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The Residents of Kampong Ayer, 1906–1940: The Activities of *Pengalu*, *Padian*, and Handiwork

ABSTRACT: A majority of the Malay Brunei society lived in Kampong Ayer. In terms of economic activity, they had various employments, such as catching fish and handiwork. As fishermen, the residents of Kampong Ayer used equipment, such as nets (*jala* or *pukat*), "*kabat*", "*lintau*", "*kilong*", and such. Meanwhile, the activity of handiwork encompassed weaving cloth, making gold, silver, copper, and "*memburis*" (making something). In marketing, these two economic activities, apart from being sold by its owner or maker, it also involved the "*pengalu*" and "*padian*". This article, by using the historical method and qualitative-descriptive approaches, will attempt to look at the activities of the "*pengalu*", "*padian*", and handiwork carried out by the residents of Kampong Ayer from 1906 until 1940. The findings show that history has shown those activities held the interest of the residents of Kampong Ayer. However, due to the processes of modernisation and vast development, two of the main activities, namely the activities of "*pengalu*" and "*padian*" have become extinct. The activities of "*pengalu*" and "*padian*" faced problems that were serious challenges. Eventually only the activity of handiwork has survived from then until now. This article will also focus on the factors that caused the extinction of the "*pengalu*" and "*padian*" activities. Besides that, this article will also focus on the activities of handiwork from 1906 until 1940, and also some forms of careers that were saved by the government from becoming extinct or disappearing.

KEY WORDS: Residents of Kampong Ayer; "*Pengalu*" and "*Padian*"; Handiwork; Problems and Challenges; Government Roles.

INTRODUCTION

A majority of the Malay Brunei society lived in Kampong Ayer. In terms of economic activity, they had various employments, such as catching fish and handiwork. As fishermen, the residents of Kampong Ayer used equipment, such as nets (*jala* or *pukat*), *kabat*, *lintau*, *kilong*, and such. Meanwhile, the activity of handiwork encompassed weaving cloth, making gold, silver, copper, and *memburis* (making something). In marketing, these two economic activities, apart from

being sold by its owner or maker, it also involved the *pengalu* and *padian* (Cleary & Kam, 1991; and Bakar, 2015).

Although the Residency administration introduced a system of government departments in Brunei in 1906, where job opportunities became available to the residents of Kampong Ayer, in the beginning there were not very interested in this new employment sector (*cf Brunei Annual Report, 1911; Brunei Annual Report, 1912; and Hussainmiya, 2006*). This is because

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the income from working on their own was better and more compared to being salaried workers in the government service. Only at the end of the 1930's until 1940, a few of the residents of Kampong Ayer became involved as salaried workers for the government (Hussainmiya, 2006; and Bakar, 2015).

This article, by using the historical method and qualitative-descriptive approaches (McCullagh, 1984; Denzin & Lincoln eds., 1998; Howell & Prevenier, 2001; and Sjamsuddin, 2007), will attempt to take a look at the activities of the *pengalu*, *padian*, and handiwork from 1906 until 1940 in Kampong Ayer, Brunei Darussalam.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pengalu. One of the economic activities of the residents of Kampong Ayer during this period of study is *mengalu*. From this activity, the *pengalu* evolved and were traders who usually comprised of men, whose role was to sell and buy crops from rural residents through barter trading. The *pengalu* usually brought the goods needed by the residents who lived on land such as fish, cockles obtained from fishermen, and *kuih* supplied by *kuih* makers among the residents of Kampong Ayer. Usually, dry *kuih*, such as *sapit*, *makanan cincin*, *madu kasirat*, and *kuripit* are the types of *kuih* that keep for a long time and do not spoil easily (Murni, 1989:138; and Bakar & Ariff, 2012). Fish and shellfish are usually processed first, whether smoked, pickled or salted, so it would keep for a long time without spoiling (Bakar & Ariff, 2012; and Adenan *et al.*, 2014).

Meanwhile, the goods obtained from the rural residents were jungle products or crops, such as *paddy*, vegetables, and fruits (Hassan, 1996:177-180). The rural residents obtained the goods they needed through the *pengalu*, who came and stopped by at the river. The contact between the *pengalu* and the rural residents during this period was only via the river or sea. Clearly the role of the *pengalu* during this period was as a buyer of goods to the rural residents and the residents of Kampong Ayer (Anaman & Duraman eds., 2003).

The *perahu* used by the *pengalu* is bigger.

The size of the *perahu* of the *pengalu* was bigger than the normal passenger *perahu*. It could hold a load goods weighing 302.4 kilogram until 604.8 kilogram (Murni, 1989:139). This *perahu* usually had walls and an *attap* made from *kajang* to protect the *pengalu* from the rain and sun. The *pengalu* is usually assisted by four workers who took turns to move the *perahu* to the desired destination. Those assistants were usually family members, such as his wife and children (Murni, 1989:139; and Gin ed., 2016).

Therefore, the *perahu* of the *pengalu* could be thought of as a temporary home for the *pengalu*. During this period, a trading licensing system was introduced and issued by the authorities for a fee of thirty sen for each license and valid for a period of three months (Murni, 1989:137). If the said license expired, it could be renewed. Because *mengalu* was a trading activity, it required the possession of a license (Anaman & Duraman eds., 2003; and Gin ed., 2016).

Pengalu operated at two bases to carry out their trading. The first base was at Kampong Ujong Klinik comprising *pengalu* from Kampong Saba, who traded towards downriver of Sungai Brunei, such as at Kampong Putat, Pudak, Menunggol, Kupang until Limbang. Meanwhile, the second base was at Kampong Limbongan comprising *pengalu* from Kampong Tamoi, Lorong Dalam, Burong Pinggai, and Bukit Salat. Their trading areas included Kampong Batu Empat, Kilanas, Mulaut, Junjungan, and Limau Manis (Sani, 2015; and Gin ed., 2016).

Padian: The Choice Employment for Women. While the *pengalu* traders comprised of the men folk and operated as far as upriver, this form of trading differs completely from the *padian*. These traders are women who carry out their trading in *perahu*, or known as small-sized *gubang* (Ibrahim, 1970; Ibrahim ed., 1996; and Hays, 2015).

The *padian* activity is based at Labuhan Kapal (the former Royal Customs Shipyard) and at some areas of Kampong Ayer. The *padian* carry out their trading only around Kampong Ayer in Bandar Brunei. Some of the goods they traded were fish that they obtained from fishermen. Meanwhile, crop

products such as rice and vegetables are obtained from the *pengalu*. Besides that, the *padian* also sold various types of *kuih* obtained from suppliers in Kampong Ayer (Adenan *et al.*, 2014; and Board, 2018).

The meeting point between the *pengalu*, *padian*, and fishermen is a place known as the *pangkalan padian* (*padian* base), or a place for the *padian* to stop for the purposes of selling or exchanging of goods. The places turned into the *padian* bases are around Kampong Ayer, for instance at Kampong Saba, Kampong Lurong Sekuna, and Kampong Kuala Peminyak. Clearly, the *padian* and *pengalu* depend on one another for the purposes of trading (Adenan *et al.*, 2014; and Bakar, 2015).

In trading, they depend on the tides. The activities of the *padian* is more brisk during high tide. They move by sailing along small alleys around Kampong Ayer. The trading activities of the *padian* begins in the early morning until the evening with an income that is not fixed, depending on the goods traded to the residents around Kampong Ayer. Meanwhile, the equipment carried by the *padian* consist of measures, a *cupak* made out of a coconut shell, *gantang* made out of a round shaped piece of copper, *takung* made out of bamboo for storing fish, and such (Hassan, 1996:177-180; and Bakar, 2015).

Handiwork. Apart from *mengalu* and *padian* as the daily economic activities of the Malay society of Kampong Ayer, some of them are involved in handiwork as a career. During this period, the skills if the Malay society in Kampong Ayer in the field of handiwork still existed. This industry was one of the sources of income for the residents of Kampong Ayer and was usually carried out at private homes (Bakar, 2015; and Hamdi, Abdullah & Narudin, 2017).

Among the handiwork activities during this period were: (1) Weaving: How Thread Becomes Cloth; (2) Handiwork of Gold and Silver; (3) Copper Handiwork; and (4) *Memburis Perahu* or Making *Perahu*. Its explanation is following here:

Firstly, *Weaving: How Thread Becomes Cloth*. This industry still thrives at Kampong Ayer (Wahsalfelah, 2005).¹ Kampong Burong

Pingai Ayer, Kampong Lurong Sekuna, and Kampong Sungai Kedayaan are the dominant areas in this industry. This industry, carried out at private homes, has brought a generous income to the residents of Kampong Ayer (Wahsalfelah, 2005; Adenan *et al.*, 2014; and Bakar, 2015).

The handiwork of cloth weaving is only done by the womenfolk of Kampong Ayer. To complete a piece of cloth that incorporates various types of silk, gold, and silver threads takes a minimum of one month, sometimes more to ensure the quality and finesse of the cloth woven to meet the expectations of the customers. The patterns they showcase on the woven cloth produced are various types of plants, such as bamboo shoots and many other Bruneian motifs (Wahsalfelah, 2005; and Hays, 2015).

The production of the woven cloth patterns continued to evolve, when the practitioners or owners exchanged ideas between the residents of one village with another. They accepted orders, whether from royalty or individuals, and the pattern of the weaving is set according to the customer's wishes. To ease the work of cloth-weaving, they used equipment of Malay technology, such as: *pelarauan*, *andir-andir*, *anian*, *lidi*, *kepala tenun*, *papan pengulungan*, *batis olak-olak*, *cucuk karap*, *karap*, *suri*, *jentera*, *pasa*, *anak pasa*, *untang-untang batis pelunyan*, *sampaian*, *belida besar*, *belida kecil*, *bengkala pilihan*, *torak*, *anak liringan*, *sikuan*, *buluh penarikan*, *kayu turus*, *sasaban pertenenan*, *bilah pemilihan*, *bilah sangkat*, and *mata sundi* (Salleh, 1989:117).

Those equipment could be obtained from nature, such as bamboo, wood, and such; and chosen and processed first before being used as equipment for weaving (Salleh, 1989; and Julaini *et al.* eds., 2014).

Secondly, *Handiwork of Gold and Silver*. Besides the handiwork of weaving cloth, the Brunei Malays of Kampong Ayer during this period were also active in gold and silver handiwork. The goldsmiths and silversmiths of Brunei stayed at Kampong Pandai Emas. The skills of silversmithing was handed down to their own family and relatives, and became a source of income (Hays, 2015).

¹See also *Brunei Annual Report*, 1950. Bandar Brunei: page 50.

Awang Sagap developed handiwork to the residents of Kampong Pandai Emas. Villagers named Awang Abdullah, Awang Buntar, and Awang Hassan were students of Awang Sagap. To add and further study the skills of silversmithing, they got hold of a silversmithing expert named Sidin from Jawa, Indonesia (Hussin, 1976). Sidin taught them various skills in silversmithing, for instance, making silver items in shapes and carvings, such as: *subang* or ear studs, *kubamban* or buttons, *galang tanduk* or earrings, and *galang lilit* or bracelets (Hussin, 1976; and Gin ed., 2016).

The method employed by Sidin of Jawa, Indonesia in teaching was not through courses or lectures. An important method was used through the careful observation of handiwork methods. After observation, then only they were asked to make small items. After they are really skillful, then only were they allowed to make their own items without supervision and using the own ideas. After many residents became skillful at handiwork at Kampong Pandai Emas, a *balai* (public hall) named *Balai Pak Besar* was built. The number of silversmiths kept on increasing so another *balai* was set up, known as *Balai Haji Ajak* (Hussin, 1976; and Gin ed., 2016).

Silversmithing became more widespread after encouragement and support from the British Resident in Brunei, H. Chevallier. He taught them modern handiwork ways using plans. As an outcome of this guidance, the era of silver handiwork in Brunei underwent changes to become more systematic and organised. Meanwhile, the finished products from silver handiwork was sold to customers, especially royalty and individuals who made orders (Bakar & Mail, 2016).

Silver handiwork in Brunei used many tools of technology, such as: *kuwi*, *cuan*, *kawat*, *puputan*, *dapur*, *pelapau*, *tukul*, *papan pengarungan*, *kikir*, *pateri*, *katak besi*, *cuanam*, *candas*, *pahat*, *jumpat*, *tarikan edar-edar*, *calak*, *landasan*, *kuda-kuda*, and *tanji* (Hussin, 1976). Apart from silver handiwork, gold handiwork also contributed an income for the residents of Kampong Ayer. This employment was also handed down into the same family using the handiwork skills and knowledge

handed down to the closest family members first (Hussin, 1976; and Gin ed., 2016).

The residents of Kampong Pandai Emas were skilled in silver and gold handiwork and this village became known as *Kampong Pandai Emas*, which then became known as *Kampong Sungai Kedayaan*. The skills of the villagers focused more on jewellery, such as rings, bracelets, necklaces, brooches, ear studs, *cucuk sanggul*, *gandi*, and such; and use during official events or weddings (Hussin, 1976; and Gin ed., 2016).

Thirdly, *Copper Handiwork*. Copper handiwork was first established at a place named Kampong Pandaian. That village was near Kampong Ujong Bukit. Awang Salleh was the first person to go into copper handiwork (Jaafar, 1989). Then that employment was then handed down generation by generation until Kampong Ujong Bukit was inhabited by residents skilled in copper handiwork. The products of copper handiwork included musical instruments, such as *gulintangan*, *tawak-tawak*, the gong, and also a few weapons. These products were usually favoured by the rural residents, such as the Iban, Dusun, Kedayaan, and Belait tribes (Ahmad, 1985; Jaafar, 1989; and Tuah, 1993).

Fourthly, *Memburis Perahu or Making Perahu*. The exact date when making *perahu* or *memburis perahu* cannot be ascertained. However, this work during this period was carried out by the residents of Kampong Ayer. This can only prove that water transportation system in Brunei already existed before the 10th century AD (*Anno Domini*). The findings from a study carried out by the Brunei Museum Department, through the Archeology Division, and others found that there were some fragments and tools related to *perahu* at the dig sites in Sungai Limau Manis, such as *lunas perahu gubang*, *lunas perahu tongkang kau*, *pengayuh*, and such (Amit, 1996; Osman, 2007:122; Bakar, 2013; and Bakar & Mail, 2016).

Those places have a high number of residents and is the path of the *pengalu*, who use *perahu* when trading with the Kampong Ayer villagers and the rural residents. The work of making *perahu* is carried out by the residents of Kampong Ayer to fulfil the

demand from the residents of Kampong Ayer, who use the *perahu* as a mode of transportation at Kampong Ayer (Osman, 2007; and Jalil, 2012).

Various types of *perahu*, such as *jumpung*, *gubang* or *bidar*, and *bagung* are produced during this period. The material for making *perahu* is *bakau* wood or any sturdy wood. Other than that, the tools used are axes, *beliung*, *ketam*, saws, chisels, *olak-olak*, *sapit-sapit*, *pembahas*, *tali pembahas*, wooden wedges, and wooden knives (Hamid, 1989:10). Making *perahu* was a small industry carried out at private homes. The income from making *perahu* is used for the *perahu* maker's family expenses. Their customers were the residents of Kampong Ayer, who determined the design of the *perahu* that they wanted (Hamid, 1989; and Najib, 2013). See table 1.

The names of the villages stated in table 1 gradually lost its popularity as the careers undertaken by the residents of the village became extinct and the residents no longer undertook those careers. This is because the residents involved had moved to land, moved to be with their wives, moved to another place or village, changed jobs to government positions (public services sector), and so on. This phenomenon continued until some of the village names became extinct and it not known anymore (Brown, 1970; Ibrahim, 1971; Ibrahim, 1996; and Ibrahim ed., 1996).

Challenges and Problems. The employment of the residents of Kampong Ayer, such as *pengalu* and *padian*, have become extinct. However, employment as fishermen in Kampong Ayer still exists until today, although it is only undertaken full time or part time by a number of villagers (Bakar & Ariff, 2012; and Adenan *et al.*, 2014).

The *padian* is now extinct as there are no longer any womenfolk, who are willing to undertake this work. This is because of the safety of the *padian*. The number of sea taxi *perahu* have increased, boat engines with high horse power; and some women had moved and were selling their goods on land. The government had opened a place called a *tamu*, near Sungai Kianggeh in Bandar Seri Begawan and a modern commercial centre

(Bakar & Ariff, 2012; and Yunos, 2015).

The *padian* also became extinct, because of a lack of customers in Kampong Ayer. The villagers of Kampong Ayer preferred to buy goods at the trading centre at the *tamu* and at the fish market on land. The *pengalu* became extinct, because shops were built on land in Bandar Brunei, roads at the Tutong road area were opened, shops on land were controlled by the Chinese, vehicles began to exist on land such as cars and trucks (Adenan *et al.*, 2014; and Yunos, 2015).

Apart from the *pengalu* and *padian*, the work of the gold, silver, and copper industry also became almost extinct. This is made worse when there is a lack of gold and silver industry carried out in private homes, because of competition from ladies' jewellery and house decorative items made of silver and copper that were thought to be of better quality from overseas. Many private homes of the coppersmiths had burned down and some of the skilled residents had moved to land and left the industry (Bakar & Ariff, 2012; and Bakar, 2015).

Apart from that, there were also skilled residents who worked with the government and in other places. In order to preserve the continuity of the silver, gold, and copper work industry, the government had taken steps to take over by establishing a centre known as the *Pusat Kesenian dan Pertukangan Tangan Brunei* (Brunei Arts and Handiwork Centre). Meanwhile, the work of making *perahu* among the residents of Kampong Ayer still exists until today with increased production of more modern *perahu*, such as the *perahu motor tambang* and such (Julaini *et al.* eds., 2014; and Bakar, 2015).

The weaving industry still exists in Kampong Ayer until today. This work is undertaken by the womenfolk and passed down to their daughters, who possessed weaving skills. Until today, this weaving industry is still undertaken by a number of women at Kampong Burong Pingai Ayer and Kampong Lurong Sikuna. Today, the government holds weaving courses at the *Pusat Kesenian dan Pertukangan Tangan Brunei*. Apart from at this centre, there are efforts by the *Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanah*

Bolkiah by preparing a venue for weaving at Kampong Bolkiah A at Kampong Ayer. Meanwhile, the residents of Kampong Ayer who had moved to land undertake this task at privately owned homes on land (Wahsalfelah, 2005; Kon & Azaraimy, 2006; and Julaini *et al.* eds., 2014).

CONCLUSION ²

Development and modernisation has affected the sustenance of traditional careers. Some careers have become completely extinct, such as the *padian* and *pengalu*. However, there are also some careers which survive until today and adapted to the evolution of Kampong Ayer. The extinction of the careers once undertaken during this period is caused by many factors, among them are the residents of Kampong Ayer moving to land; the formation of Bandar Brunei and building of shops; and societal and social changes that moved those careers to the land.

However, there are also some forms of careers that were saved by the government from becoming extinct or disappearing. Apart from this, fast development has brought about changes in the names of Kampong Ayer, that were once known by the residents' careers.³

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Adenan, R. Haji *et al.* (2014). "Kampong Ayer: A Community Living on Water in Brunei Darussalam". Paper presented in the 30th International Plea

²**Acknowledgment:** This paper, before to be modified and updated the References like currently, was presented in the "Simposium Kebangsaan Kampong Ayer: Budaya, Warisan, dan Pemeliharaan, Dahulu, Kini, dan Masa Depan", jointly organised by the Medical Institute and Academy of Brunei Studies, University of Brunei Darussalam, on 9–10 Safar 1430 AH (*Anno Hijriah*) or 4–5 February 2009 AD (*Anno Domini*), at Dewan Canselor, University of Brunei Darussalam. I'd like to thanks to participants of the Symposium, who have given the input and new perspectives pertaining to my paper. However, all contents and interpretations pertaining this revised article are solely rested to my responsibility academically.

³**Statement:** I, hereby, declare that this article is my original academic work, it is not product of plagiarism, due to all sources used and cited in the analysis are showed clearly and available in the References. This article is also not submitted, reviewed, and published yet in other scholarly journals.

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