

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Indigenous People and Development

In social analysis, the term indigenous basically differs from the term tribal, since each of them refers to different aspects of the so called traditional people. The meaning of the term indigenous is similar to that of native, the group of people who inhabits a certain area but now have to live side by side with the migrants (Burger, 1987; Brownlie, 1992). On the other hand, the term tribal points out to a group of people who has similarities in language, culture, social organisation, and shares common territories (Winnick, 1960; Howard, 1986). Yet, to a larger extent there are similarities that can be drawn between indigenous and tribal, one of which is their poor socio-economic and political conditions (Wrightson, 1976; Burger, 1987, 1990). This is the reason for which many of the so called indigenous people can also be called tribal people or vice versa. Because of that, in the context of this thesis, the terms indigenous, tribal, native, or aboriginal are used, unless specified otherwise, interchangeably. At present, tribal people all around the world comprise approximately 200 million people, or roughly four percent of the total world population (Goodland, 1988). Most of them are living in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Pacific areas.

The development process, as seen from indigenous people's point of view, often means efforts to change their socio-economic conditions through the introduction of various new values and technologies by people outside of their social systems. This 'top-down' approach takes place mainly because of the following:

1. Indigenous people, as a social group, are politically part of a state; and
2. By being a part of the state, the indigenous people are basically subordinated to such an extent that they have very little autonomy to decide what they want or do not want to be done for them and their lives (Poggie and Lynch, 1974). More than that, as their socio-economic conditions are often regarded as backward, in many instances they are obliged to adapt themselves to the objectives, policies or programs of the state.

Yet, ideally, being a subject in a modern state should enable the indigenous people to achieve an improved quality of life, since any state in the modern world claims that through its very existence it ensures equity, prosperity and justice for its citizen through development activities. However, such an ideal very often is only a utopia whether in the capitalist or socialist/communist countries (Appell, 1977). There are many reasons why the indigenous people face many difficulties in adjusting to the development process. Some of them are:

- (1) Most of the indigenous people are less powerful, technologically and numerically compared to the national society (Goodland, 1988);
- (2) Their aspirations have either not yet been understood properly, or have even been intentionally ignored by the development planners (Tarumingkeng *et al.*, 1987); and
- (3) The ruling elites of the states show little respect for the unique socio-cultural characteristics of the tribal people (Appell, 1977).

Some implications can then be drawn. First, the indigenous people often resist the pressure to become involved in the development process and choose to live as they are. Second, the indigenous people have participated, but because of unsupportive circumstances, they were expelled from the development process. Third, the indigenous people are forced to live an oppressive life, both politically and economically. Fourth, some groups of indigenous people become extinct because of the development activities (Bodley, 1988). Goodland (1982) summed up three major negative social changes suffered by the indigenous people because of rapid development activities. They are: (1) loss of self-esteem, as a result of negative attitudes of change agents toward indigenous cultures; (2) increased role conflict and ambiguity as a result of the dismantling or reducing of the power of the local leaders, as well as the rapid growth of dependency on people and resources from outside; and (3) the widening of the aspiration - achievement gap because of the inappropriateness of local ways to adjust to a new environment in order to fulfil various new expectations introduced from the outside.

The discussion presented above does not imply that there is no need for the indigenous people to be involved in the development. Any tribal group, as pointed out by Richardson (1988), eventually, will be contacted by outsiders, as well as any traditional society in the world would be changed because of the change in its environment.

Moreover, Appell (1977) claims that the indigenous people are often short-sighted and biased in appreciating their current as well as future situation due to lack of experience with the modern world. Coupled with the fact that the development approaches for the indigenous people so far are often far from adequate, this argument brings us to a very important issue: what has to be done to enable the indigenous people to survive in and to gain benefit from the development process.

One of the important issues associated with development and its negative and positive aspects is people's attitude and adoption to new technology introduced through the development project. This thesis attempts to study this issue in the context of the indigenous people.

1.2 The Importance of Understanding the Technology Adoption Behaviour of the Irian Jaya Indigenous People

Irian Jaya (formerly known as the Netherlands New Guinea) became part of the Republic of Indonesia in 1963. In the previous centuries, it was a relatively unknown place, mentioned mainly in the reports of various western voyages and explorers. Moreover, for many, it was a place which was "... remote, inaccessible, and occupied by primitive stone-aged headhunter people" (Hastings, 1971, p.4). Since its integration with Indonesia, changes have taken place under the name of development. Various concepts, values and activities have been introduced to the indigenous Irianese either through the efforts of governments and non-government institutions, or through the influx of migrants from other parts of Indonesia.

However, many have criticised the development activities in Irian Jaya for being far from adequate. For instance, Tarumingkeng *et al.* (1987) claim that the development in Irian Jaya is often being executed without regard for the needs and conditions of the target communities. On the other hand, Roestam (1987), the then Indonesian Minister of Interior Affairs, argues that this situation has also been worsen by the fact that it was only since the Pelita¹ III period that the development in Irian Jaya could be executed properly.

¹Pelita is the Indonesian acronym for Pembangunan Lima Tahun, the Five Yearly Development Plan, started in 1969 after President Suharto was elected as the President of the Republic of Indonesia. There have been six PELITAs since that period of time.

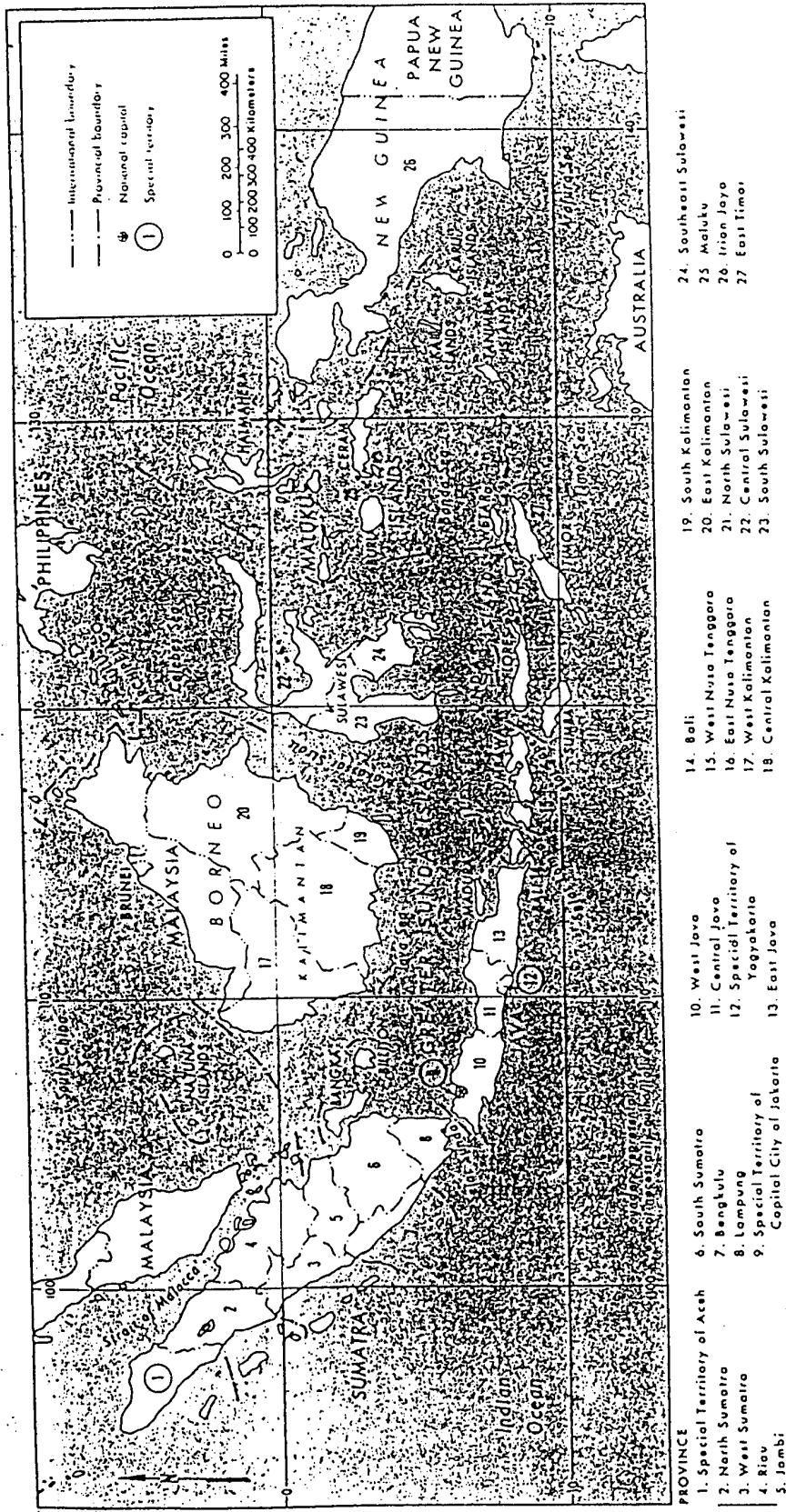


Figure 1. The Administrative Regions of Indonesia
(Source: Bunge, 1983).

Since 1963 to early Pelita I period, development activities were mainly focused on establishing political stability and resolving security problems. On the other hand, the development activities in the Pelita I and II periods were focused mainly on rehabilitating the existing transportation infrastructures. As a result, the achievements of the Pelita III in Irian Jaya are comparable, on the average, only to the results of Pelita I in other provinces of Indonesia (Roestam, 1987). In other words, Irian Jaya is lagging far behind other Indonesian provinces in terms of the development pace.

Yet, this situation is not unnoticed by the government. The announcement of so called "*Pembangunan Kawasan Timur Indonesia*" or the Development of Eastern part of Indonesia (Irian Jaya is located in the eastern part of Indonesia) which started five years ago should be seen as a strong political will of the government to make a break-through in improving the situation of the indigenous population of Irian Jaya. The question is: how could it be done properly?

It is believed that one of the crucial steps that need to be taken in order to gain a proper understanding to improve the development approach is by studying to what extent the indigenous people of Irian Jaya have been involved in the current development programs. Until now, very limited research has been conducted to study the extent to which the indigenous people of Irian Jaya have adopted the values and new technologies introduced from outside of their social system through development activities. As most of the indigenous people in Irian Jaya are farmers, then it is appropriate to conduct the study in the agricultural field. It is for this reason that this study has been conducted.

1.3 Reasons for Choosing Arfak Tribal Farmers

Assessing to what extent the indigenous Irian Jaya people have participated in the development is a complex task. The Irian Jaya population comprises of more than 200 different tribes which are dispersed throughout the islands, from the coastal area, swamp land, up to the mountainous terrain. On the other hand, development activities are not distributed equally.

The criteria employed in this study to select tribe(s) to be studied are as follows: (1) that the tribe which will be studied should have been exposed to, and involved in at least one development project; (2) that development project has been recognised by and is

part of the government plan; (3) that project involves a reasonable number of the members of the tribe; and (4) the involvement of the people in that project has to be long enough, at least five years.

Arfak tribal farmers were chosen purposely to be studied because they fulfil the above criteria. Locally they are known as *Suku Besar Arfak*, the Big Tribe of Arfak. This name is used because even though in various cultural aspects they are similar to each other, in fact they consist of four different tribes: the Meah, the Hatam, the Moile, and the Sougb. The Arfak tribe is named after the Arfak mountain (see Figure 4), the area where these people originated. According to Silzer and Heikkinen (1984) the Arfak tribe has approximately 40,000 people.

Compared to other tribal groups in Irian Jaya, the Arfak tribe has been involved in various development projects for a relatively long period. The major projects that have been introduced involving Arfak tribal people are: government sponsored transmigration project where some of them are involved as local transmigrants; the state-sponsored Oilpalm Nucleus Estate Smallholder Scheme (NESS) project where some of them are involved as smallholders; private cacao plantation PT Coklat Ransiki (PT Cokran) where some of them are involved as labourers; and the butterfly farming project of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), an international conservation organisation, where some of them are involved as butterfly farmers.

From those four types of project, transmigration and oilpalm NESS were chosen for this study since only in these projects were Arfak farmers the owners as well as the managers of their farms. PT Cokran and WWF Butterfly Farming Project were not included because of the following reasons: (i) Arfak tribal people work only as labourers in PT Cokran; and (ii) the Butterfly Farming Project of WWF, at the time of research preparation, has not yet reached the marketing stage, a stage which is very important in determining the success of the involvement of any farmer in any project.

1.4 Objectives and the Carrying Out of the Study

In general, the study aims to investigate the adoption behaviour of the indigenous people in Irian Jaya by particularly looking at the extent to which the Arfak tribal people have adopted the technologies introduced to them through transmigration and oilpalm

NESS projects. The specific aims of the study are:

- (a) To study some sociological features and the traditional farming system of Arfak tribal people as a basis for understanding their involvement in the modern agricultural activities;
- (b) To understand their adoption behaviour in the transmigration (where they are involved as local transmigrants) and the oilpalm NESS projects (where they are involved as smallholders) by examining the extent to which they have adopted the technologies introduced through these two projects, as well as to investigate what factors influence that behaviour.
- (c) To compare the extent of Arfak people's adoption behaviour of technologies introduced through transmigration program with Javanese transmigrants.
- (d) To determine to what extent their involvement in transmigration and oilpalm NESS has improved their socio-economic wellbeing.
- (e) To propose some recommendations to the relevant parties regarding issues to be considered in developing Arfak tribals especially, as well as the indigenous Irian Jaya people in general.

To be able to meet the above objectives properly, besides carrying out a field survey, a series of the workshops was conducted seven months later. These workshops were in three levels: (1) on the Arfak tribals level; (2) on the field officers and Javanese transmigrants level; and (3) at the district level, where most of the key people involved in the development of Arfak tribals attended. Basically, the workshops had two objectives:

- (1) To reconfirm the findings/conclusions of the findings, to gain feed back, as well as to collect additional information from the ex-respondents of the field survey as well as the relevant key people. This would strengthen the validity and comprehensiveness of the study as outlined by objectives (a), (b), (c), and (d) above.
- (2) To arrange a type of meeting where the results of this research, plus other information from other stakeholders involved in the development of Arfak tribals, including from the Arfak people and their traditional leaders themselves, can be exchanged and be used as a basis for initiating changes through consultative/participative dialogue. Clearly, only by employing a series of workshops, could the objective (e) above be achieved satisfactorily.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is arranged into ten chapters. Chapter One deals with the background and objectives of the study. Chapter Two covers the review of the related literature, the conceptual model, and the hypotheses formulated in the study. Chapter Three explains the methodologies used in collecting and analysing the data and information of the study. Chapter Four gives the selected information about the study area and its location, as well as explaining the background information of transmigration and oilpalm-NESS projects in which this study was conducted.

Chapter Five discusses the findings of the study regarding the social structure, traditional agricultural and social change among Arfak tribals. Chapter Six analyses the differential characteristics of the study respondents. Chapter Seven reports the findings of the field survey showing the respondents' individual experiences in adopting the technology. Chapter Eight describes the result of a series of workshops containing the group level perspectives on the technology adoption of Arfak tribals and other related issues.

Chapter Nine focuses on discussing the characteristics of the development project -- issues that were considered as most critical in determining the technology adoption behaviour of Arfak tribals.

Chapter Ten completes the reportation of this study by providing some conclusions. It is expected that these conclusions can be used as principles for the future development of Arfak tribals specifically, or with careful consideration, can be used also for the indigenous people of Irian Jaya in general.