

**THE IMPACT OF OUTMIGRATION ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC
STRUCTURE OF A RURAL VILLAGE IN WEST MALAYSIA:
KAMPONG PARIT CHANGKAT**

oleh

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Latihan Ilmiah

Bagi Memenuhi Sebahagian
Daripada Syarat-Syarat Untuk

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SYNOPSIS

This report examines the impact of outmigration on the socio-economic structure of a rural village in West Malaysia, Kampong Parit Changkat situated in the Sabak Bernam District of Upper Selangor. It represents an agricultural society with a subsistence based dual economy: (padi) rice cultivation and cocoa and coconut plantations.

Chapter One provides basic information on the location of the village, the settlement pattern and a general over-view of the socio-economic and political structure of the village. This is followed by an account of the aims and objectives of the study. The third part of the chapter deals with the type of methods used to extract data, participant observation, interview schedules and informal interviews/conversations. Studies conducted by social scientists were also referred to.

Chapter Two provides a detailed account of the social and economic situation at the village level with particular emphasis on the role of the nuclear family - the basic organizational cell. Village activities and household roles/activities are also dealt with in detail. The values and norms that dictate their daily lives is also examined.

Chapter Three deals with the impact of outmigration in the rural place of origin. The consequences of outmigration on the demographic level and the agricultural productivity, the impact of migrant remittances, the drain of rural income to urban areas, the change in occupational structure and the impact at the family level, are examined. A review of the change

in attitude towards city life is also dealt with.

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The concluding chapter sums up the totality of the impact of outmigration on the place of origin. Other possible factors which could have accounted for the changes in the socio-economic structure is also dealt with.

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PREFACE

This report, carried out in a rural village in Peninsular Malaysia, for a period of two weeks, was undertaken as a Graduation Exercise to be submitted to the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaya. It proposes to examine the impact of outmigration on the socio-economic structure of a rural village, in this case an agricultural society with a subsistence based dual economy: padi (rice) cultivation and coconut and cocoa plantations. A thorough over-view of the village economy and the social structure of the village as it exists will also be illustrated. It is hoped that this study will add to the existing knowledge of migration and provide a better theoretical understanding of the consequences of out migratory response in the place of origin.

CHAPTER I

AN OVER-VIEW OF THE VILLAGE

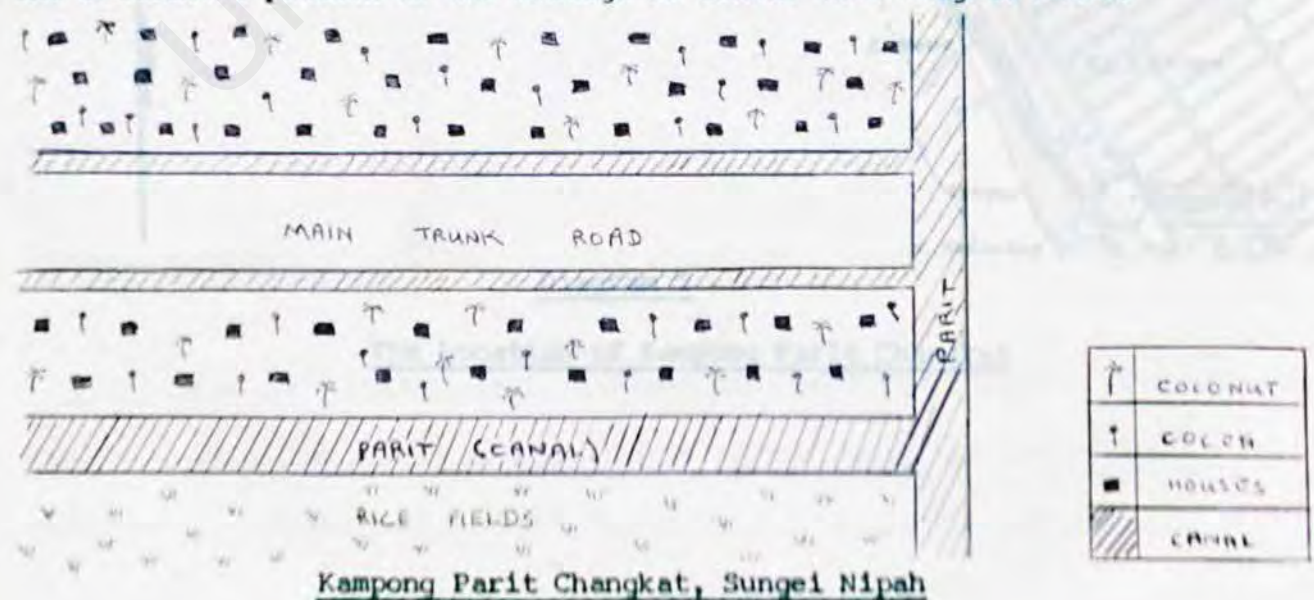
Kampong Parit Changkat, Sungai Nipah is the official name of the rural village studied. Its location is in the Sabak Bernam District of Upper Selangor, and is approximately sixteen kilometers from the district's capital town, Sungei Besar. The main trunk road connecting Kuala Selangor and Teluk Anson runs centrally through the village proper, thus making the village easily accessible (see diagram 1).

The area constitutes a coastal region and the village proper is about 10 to 13 kilometers from the beach. The terrain resembles an extensive flat plain, making it extremely suitable for the cultivation of wet rice. One of the major occupation of the villages, in terms of the amount of time spent on the activity, is wet rice (padi) cultivation. This agricultural activity is so extensive that the area constitutes part of the major rice producing areas in West Malaysia. In fact, it is an extension of the Tanjong Karang rice producing area which is considered the Rice Bowl of Selangor. From the main road, one can see miles of different coloured patches varying from light green to golden yellow and this presents a refreshing picture indeed. The climate too seems to be conducive for rice cultivation. The most popular variety grown is the MR 1 which was introduced three years ago by the National Padi Board (Lembaga Padi Negara), a governmental body, to increase yields. Double cropping is a common feature. The crop is planted in December before the North-East Monsoon begins to allow for the maximum rainfall during

the growing period. The crop is harvested in May-June, the drier months of the year. The second crop is planted in June and harvested in November. Agricultural productivity is relatively high and constant except when yields are ruined by agricultural pests such as rats, birds, crickets and the brown hopper.

It must be noted that although wet rice is cultivated so extensively, it is by no means the most important agricultural activity. The basic goal of small farmers in cultivating rice is to grow their own food supply. The sale of any surplus is only incidental to this basic goal. The primary economic activity then constitutes the cultivation of coconut palms and cocoa plants. It represents a non-seasonal activity thus allowing for all the year round harvesting. It is cultivated as a cash crop unlike padi which is a subsistence crop. It ensures a regular income for the villagers.

The village itself is not very extensive. Houses are constructed of wood in the typical malay-style architecture. They are situated on both sides of the trunk road and are neatly arranged in rows, parallel to the road. The settlement pattern of the village is linear (see diagram below)



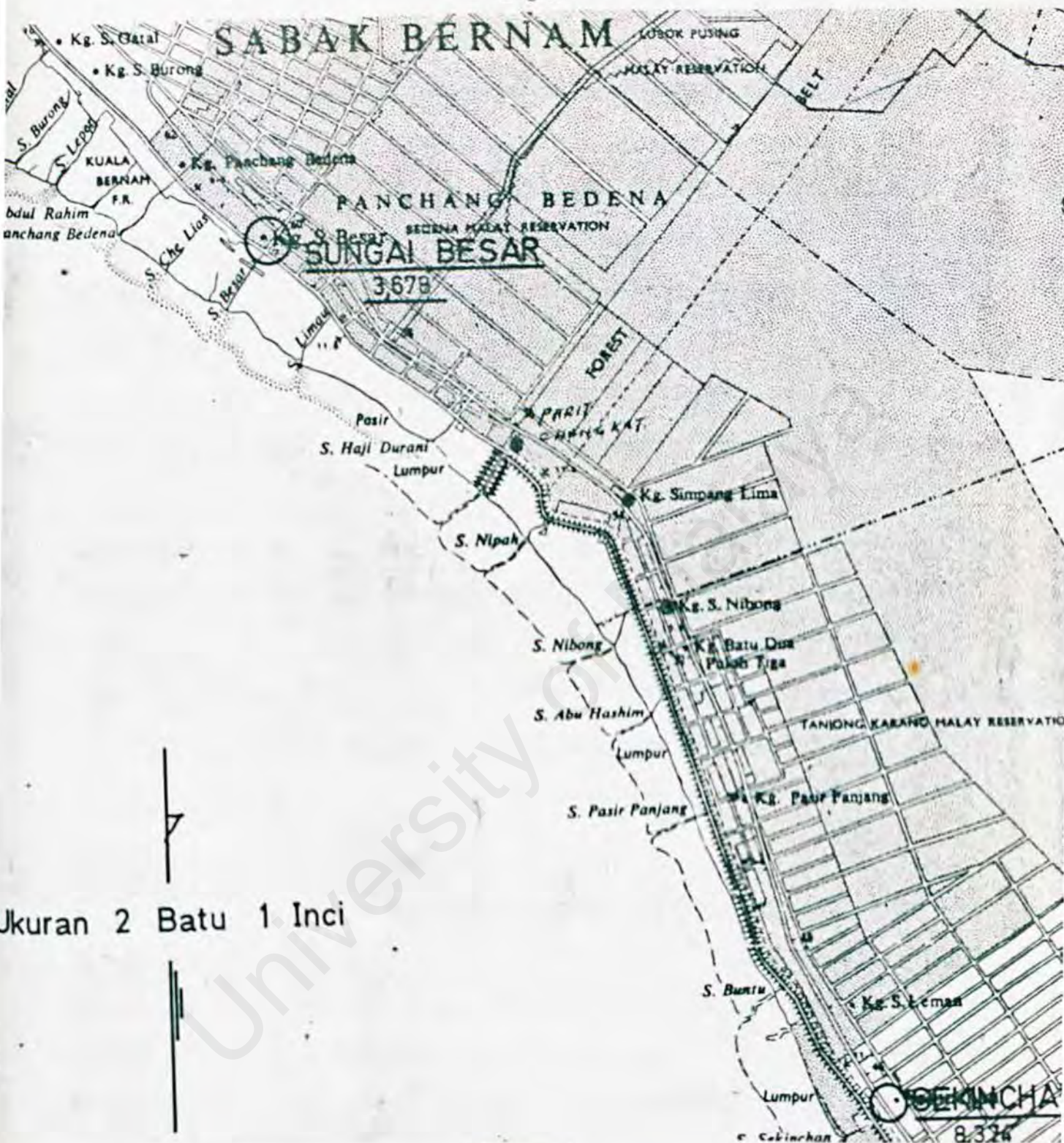


Diagram 1

The Location of Kampong Parit Changkat

The villagers in Kampong Parit Changkat are almost entirely Javanese. Of the twenty families surveyed, only one non-Javanese family resided in the village. The whole community adheres to the Muslim faith. Religious homogeneity as well as racial homogeneity is prevalent and it fosters greater cohesion among the villagers as all members share and practise the same values and norms. Besides, the villagers also share common economic activities which have its basis in agriculture. Fishing too, is an important secondary activity in which most of the members of the community are involved. Besides this, the Javanese also cultivate a garden where they grow their vegetables such as long beans, chillies, etc. The people of Parit Changkat thus are almost entirely self-sufficient. Rice, the staple food of most Malaysians comes from the villagers own fields. Their proteins too are obtained from the canals (parits) in the form of fish such as Lobotes (ikan sepat) and catfish (ikan keli), which are caught with cast nets and by the hook and line method. Supplements to the main meals are found in the back garden.

Within this dense settlement, the household typically forms the basic unit of production and consumption and each carries out virtually the same tasks and activities as all other households. The family is also the social group and economic and domestic relationships are closely bound together. Community homogeneity thus represents another major characteristic of this rural village.

The population figures reflect an almost equal number of males and females - 81 males and 84 females. Most of the older members of the community are themselves migrants from other villages who settled down in

Sungei Nipah. These numbered fifty-nine in all. The village thence is not an old established one although it was developed along traditional lines.

There are two suraus to serve the community and religious activities seem to play a prominent role in the villager's daily lives. All local community meetings (that is matters that pertain to the affairs of the community) are held at the surau. The surau is also a centre for religious education. Formal education is provided for by the Malay medium schools situated close to the village.

Kampong Parit Changkat, like all other rural villages has a headman known as the "Tok Sidang". He takes care of all administrative matters regarding the village, and presides over all meetings dealing with community problems. The Sidang obtains few rewards for his pains beyond the gifts of status and prestige and a minimal allowance paid to him by the Government.

Generally then, we can say that Kampong Parit Changkat does reflect a typical rural village in West Malaysia.

Objectives of Study

This study proposes to investigate at the micro level the economic and social impact of outmigration from a specific rural community in a developing country on the welfare and development of that community as well as on that of the economy as a whole, taking full cognisance of the selectivity of the migration process and its consequences. The social situations and processes that emerge at the household level will also be dealt with extensively.

The evidence and arguments used to illustrate this impact will be drawn almost entirely from a detailed study of a rural village in Selangor, West Malaysia. References to studies carried out elsewhere by social scientists like Jim Anderson, Torraine Corner and Brandes will also be included. In a strict sense, the findings reported here and the conclusions drawn from them pertain only to West Malaysia, in so far as West Malaysia shares characteristics with other developing nations, however, the findings and conclusions may be generalized to them.

There exists substantial literature on rural-urban migration with emphasis on determinants of outmigration and the patterns and flow of migration movements. Little however has been written about the dramatic effects which a movement of a group of people/individuals could have on the dynamics of the socio-economic structure of the place of origin, with the exception of Pryor, Soon Lee Ying, Ramesh Chander and Harbans Singh. But in general, the feedback effect of outmigration has been grossly overlooked. This proposed study hence attempts to provide a new dimension to the existing knowledge on the effects of outmigration in Malaysia.

This study will also provide much needed information for policy makers. Rural outmigration is a topic of major concern to the Malaysian Government in formulating policies in a number of vital areas related both to agricultural development and to the overall development of the national economy. Most of the rural development strategies are based on macro-level studies whose findings and hypotheses were generalized to other rural communities. Hence, this study may provide some ideas on the suitability of

using such generalizations in formulating rural strategies in particular villages.

Finally, it is hoped that this report will provide the reader with an acute illustration of the situation in a Malaysian rural village as well as to stimulate further interest in local studies on the impact of outmigration on the rural place of origin.

Methodology

The location chosen for the study was Upper Selangor, in the district of Sabak Bernam. Kampong Parit Changkat, Sungai Nipah, represents an agricultural-based dual economy village. The area was chosen primarily because of the fact that the area has experienced a considerable volume of outmigration, thus allowing for a proper study on the impact of outmigration on the village itself.

Fieldwork commenced in May 1980 and lasted for a period of two weeks. An initial pilot survey was carried out on the first day of arrival to determine the extent of the village territory and the physical characteristics of the village proper. An initial census of all accessible and available households was undertaken to ascertain their migration experience and to outline the social, economic and demographic characteristics of the population. The number of families covered amounted to twenty, nineteen of which had experiences of outmigration. It was felt that the quickest and best means of extracting impact data was to be adopted as foster children by one of the families in the village. The Tok Sidang (village headman) generously conceded

to the proposition. This allowed for the easy establishment of rapport among the villagers, and proved to be a boon in the long run as the period of fieldwork was limited to two weeks. Furthermore, being constantly in the village, it allowed for easy familiarization with village activities both at the family level as well as the community at large. Besides, certain significant information can only be observed through integration among the villagers and not through questionnaires.

To supplement the information collected through the use of the participant observation method, informal interviews were also carried out. The villagers seemed to more responsive to friendly "chatting" rather than to formalized questionnaires. Furthermore, the interviews were carried out during the leisure hours when residents gather at a member's home to chat and spend some time. This represents the village grape-vine which keeps the female residents up-to-date with the latest goings on in the village. The informal "chats" covered questions on the inflow and outflow of migrant cash remittances and the uses they are put to / ^{and} questions on the ownership of material goods and the villagers attitudes towards outmigration and possible future plans to migrate. Residents were also questioned on whether they perceived a change in the family structure in relation to the wider social structure of the village, with the increasing outmigration of their children. The interviews were all carried out in the Malay language. One problem which cropped up because of the language used, was that the people of the village, being mostly Javanese, did not speak standard Malay. Rather their language was interspersed with Javanese words and a Javanese twang/accnt, making it difficult for an outsider to comprehend the locals. But the problem was

eradicated, for within a week, one became familiar with the intonations and progress in the collection of data was accelerated.

It is interesting to note that the Kampong folk were initially concerned as to whether we were connected with the Government administration and whether the Government would have access to the information given. But once they were assured that we were from the University and that all information gathered was confidential and strictly for study purposes, they were both relieved and satisfied and were remarkably willing to divulge any and every kind of information.

The Village

There is a small village in the agricultural valley with a substantial land area. The land is the primary source of livelihood. Every village has a plot of land, which is divided into several plots. The primary crop is rice. The rice is grown in the valley and the other crops are grown on the hillside. The village is a small one, with a population of about 100 people. The village is a small one, with a population of about 100 people. The village is a small one, with a population of about 100 people.

CHAPTER II

THE VILLAGE SITUATION: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

BACKGROUND OF THE VILLAGE

The importance of the socio-economic background of the rural village cannot be underestimated. If one is to understand and assess the impact that an outmigration can have on the village socio-economic structure, one has to be acquainted with the traditionally existing way of life of the rural villagers. Thus any change in the dynamics of that fundamentally traditional structure can be seen in correlation with the recent outmigratory trends. This chapter also proposes to enlighten the reader on the role of the community in general with special emphasis on the role of the nuclear family in relation to the individuals and the wider socio-economic framework of the village.

The Economy

Kampong Parit Changkat is an agricultural society with a subsistence based dual economy: padi (rice) cultivation and coconut and cocoa plantations. The land is the primary source of livelihood. Every villager owns a plot of land, be it freehold land or leasehold land. The poorest own at least an acre which the richer ones own anywhere from five to ten acres. The average family usually never aspires beyond the 3 acre zone. Of this amount, 2 acres normally constitute padi land while the remaining acre makes up the kebun.

Agriculture is an all encompassing way of life and farming represents the primary occupation of the villagers. All the villagers are involved in both the cultivation of rice and in the planting of cash crops like cocoa and coconut palms.

Rice is cultivated extensively by the villagers of Kampong Parit Changkat, the most popular variety of grain that is cultivated is the MR 1 and the MR 7, both of which were introduced by the National Padi Board (NPB) to stimulate higher yields. It has been estimated that each acre of land can produce a yield of 30 sacks of rice, indicating that agricultural productivity is relatively high. Each family normally reserves 10 sacks of rice for local consumption and the surplus is sold at \$45/- a sack of rice to the local branch of the National Padi Board, located in Sungei Besar.

With exception of the minor 'nouveau riche', who normally rent out most of their padi land, the labour required for padi cultivation is usually provided by the nuclear family. With the exception of controlling of water levels and fertilizing, which is done solely by the head of the household, the remaining activities of planting, sowing, weeding, harvesting, etc. are carried out jointly by both the parents. This indicates the lack of differentiation in sex roles among the villages. "Field watching" during the harvesting season is usually done by all members of the family, particularly the children. Labour is usually hired for ploughing, harvesting and threshing. This concept is referred to as "upah". In return for their services, the hired labourers are usually paid in cash or sacks of rice. The percentage is usually agreed on before the work is done. Usually 20% of the yield is paid to the labourers. During harvesting time, the locals themselves

work as hired labour on their neighbour's fields. Each person can earn as much as M\$200/= per season.

Besides cultivating the fields, fishing in the parit (canals) is also a common activity. This is usually done by the head of the household but is not strictly his role as women have also been seen fishing. Sometimes the fish are caught for sale but usually it is for family consumption. Catfish (ikan keli) and lobotes (ikan sepat) are the common varieties that are caught. The ikan sepat is sometimes dried and salted and sold to the Chinese middlemen. The local children also enjoy fishing but for them it is but a past-time.

The other major agricultural activity which provides a regular income for the villagers is the cultivation of coconut palms and cocoa plants. It is a widespread activity and every family has its own "kebun" (mini plantation), where cocoa and coconut trees abound. Coconut cultivation represents a traditional agricultural activity. Cocoa on the other hand is a new activity encouraged by the Government in its promotion of crop diversification. Being a crop/plant with which the villagers are unfamiliar with, it has resulted in neglect of the crop and hence a low yield is not surprising. The coconut palms on the other hand are a more fruitful crop.

Harvesting of the fruits is usually done once in two to three months. Traditionally, the head of the family did the plucking of the nuts while his wife and children helped in unhusking, splitting and removing of the flesh from the shells. Later the shells are burned and used as charcoal, while the kernel is smoked, dried and packed into sacks for sale. But today,

it has become the common practise to hire labour. A Chinese middlemen plucks, unhusks, splits and processes the copra. For his efforts he is paid a certain percentage of the yields. The produce is sold either as nuts or in the form of copra, at M\$30/= a pikul.

All activities regarding the cocoa plants, on the other hand, are carried/solely by the family, more especially the female head of the household. The cocoa pods are plucked, split and the seeds removed. The cocoa seeds are sold to the same village middleman who buys the coconut produce. Usually, wet cocoa seeds fetch a price of M\$1.10 per kati while dried cocoa seeds can fetch twice that amount. The cocoa plants were recently planted and as such most of them have not yet reached a mature growth to produce a maximum amount of cocoa pods. Not surprisingly then, the yields are extremely low.

Besides the afore-mentioned agricultural activities, every family cultivates its own vegetable plot and fruit trees. The vegetables are grown for daily consumption. The most commonly grown plants are the water convolvulus (kangkong) which grows abundantly in the parit in the front of the house, long beans (kacang panjang), french beans (kacang pendek), loofah, marrow and bitter gourd (berjenis-jenis labu), brinjals (terong), ladies fingers (kacang benci), spinach (bayam), sweet potatoes (ubi manis), tapioca (ubi kayu), lemon grass (serai), cucumbers (timun), tomatoes (terong masam) and chillies (cabai). Besides this, the villagers also plant sugar cane and sugar is extracted from these plants to supplement the daily consumption. Fruit trees also abound. The most popular varieties are mango trees (mangga), banana trees (pisang), papaya trees (betik), guava trees (jambu batu), jack fruit trees

(chempedak), star-fruit trees (buah bintang), soursop (durian belanda) and the rose-apple trees (jambu air). The diet of the local villagers is well compensated for where roughage is concerned.

To conclude then, it would be possible to say that the residents of Kampong Parit Changkat are more or less self-sufficient, with fish and rice from the padi fields and vegetables and fruits from their own backyard. The peasant economy is not only labour intensive but it also maximises the utility of the land.

The Village Infra-structure

Kampong Parit Changkat, being a rural village with an agricultural based subsistence economy, logically would lack the social amenities found in a town. The only available social facilities in and around the area is the surau, a Malay medium school and a small provision shop which stocks all the basic goods which the villagers might require. Besides this, domestic science classes are conducted once a week at the surau for the benefit of the newly-weds and the unmarried females. The villagers thus lead a rather simple existence.

The standard of living of the villagers is relatively low compared to town standards. This is not surprising considering that the fact that the average income per family per month amounts to anywhere from M\$200 to \$300/=. The poorer ones have to contend with barely a M\$100/= to M\$150/= per month, while the richer ones could bag around M\$1,000/= per month. But the majority of the people fall into the average category. Bearing in mind that fertility

rates in the village are relatively high (with at least 6 to 7 children in a family) the ^{per}/capita income will also be correspondingly low. In view of this, savings are almost negligible and according to the villagers they barely manage to make ends meet.

The houses that the residents live in, were in most cases built by the head of the household himself. They are constructed in the typical Malay style architecture. The basic construction material is wood and the roof is normally made of zinc. The inevitable verandah and rickety step ladder are features of such a house. All the houses are raised and the area beneath the house functions as a roosting place for the few hens, chickens and ducks that the villagers rear.

Normally, the houses are constructed with one living room, one large room where everyone sleeps together, and a kitchen. The bathroom, comprises of a small shack constructed of zinc and is situated a couple of yards from the house itself. The toilet is a communal one where 3/4 houses share the same premises. It resembles a small shack constructed out of zinc. A huge hole is dug below the shack which has been built on stilts. The accumulated waste material is most probably used as fertilizer for both the cocoa plants and the coconut trees. For the villagers, toilet facilities are of little importance. Rather, they feel that owning material goods like a radio, a television set, etc. are of greater importance as the prestige value accorded to such commodities is very high. Two out of the families studied possess a car. They are of course, the most wealthy residents of the village. The usual mode of transport is none other than the bicycle and practically every family owns at least one. Bus transport is the common means of travelling out of the village.

At the household level, we find that electricity is available to everyone but some families have yet to take advantage of this amenity as they are unable to afford the cost of the wiring and light fixtures. Piped water facilities are also available but it has been suspected that the water is but purified "parit" water. That could account for why the locals do not drink the piped water. Rather, they collect rain water which runs off the zinc roof, and this is boiled before consumption.

The villagers start the day at the crack of dawn. This is necessary because they have to finish tending the rice fields before the sun becomes too hot to work. All the villagers consume three meals a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breakfast is usually served around seven a.m. The meal usually comprises of Malay cakes (kuih) or fried bananas and sweet potatoes. Lunch is at midday and it comprises a balanced meal of rice, fish and a vegetable dish. Beans and gourds are the common vegetables eaten and the only leafy vegetables consumed comes in the form of tapioca leaves and water convulvulus. One unique dish associated with the villagers is "Ulam" where raw vegetables like tapioca leaves, long beans, etc. are consumed with the accompaniment of a chillie padi paste. The meals are usually rounded off with fruits from the garden.

The final meal of the day is dinner which normally resembles the midday meal. Beverages are usually drunk early in the morning. A unique peculiarity of the villagers is that all beverages are drunk without the addition of milk. Rose-flavoured tea tops their list of favourite beverages. Meat, on the other hand, is a luxury item. It is hardly even consumed except on feast days, weddings, festivals and other ritual celebrations such as

the circumcision ritual. Meat is considered a very expensive item priced at M\$5/= a kati. In view of the fact that the basic meals are practically 'free', to buy meat at such an expensive price would logically be wasteful spending. Hence it is only consumed during celebrations. Weddings, and other celebrations are cardinal in allowing for greater social integration among the community members. Greater integration could also lead to greater social unity and a wellknit community as Parit Changkat undoubtedly is. This is because at every celebration, the whole village is invited and everybody lends a helping hand in the celebrations. This social norm has become perpetuated in the social framework of the village.

But Kampong Parit Changkat does nevertheless suffer from a number of drawbacks. There is a total absence of drains or services to remove excretion and garbage. This has resulted in the construction of unhygienic toilets and the dumping of rubbish in the backyard. Such conditions will naturally encourage the propagation of house flies and other insects. Bugs and other unidentifiable insects also seem to have their own niches in the wooden boards of the house. Furthermore, the canal (parit) situated directly in front of the house acts as a perfect breeding ground for the numerous varieties of mosquitoes. In the face of such unhygienic conditions, it is surprising to note that the illness rates among the villagers is extremely low.

It was also discovered that the villagers are an extremely superstitious group. They believe in the existence of demons (pontianaks) and ghosts (hantu). They also believe in the rearing of "jins" - a kind of demon which lives with the family that owns it, and can perform supernatural

deeds. "Pantangs" (superstitious dos and don'ts) are adhered to faithfully by all residents. In view of the harmful effects of evil spirits, all families take precautionary measures to ward off the evil. A corn cob is usually hung at the entrance to the door to ward off the spirits from entering the house. Within the house, bags of salt and herbs and even old shoes are hung on the ceiling. All doors and windows must be shut by dusk, or else the evil spirits which come out after dark will enter the house and disturb the people. Thus, we note the significant influence of superstitious beliefs on the daily lives of the villagers.

To put it in a nutshell, Kampong Parit Changkat is a typical rural village, with its own set of values, norms and beliefs which influence the daily lives of the residents. The social structure is undoubtedly a typical traditional structure to which all the villagers conscientiously adhere to.

The Education Level

Most of the residents of Kampong Parit Changkat have received at least some form of education. Only 24.2% of the people interviewed had received no formal education whatsoever. Residents educated at both the primary level and the secondary level of education form the backbone of the society. Approximately 36.9% have received primary education while 37.5% have reached the secondary level of education (see Table 2.1). It has been found that it was this latter 37.5% of the residents who had the highest tendencies to migrate out of the village. Recent trends reveal that the higher the education level, the greater the tendency to migrate. It is not surprising then that the 1.2% of the residents who have attained tertiary

education, no longer reside at the village. In view of this recent trend, one is not much surprised to find that the remaining members of the village comprised of the uneducated and those who have attained a primary level of education. Their village they will have to find it beyond the borders of the village.

Table 2.1

The Role of the Indian Family

Age Category	LEVEL OF EDUCATION									
	No formal education		Std. 1-3		Std. 4-6		Secondary		Tertiary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
60+	3	1			1					
55 - 59	2				1					
50 - 54	3	5		1						
45 - 49		5			2					
40 - 44		5	1		1	1				
35 - 39		1						1		
30 - 34		1		3	5	4	1			
25 - 29		2			5	7	4	4		
20 - 24					5	5	9	7	2	
15 - 19					2		7	19		
10 - 14					3	4	6	4		
5 - 9	1	3	9	1						
1 - 4	6									
Below 1	1									

Key: M = Male
F = Female

Two Malay medium schools situated near the Kampong provide educational facilities for the villagers. Unfortunately, the highest level of education offered here is the Form 5 level. Thus, if villagers desire to further their studies they will have to find it beyond the borders of the village.

The Role of the Nuclear Family

Rural communities are considered homogeneous in that the basic organizational ^{for} cell/all individuals is the family or kinship group. Family ties for villagers are generally viewed as being strong and involving a host of mutual rights, obligations and loyalties. Wolf (1966) spoke of the existence of a "multi-stranded relationship". Thus the household is not only a social group but also a production unit and so closely bound are economic and domestic relationships that household members themselves can make no distinction between them.

There is no distinctive sex role among members of the family. Even the adolescent males are quite adept at cooking. Usually the mother does all the domestic chores with the help of the elder female children. The male children are usually delegated duties such as running errands, plucking fruits, etc. There exists no standard division of labour within the household. The children help the parents in every way they can and vice versa.

The whole family is very closely knit. Respect is always given to the elders. The parents are held in the highest regard. The younger children

listen to and respect the older children. Should a quarrel take place (it is the exception rather than the rule), it is usually settled by an elder male sibling or else by the head of the household. The family is also religiously well-knit. Prayers are offered five times a day and family members usually gather together once a week for a family recital of the Koran. The female children are usually closer to the mothers while the male children identify with their father.

During harvesting time, the family descends to the rice fields "en masse". There is no role allocation observed, everyone does what he is most capable of doing. The family then, the most homogenous unit, exists by one motto "eat together, sleep together, suffer together". This represents a typical traditional rural way of life with its own unique set of norms and values.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF OUT-MIGRATION ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE RURAL VILLAGE OF ORIGIN

The movement en masse of a group of people from a rural community has dramatic effects on the demographic characteristics as well as influencing the social and economic growth of the place of origin. Wolf (1957) pointed out that the rural village cannot resist being broken down under certain socio-economic conditions. He feels that economic individualism and the dissolution of community barriers against outside commodities and ideas tend to undermine the sense of village identity and cohesion that prevails under traditional circumstances. But is this development inevitable for every rural village?

The majority of the migrants from Kampong Parit Changkat fall into one age category - fifteen to twenty-four years of age. Not surprisingly, this age category of residents also incorporates the most highly educated members of the community. Why is it that this particular age group usually has greater tendencies to migrate than other age groups? According to the interviewees, the main impetus to migrate arose from a need to further one's education and in search of white-collar employment opportunities. Due to the fact that the schools around the village territory do not provide for education beyond the Form Five level, residents who want to pursue an education will have to migrate to places where further educational facilities are available. Others who have already achieved an education, migrate to pursue an academic career. Being an agricultural community white collar employment opportunities

are non-existent in the village. Educated residents thus have to venture beyond the village in pursuit of employment.

Another major factor which accounts for widespread migration is marriage (see Table below). Exogamous marriages are common in the village. Women who marry out of the village generally settle down in their husband's village since the village basically follows a patrilocal system. Such migration patterns then are dictated by village residence modes rather than a matter of one's own choice.

Besides this, one has to take into account the pull factors of the place of destination. The attraction of city life, the neon lights, the entertainment galore, the hustle and bustle of daily life, all seem to beckon the members of the rural village, and having been exposed to town life via the experiences of the migrants, as well as at the nearest town, Sungei Besar (If only once a week on market days), the yearn to venture further afield is stimulated. The stimulus to migrate then is ever present. The major concern of this report is to establish how widespread an effect/impact does such an outmigration have on the socio-economic structure of Kampong Parit Changkat.

The Demographic Pattern

The population figures for the twenty families that were interviewed numbered 165 people. Of this total, 81 are males and 84 females, indicating that sex distribution is almost equal. Nineteen out of the twenty families interviewed had migrant children. The number of migrants for the twenty families stood at fifty-one with twenty (39.2%) of them being males and 31

(60.8%) females. Most of them were in the 15-24 years of age category.

As stressed earlier, this category of members represented the highest educated residents. With outmigration, the village loses a disproportionate percentage of the younger and better educated population. As a result, the proportion of the total population economically dependent increases as the relative share of productive workers is reduced.

The demographic pattern of the village is also drastically altered. Firstly, we have a large reduction in population. About 31% of the residents of the 20 families had migrated. But more important, it has given rise to a village that comprises of the very old and the very young. This drastically alters the standard demographical pyramidal structure of a developing village. The stayers are also a very much less educated community. Recent trends reveal that the more educated a villager the more likely he is to migrate. The fact that the village is now experiencing a drastic drain of skilled, educated people, could lead to a decline and possibly a stagnation of the village itself. Therefore, the relatively poor situation of the non-migrants in rural areas may be to some degree a direct result of the drain of educated residents. Outmigration of younger people and of the more aspiring and energetic would mean that the remaining residents will be very much less receptive to new innovative methods on improving agricultural productivity. A dire lack of personnel who are capable of stimulating developmental programmes for the village is also evident. Consequently, the village will stagnate. In view of this, we can say that the effects of outmigration on the demographic structure is by no means insignificant.

Agricultural Productivity

In a study carried out in Montserrat*, migration seriously impeded the production of sea-island cotton - the basis of this small island's economy. This led to changes tending to create a labourer class. In a Vietnamese village studied by Sansom, the large number of male absentees created a substantial shortage of agricultural labour, hence wages rose rapidly. Added to this, technological changes were introduced and production rose.

In Kampong Parit Changkat, it has been found that with outmigration of family members, the need to hire extra labour is paramount, especially in families where young males have migrated. In the rice fields extra labour has to be hired during harvesting time and this reduces the total incoming cash from sales of the crop. The income level of the family then is affected. If income level changes, then it is only logical to assume that the standard of living will also be affected. In the "kebun", extra labour is also hired to pluck, unhusk and process the coconuts. In one household it was found that prior to migration, the sons used to attend to all the "kebun" activities, but now the head of the household has been forced to hire a Chinese middleman to harvest the coconut crop. The family thus loses some vital income to the hired labourer. Since the economy is subsistence based, the amount of income derived from the sale of crops is the only liquid cash for the family. Thence even a minimal drop in that cash can be seen as having tremendous effects on the family itself.

* Cornell, Migration from Rural Areas.

It can also be argued that with the drain of educated people via migration, the remaining population will be very much less receptive to modern innovative methods, thus stagnating agricultural productivity. But to conclusively establish such a conclusion would be difficult.

Impact of Migrant Remittances

Brandes alleges that migrant remittances have played a great part in providing the stayers with a means for an increasingly higher standard of living. Don V. Hart (1971) investigated this discipline in his study of Barrio Caticugan. He found that many of the women working outside the barrio were sending remittances regularly and one had even sent so much that her parents were able to build a new house. Visaria (1972) in another study, likewise found that cash remittances reduced the need for farmers to sell small surpluses and enabled them to generate savings which were invested in better housing. Padki (1964) in his study on two Indian villages revealed that remittances did indeed have an impact on the income level. Is the impact equally as significant in the case of Kampong Parit Changkat?

It was found that remittances from migrants usually arrive in either monetary forms such as cash or non-monetary forms such as food and clothing. More often than not, cash remittances are usually of a minimal amount of only about M\$20/= to M\$30/= per month. To a city dweller, it is but a pittance but for the rural villager, this is ^a/considerable sum especially when compared to the low family income per month of around M\$100/=. One must bear in mind that being a basically subsistence economy, cash transactions are few, so much so that any income is vital. It helps to raise the low

percapita income of the family, thus allowing for better living conditions.

Migrant cash remittances are spent in various ways. More often than not it supplements daily expenses on food and groceries. Sometimes, the money is spent on household ware (like a certain pyrex/glass dish maybe which the mother had been eyeing for some time) or even to buy household linen, furnishings and individual apparel.

On festive seasons such as Hari Raya, the amount spent on these items are significantly more as remittances from migrants during festive times increases correspondingly. It's only logical then to assume that the more money coming into the house, the greater the powers of spending, be it on food, clothes or otherwise. This could result in a significant rise in living standards of the stayers. But one must bear in mind that such remittance generating effects can be counteracted by the fact that with the migration of youthful members, the stayers are forced to hire more labour, which means a reduction in total income. But such a case need apply to only a few households. As such, the general impact of remittances is still significant in the case of most families.

Besides spending migrant cash remittances on food and clothing, another vital avenue for channeling such resources lies in the educational field. Most households use such remittances to pay for the children's education. The money is used to buy school books and to pay for travelling expenses to and from school. The impact of remittances then can be seen in the light of increased educational opportunities for the remaining members of the family. In the long run this could further stimulate migration because

it has been found that with increased education, the existing trends reflect an increasing tendency to migrate, further affecting the demographic, social and economic structure of the village.

As remarked earlier, migrant remittances can also take the form of non-monetary rewards such as food, clothing and other material objects. Every time migrants visit the village, they usually buy back food from their place of residence. More often than not, the kind of food bought is usually a luxury item in the village e.g. expensive fish, chicken, beef, sweets, biscuits, fireworks, etc. One must bear in mind that to the villagers who are used to eating fish reared in padi fields, other varieties of fish such as ikan bawal (pomfret), ikan kurau (threadfin) etc. are expensive luxuries. Added to this, fresh fish is only consumed abundantly during the rice growing season. Once the padi begins to ripen and the fields are drained, the villagers consume only dried salted fish which were caught and processed earlier and very rarely do they get to eat fresh fish unless they can afford it. Meat, on the other hand, is a totally rare commodity which is only eaten during festivals and other celebrations. Villagers sometimes do not get to taste meat for months on end. Only the "nouveau riche" locals consume meat once in a while. Meat then is a prestigious product, placing consumers a rung above the others.

Furthermore, the type of clothing that the migrants buy back are from the city and this is very much different from the traditional baju-kurung and sarongs that the villagers are used to. Villagers now can be seen wearing city garb like jeans, knee-length dresses, etc. Some of the more daring females even wear slacks and jeans as well as a thick layer of make-up. The migrants then represent models of city influence which non-migrants can

emulate. The influence of city life is significant in the mode of dress of the rural folk. Styles have now changed and more and more villagers are discarding their traditional garb. Could this in time to come undermine the traditional Malay culture?

There are other forms of non-monetary contributions from migrants. It was found that in some cases migrants even bought back prestigious consumer goods such as hifi sets, fans, television sets, refrigerators, etc. for the family as well as for their own ^{use} when they come to visit. This reflects an obviously significant rise in the standard of living of migrant families. More important, it marks the infiltration of city trends and lifestyle into the traditional rural structure. Added to this, the prestige afforded by the ownership of such items is extremely coveted and owners are placed on the upper rungs of society. Families with migrants then have a greater opportunity of attaining a higher status in society. Thus outmigration has played a part in up-grading living standards and the status of their rural families.

Drain of Income from Rural to Urban Areas

If remittances to the area of origin and other indirect benefits of outmigration do not offset the cost of that area's investment in the rearing and education of the outmigrant (remembering that the migrants are more likely to be the potentially most productive members of their generation rather than potentially unproductive burdens) the net result would be a transfer of resources from an area of poverty to an area of relative affluence.

It was revealed that a substantial proportion of the migrants left to pursue a higher education. The responsibility of supporting migrants till they complete their education thence falls on the shoulders of their parents or siblings. The burden is great considering the high cost of education and the high cost of living in towns, coupled with the low yearly income of the average family. This burden is even greater when more than one member in the family migrates. The outcome of such a situation then is one which will affect the remaining family members.

Thus, not only do we witness a drain of income from the rural to the urban areas, but we also find that the sacrifices made by the stayers are numerous. At times, they might not be able to make ends meet, forcing the stayers to forego many necessities and make do with what little they have. They live by one policy in times of hardship - "we eat when we have and starve when we don't" - and this will see them through. Sometimes, to support the migrants, the family resorts to borrowing from the middlemen to whom they sell their produce. In time, the villagers might become so heavily in debt that they would be completely at the mercy of the middlemen. As it is, the middlemen have a rather strong hold on the villagers at the present moment. The vicious circle might go on and on and when it will end, only time will tell.

Besides this, the family also witnesses a loss in potential income with the emigration of each member. Young adults of both sexes usually engage in harvesting activities twice a year. They hire themselves out as field labour and during each harvesting season, an individual can earn anywhere from M\$100/= to M\$300/= depending on the labour input. With the outmigration

of these adults, the family loses this vital additional income. The larger the number of migrants in a family, the greater the loss in income. As such, the standard of living of non-migrants is affected with the decrease in per capita income. My postulation is that in the beginning when members first migrate, the family will experience a loss in income and a lower standard of living. But once a migrant is firmly established with a regular job and remittances are sent constantly to the village, the stayers begin to enjoy an increasing standard of living.

Change in Occupational Structure

Many residents migrated for the sole aim of acquiring an education. Having attained this goal, new job opportunities which were not so strenuous as traditional occupations were now open to them. Most of the fairly well-educated residents then took this opportunity to break away from the traditional rural occupation, that is, farming and moved into the clerical and administrative fields. The occupational distribution of village members thus indicates a healthy trend of increasing concentration of rural population from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations like factory jobs, contract work, teaching, etc. A greater diversity in the occupational structure is evident as an indirect consequence of outmigration.

Impact at the Family Level

Cornell in his Indian case study claims that with the migration of mainly adult males, the economic importance of the other groups (more especially the females) is enhanced. They do more of the agricultural work

and must make important agricultural decisions and ensure that the decisions are implemented. In many instances, the women who assume these roles take on a significant new responsibility and a resultant impact on their prestige is evident. McEvory in his study on Sabo village social life and organization has come up with the postulation that the practise of outmigration has contributed not only to the formation of particular female-headed households but also to the persistence of this household type as a socio-cultural phenomena of considerable significance in modern day Sabo village life.

But the situation in Kampong Parit Changkat is a completely different one, where there is no strict role allocation for the sexes. Thus, where such a lack of sex-discrimination in working roles, at least between husband and wife and among children, is an accepted pattern, migration then can merely mean an extension of family responsibilities, without any dramatic social consequences. In Parit Changkat, it is not the older generation comprising the parents that have tendencies to migrate. Rather it is the children who migrate individually. Most of the migrants are those who leave the village immediately after finishing school. Hence, while they stayed in the village, they would have been pre-occupied with schooling activities, so much so that very little time is spent on household activities. The younger female children provide general assistance in menial domestic chores such as washing the dishes and sweeping the floor. The older female children who are not schooling generally perform the more difficult domestic chores such as washing the clothes, and helping out with the cooking. The mother, of course, makes all final decisions regarding the domestic home and the children merely assist her. Thus, if one child migrates, the chores previously done by her are usually undertaken by the remaining

siblings and the mother. No doubt this means increased responsibility for the remaining siblings, the mother herself has to do more work as she has now lost some domestic help. This is felt even more if the migrant happens to be an older non-schooling child and the remaining siblings are either too young or too busy with school to take over the extra chores.

In the rice fields and plantations, the father with the help of the mother usually does all the work. Any help provided by the children is merely secondary in nature so that an absence of that help has only an imperceptible effect on the parents. But the fact that many of the male children tend to migrate out of the village would mean that there would be no one to step into the father's shoes when he becomes too old to work. This means that no matter how old the parents are, they will have to carry on regardless or else hire out their land to other farmers. It is possible that in the near future, a landlord-tenant class system might emerge.

Furthermore, migration into urban areas disrupts the familial patterns as individual members work beyond the village. Parents are separated from the children and an important area of shared concern and activity is lost. This could lead to weakening family ties.

Sometimes the fact that there is no one to take over the agricultural duties, can stimulate the remaining residents to migrate as well. It was found that with the outmigration of the children, the parents have begun to feel lonely living in the village. They talked of plans to migrate to join their children, because they were too old to work the fields and were feeling desolate in the village with only one or two children. We can assume then

that outmigration of individual members can stimulate the stayers to migrate as well.

Changes in Attitudes towards City Life

Traditionally, the villager's world view was such that the Kampong was the villager's world. To them, the village represented the ideal and only place to live. With outmigration, we have observed the infiltration of ideas and trends from the city into the closed village community. Since olden days, the villagers always considered the city to be a place of sin, busy and impersonal. It was hence a bad place to live. With the outmigration of members of the village, it foresaw a tremendous change in the attitudes of the villagers towards city life. Migrants who returned to the village to visit their relatives told the people about city life and its advantages. This has created a greater awareness among the people making them more receptive to city life. This is evident in the fact that some stayers have even revealed the desire to migrate to the city. The "Kampong is best" attitude has been revised to allow in city influences and ideas. Of course, there will inevitably be a few extremely traditional locals who cling on to the belief that city life is bad. Invariably, these are the families that do not have any migrant members. But the majority of them have exhibited a favourable reaction towards city life, leading one to conclude that the people are undergoing considerable psychological change and this changing attitude could have great significance in undermining the future economic transformation of the society towards the desired goal.

In conclusion then one will not be far wrong in saying that the outmigration of rural villagers has had a perceptible effect on the socio-economic structure of the village. The fact that the study was a cross-sectional one means that we have only managed to deal with the individual consequences of migration in the short run. To obtain a morewholistic picture of the situation, the effects of outmigration should be considered in its totality in a preferably longitudinal study.

In any attempt to analyse the effects of outmigration on the village, one must not overlook other important factors which could have accounted for the effects noted in Chapter III. The fact that the village is located on the main road which connects Kuala Selangor and Teluk Anson, allows easy accessibility. Geographical mobility is greatly enhanced especially since communication facilities like bus services are very well developed. Thus, not only do villagers have easy access to the outside community, but material and informational flow from the outside is also enhanced. Trends, thoughts, ideas and city influences rapidly penetrate into the village and inevitably affect the attitudes of the villagers.

Furthermore, the village is situated a mere 45 kilometers from the district capital town of Sepang Besar. The town is well-developed and provides social facilities such as cinema, beauty salons, restaurants, shops and houses. Therefore, being near to the town, villagers may experience

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

We have seen in the preceeding chapters the socio-economic structure of the village as it exists and more important the effects that outmigration has had on this structure. In view of this, a number of questions were raised regarding the issue: To what extent has the impact of outmigration transformed the traditional rural village: Is outmigration the sole factor contributing to the change in the socio-economic structure:

In any attempt to analyse the effects of outmigration on the village, one must not overlook other important factors which could have accounted for the effects mentioned in Chapter III. The fact that the village is located on the main trunk road which connects Kuala Selangor and Teluk Anson, allows for easy accessibility. Geographical mobility is greatly enhanced especially since communication facilities like bus services are very well developed. Thus, not only do villagers have easy access to the outside communities, but material and informational flow from the outside is also enhanced. Trends, thoughts, ideas and city influences can easily penetrate into the village and possibly affect the attitudes of the villagers.

Furthermore, the village is situated a mere 16 kilometers from the district capital town of Sungei Besar. The town is well-developed and possess social amenities such as cinemas, beauty saloons, merchandise shops and banks. Tuesday, being market day in the town, witnesses many visitors

from Kampong Parit Changkat. The village folk are hence quite well-exposed to town life. In fact, most of their possessions such as household items, clothes, electric goods and the like are all purchased in the town. This could be one of the factors which could have accounted for the change in the style of dressing - from loose traditional Malay baju to modern figure hugging jeans. Thus the effects of the physical proximity of Sungei Besar and the accessible location of the village itself cannot be overlooked. In view of this, it would be ^agross over statement to conclude that the urban influences which have infiltrated the village are totally a by-product of outmigration. But this doesn't mean that the role of the migrant as mediator between the city and village can be overlooked either.

Tilly (1974) put forward this definition of a rural village - "The members of households whose major activity is farming, which produce a major part of the goods and services they consume, which exercise substantial control over the land they farm and which supply the major part of their labour requirements from their own energies". Following this definition, one can consider the people of Kampong Parit Changkat to fall under this category (but only up to a certain extent). It must be noted that being provided with effective models and means of emulation, the people of Kampong Parit Changkat are simultaneously experiencing a rapid loss of their traditional cultural values along with the concomitant accumulation of the symbols and accoutrements of urban life. For the villagers, the adoption of urban practises and accoutrements not only helps maintain a positive self-image but also indicates a new attitude towards the display of wealth.

The more a family can surround itself with symbols of urban life - radio, car, television, refrigerator, etc. - the greater its prestige. Traditionally, wealth was evident in the amount of land/property a person owns, but now it's the number of consumer goods that one possesses.

The trend then is for the rural villages to absorb the characteristics of the city and finally emerge as a replica of it. But is this development inevitable? It appears to be so but surprisingly in the case of Kampong Parit Changkat, the social, economic and psychological changes experienced by the villagers has not destroyed the cohesive and homogeneous entity of the community. The sense of integrity and identity still remains secure. Urban influences have been somehow incorporated into the traditional system in such a way that values and norms of the traditional Javanese society have been moulded into accepting the new and preserving the old. Outmigration then, though having stimulated tremendous changes in the socio-economic framework of the village, has not really undermined to any great extent the tradition of Javanese culture, or the tradition of the rural community.

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