilities.

Beliefs

Islam was brought to Sumbawa by Makassar people from South Sulawesi. The majority of the Sumbawa are devout Muslims, but many of them still carry out animistic practices. Many Sumbawa people still depend on the many shamans (occultists/traditional healers) in the area for counsel and help, especially during times of difficulty or crisis.

In 1995, over 75% percent of toddlers in the province received "help" from shamans or diviners. The Sumbawa believe in many kinds of spirits and jinn, called amar and bakek. They hold special ceremonies for protection from disasters and evil spirits.

Needs

They need help in improving and marketing their agricultural goods like honey, pearls and wood. Sumbawa has great tourism potential in light of its cultural wealth and beautiful natural environment.^(E-JB)

