

THE ECONOMY OF THE TAGAL MURUT OF TENOM SABAH (EAST MALAYSIA):

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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KUMA DIKA DI AMA



Mantad raha om tonsi-nu
... napasi oku
Mantad tulang om lasu nu
... nakaakan oku
Mantad romou om tirak nu
... nakagayo oku
Mantad kinonorowon do ponusarahan nu
... nokosikul oku
gisom do baino om sogigisom
amu oku kosomuli dika, nga
mantad barakat do kinorohingan
kostonongon rumikot id dika

-akus-

BUNDU TUHAN

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Except all mentioned above, this thesis was
done entirely by me.

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ABSTRACT

This Thesis is an empirical study in ethnography of the economic behaviour of the Tagal Murut in Sabah. It is hoped that this analysis and description will contribute to the reliable information of the contemporary Murut.

In Chapter One, I deal with the background of the Murut economic in specific and the indigenous people in Sabah in general. It also discussed the methodology, theoritical and field condition.

I also criticize the writings of European writers about Murut in Chapter Two. This chapter gives informations regarding Kampong Tilis and the social organizations.

In Chapter Three, my focus is on the production activities of the Tagal Murut. A question that I tried to answer here is of the Tagal Muruts' types of economy. Related to this, Chapter Four discussed about distribution, sharing and consumption of the people.

I have included the social organization in my scope of discussion in order to understand and reanalyse the concept of 'Communalism' in contrast to 'Individualisme' of the contemporary Murut. This part was discussed in Chapter Five under economic and society.

In Chapter Six, I discussed about the Tagal Murut's future. This chapter deals with the poverty and development of the people. In relation to the poverty,

I have employed the idea of capitalist penetration to the rural people, for example, the logging activities and cash crop cultivation and deals with criticism of different ideas to the development.

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ABSTRAK

Tesis ini merupakan satu kajian empirikal dalam ethnografi ekonomi di kalangan masyarakat Murut Tagal di Sabah. Adalah di harapkan agar analisa ini dapat memberi sumbangan kepada penulisan tentang kaum Murut masa kini.

Dalam bab pertama, membincangkan tentang latar belakang ekonomi masyarakat Murut khasnya dan masyarakat peribumi Sabah pada umumnya. Dalam bab ini juga membincangkan tentang kaedah kaedah dan masalah dalam penyelidikan serta teori-teori yang diaplikasikan.

Saya juga telah membuat kritikan terhadap tulisan tulisan penulis barat yang membincangkan tentang masyarakat Murut. Ini dibincangkan dalam bab kedua. Bab ini juga memberikan penerangan tentang Kampong Tilis yang di kaji serta organisasi sosialnya.

Dalam bab ketiga pula, tumpuan di berikan kepada kegiatan pengeluaran. Persoalan yang cuba di jawab dalam bab ini adalah tentang jenis ekonomi yang di jalankan oleh masyarakat Murut Tagal. Berkaitan dalam hal ini, bab empat membincangkan tentang pengagihan, perkongsian dan penggunaan.

Organisasi sosial juga dikemukakan dalam skop perbincangan, dengan tujuan untuk memberikan pemahaman terhadap konsep 'communalism' dan 'individualism' di kalangan masyarakat yang dikaji. Perkara ini di bincangkan dalam ekonomi dan masyarakat di bab kelima.

Dalam bab akhir, saya membincangkan tentang masa depan Murut dengan menghuraikan tentang kemiskinan dan pembangunan masyarakat. Berhubung dalam hal ini saya telah melihat penembusan ekonomi kapitalis terhadap ekonomi masyarakat luar biasa seperti

pembalakan dan pertanian 'cash crop'. Ini merupakan satu kritikan terhadap ideologi difusi dalam pembangunan.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is little detailed and reliable information concerning the ethnology of the native peoples of Sabah particularly the Muruts. John L Landgraf was probably the first scholar to have carried out an indepth study on the Murut people. He spent nine months in Sabah between 1954-1955 including three and a half months as a resident in a Murut Village and a similar period travelling over about half the Murut area (Landgraf: 1955). Landgraf's report of his brief survey of the aboriginal people in Sabah has been reviewed by trained ethnologists. There is no reliable or detailed study on the economic behaviour within the social structure of the Muruts in Sabah. The recent research on Murut people conducted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL: 1985) deals with mainly linguistic matters.

Discussions of the customs of the Sabah people by other ethnologists have been based on secondary descriptive accounts. The writings of Low (1848), St John (1862), Roth (1896), Evans (1953), Rutters (1922), Hose (1912) and Mc Duangel (1956) are usually those cited in discussions of the ethnology of Sabah. A recent indepth anthropological research study among the Murut population was conducted by Crain (1970). However, the arguments and statements about

Muruts presented in these references may be quite misleading for the contemporary Muruts. This is because the people and their culture have changed and are changing rapidly due to expanding contact with other external cultural groups and as a consequence of national government policy.

Culture is generally defined as a way of life and includes, for example, economic factors, political system, kinship and marriage, ritual and religious practices. It is difficult to reliably analyse the Murut cultures on the basis of data provided in the early accounts. These were frequently derived from casual observations or by government officers in the course of their other duties. While the form of culture may at times be quite accurately described, such accounts were taken out of the context in which they occurred. Such accounts also carry interpretation of meanings of Murut culture that are essentially based on European views of the world of men and nature. For these reasons data offered are not generally reliable representations of the Murut society.

I had not developed a specific hypothesis for testing prior to commencing my field work but I was primarily interested in the Murut economic and cultural life and the way they conducted their daily affairs. This thesis will describe the mode of economic production and distribution in a Murut Tagal Village. The study village is named Kampung Tilis which comes under the jurisdiction of

the Tenom District. I will focus on the production technology and social relations of production and distribution by analysing the Tagal Murut economy in detail based on the indigenous peoples perspective rather than on the transient and somewhat casual European view which is largely based on the writings and accounts of others. My own background is a Dusun from a village which shares several similarities including language group, food consumption patterns with the Tagal Murut village I studied. This proved to be an advantage in understanding the Murut culture.

The highland people in Sabah practice shifting cultivation. There have been a number of government initiatives to discourage this activity with the long term objective of ecological conservation (by limiting slash/burn) and introducing the Murut people into the mainstream of Malaysian society. To understand the development of the present economic activity, it is necessary to understand the history of the economic development in Sabah. (See 1.3).

1.2 AIM AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is intended as a contribution to the ethnographic understanding of the indigenous groups of Sabah, particularly of the Tagal Muruts of Sabah. In

recording the Murut culture and economic behaviour, it is hoped that it will be of assistance in aiding the Government in the formulation of future developmental policies for the Tagal Murut people.

The main purpose of this study is to examine and analyse the economic behaviour of the Tagal Murut in Tenom. I shall deal with the distribution, sharing and cooperation among the Murut people. In subsequent chapters, I will discuss the Tagal Murut's occupations with the purpose to identify whether they remain totally subsistence farmers or otherwise.

This study also deals with the misconceptions and ethnocentric views of some of the previous writers. Hopefully my observation and analytical description will give an accurate picture of the contemporary Murut economy.

The Murut culture especially their marriage system is also an integral part of the economic framework. When discussing poverty and the poor Muruts, some of them feel that the marriage system which they call "berian mati" or "irau" (forever dowry) should be abolished. The impact of such a change was seen as a way of improving living standards of the people. The question here is, "Is it possible and necessary for them to change their own traditional culture in order to improve their living standards?"

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The influence of capitalistic values on the traditional economic system of the Muruts will also be discussed.

1.3 BRIEF ECONOMIC HISTORY OF TENOM DISTRICT MURUTS

The economic history of Sabah can be broadly divided into three periods: namely the pre-colonial, colonial and post Independence. The pre-colonial indigenous society can be divided into the following major economic groups:

- i) hunter and gatherers - swidden agriculturists.
- ii) wet rice cultivator,
- iii) fishermen.

The interplay of various factors - such as geographical condition, inter-ethnic relationships, international trade patterns, the migration and settlement of new ethnic groups and political intrusions served to produce a process of evolution and development which by the 1860's led to the emergence of specialised economic groups. According to Ranjit Singh (1981), the difference between the activities carried out by the various indigenous groups can be seen in the areas of population distributions, material/cultural attainment and community organisation.

Traditionally, paddy cultivation either of the hill or wet types has been the most important economic feature of the population. In fact paddy cultivation are so important culturally that the cultivation stages were invested with ritual. In the Interior Divisions, the Murut and the Dusun people planted both dry and wet paddy with most people practising shifting cultivation. Shifting cultivation consists of hill or dry paddy as the main crop together with a number of other secondary crops such as corn, tapioca, sweet potatoes and bananas. In the pre-colonial period, the Murut and the Dusun engaged in subsistence economy.

During the colonial period, many of the people in the interior were involved on an increasing scale with the market economy. They tapped rubber or were engaged in urban employment as they no longer chose to depend solely on their subsistence activities for their livelihood. It was reported by Bruce (1924) that Tenom District in 1910 began to grow as a trading center in the interior. During this period the colonialists also introduced cash crops such as rubber and coffee. The Muruts in Tenom gradually involved themselves in these cash related activities.

In brief, cash cropping and occupations outside agriculture increased the sources and amount of cash incomes of the villagers and consequently they began purchasing more consumer and manufactured goods from the urban markets.

The increased income also induced the villagers to invest more into their children's education, and thereby further integrated them with other societies.

After North Borneo achieved independence and elected to join Malaysia on September 16, 1963 it was renamed Sabah. The people gradually received more attention from the National Government. Dunn (1983) mentioned that:

The Government desire to resettle part of the rural population who are nomadic and are scattered all over Sabah into a compact community so that the benefits of development could be brought into their lives. Many of these rural people live in remote areas in isolation, especially in the interior districts like Pensiangan, Sipitang, Kinabatangan etc. Majority of Muruts and allied tribes come under this category. (Dunn 1983:5)

This proposed policy indicate how much the Government was concerned for the Muruts and the affairs of the indigenous people. This also gives an explanation why the Muruts migrated from District to District and from the deep interior to the nearby towns.

1.4 RESEARCH AREA

Most of the materials used in this paper was gathered during my field research extending from the

beginning of May to the end of June 1988 in Tenom. While field work was carried out mainly in Kampong Tilis in Tenom, I also visited several other kampongs (villages) namely Baru Jumpa, Masanoi, Kemabong and Kongkalar.

I chose this area for my field research for specific reasons. Until recently, this district being situated in the interior highland region was largely isolated from outside contact. There is only one daily land cruiser service operating from this kampong to the nearest town (Tenom) and other areas. The only road that reaches the area is a dirt road built by a timber company several years ago.

Kampong Tilis is a typical traditional Murut village with a longhouse type of social organisation. There is only one Government primary school. Due to the lack of development, it therefore is an ideal area for my ethnographic objectives.

The economic activity comprises both subsistence and cash crop farming. Logging activities which operate actively in this area have affected the people by their impacts on the local environment.

Lastly, the introduction of commercial agriculture enables me to analyse the impact of the capitalist penetration among the Muruts.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this thesis was gathered through the conventional anthropological method of participation and observation. A questionnaire concerning particular topics of concern were prepared and selected village people were interviewed. Interviewees were identified on the basis of their societal roles. Other questions were put forward when the need arose in order to clarify particular points.

Beside participating and observing the people in their daily life, I requested individuals to explain their economic behaviour, the meaning of certain aspects of their culture and the particular mores used by the people. Most of my conversations were with the head of households and the elderly folk. Much of the data gathered were through structured surveys and systematic monitoring of the activities of the same individual. During the two months in the field, I stayed for periods of one month in Kampong Tilis and Masanoi respectively. Both areas are populated predominantly by Tagal Murut.

My interviews were conducted in the Murut Tagal dialect especially in Tilis but interspersed with Malay as the need was apparent. I understood Tagal because of its similarity to my own dialect (Dusun). During my initial weeks in Kampong Tilis, I carried out a household census which formed an important basis for my subsequent collation of the histories of the villagers. I also mapped topographical and agricultural features including those of swiddening fields, coffee, cocoa, rubber plantations and orchards of the settlement.

The quantitative data presented in this paper was collected through the recording of the production, income and expenditure of eight households for one week. Activities were recorded through daily interviews and personal observations of eight selected villagers. However in recording daily activities, the method used did not include a study of labour intensity.

Income and expenditure data was readily collected as there is only one retail store in the kampong and one land cruiser for daily transportation to Tenom. Mr Paris, the driver hired by the owner of the land cruiser assisted me in recording how much the respondents spent in Tenom and how much they received from selling their products.

Time allocation of eight couples from eight households was studied. The data was collected through the

observation both of the wives doing their domestic chores and assisting their husbands on the farm and of their husband. Their normal working hours were recorded during the course of one week - 13 to 19 June, 1988.

There were a number of limitations imposed on my field work. Firstly, the time constraint. I realise that effective anthropological studies should be carried out over a longer period for more detailed information and understanding. It is possible that my cursory study may have introduced some inconsistencies of facts together with my personal perception of the people. However, since their activities are closely related to those of my own people, I had the advantage of calling upon my own experience in interpreting Murut behaviour.

In conducting my census, I experienced difficulties in accurately determining individual ages. Many of the people had forgotten their date of birth. Some of them were cooperative in showing me their identity cards so that I could calculate their age - but others did not do so.

It took me a very short time to develop a good rapport with the people due to my language abilities and flexibility in adapting myself to their ways, but that cannot be interpreted that they totally trusted me during

the period of my field research. I faced a number of problems in explaining to them the purpose of me coming to reside with them. It is possible that as a consequence of their fear of strangers they had suspicions and doubts in their minds. Coincidentally, at that time, there were a few murder cases in the Tenom area which involved people from other Districts. This factor affected my effectiveness as they perceived saw me as an outsider.

In my daily involvement during the field research, I could not be totally free in interacting with all groups. For example it was considered culturally disrespectful to talk with the women especially the young girls without their parents or other relatives present. Limitations on mixing freely with both sexes and problems with various age groups prevented me from getting their private opinions on some subjects. Those whom I talked with, were often quite reluctant in responding to my questions. Most probably this arose from a feeling of inferiority. Without Mr Simon's (the Church leader) help in explaining to them the purpose of my visit, I do not believe that the people would have given me their cooperation. This may be because they have a tradition of giving great respect to government officers such as the Yayasan Sabah's flying doctor and staff who visited a few months earlier to provide medical services.

There was also another field researcher in the District where I was studying who was examining malaria

transmission and control. The people frequently associated my studies with hers and hence were confused by our different research motives.

I found certain customary laws of the people difficult to understand. This was largely due to differences in their dialects of the language. Some people, especially the elderly had to resort to gestures when language proved a barrier.

My time limitations and the isolation of the kampong prevented me from organizing other field visits. As a result I missed some of the activities such as intensive hunting and fishing. I therefore had to be satisfied with verbal reports of what happened during these expeditions.

1.6 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Based on my initial objective of studying the Tagal economy, I employed a synthesis of several theoretical approaches in economic anthropology. There have been several theories developed for the analysis of economic behaviour namely formalism, substantivism and Marxism. However, it is not my purpose to argue for or against these theories. Instead, I have attempted to use them in my analysis of the Tagal Murut economy.

In analysing the allocation of work amongst the people, the various choices in production between the individual and household strategies which influenced their economic decisions, the neo-classical framework was employed. For example, I have used the Chayanovian analysis to examine the internal dynamics of households production. Chayanov's analysis noted that:

The energy developed by a worker on a farm is stimulated by the family consumer demands, and as they increase, the rate of self exploitation of peasant labour is forced up.' (Chayanov 1966: 81, in Gomes 1986: 17)

The enormous scope of economic anthropology and its emphasis on society rather than the individual helped in making a generalization of the economic activity. Substantivist theories argue that:

... it is not one of degree alone but rather one of kind. The individual human being is not regarded as a continually rationalizing and economising being but instead is preceived of as a member of society influenced and motivated by a larger social context. Individual 'rational' choice making between alternatives means and end (Kocke 1980: 5).

Formalist's analysis on the other hand focuses on the individual rather than on society. Herskovits (1968) and Kocke (1980) mentioned that the peasants are rational in

using the scarce resources to obtain livelihood:

Human beings all over the world in tribal hunter and gatherer societies or in peasantries maximise scarce resources by making conscious choices between alternative means and ends (Kocke 1980: XI).

Economic anthropologists have contributed a great deal to the understanding of the economic aspects of social relations in peasant societies. For instance, four types of exchange systems have been recognised, they are reciprocal exchange, redistributive exchange, mobilization exchange and markets exchange (Nash 1966 23-28). Relating to the systems and the peoples' development, Gregory (1982) quoted Marx and Engels dictum:-

The family, which to begin with is the only social relation becomes later, when increased needs create new social relations and the increased population new needs, a subordinate one and must be located and analysed according to the existing empirical data (Gregory 1982: 14).

This is useful in order to understand the Tagal Muruts' development with the presence of the capitalist economy.

Another typology I used in my analysis is "shared poverty" (Geertz 1956). His analysis in Java showed that the segmentation of economy has caused poverty. He argued

that:

Shared poverty was the general pattern of a worsening economic situation through a division of the economic pie into smaller and smaller pieces (Geertz 1963: 141).

However, Clammer (1979) sees the spirit of sharing as a universal solution for all developmental problems and is thus more a matter of ideology than of empirical evidence. He referred to a commune as "organic" rather than "mechanical" in its organisation and ethos. He indicated that:

What the communitarian sees as the anonymity of modern society another can see as independence; what the communitarian sees as the political advantages of his system another can see as static, conservative, and unliberal; what one sees as desirable community socialization and rural control another sees as intolerably repressive interference in the rights of the individual and so on (Clammer 1979 :119).

In order to understand the societal problems in the Tagal Murut in Kampong Tilis, I employed a Marxist approach which argues that capitalism will destroy all non-capitalist forms in its advance. Poverty as a social problem amongst the Tagal Murut has been analysed in terms of this perspective. Poverty is seen as a consequence of the penetration of Capitalism and is related to exploitation.

CHAPTER 2

THE SETTING

2.1 LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

Sabah which is popularly known as "The Land Below the Wind" is one of the thirteen states of Malaysia and occupies the Northern part of the Island of Borneo between $3^{\circ} 42'$ North to the $7^{\circ} 2'$ North, with an area of 73,711 sq kilometres (Lee 1982: 1). It has 1,448 km of coastline with the South China Sea on the Northern and Western side and the Sulu and Celebes seas on the Eastern side. (Situn 1978 : 1).

The State is divided into four residential areas namely:- West Coast Resident, Sandakan Resident, Tawau Resident and Interior Resident.

The Tenom District is situated in the Interior Resident in the South-Western part of the State. This District is generally a very mountainous area incorporating the Crocker Range. There are also plains around the area of the Padas River (one of the largest rivers in Sabah). Such rivers have become one of the most important factors to the people in choosing their place of settlement. Rivers serve as the principal water supply for the Murut people in mountainous and hilly areas.

This is the case in the Tenom area, where the Tagal Murut have settled along the Padas River and its tributaries.

Kampung Tilis is in the eastern part of Tenom on the flood plain of the Tilis river and surrounded by hills. It is approximately 53 kilometres from Tenom Town. The Kampung is linked to the Town by a gravel and earth road that was built by a private timber company.

The people farm their land along the river banks and up to the hill slopes about 3 km from their village. They practice swiddening and dry rice cultivation.

The soil in this area is fertile. The District is rich in forest resources such as timber and rattan which are exploited for their commercial value. The people also gather wild forest products for their own consumption, for example, fern and bamboo shoots.

2.2 THE MURUT TRIBE

The Murut in Sabah are one of the indigenous

@

racial groups categorized under the term of Bumiputeras . The Murut are the third largest Bumiputera group in Sabah after the Kadazan/Dusun and Bajau Groups. There have been a number of descriptions and interpretations given by European writers regarding the Murut people. For example Rutter (1984) says that:

The Murut and Dusun meant "men of the hills" and "men of orchards" or gardens. The Murut may be said to inherit the hill country of the interior of North Borneo (Sabah) while the Dusuns occupy the coastal plains and the uplands beyond. (Rutter 1984 : 30).

It is without doubt that Rutter's writings have influenced other authors as the term "hill people" can be commonly found in other books and monographs. Some publications have adopted an ethnocentric view such as by characterizing the people as "primitive", "hostile", "simple", "savage", "un-cooperative" etc. Examples include those by Keith (1952 : 87), Maxwell Hall (1958 : 12),

@ Bumiputeras term used for classification of Pribumis and non-Prebumi in Sabah. According to the Sabah 1980 census, the Pribumis is: Kadazan, Busun, Kwijau, Murut, Bajau, Illanun, Lofud, Rungus, Tambanuo, Dumpas, Maragang, Paitan, Idahan, Minokok, Rumanu, Mangka'ah, Sulu, Orang Sungei, Burnai, Kadayan, Bisaya, Tidong, Other Indigenous Malay, Sino-native and Cocos Islander. (SABAH ANNUAL REPORT, 1984)



FIGURE 2:1 THE DISTRIBUTION OF MURUT GROUP IN SABAH

Charles Burse (1924 : 164) and Cook (1924). Keith for example stated that:

... The Murut tribes of the interior are believed to be a basically mediterranean people with an infusion of mongoloid blood. All these people keep alive today the description of hundreds years past of a simple, savage, archaic people, un-cooperative with an ignorance of civilization (Keith 1952 : 87).

This is a good example of the European ethnocentric view of the Murut people.

There have been several theories concerning the origins of the indigenous people of Sabah. Among them was the idea that the Dusun tribal groups originated from China while the Murut came from the Philippines. There are similarities between these populations and other Asian people. This can be observed in such aspects as their physical features and their costume. Harrison (1967) noted:

Some of the hill people (Murut/Dusun) in the Southern interior show occasional tendencies towards the curly hair and small stature which are popularly taken to equate with "pygmy" negritos, present in West Malaysia and the Southern Philippines (Harrison 1967:74).

Dr Albert Gomes, my thesis's supervisor developed the impression that the Muruts had similar physical features to the Semai Tribe, an aboriginal people of West Malaysia. Other writers, for example Cook (1924), Hall (1958), and Harrison (1967) have also discussed this in detail.

The terms used by Europeans to identify the Muruts are "Idahan" or "Idaan". Holly (1955) wrote that:

The original term of "Idahan" is the original Dusun name for the Dusun people (Hill people). The name is at present applied to a small group of Islanders living in the surrounding Lahad Datu and Tungku Island in South-Eastern of Sabah. (Holly 1955:112)

I intend discussing this European ethnocentricity in detail as an example of ethnonyms given by outsiders to suggest that these communities are inferior to others. "Idahan" is still used in a derogatory sense by other ethnic groups such as the Sulus from the North of Sabah and the Kadazans to refer to either the Murut or Dusun people who live in the Crocker Range.

Other ethnonyms used by Rutter (1922, 1929) and Leach (1947, 1950) to refer to the Northern Murut in Sabah are "Sabah Murut, Tagal, Taggal, Tagul or Tahol".^{*}

* For detailed descriptions see Rutter (1922:63-73, 1929:34:30) and Leach (1974, 1950:73-75).

It is quite clear that casual or European writers are confused by the terms used by the local people, especially the Muruts. To simplistically indicate equivalence between "Idahan Murut", "Sabah Murut", "Tagol" and "Tagul" as common ethnonyms is both confusing and incorrect. The Murut people in Sabah have identified at least twelve sub-Murutic linguistic families and at least twenty-two dialects of the Murut language. Tagal itself, which is also call "Sumambu" contains 5 different dialects.

Further information and discussion of these people can be seen in the classification of the Murut people in Sabah. The term "Murut" is broadly applied to people from the interior of Borneo. Appell (1969) divided the Murut people into two groups based on their language. The Northerners and the Southerners. However the members of both these groups are more closely related to other groups than they are to members of the other Murutic section. As Hall (1958) notes:

Between the Murut groups there was difficulties in language in native law and social customs such as tattoing and effecting improvements to natural ears and teeth but the distinctions were largely geographical and slowly breaking down.

Rutter classified the Murut according to geographical or ecological perceptions. He regarded the Muruts as "Hill Murut" and "Murut of the Plains" (Rutter

1929) on cultural and linguistic grounds. Prentice and Whelan (1969) followed Rutter's classification by using the terms "highlands" and "lowlands".

Appell (1969) failed to identify other groups of Muruts living in remote jungle areas and the deep interior for example Gana. Rutter's classification through ecological factors and the local names of certain settlements of the Muruts in Sabah is quite clear. However to identify them as either "hill" or "plains" Murut is not accurate. We can find Temogon sub-Murut clans living in hill areas and Tagal clans living in the plains. The most recent classification of the Murut and Murutic families on linguistic grounds has been undertaken by the Summer Institute for Linguistic's (SIL) during research in Sabah in 1982. Below are the names of the Murutic families and Murut people as provided by SIL:-

Selungoi, Kolod, Serudong, Kalabakan, Baukon (2 dialects) Sumambu/Tagol (5 dialects), Paluan, Bearfort Murut, Keningau Murut and Orana. (SIL 1985).

The Tagal (Sumambu) Muruts are a sub-Murut ethnic group who occupy the Southern part of Sabah and the Pensiangan, Tenom and Sipitang Districts. Most of them have settled in the Padas area, headwaters of the Western Resident, inhabited by the so-called Lun Daye which means "upriver folks". The Murut Native Chief in Masanoi pointed

out that the Tagal River is a small tributary in Pensiangan occupied by the Murut in Pensiangan. Harrison (1967) noted that the Tagal people in Sipitang, Pensiangan or in Tenom faced controversial problems regarding the questions of their origin.

The Tagal people in Tenom are mostly migrants from Pensiangan. This internal migration occurred because of the presence of jobs and amenities in Tenom, including substantial rubber and cocoa plantations. The migrants seek employment either with the Chinese Towkeys, the Sabah Rubber Board or Plantation Companies such as Harrisons Plantations etc.

Regarding the Tagal language, there are five (5) Tagal dialects. Linguistic research in Sabah only began in the early 1960's when linguistically trained missionaries of the Borneo Evangelical Mission began an analysis of several Dusun and Murut dialects for the purpose of their scripture translations. Prentice is noted for his linguistic anthropological study in Sabah (Shater 1975). His research was on the Poros linguistic group (a sub-dialect of the Murut and Temogun). He lived in Tenom township in Southern Sabah from 1965 till 1968. Prentice in his research also faced the problems of distinguishing dialects in Sabah. Shater indicated:

As Prentice notes, the term "Murut" is especially troublesome in this regard. This is regularly applied to the speakers of two very different language groups belonging to separate branches of the Austronesian phylum... [.....]. The "Tagal" speak a variant of what Prentice here calls the "Sumambu" sub-dialect of Highland Murut. The situation is further complicated, in everyday usage, by the fact that terms are used differently in different areas (Shater 1975 : 30).

In my study area, the Murut people speak Tagal. However the Tagal dialect that I used in Masanoi (plains area) which originated from Sipitang is different from the Tagal dialect used in Tilis. When I used the Masanoi dialect, the people informed me that they did not use certain words, even though they understood what they meant. I therefore came to the conclusion that to understand the local languages in Sabah, is a very difficult task.

The Tagal Muruts still practice their traditional beliefs and customs such as idol worshipping, (eg stones, skulls etc.). They continue to practice traditional magic, using potions and charms.

Until fairly recently the Tagal Murut were head hunters. They believed that the collection of the heads of humans was a sign of a "hero" or a "wealthy person". The body of the dead human was then put in a large valuable jar where it was left to rot. The liquid from the decomposed body was then collected and used as a poison called "lontong".

Christianity was adopted by the people about 5 years ago. The Christian Church in Kampong Tilis belongs to the Borneo Evangelical Mission. The old folk in Tilis although converted to christianity still practice their traditions such as drinking rice wine and magic.

In Tilis, the people used to live in one longhouse similar to the Iban or the Dayak's longhouses in Sarawak. The houses were frequently situated near the river banks as the river served as their main source of water supply. However, the people no longer live in longhouses, but in separate dwellings. The Kampong Tilis headman recorded that the local Muruts used to live in a longhouse situated on a tongue of land between the river and its tributary. This settlement pattern has now been replaced by linear villages strung out along the tributary.

The Murut culture is very extensive. Each Murut sub-ethnic grouping has its own special dances and musical instruments which cannot be found in other ethnic groups. For example, 'Magalang' dance - a ritual dance (Calder 1958 : 111) and the "lansaran" (Harrison 1984 : 194) which became popular among the Tagal and remain as an integral part of their lives. The costumes of these people are quite colourful and are treasured items, passed down between generations. They are not used in daily life but kept as personal property and used only on special occasions.

The Tagal Muruts' daily diet consists of "tamba" (fermented meat and fish), wild vegetables, rice, tapioca ("kasila"), sweet potatoes ("kasuo") and yam ("malau"). They traditionally drink "bulak" a wine made from tapioca or rice. This wine is sipped through a piece of bamboo. Many Kampong Tilis people have stopped drinking rice wine since the missionaries came. Now the young people in particular enjoy drinking coffee with biscuits.

2.3 SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Among the Tilis Muruts, blood relationships (either through marriage or kinship), are referred to as "pahaka". The term for others out of the lineage is "vokun".

The term "pahaka" means the number of households which has blood or marriage ties. These include nuclear, extended and hereditary families. I have emphasized on the nuclear and extended families in terms of property and work distribution. The Tagal Murut always have a common feeling of belonging.

"Vokun" also called "oko" refers to people outside the family and who are not related whatsoever but who are staying together in the kampong. In Tilis, this term is also used for the people who recently migrated to Tilis from

other kampongs. "Vokun" is used to refer to someone looking for a partner in marriage from the "pahaka" lineage.

The structure of the Muruts is a direct reflection of commitment to their economic activity. Generally, the members in one households act together as a unit for production and consumption of the goods. Each household is a cooperative organisation with individuals contributing to its production and sharing its products. Products derived from other activities such as hunting and fishing are consumed by each member of the household and his "pahaka". Generally, the family units are economically self-supporting.

Each member of the household has a right to use all the articles and property of the household since the articles are inherited from their parents. Examples of such articles are "pilang" (parang/chopper), "sapok" (blow-pipe), "tutuan" (pounding place), "Kulapa" (paddy store) etc. The ownership of certain items like beads, ornaments, cassette players and so on are usually regarded as personal items but in general, each member of the household or "pahaka" have easy access to each other's possessions.

Property such as land can only be inherited by sons. However it is possible to get one title of land under several names whether through his "pahaka" or "vokun" in the kampong. In Tilis, land tenures are based on the practice

that whoever occupies the land has a right to apply for the land title. At the present time, the people still prefer to use the land in the kampong under common title. The Government has not given each person a specific grant.

For the swidden, the members who cultivate a plot in cooperation with other members (e.g. other families in households or "pahaka" or non-related members) have a right to the products. For example if household A, B, C and D cooperate in cultivating the swidden the produce will be shared equally between A, B, C and D. In this case, A, B, C and D do not take into account the number of members involved, or the amount of time each member contributes to the cultivation of the paddy.

At the present time, following marriage, the couple usually prefer to establish a new household. For those following traditional practices, unless permission is withheld by the head of the household the married couple will be given a new room (bilik) for themselves.

Marriage starts the development cycle of the household. For example, after the marriage ceremony the couple will stay temporarily either with the bridegroom's family or the bride's family until they are ready to build their own house. For the Tagal Muruts in Tilis, the new

couple will usually stay with the bridegroom's family. They will share in the bridegroom's family production activities.

In the household development cycle, division of labour is based on sex. The males are usually engaged in productive work to obtain their livelihood (eg hunting, fishing, collecting rattan, farming coffee or cocoa etc). In some activities the couple may work together. Generally, the women performs the household chores and take care of the young children. During my survey, the women were also observed to be involved in activities such as handcrafting or drying, pounding or milling, paddy or coffee. These activities and the division of labour will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapters.

2.4 MATERIAL CULTURE

There is also another interesting aspect of the Tagal Murut behaviour concerning the development of material items. This is necessary for the conduct of the subsistence production as well as to maintain the prevailing standard of living. It is generally defined as the "objects needed or made by men for his survival or for supporting and improving his life" (Basu 1975:4).

In every economic activity which is geared towards the necessities of replacement of human energy or reduction of labour power, there has been evolution of technology

developed to meet these needs. The material culture of the Muruts includes:-

- a) construction of dwellings.
- b) household utensils.
- c) types and hunting implements.
- d) baskets.
- e) musical instruments and various other items.

The sources of the materials used are from the forest eg, rattan, bamboo and wood. In fact, bamboo is so widely used by the Muruts that their material culture has often been dubbed as the bamboo culture.

The Murut, have different ways of fashioning and using items compared with the other indigenous people of Sabah. This is partially due to soil and climatic differences which governs the availability of different types of vegetation. For the Tagal Murut in Tilis, the use of the raw materials available in their economic activities (especially in subsistence production) can be seen in every part of their activities. For example, the "takang" (shelters) are built from bamboo and tree bark. "Kulapa" (paddy storage) is made from the bark of the tree etc. In the paddy fields, various animal traps are made from rattan and bamboo and left in the fields to prevent the pests from eating the paddy. Other items of the Tagal Muruts are summerize in Table 2.1 and illustrations in Appendix A.

From this it can be seen that the Muruts extensively exploit their forest vegetation and are very skillful in fashioning items for their use. (Material illustration can be seen in Appendix A). The Tagal Muruts in Tilis are adequately provided for with the raw materials available. Items are used depending on their suitability to the conditions. For example, in trapping and hunting, the choice of items used depends on the expected targets. For killing birds or squirrels they use blowpipes but for hunting trips where their targets are large animals, wild boars or deer they usually use domesticated dogs to seek out the quarry and shotguns.

2.5 VILLAGE ORGANISATION

Kampung Tilis is situated approximately 53 kilometres from Tenom Town. The people are originally from three kampongs in the Tenom and Pensiangan Districts. They are: Kampongs Kobintaluan, Katambalang and Sumangulu. The majority of the residents are from Kobintaluan, with only three families from Katambalang and one family from Sumangulu.

Kampung Tilis was founded in 1979, by migration from the other three kampongs. The people from Kobintaluan were said to have migrated in three stages. They first moved to Sugiang Tengah (28 km from Tenom) then to Kongkolor (7 km from Tilis) and finally settled in Tilis. (See Diagram

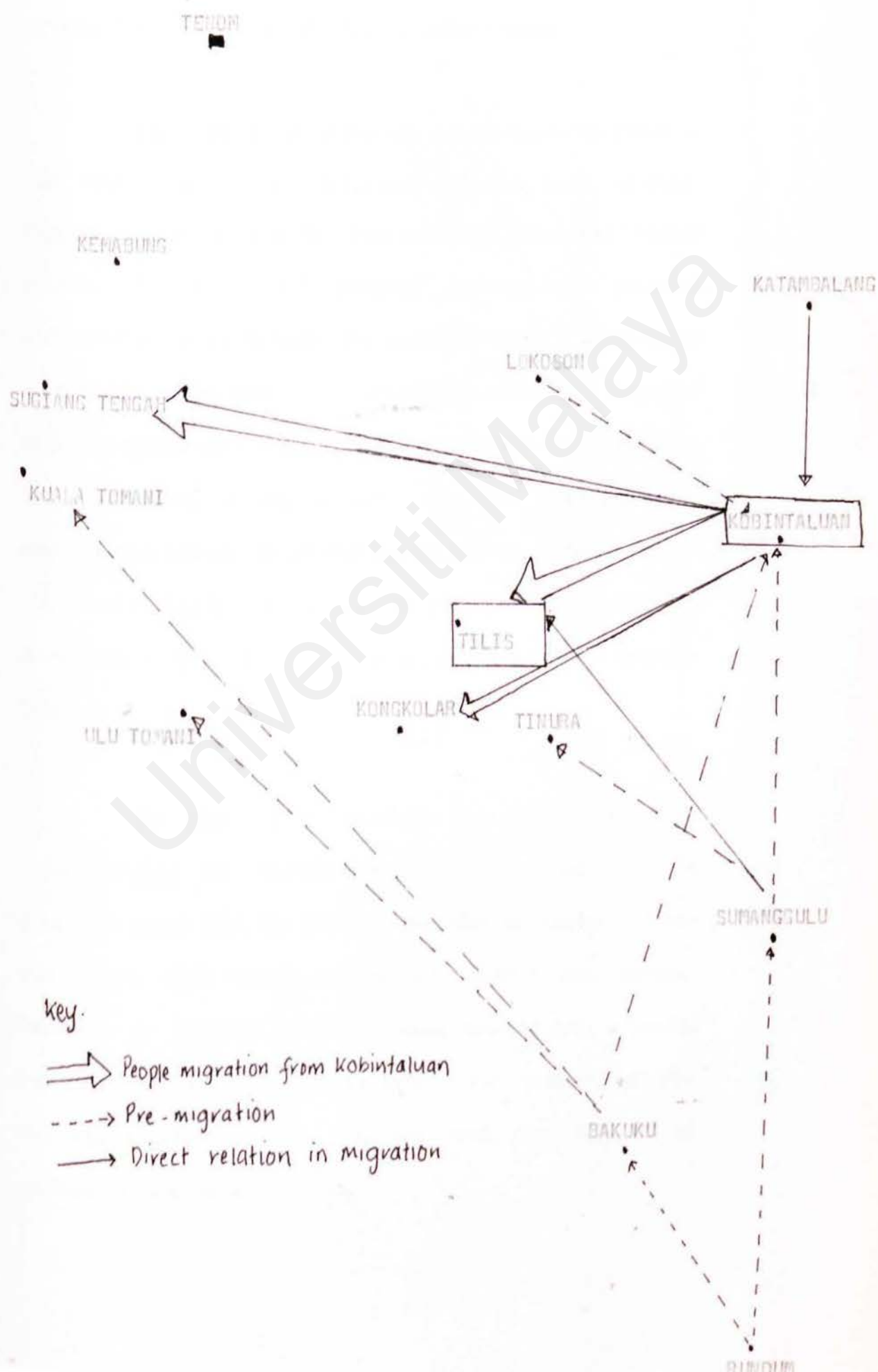
2.1). The headman in Tilis described the history of these migrants. It appears that Datuk Tingkalor, a former Sabah State Minister (1964-76) who was also the head of the Borneo Evangelical Missionary in Tenom, initiated the migrations. Initially, there were only forty people who arrived in the area, but after it became known that the soil was fertile and suitable for farming, the population of the village has continued to increase.

One of the reasons for their migration was that their former kampong was very far from Tenom. They had to walk through jungles, hills and rivers for about a week to reach Kemabong to board public transport to Tenom Town. The purpose of their trips was only to sell coffee and forest products and for purchasing essential items such as salt etc. The headman said that these trips to Kemabong were usually made every 6 to 12 weeks.

In 1979, a road was built to Kampong Kongkular. This road although not in a good condition, makes it much easier and faster for the people to commute to town. Four wheel drive access is available during all seasons.

Kampong Tilis consists of several households which the villagers refer to as "pahun" or "langkau" (which means house) or "pahaka" (which means family). The "pahun"

DIAGRAM 2:1 THE TAGAL MURUT INTERNAL MIGRATIONS IN TENOM



consists of people who eat and sleep together under the same roof, while the "pahaka" refers to family members who are staying together or are staying in other houses.

For present purposes the use of house to refer to the households is more practical and has been adopted. Kampong Tilis households practice the bilateral family system. Reference to 'households' includes both paternal and maternal relationships. For example, Mulih's house means that Mulih is the head of the household. He stays together with his unmarried son and daughter and other family members (eg grandmother, mother-in-law). His son, Simon, who is married has his own house and family and is considered as the head of his household, but he (Simon) and his children frequently stay in Mulih's house and share his food because they are Mulih's "pahaka".

The core of the household is a group linked by close kinship but non-kin may also be included. It is generally known that the married son, when he can afford his own house, will live on his own and create a new nuclear family. In contrast to this, house sharing and extended families also exists in this village. For example, Laingan and his brother Angkuni, who are both married, stayed together in one house.

Although the people in Tilis now generally stay in separate houses and not in longhouses, the longhouse family concept still persists in certain families. There are only two longhouses in Tilis. These are occupied by three and six families respectively. Each family lives in a separate room, and leads their independent life for example, they cook and eat in different places. The longhouses in Tilis are not a form of village as occurs in certain areas such as Rungus village (Lee 1982 :140) or the Iban in Sarawak (Bruce 1968). The longhouses were built by the "pahaka" members. The longhouse is a concept of families integration. In each of the longhouses, the members give the privilege to the eldest male as the head of the whole household. He will be responsible for the member's security and affairs.

Table 2.2 shows the composition of household in Tilis (June 1988). Age and sex composition in Tilis is illustrated in Diagram 2.2 (Appendix B).

Table 2.2: The Composition of Household in Tilis

House	Size	Couple	Husband	Wife	CHILDREN		Others
					Male	Female	
A	10	1	1	1	4	2	1
B	6	1	1	1	2	-	1
C	6	1	1	1	-	4	-
D	3	1	1	1	1	-	-
E	14	3	3	3	-	5	-
F	11	4	4	4	3	-	-
G	8	1	1	1	3	2	-
H	26	3	3	3	6	11	3
I	16	2	2	2	5	6	1
J	7	2	2	2	2	-	1
K	5	1	1	1	1	2	-
L	5	1	-	1	3	1	-
M	6	2	2	2	1	1	-
N	6	1	1	1	3	1	-
O	7	1	1	1	4	1	-
P	12	2	2	2	3	4	1
Q	18	3	3	3	4	6	-
R	4	1	1	1	-	1	1
S	18	1	1	1	8	6	2
T	6	1	1	1	2	2	-
U	6	1	1	1	1	2	1
V	8	1	1	1	3	2	1
W	13	1	1	1	2	6	3

CHAPTER 3

PRODUCTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Sabah under the Government of the British North Borneo Company from 1946 to 1963 practiced a capitalist economy. (Abdul 1986: 2). The State faced economic changes similar to other colonial countries. Sabah had as the characteristics of such changes:

- a) an opening of its doors to foreign investment.
- b) increased exploitation of mining and forests products.
- c) inter-dependence with the Colony's economy.

The local administration of the State is changing rapidly, for example, land tenure, industrial development, commercial, agricultural, specialization in labour power and depopulation in rural areas. After Sabah achieved independence in September 1963, these policies were continued. This meant that the indigenous people in Sabah were already involved in capitalist economy besides their subsistence economy long before Sabah's independence.

The Tagal Murut have traditionally been involved in paddy cultivation. After European enterprises opened up large areas for rubber cultivation and introduced a capitalist economy the indigenees traditional subsistence economy began to decline in importance. In Sabah, the Muruts' primary subsistence activities are swidden cultivation, hunting, fishing and collecting forest products. In Kampong Tilis, swiddening is undertaken from August to February with the secondary crops being cultivated between February to August. The people work continuously on the permanent coffee and cocoa plantation. Hunting and fishing activities are limited to quiet periods when agricultural production is less intense.

This chapter examines the relative involvements of the Muruts between their traditional subsistence economy rather than the capitalist economy. Questions to be answered in this chapter are: What type of production?, how do these people operate the production?, how is the division of labour applied and the time allocation for these activities?

Before proceeding further in the discussion on the means of production for the Tagal Murut, I will first define the meaning of production as used by anthropologists and economists (Hunter and Whitten 1976 : 136).

Production (and especially the distribution of wealth or the means of production) in such economies is taken for granted. Production is regarded as the aggregate of raw materials and goods (and sometimes services) generated in response to demand not as a fundamental social process governing the forms of exchange and consumption. (Hunter and Whitten 1976 : 136).

Production to the Murut as noted in literature was mostly associated to ethnocentrism sentiments by these writers especially concerning the subsistence economy and the "primitive technology". Reference has been made to hunting, fishing and gathering activities as "imperious and uncivilised activities" (Keith 1952). Today these activities are commoditized and commercialised for generation of a cash income.

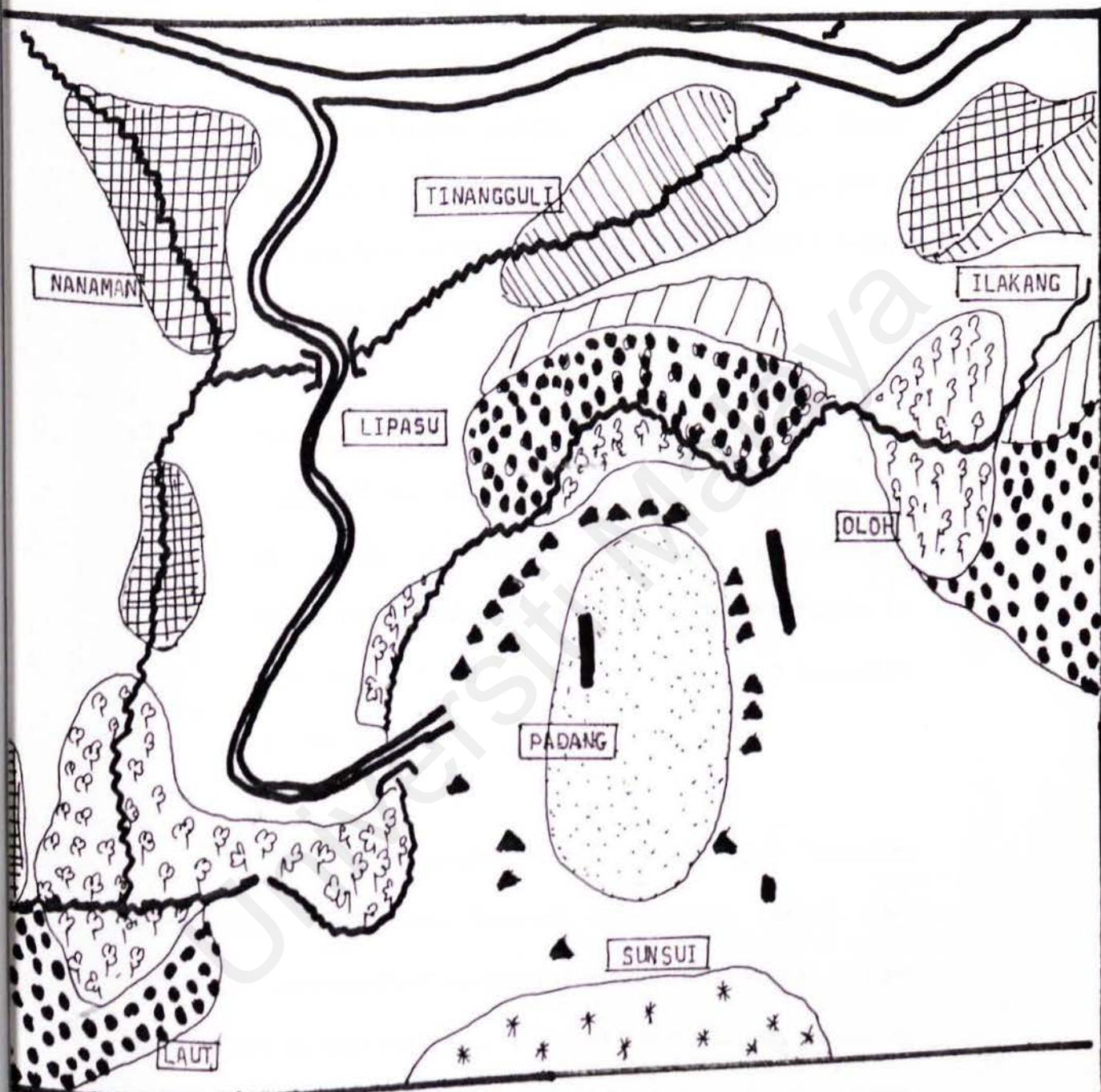
Every type of subsistence production turns into commodities when needed or demanded by others. The case as found by Roberts (1974), is that informal enterprises are not predominantly confined to "traditional" artisan types of production but are also connected with the construction of modern buildings, transportation, radio and TV repairs and textile manufacturing. (Kahn 1978 : 112). Other scholars echoed this need for increased productivity and efficiency on the part of informal enterprises which it is assumed will lead to an evolutionary growth in the economy (Long 1979:181). Long suggested that state discrimination of the informal sector should be reduced.

It has long been recognised that inter-cropping is a universal feature of hill rice cultivation in Sabah and of the indigenous agriculture. Particularly to the Murut people of the Interior Division, hill rice cultivation is a major economic activity. The Tagal Murut in Tilis cultivate rice swidden, secondary crops and sometimes home gardens. Swiddening is done seasonally once a year from August to February.

Murut people prefer planting into new areas or at least moving from one plot to another after two or three years. While this broadly classifies them as "shifting cultivators", in practice this definition is of only limited application for example, in the case of Kampong Tilis, every household has moved or shifted its plot at least 5 to 7 times since they first took up residence. At the present time, the people are still looking for other areas (primary forest/virgin jungle) for swiddening (see figure 3:1). The headman told me that they will come back to the first or second plot for swiddening after 3 or 4 years. There are several reasons he gave me as to why the people shift from one plot to another:

- a) to open up new areas in order to fight for the land title as it is the Government's policy that

Figure 3.1: Movement of swidden field in Tilis since 1979



Key

- wet and dry rice cultivation in 1979 to 1980
- swiddening cultivation in 1981 to 1983
- cocoa and coffee area opened on 1980
- swiddening cultivation in 1984
- swiddening cultivation in 1985
- swiddening cultivation in 1986 to 1987
- swiddening area in 1988

- ▲ Houses in 1988
- ~ Streams
- == Road

they have to cultivate the land before applying for the title.

- b) to look for fertile land that can be expected to bring in higher income. Also to let the former land rest for a few years to regain fertility. During this interval, secondary forest will return to these areas.
- c) to own as much land as they possibly can for their "pahaka" who will also be entitled to the land (eg Mr Mulih, the Headman, will open up different areas for swiddening yearly to fight for rights to the land title so that he can divide or segment it for his sons.).

It is more accurate if we use the term "rotation cultivation" for this type of cultivation rather than "shifting cultivation" in order to understand their values as settlers in the village. This will provide one answer to the question raised by Harrison (1984) that: "Is the Murut nomadic or not?" and the terms he used "explosive nomadism" (Harrison 1984 : 115) is not true. There is no suggestion of nomadism in the classical sense. It appears that up to the present time, the Murut have never reached the Northern or the Eastern boundaries of the Residents.

Swiddening in terms of labour and labour power is low in technology. Division of labour is based on sex and age. One household may operate one plot in one season. Alternately ownership of the swidden may be shared among those who operate the land. Owners may also receive help from others who are not owners of the land but who will get an equal share from the produce.

The swiddening process begins in July or August through to February. The plot is cleared by slashing and burning and then harrowing. After harrowing is completed, the area is ready for the planting of seeds. During the immature period, the fields will have to be kept free of weeds. Weeding work is allocated to the women and children.

During the ripening period, the paddy attracts pests such as weaver-birds, rats, monkeys and squirrels. To protect the paddy from these pests, the Murut build small "takang" (huts/shelter) in the fields and station watchman in them or alternatively the whole family will live there until harvesting is completed. Scarecrows made from unused clothes or plastic will be put at various points in the fields to scare away the birds.

The paddy is reaped with a special type of knife mostly by the women and children. Generally, the men are

involved in hunting, clearing new land and recovery of forest products.

Occasionally, if the weather is very wet at the burning stage, the Muruts are unable to harvest their plot and the crop is a failure. In this case they support themselves as best they can on jungle tubers and whatever small animals or fishes they are able to catch.

Secondary crops are planted in the same field when the paddy crop is young. As the shallow soil of the hill will only support crops of paddy for a few years at the most, the Muruts only plant paddy once in the area and interplant with "malau" (yam) during the immature period. After the paddy has been harvested and the secondary crops such as "malau", "kasila" or "kasuo" (a type of tuber plants) are also harvested, this area is then abandoned.

After a few years, when secondary forest has grown on the land, it may be used again as the land has been rested and fertilised by humus having accumulated. This is what I mean by "rotation cultivation".

Usually, secondary crops are planted only for personal consumption but crops such as bananas, mango and langsats are sold. In some places of the Tagal Murut village, there is an organised market ("tamuan") selling a

variety of secondary crops including wild forests vegetables. For example there is a "tamuan" in Masanoi once a month organised by the mission. Usually, the women and children will plant and look after the secondary crops.

A list of the secondary crops which are planted during swiddening and after harvesting (from February to August) are described in Table 3:1.

Table 3.1: Secondary Crops grown in Swiddens in Tilis

Tagal Name	English Name	Remarks
Malau Kasila Kasou	Yam Tapioca Sweet Potatoes	A type of root and tuber crops, planted during swiddening.
Sawi Petula Peria Benterong	Mustard Green Hairy Ground Loofah Bitter Gourd Egg Plant (Brinjal)	Vegetables and some miscellaneous crops planted after planting paddy.
Tairus Lampun Mangga Kikian Piasau Puntih	Maize (Corn) - Mango "Tarap" (Local Name) Coconut Banana	A variety of fruits planted after harrowing the ground for long-term used.

The Muruts are very efficient at hunting, fishing and trapping. These activities are done not for their contribution to family economics but as food supplement activities. Harrison (1984) noted that: "Very high fish availability marked the present visit, held over from an extensive 'tuba poison' fishing of a few days before" (Harrison 1984 : 120).

The weapons used by the Muruts for hunting are the blowpipe, spear, catapult and shotgun. The people are involved in this activity either as individuals or in groups. If done individually or in small groups of two to three persons they will hunt in the nearby areas only. Large group hunting is also carried out and in this case the hunt is usually conducted in the deep jungle 50 kms or more away from Kampong Tilis. The group comprising both the old and young men of the village spend two to three weeks in the jungle.

The only traditional weapon to which much attention is given is the blowpipe. This instrument has been traditionally used by the Muruts until it has now become one of the precious dowry items. Every house in Tilis possesses blowpipes. The Murut blowpipes are very similar in construction to those used by the other indigenous people of Sabah. It is a cylindrical tube of hard wood, with the

muzzle being fitted with a small wooden sight above and with a flat spear blade attachment below, which guides the dart on leaving the muzzle. The spear if necessary can also be used as a weapon. The points of the short darts are covered with "palih" a kind of poison. The dart head is conical in shape and made of pith which has the upper or larger end closely fitting the bore of the weapon. The dart quiver is a bamboo box made from the large internode, with one of the adjoining nodes left untouched to form its bottom. It is covered with a cap made from the same piece of bamboo (See Figure 3.2). Blowpipe and dart making is slowly decreasing as their use is superceeded by the shotgun. In Tilis it is reported that the blowpipe is only used in small scale hunting while shotguns are usually used in large scale hunting.

Fishing is done by both men and women. Like hunting, fishing is usually done after the harvesting period and the people are at leisure due to under employment. The equipment used for fishing are "pantik", "siur", "puket" and "rambet". Tuba poisoning is sometimes carried out when there are schools of fish in rivers or pools. The tuba juice is poured in the marked areas and within a few minutes the stunned fish will be floating up.

The women and school children in Tilis used "siur" or "pantik" for fishing in the Tilis river. The river is

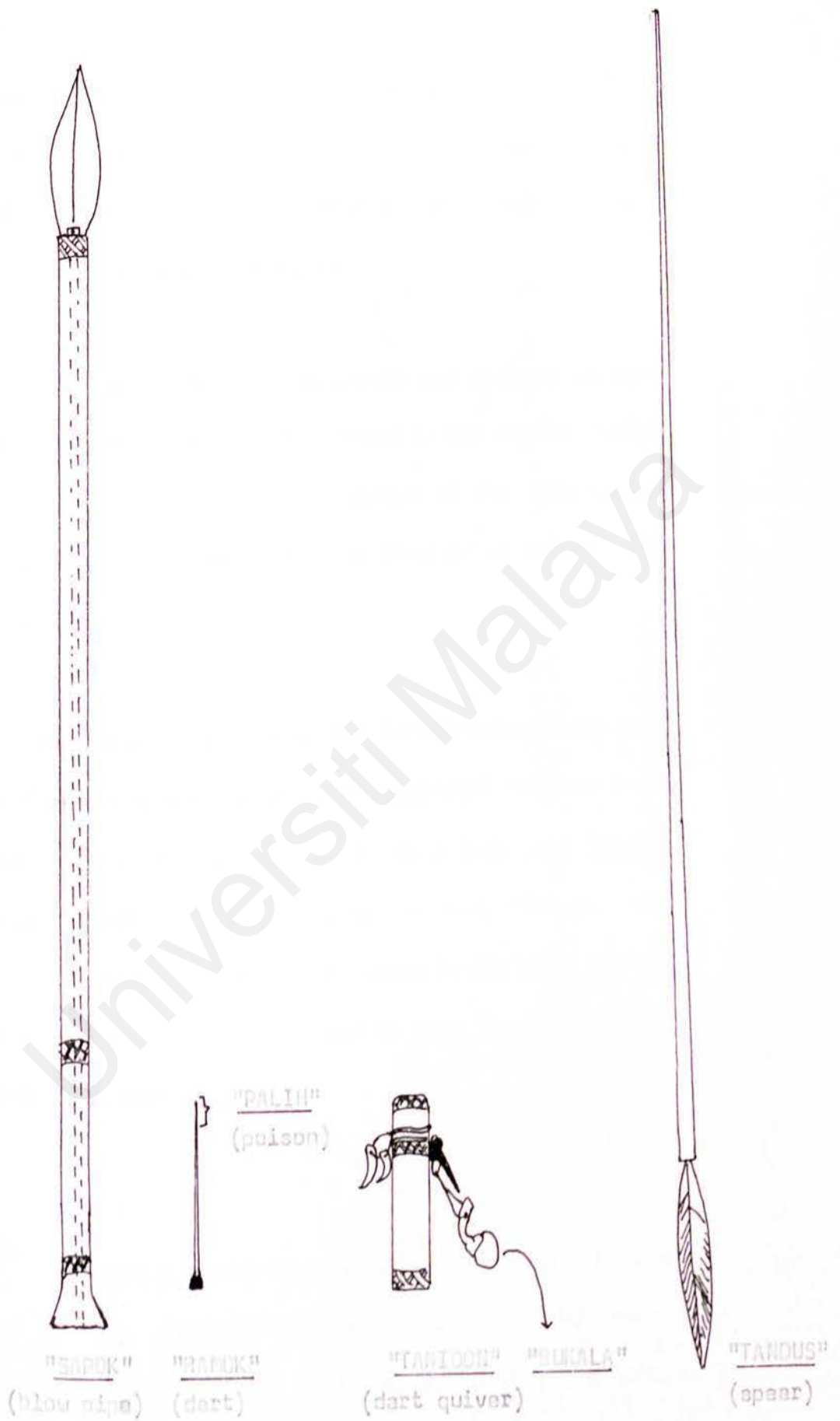


FIGURE 3:2 TRADITIONAL WEAPONS.

quite shallow and is polluted by timber recovery activities in the Tilis and Kemabong areas. Large group fishing organised by the men is usually done in the larger rivers such as the Lokoson and Padas river.

Trapping of birds, squirrels and monkeys is done by using pits, nets and spears. Usually the baited traps are put in the centre or by the boundary of the plantation thereby preventing the animals from damaging or eating the paddy crop.

In Kampong Tilis, fish and forest animals are only used for family consumption and for occasional celebrations. To preserve the meat/fish, the people made them into "tamba" or "jarok" (fermented meat or fish) and keep them as food supply. Occasionally they do sell these products to satisfy outside requests. The animals used to make "tamba" are wild boar, deers and monkeys.

Of special interest regarding the Tagal Muruts' culture is the sharing or distribution of the hunted animals. For example, if a wild boar is caught, the animal will be divided up by the participants in the hunting group. People who are not involved in the group but who lend their articles such as shotgun, blowpipe or bullets, will also

receive a part of the wild boar in return. Detailed description of this is in Chapter 4.

The Tagal Murut derive food and other necessities from the forest. They collect fern tips, bamboo shoots, herbs, various wild or semi-wild fruits, rattan and a variety of resin. This vegetation is used in their daily diet as fresh vegetables due to the difficulties faced in obtaining commercial goods such as tinned fish, vegetables and noodles etc. Vegetable gathering which produces nearly all of the villagers' vegetables intake, is mostly done in between the work of other productive activities. It was observed that almost daily the people go out to gather forest vegetables. This is very time consuming because they have to climb up hill, walk through primary and secondary forest, crossing streams or walking along the river banks. Sometimes it is done in conjunction with hunting or fishing expeditions. It was further observed that these products are never sold.

3.4 CASH CROP CULTIVATION

Every household in Tilis owned a coffee and cocoa plot. Coffee production is a major source of income. Coffee is sold in Tenom and Kemabong whenever the people needed the cash to meet their daily needs. My income data shows that coffee is the major source of income for the Murut at this present time (see tables 3:2).

Table 3.2: Income and Consumption statistics of
Eight Households in Tilis from June 13 - 20, 1988

Household	Income (\$)	Consumption (\$)	Result (\$)	Sources of Income
Ampingot	93.00	23.00	+ 70.00	Coffee
Mulih	60.00	95.00	- 35.00	Coffee & Paddy
Simon	50.00	67.00	- 17.00	Coffee & Paddy
Taim	68.00	60.00	+ 8.00	Coffee
Sambiang	80.00	87.00	- 7.00	Coffee
Andahang	-	12.00	- 12.00	Coffee
Anghu	60.00	47.00	+ 13.00	Coffee & Paddy
Surang	35.00	19.00	+ 15.00	Coffee

The price of coffee was \$1.00 per kilogram at the time of the study. During my one month of field work, I noticed that the women did all the lighter duties such as drying the paddy and coffee while the men do all heavy-duty work like getting swiddening plots cleared etc.

The people have also planted cocoa but for the last two year, most of the cocoa growers have not received any income. They are faced with a lot of problems including pest infestation in looking after their cocoa.

Due to the lack of facilities, the majority of these people were unable to operate this type of capitalist economy successfully for several reasons:

- a) lack of chemical fertilisers.
- b) lack or no knowledge of insecticides to protect their cocoa from pests and diseases.
- c) do not possess the proper knowledge on how to take care of their cocoa plantations.
- d) lack of financial support.
- e) high transportation costs due to the distance from their plantations to the town.

By comparison, the people in Masanoi successfully operated their cocoa crops and were able to sell it locally

to the middle men either from the Agricultural Department or from private companies.

Technology is used along with traditional knowledge and traditional tools. For example, the use of "tutuan" in peeling the coffee pods. Ownership when operating this sort of commodity differs from the swiddening operations because these are basically private enterprises.

3.5 CRAFT PRODUCTION

Every household in Tifis does crafting work like baskets, hats or fishing net for personal use. There are no special or extensive sales for these crafts. However, the people do sell these items if there are requests from outsiders. In my observation, these people faced difficulty in fixing the prices for their crafts. They therefore only estimate the price. The actual cost of the product is based on the size and quantity of the materials used.

The Tifis women are very skillful in crafting, they do this in the evening or while drying the paddy or coffee. The materials used are usually bamboo or rattan. The materials are coloured by traditional dyes which are obtained from the jungle or by commercial products.

It is not exceptional for a 13 year old girl to complete a coloured diagram on a basket approximately one and a half foot high in five days. This is due to the people's general inculcation in which most of these traditional skills are learned by their children (Hunter 1976 : 81-85).

In regards to crafting, it was noted that almost all the tools that the Tagal used for hunting, fishing, cultivating, carrying and for domestic work are made by themselves.

3.6 WAGE LABOUR

Wages are one of the ways to earn money (cash income) categorized by Gomes as a production activity. (Gomes, 1986: 67). However during the survey period, unemployment in both the private sector and government departments in Tilis were high.

In Tilis, there are only two government teachers and a labourer who is hired by a chinese towkey in Kemabong. The people informed me that the men have a good chance of getting jobs in a timber company located next to the kampong (Unikaya Sdn Bhd) but the people, especially the young and the young married men, prefer cultivating the land for cash crops rather than working for others. The following case is typical.

Simon for the last 5 years worked in a Rubber Plantation Scheme. Two years ago, he shifted to Unikaya Timber Company and was appointed as a foreman. He earned approximately \$1,000.00 per month with allowances. After a year of working, he returned to the kampong and started planting coffee and swiddening.

It is quite clear that the people are psychologically unprepared in the sense of improvements on their lives. However there are other possible reasons why this has happened as given below:

- a) lack of education
- b) the fatalism attitude
- c) limited opportunities

3.7 DIVISION OF LABOUR AND TIME ALLOCATION

After describing all the productive activities of the Tagal Murut, we can identify the roles of the sexes in their activities and also in the processes of decision making. In discussing the question of who and whose produce are consumed by whom in this type of economy, I refer to Chayanovian analysis of his study of Russian peasant households in which he asserts that "the degree of self exploitation is determined by a peculiar equilibrium between family demand, satisfaction and the drudgery of labour itself." (Chayanov 1966 :6 in Gomes 1986 :17).

To illustrate the Tagal people daily routine, I observed for a week eight couples from eight households in Tilis. Some of the activities were not observed directly but were reported through daily interviews. It was found that generally the people wake up quite early in the morning (at about 5.30 am or earlier) and retire to bed about 9.00 pm. In the case of the eight couples I have noted down their productive activities from June 13 to June 19, 1988. These consist principally of tending to their subsistence commodity and domestic chores. The times taken for doing their work are shown in Table 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.

Table 3.3: Time Allocation of Production for Eight Couples in Tilis, from June 13 - 19, 1988

Productivity	Number of hours			Percentage
	Men	Women	Total	
Commodity	105	110	275	25.2
Subsistence	268	120	388	35.7
Domestic Work	84	340	424	39.0
TOTAL	517	570	108.7	
Percentage	47.5	52.4	100.0	

Table 3.4: Time Allocation of Subsistence Production Activities for Eight Couples in Tilis from June 13 - 19, 1988

Productivity	Number of hours			Percentage
	Men	Women	Total	
Swiddening	201	60	261	51.5
Hunting	26	0	26	5.1
Fishing	13	16	29	5.7
Collecting	28	44	72	14.2
Crafting &	0	119	119	23.5
TOTAL	268	239	507	100.0
Percentage	52.9	47.1	100	

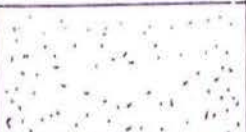
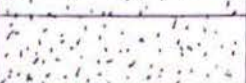




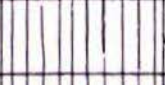
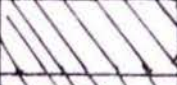

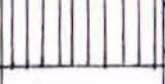
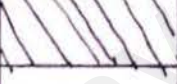








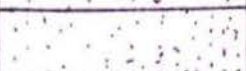
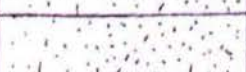








During my period of observation, commodity production was based solely on coffee or cocoa activities, while in the subsistence economy, swiddening activities are based mostly on clearing the new land for paddy cultivation. Where hunting and fishing were concerned these were minor activities which were carried out in the Tilis suburb itself.

The division of labour on economic activities are illustrated in Table 3.5. The time contribution on the concentration of certain types of activities are illustrated in Table 3.6.

Table 3.5 : Division of Labour on Economic Activities

Types	Activities	Man	Woman	Son	Daughter
Coffee	Planting & Clearing	x		x	
	Weeding	x	x	x	
	Pesticides application	x			
	Plucking/Reaping		x	x	x
	Panning		x		x
	Drying		x		x
Cocoa	Planting & clearing	x			
	Weeding	x	x	x	x
	Pesticides application	x			
	Pruning	x	x		
	Plucking		x	x	
	Removing seeds		x		x
Paddy	Clearing & burning	x		x	
	Planting	x	x		
	Weeding	x	x	x	x
	Harvesting	x	x	x	x
	Threshing		x		x
	Drying		x		x
	Milling		x		x
Fishing	'Memmuket'	x		x	
	'Mensior'		x	x	x
	'Memantik'			x	x
	'Menuba'	x		x	
Hunting	All hunting activities	x		x	
Gathering	Forest Products	x	x	x	
	Fire wood collection		x		x
Domestic	Care of pigs/chicken		x		x
	Care of cow	x			
	Carpentry	x		x	
	Crafting		x		
	Care of baby/elderly folk		x		

Table 3.6: Production Activities by Month

Month Activity	Swiddening	Hunting	Fishing	Crafting	Farming
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					
Key:	 Cooperation in Swiddening carried by Household  More time for Hunting  Intensive Hunting  Fishing in Group  Secondary Crops planted  More time for Crafting				

In swiddening, during certain months, there is a need for good cooperation among the people to make it easier to finish up the work and hence allow them to spend time in other activities.

Hunting and fishing are carried out throughout the year but there is a pattern whereby in certain months extensive and intensive activities are carried out. This is due to the fact that certain animals gathered at certain times of the year at particular locations in the jungle. Usually the hunting trips are organised about a month or so before this period (October or November). However, families who do not have enough manpower for weeding activities in the paddy fields hunting trips. Fishing is, however, of a seasonal nature depending on climatic factors and availability of manpower.

Grafting is done by the women either during drying of the paddy or coffee in the house compound or after harvesting usually in July (before planting for the next season).

In farming, I have combined the planting of secondary crops with the cocoa or coffee (Table 3.6) plantings which means there is still work to be done even after the paddy is harvested. The people informed me that coffee also has seasonal labour demands since in certain months the plants have more fruits.

activities. This idea is similar to Terray's concept of "infrastructure".

The domination of use-value means the production is determined by consumption, therefore by existing needs (...) without external intervention, needs remain unchanged, and consequently that intensity of exploitation also remaining uniform (Terray 1975:97-98, in Kocke; 1980 : 118).

Testing the Chayanov (1966) hypothesis, may help us in making a hypothesis for the type of Tagal economy. His model of internal dynamics of household production (Chayanov 1966 :81) could be connected with swiddening activities between three respondents whom I interviewed regarding their production of the last season (September 1987 to February 1988). (See Table 3.7)

Table 3.7: Production from September 1987
to February 1988

Name of Head of Household	Number of Members Operating	Size of Swiddening In Acres	Number of Members Consuming	Production in Kilo- grammes	Balance as at June 1988
Mulih	6	2	10	150	50
Angang	10	2	18	210	100
Yahat	5	2	8	120	70

Accuracy of the data is not guaranteed because the balanced stock as at June 1988 which I have observed is already in the "kulapa"(paddy store). Calculations are based on a rough estimation only and the same estimation is also used with regard to the data on the size of the field where the three respondents' similar plots are located.

In general, it was found that Mr Anggang produces more but also consumes more because of the size of his household. The data cannot be compared exactly in examining the Chayanov theory because certain unavoidable unforeseen events had happened to the respondents as listed below:

- a) in the cooperation activities from slashing to harvesting, there is the presence of other people who are linked to their "pahaka" or "vokun" who consumed the produce.
- b) there are no rice sales records.

This therefore means that the Chayanov theory could not be applied to these people.

What we need to determine is whether the Tagal Murut definitively practice a subsistence economy or do they practice a capitalist economy or a mixture of the two having measurable characteristics. First of all, the means of subsistence are produced by the expansion of creative energy or more correctly, labour power, which needs to be continually renewed.

We categorised the forms of subsistence production into two terms, the first is the "most organised" which consists of the farming of hill rice (swiddening), where a variety of crops, particularly hill paddy are cultivated. The second is the "supplementary subsistence". These include fishing, trapping and hunting activities. In all these instances, the natural forest environment represents the major means of production.

The productivity and activities of rice swiddens in Kampong Tilis are extremely important to the people. From the history of this kampong, economic activity has shown that it is an annual activity for them to obtain their livelihoods. Furthermore, from the people's account of their plantings of previous swiddens, it is evident that there has been an increase in yields. The spirit of labour cooperation seems to attract more people into swiddening.

In contrast to this cooperation of the contemporary Tagal economy, we see that there is less attention to commodity productivity. The coffee farm is very old and there is extensive attention provided, even though these activities are their major source of cash income.

From my own perception which is linked to their history, these people have to face a change in attitude in the sense of getting more production. Among these changes is the reduction of individuality in production from rattan collecting to cultivation. We can find the spirit of cooperation, not only in the swiddening activities but also in clearing cocoa or coffee plantations.

Indoor economic activities like crafting also show the cooperation among the women in Tilis. For example, there is a case where A asks B to finish the basket that A is doing while A is required to attend to another job urgently. At the same time another person Z has requested for A's basket as soon as possible. Here B could not or did not offer her basket to Z because it is already a promise ("janji") from Z to A.

Actually the two activities, swiddening and caring for the coffee and cocoa/crafting are not in competition with one another in terms of labour as these two activities can be done simultaneously.

In the case of purchasing commodities from the market, the people only buy essential items that are supplementary to their needs eg. cooking oils, kerosene, lamp, battery, salt, sugar, biscuits etc. They seldom buy rice, but sometimes do buy noodles, tinned fish or meat. Their daily diet consists of hill rice, fresh vegetations from the forests and "tamba". There is only one simple retail store in the kampong which only sells simple commodities such as noodles, soaps, biscuits and candles.

In addition to rice production, tapioca, sweet potatoes, yam etc are also grown. Hunting as their traditional supplementary economy is still apparent but declining in the use of their material culture like the blowpipe being replaced with the shotgun.

The time contribution on certain types of activities are illustrated in Table 3.6. The time allocation in Table 3.3 and 3.4 clearly demonstrate that it is the subsistence economy that is being widely practiced.

I conclude that even though a few assumptions of how subsistence economy is practiced had to be made, it is more extensively carried out and more important to the Tagal Murut. I acknowledge the existence of commoditization and commercialization in the kampong; for example, cash crop cultivation and the case of direct request for crafts and food like "tamba".

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CHAPTER 4

DISTRIBUTION, SHARING AND CONSUMPTION

4.1 WORK SHARING

Work Sharing among the Tagal Murut is known as "morugup" or "moroyong". Such sharing can be conducted formally or informally. Informal "morogup" refers to cooperation in work with the agreement of each of the members involved. Informal cooperation is usually carried out in small numbers of five to ten people. For example, during the swiddening the people in the kampong will organise an informal "morogup" based on the size of their plots and availability of labour in the households.

At the time of my field research, swiddening activities were carried out in three adjacent areas namely, "Nanaman", "Tinangguli" and "Limbou". Before the cultivators started work on their swiddens they held a meeting to discuss arrangements for the "morogup". At the meetings, they will fix the time and the number of the persons to be involved in the work. The sequence of planting is not fixed due to the variation of climatic conditions. Through experience, they can predict the weather for the next day are hence this means that a "morogup" may be done daily, twice or three times a week, depending on the weather conditions.

In Table 4.1 a list of informal "morugup" done in Kampong Tilis of six members for two weeks (from June 6 to 18, 1988) is provided.

Table 4.1: Informal Morugup Activity by Six Members
In Kampong Tilis from June 6-18, 1988

Household	Date	Place	Activities	
Simon	6/6	Nanaman	1	Slashing and
Angunni	9/6	Tinangguli	1	clearing
Ambau	11/6	Tinangguli	1	primary forest
				for swiddening.
Polipos	13/6	Tinangguli	1	Clearing
Andanang	16/6	Tinangguli	1	secondary
			1	forest for
				swiddening.
Angkuras	18/6	Nanaman	1	No record.

It is a type of sharing which Pryor (1977) refers to as "balanced exchange". A person provides his services to another with the expectation of a similar return services from his benefactor in the future. I have observed that people exchange services and do not be reciprocate a services with money.

The exchange can be initiated either by a "tied gift" (ie. person A gives person B a gift (x), and person B is obligated to make a return gesture of equal value if he accepts it) or alternatively a "tied request" (ie. person A requests something from person B and then gives B in return something of equal value. Reciprocal exchange cannot be forced in the sense that any initiated exchanges must be accepted voluntarily. The exchange can also be rejected.

Swiddening, operated by one household in joint venture with others. Although both of these are distinct from each other, their services when given are considered a form of cooperation. Illustrations is given in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Cooperation in Operating the Land For Swiddening and its Reciprocal Terms by 'Pahaka' and 'Vokun' in Tilis

Name of Members	Land Operated	Production	Distribution
Mulih Anggang ('Vokun') Simon ('Pahaka')	2½ Acres of Swiddening	450 kgs	150 kg each
Members who operate the 2½ acres land owned by Mulih. Anggang offers himself in cooperation with them in operating the land with reasons of fertilised soils. Simon is Mulih's son.	From clearing to harvesting everybody co-operated in operating without counting the time and the amount of labour contributed by each member.	Income (estimated) from rice swiddening.	a) Anggang (Vokun) get equal with them as reward for his cooperation. b) Simon (Pahaka) will keep his share together with his father and take it when needed without any obligation.

Formal "morogup" is usually organised by the church. The organizational structure of village church can be namely the youth section, women league and parish council (fathers section). In Kampong Tilis, the youth section is the most active amongst the three. Formal "morogup" is organised on a voluntary basis. A person who receives help from this group is expected to donate money to the church. The money will be used for the church's development and activities. The amount of donation however is not fixed. For examples if Boliking needs help and ten people turn out to help him, Boliking will make a payment of say 2.00 ringgit to each helper. Thus he will pay to the church a total sum of 20.00 ringgit. Here again payment varies from section to section depending on the natures of the work and the earning capacity of the person concerned. Therefore it can be said that the person who attended the formal "morogup" is actually voluntarily donating his services to the church. The church encourages people to be involved in the morogup it organises as it also derives much gain from such an activity.

The Tagal Murut people also wish to help others either in "pahaka" or "vokun" but usually they get something in return. This case appears as a 'temporary cooperation' activity which is required in some conditions. Firstly, a person who has a large plot of swiddening but very little labour force availability and particularly when faced with adverse climatic factors may be required to finish up the

work quite urgently. Secondly, the owner of the land may be unable to continue his work because of some incident (eg sickness etc) and thirdly, it could be done by mutual agreement with promise of some kind of exchange services which will be given in future. This case is similar to hiring others to do the owner's work, but in Kampong Tilis, the concept of hiring others to do paid work does not exist. For those who contribute their energy to the work it becomes an obligation on the part of the owner to give either money or paddy in return.

Usually swiddening and other seasonal activities are an example of mutual cooperation. For example:-

A helps B to harvest or weed B's plot, in return B is obligated to give A some of the paddy harvested.

However these cases depend on how long and how often A helps B. B is obligated to count the hours, and assess the amount of work done. B will give A paddy equivalent to B's estimation of A's contribution.

This reward is not counted in terms of monetary value but rather from the hours contributed with B determining the value for each hour. A is not considered as a labourer or as selling his energy to B. This is based more on a social interest on both sides which apparently

aims to make their relationship as one village more cohesive and to create a feeling of brotherhood or sisterhood.

Referring to the case of A and B it is not only that A received paddy in return but also receives credit in reciprocal exchange. B could do the same work for A in return in certain other urgent activities or in the same activities during the next swiddening season. This is what anthropologists call "delayed reciprocity" (Pryor 1977).

We can also see the terms of distribution and cooperation or work sharing in other productive activities. Here, 'services' are being emphasized. We can refer to productive activities of a non-material nature which are organised in such a manner to create a "close connection" between the activity and the performers obtaining material means to satisfy their wants. A close connection may also be more indirect for exchange of special work. (ie person A helps B to carry or to find good wood for the building of his [A's] house, in return for the same favour by B sometime in the future.)

Hunting or fishing trips are usually done in groups. Usually they are individuals who own shotguns, blowpipes, spears and dogs. Although other members in the group do not own any weapons they are still allowed to join

contribute some kind of dishes, meat and rice to the people who organise the function. This sharing practice is described in greater detail in Chapter 5.

4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF PRODUCT

Distribution of products in the swiddening activities are based on two principle. Firstly, the "pahaka" members have a right to the rice income of a member irrespective of whether they have contributed their labour in the swiddening process. The swidden produce and income will be used by the household and his "pahaka" members including people who have married into the "pahaka".

Secondly, it is through the cooperation of the "vokun" who participate in the swiddening in a single plot. For this second group the income will be divided according to the energy and time devoted in the swiddening. This principle also applies to the hunting and fishing trips whereby meat and fish will be equally divided among the members of the group. But if there is excess food available this will then be shared with those households who did not participate. Therefore the people honour the hunters who are successful in their expeditions.

Forest products such as wild vegetables and fruits, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, "tambalua" etc will be

shared between the people in both "pahaka" and "vokun". This is because, rights towards wild vegetation in the forest are considered communal and hence these resources are shared by all of people in the village. The Tagal Murut will inform others in the village when they find something useful in the forest.

In crafting, even these crafts are considered personal items, if they are sold to outsiders then the money will be shared equally among those who participate in making the items. In contrast, income from cash crop cultivation such as coffee or cocoa are privately owned by the persons who operate the land. However, if the land or the coffee and cocoa plantations were owned by a group of people the products would be divided equally.

4.4 DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY

There are several items of machinery in Tilis that are owned by a group of people. Table 4.3 shows the ownership and type of machinery available in Tilis. Normally this machinery are privately owned in the urban areas but in the case of Tilis, the machinery (land cruiser, milling machine and electric generator) is jointly owned by several people.

The people informed me that this machinery is also used by non-owners when the need arises. On some occasions,

Table 4.3: Distribution of Property in Tili

Type of Property	No.	Name of Shareholders	Payments			Remarks
			C	D	I	
Jeep - Land-Cruiser	1	Simon Saapon Ambao Mulih Laingan Ampungit Ikou Ansapuk			x	The members hired one driver at \$200.00 a month. Each member contributed \$2,000 and the remainder was borrowed from Bank Bumiputera. The only monopoly transport which gives service to Tenom and its suburb daily. Income keepers are selected by members.
Milling Machine	1	Ansapok Angku Mulih	x			Giving milling services anytime when needed. Thon, who is Mulih's son, is the caretaker - charging \$0.60 ¢ per tin.
Electric Generator	4	Resthouse	x			Keys: C = Cash Payments D = Depositing I = Instalment payment
	1	Church,				
		Pastor's House				
	1	Laingan				
		Tulali				
	1	Ambu				
		Surang				
	1	Yakat				
		Anggang				

NB: There are also other properties shared by the people but not recorded here.

the part-owners of the machinery will give permission to other people to borrow or use the machine. For example, the eight people who own the Land Cruiser have no right to refuse or prevent others from using the vehicle as long as the user pays for the petrol.

Household property such as land, agricultural tools weapons and house is commonly owned. Since the household members are staying together in one roof, everybody have a right on the property they have. However, when a new married couple moved out of the household and form a new nuclear family, the head household will give them their part of the property (this distribution usually goes to the sons but daughters do sometimes receive them too).

Generally the elder sons will inherited more of the property in terms of size etc this is because it is the belief of the people that the eldest sons has the responsibility of looking after the aging parents and the unmarried younger ones.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Up to about fifty years ago the people were living in a single lineage and in one longhouse. Nowadays, the idea of living together, while still existing is changing with more nuclear families starting to live separately. The

terms of "pahaka" are still respected and are the basis of guidance for their cooperative attitude towards improving their daily livelihood.

Work sharing, material sharing and the distribution of production of the Tagal Murut economic behaviour is actually one kind of integration of the people. By this institution the people still live cooperatively together in the village.

From my observation and analysis of the spirit of unity amongst the people, besides the Church and "pahaka" influence, cooperation in their economic activities is one of the elements that make the people united. This occurs not only in the strict economic sense but also in the peoples' everyday affairs. For example, the murder case that happened in Kampong Kongkokar which is about 7 kms away from Tilis. The people of Tilis cooperated with the people from Kampong Kongkokar to search for the victim's body which was reportedly hidden in the jungle by the murderer. It must be pointed out that most of the Tilis people are from Kobintaluan the original place of the Kongkolar people. It must be assumed that there is some sense of solidarity between these two Kampongs.

The complex concept of material sharing has greatly improved the peoples' life style not only technologically but also in terms of productive efficiency. This is an assumption that economic specialisation will emerge in the future.

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CHAPTER 5

ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

5.1 KINSHIP AND LABOUR RECRUITMENT

In Kampong Tilis the people are spiritually united by Christianity. The family is united by rights on the inheritance. The most important social and economic unit and the origin of all lineage is the "pahaka" which literally means house or household. (This was discussed in Chapter 2).

The hereditary system is based on patrilineal descent with practically all of the children belonging to the father's descent group. The fathers lineage may have rights to each others labour and to the labour of their children. This concept is important to help analyse the Tagal Murut economy.

Briefly kinship and social organisation are divided into two categories, "pahaka" and "vokun". In Tilis, the type of social organisation is generally egalitarian, practised with the absence of highly social differentiation, even to the extent that the people try to treat their neighbours as their "pahaka". (For example, their willingness to help each other without obligation of

status and prestige). The kinship system is tied to "pahaka" cohesion, but there is concern for other people's affairs.

The concept of "pahaka" is important in the society in terms of the economic organisation and the social integration. Firstly the people always give preference to their "pahaka" members for work or material sharing or the distribution of products. However, in the case of property sharing or crop distribution, the elders always get the larger share with decreasing amount with age. For example, if Mr Mulih has three sons and one daughter, his property will be passed on to his sons. The daughter will not get a share (or in some cases a nominal amount). Among his three sons, Mr Mulih's eldest son will get a bigger share of the land, the second son will perhaps get a slightly smaller share and his youngest son will get the smallest amount. It depends on his parents decision. The people in Kampong Tilis are usually seeking new land to operate so that their sons will in time to come get an adequate share. The size of the farm operated usually depends on the size of the family. This supports Chayanov's (1921) theory. However, in the present situation it does not mean that the family operates their farm just for their livelihood but also to increase their family wealth.

"Pahaka" in other words also play a part in social integration among the people of Tilis. One family usually cannot make a decision to operate the land without the others "pahaka" member's contribution. The "pahaka" always consult each other in solving problems or when needing help in their work. In Kg Tilis, the "morugup" is conducted according to the numbers of the "pahaka" who can contribute their manpower to the investment.

The size of their house is dependent on the number of the "pahaka" members. One family usually consider the other "pahaka" as the owners of the house. This idea originated from the longhouse practice.

For labour recruitment, every household has a prior right to recruit their children in their swidden or cash cropping cultivation. All the "pahaka" members take the responsibility to recruit their "pahaka" children to work or to teach them to do such work irrespective of whether it is domestic or productive work. Here again the division of labour is based on sex.

5.2 MARRIAGE SYSTEM

The people use the concept of "irau" (forever dowry or "alive dowry") which means that the groom has to repeatedly pay the brides' parents a sum of dowry until such time that the parents-in-law request for this dowry to stop.

These payments are usually in instalments and this means that each payment will take at least two years to pay. The normal procedure is that the groom will have to pay four or five times. The payment and its amount will depend on the income or production of the groom in a year.

Nowadays, both money and valuables are used for the dowry. However, certain traditional items of the dowry cannot be replaced by money. This is because they are unable to place a value on the items usually "bungkas" (beads) etc.

There are certain types of items or jars called "sampalair", "Binungkul", "Kiowon", "Balaiangan", "Langkong" and "Sampa Sarawak". Each of these jars differ in value from 80.00 to 500.00 ringgit each. The type of jar required depends on the bride's parents request. The second item is a gong. There are four types of gong. These come in different sizes and values. Thirdly, there are the "bungkas" (beads), one and a half feet is considered one "tes", the lowest required being 80 "tes". Each "tes" is worth around 70.00 to 120.00 ringgit. Cash money is around 3,000 to 5,000 ringgit. Lastly, there are the compulsory items, the "pilang" (parang) and "sapok" (blowpipe).

People can buy these items either in cash or through bartering (the exchange of one's property/items for another eg paddy or tamba) . Even though the monetary value of paddy or tamba are not really certain, but mutual agreements are obtained on both sides when bartering is done.

For the next dowry requirement "irau" or "tambahan berian", will be of greater value than the first, but jars, gongs and blowpipes are excluded. Money may be around 5,000 to 10,000 ringgit and so the value of the dowry increases as it goes on. For a better illustration, see Figure 5.1 for the types of dowry of the Tagal Murut people. I have noted one case of this 'forever dowry' (the names of the person has been changed due to respect for the person's privacy). See Table 5.1.

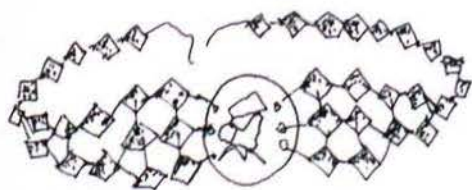
* In my observation during the field work. "Anggang take 1,500 kilos of 'paddy' from Taim in substituting for 20'tes' of "bungkas".

Table 5.1: The Dowry Payments in Tilis - Case of one Family 'A'

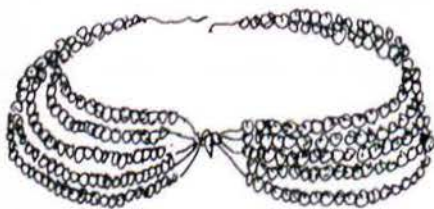
Name of Children	MARY		JOHN		MARTHA		SIMON	
Year of Marriage	1977		1978		1985		1987	
Origin of Husband/wife	Sinagang (Keningau)		Kemabong (Tenom)		Tilis (Tenom)		Tilis (Tenom)	
Berian Required /by	Year	Items (Received)	Year	Items (Given)	Year	Items (Received)	Year	Items (Given)
1st Berian	1977	Bungkas 70'tes' Gongs 6 Blowpipe 1 Money \$5,000 jars 6	1978	Bungkas 80'tes' Gongs 5 Blowpipe 1 Parang 1 Money \$3,000 jars 6	1985	Bungkas 70'tes' Gongs 1 Blowpipe 1 Parang 1 Money \$3,000 jars 6	1987	Bungkas 80'tes' Gongs 4 Blowpipe 1 Parang 1 Money \$2,500 jars 6
2nd Berian	1984	Money \$6,000 Others - 1 pig - rice (no record of amount)	1985	Money \$5,000 Others - paddy - tamba (no record of amount)		Time will be determined by Martha's parent most probably when Simon's parents-in-law give a sign of 'Irau'		Time and the items, will be determined by Simon's parents-in-law
3rd Berian	1988	Not recorded as it was held on 30th July 1988		Unknown		After John's parents-in-law		-

FIGURE 5:1 TYPES OF TAGAL MURUT'S DOWRY

1) BEADS

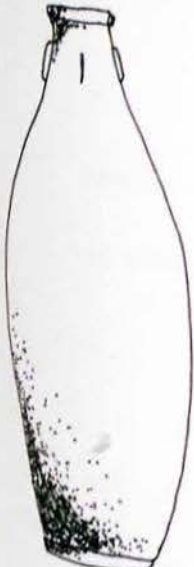


"TELUNG"

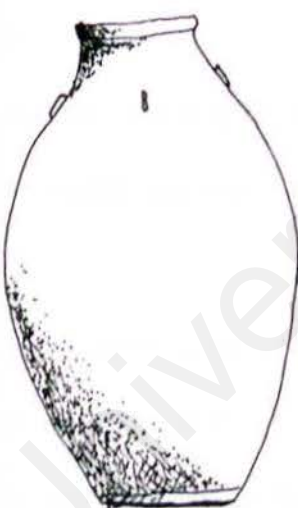


"BUNGKAS"

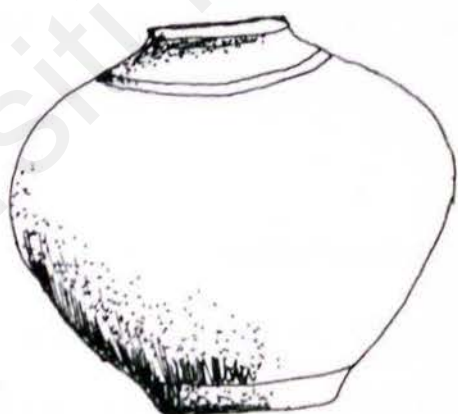
2) JARS (TAJAUS)



"SILOU"

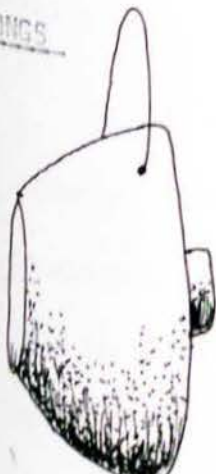


"SAPPAH SARAWAK"



"BINUNGKUL"

3) GONGS



"TA' AMAG"



"TORONGGONGON"



"SANAUG"

4) SLOW PIPE



"SAPOK"

From my analysis of the case of A's children, we found that the payments (berian) are different for the locals and when dealing with outsiders. The people asked for more from outsiders who are going to marry their daughters (if they are also Muruts) than from the local man. In Kg Tilis, there seems to be an understanding among the Tagals themselves that the dowry payments are more or less of the same value, in other words, standardised as much as possible.

The analysis further showed that the dowry requested by the bride's parents is more or less the same as what they would pay for their own son's dowry.

These are traditions that are being followed and not a form of exploitation of women in the Murut Society. However, the man with more daughters will gain more property but the man with more sons will lose more property in this type of dowry system.

I conclude that the Tagal Murut people are very concerned about the welfare of their children be it sons or daughters. This could be the reasons why the Tagal Murut like to marry young. The girls usually marries by the age of 13 to 16 and the men around 17 to 21 years of age. In a

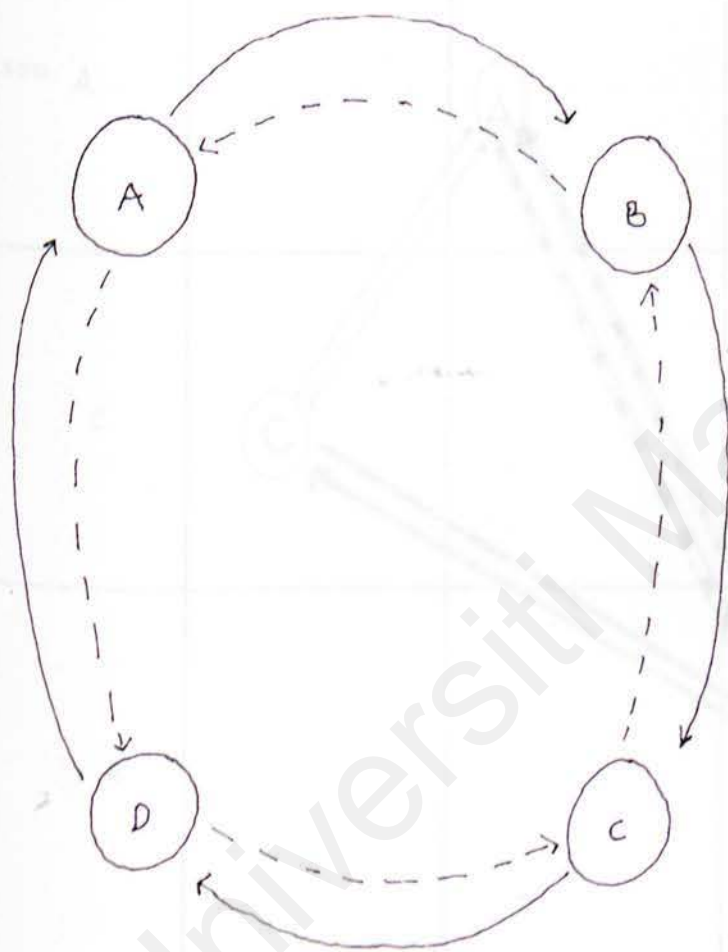
survey among the Tilis people, the oldest unmarried man found is an 18-year old boy and the oldest unmarried woman is a 17-year old girl.

The payment system of the dowry is determined from the requirements of both sides. As a result, the person get equal to those who have the same number of sons and daughters. This is another form of redistribution (See Figure 5.2).

Dowry payments among the Tagal Murut are quite expensive in terms of money. The question here is how the people can afford the payments living on subsistence economy. In Kg Tilis there are various ways in which the people cooperate in making the dowry payments. Here once again we see the distribution and reciprocal exchange of the people. (See Figure 5.3).

There are three stages of distribution in the marriage systems of the Tagal Murut. Firstly there is the distribution of certain items before the marriage is held (the "irau" [tambahan berian] occasion). The items included are "pundas" (rice), "tamba" (fermented meat), "gula" (sugar) and "roti" (biscuits). In Kg Tilis, when a person organises an "irau" that will be held in a month's time, he will inform the whole kampong and give out the items mentioned above. This is what is called "a sign of

Figure 5.2: The Dowry Payments Circulation among
The Tagal Murut People



Key:

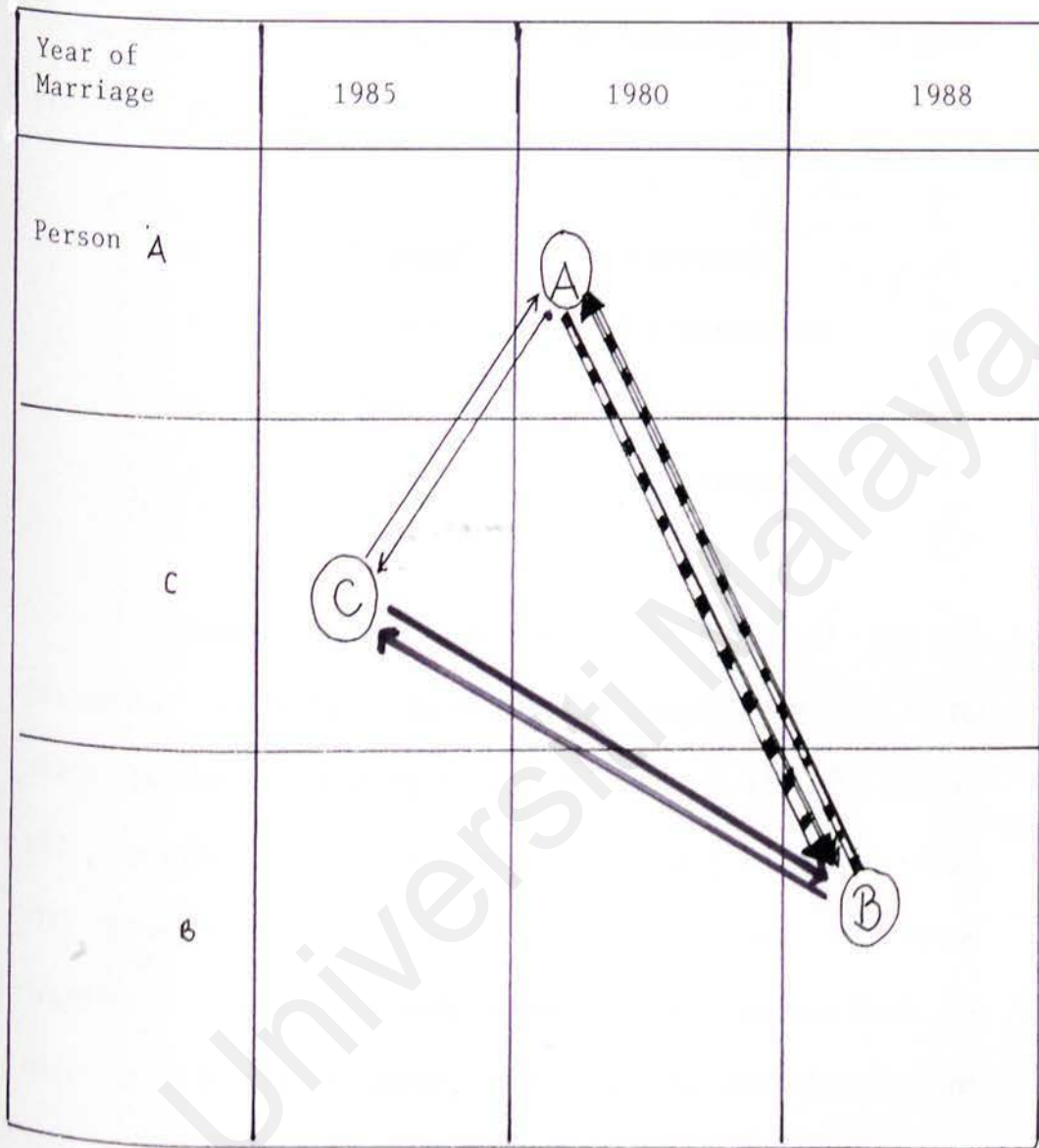


Married and the payment goes.



The daughter shifting to "Vokun" lineage

Figure 5.3: Reciprocal Exchange in Marriage Payment



Note:

1. A's occasion in 1980

C gives A	\$50.00
B gives A	\$200.00
2. C's occasion in 1985

A gives C	\$50.00
B gives C	\$500.00
3. B's occasion in 1988

A gives B	\$200.00
C gives B	\$500.00

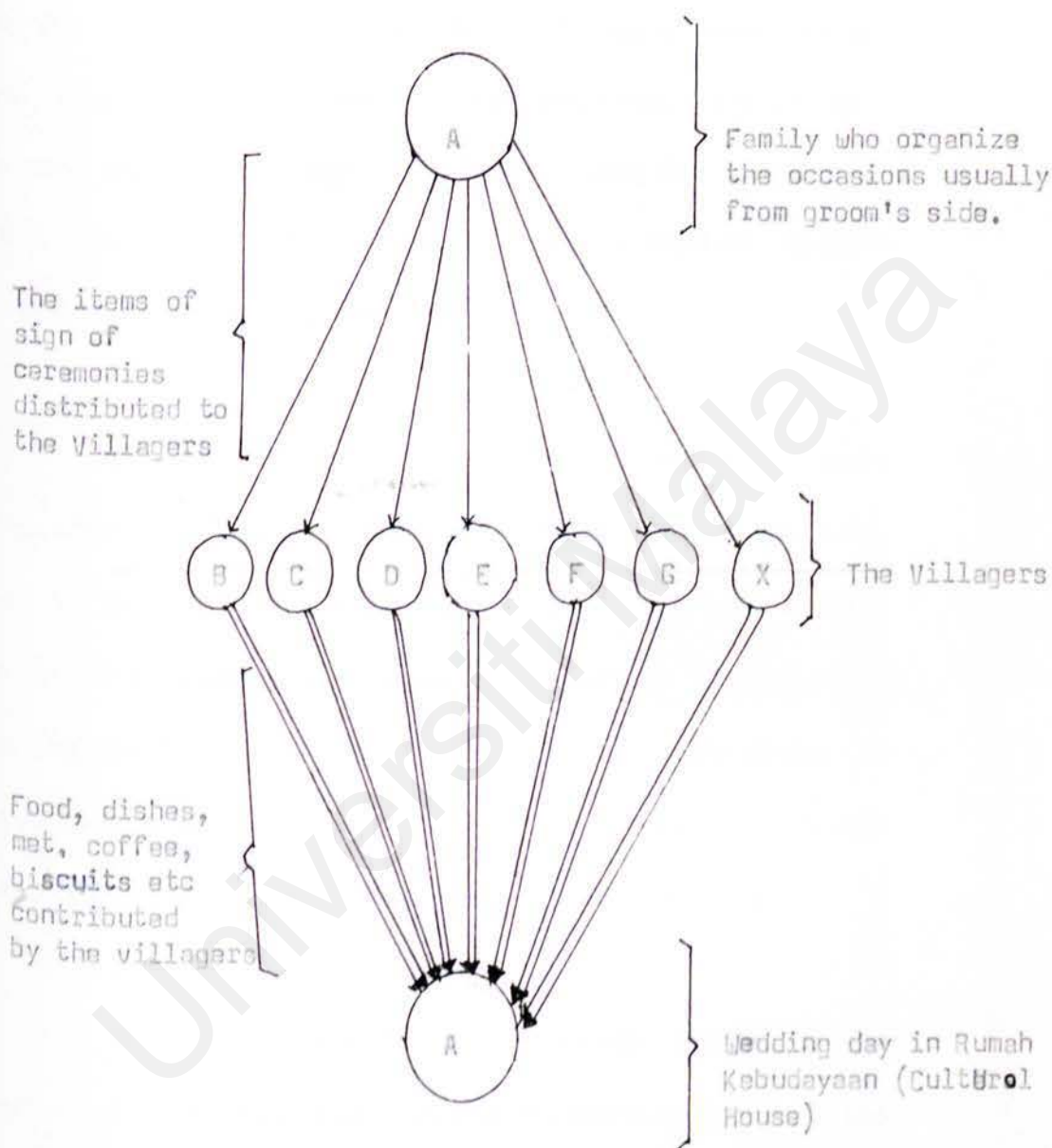
ceremony". The case I observed for the "irau" occasion was held on July 30, 1988. (I did not observed the marriage ceremony, as I had already left the kampong). The "sign of ceremony" given were:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|---|----------------|
| i | "Pundas" | - | 3 gantang |
| ii | "Tamba" | - | 3 kilogrammes |
| iii | "Gula" | - | 1 kilogramme |
| iv | "Biscuits" | - | 1/2 kilogramme |

These items were distributed to all the 23 households in Tilis. In return the people have to bring their food on the wedding day. (See Figure 5.4). The people will assemble in the longhouse (kebudayaan) for three days and three nights to enjoy themselves, eat and drink together. Since rice wine is prohibited, drinks such as milk or milo will be served. This is the distribution and redistribution or reciprocal exchange process.

The second stage is through invitation cards sent to the relatives and friends or all the people in the kampong, or neighbouring kampongs. The invitation card obliges the recipient to give something valuable or an amount of money, to the person who is going to get married or who has organised the "irau". The person who issued the invitation will be responsible to keep the record of payment made by his guests and in return when his guest invites him

Figure 5.4: The cooperation process among the Tagal Murut in Marriage System



Key:



The items of sign of ceremonies goes to the villagers.



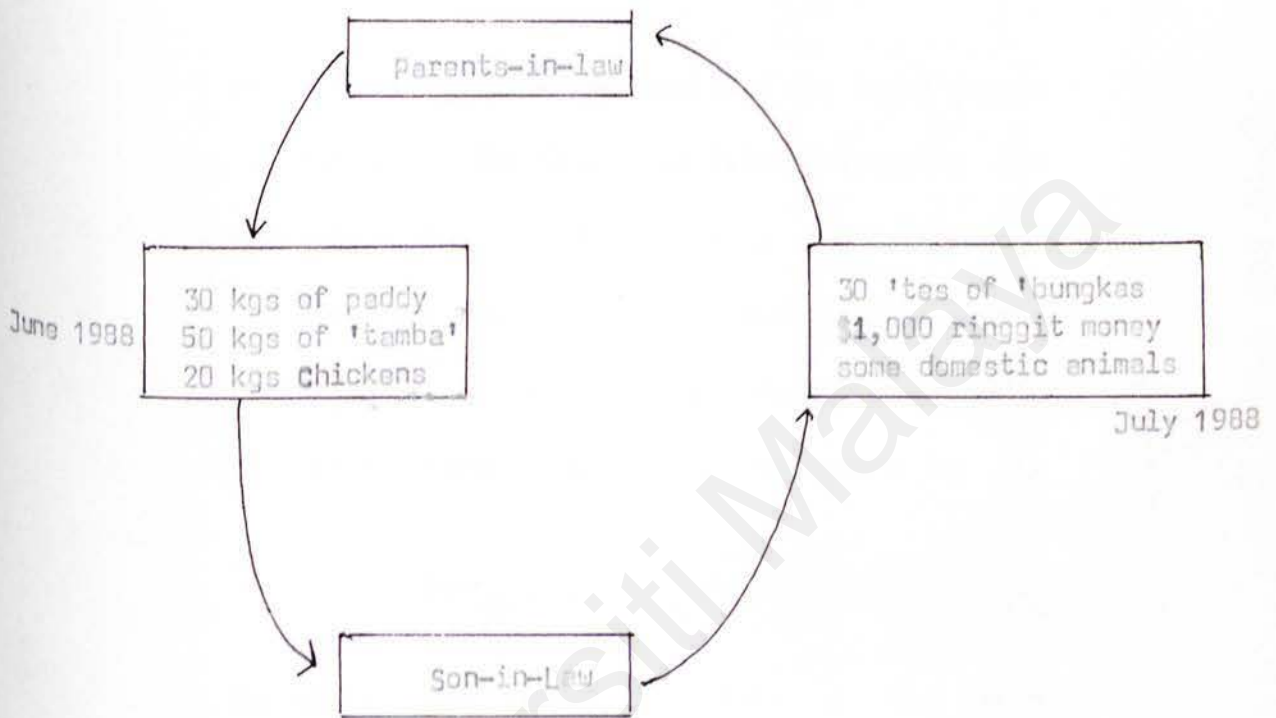
The villagers who receives the items will contribute to the individu or family concern.

he will give the same amount that was previously given to him. For example, A invites B, C, and D for an occasion, A will then record the names and amount contributed by B, C, and D. Later (maybe a year later or even a week later) when B or C or D organises the same function, A will give the same amount or things equivalent to what B, C, or D had given him in the past. This is another form of delayed exchange process (See Figure 5.4).

The third stage ("sign of irau") comes a few years later after the "sign of ceremony" and the wedding are over. This is the start of the "forever dowry". In this stage, the bride's parents give items like paddy or "tamba" as a sign of the "irau" required. Consequently, the groom or son-in-law will know that he will have to pay a certain amount for the bride a month later. (See Figure 5.5).

This discussion on the marriage system is an example of the production and redistribution process and gives us an idea of the complexity of the Murut society. Girls are treated as valuable persons who bring high status. However, this is not really practical because the distribution and reproduction are applied not for the purpose of getting wealth but for treasuring or keeping the traditional culture alive. It is quite important in the social interaction and integration sense among the people in Kg Tilis. The "irau" shows us that those who marry should not forget their parents-in-laws and the payments also make

Figure 5.5: Example of 'Irau' exchange



Note: The date will be determine through negotiation from both sides.

them united. This proves the high degree of cohesion and integration among the people.

5.3 RELIGION AND ECONOMY

As I have mentioned in Chapter 2 the Tagal people are mostly Christians. The Church in Tilis belongs to the Borneo Evangelical Mission (SIB : Sidang Injil Borneo). This Mission plays an important role in uniting the people and in improving the standard of living. What I am going to discuss here is the formal cooperation organised by the Church.

Basically, the Church in Tilis is very much concerned with the people's economy and encourages them to work hard. This is according to their belief that God will only bless those who work for themselves. The Church administration has been divided into three (3) categories, namely the Parish Council, Women's League and the Youth Section.

Each section of the administration does its own planning to improve the Church and its membership. For example, the Youth Section usually plays its role in the ceremonies of the Church, while the Parish Council is in charge of the Churches financial status and the affairs of the people in the kampong.

The Church is used by the people in most of their activities. The people meet monthly in the Church for discussions. Eventually the Church meeting has become preferred to the kampong administration meetings held by the Ketua Kampong or the Kampong Security and Development Committee.

In terms of cooperation, the Church's Women League or the Parish Council will organise a "gotong-royong" involving every household to assist the person who needs help in activities such as swiddening etc. The work is usually done in a gotong-royong way e.g clearing the cocoa plot or clearing and slashing new plot for swiddening.

Another Church organised example which I observed in Masanoi is the "tamu" (market). The Church Board determines the date and day of the market and announces it to the people about a week in advance. When the day comes, the items that are to be sold in the market will be accumulated in the Church compound. The Board of the Church will determine the price for each of the items. The profits from these sales are usually about 100% and will go into the Church fund.

The questions here is, what benefits do the people get from such activities and from the Church? This argument is quite controversial as it works both ways. The Church's

Board Members will decide on the usage of the funds, whether to improve the Church or to help the people. However, as far as I observed, the people were quite happy the way cooperation was being practiced and with the funds that go to the Church.

5.4 ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

In this part, I am going to discuss the Government's projects being carried out in Kampong Tilis. As I have mentioned before the Kampong was given a primary school which can accommodate about 47 pupils and medical services from the flying doctor of Yayasan Sabah. However, these services has been stopped a few months ago without any explanations whatsoever from the body. The people now seek medical services from the Tenom or in Batu Pua in Ulu Tomani.

With regards to agricultural facilities, the kampong does not receive much attention from the Agricultural Department in the Tenom District. In a comparison between services and subsidies given by the Department to other kampongs in Kemabong, Kampong Tilis appeared to be underserved. The Chairman of the Kampong informed me that the Security and Development Committee of

the Kampong (J.K.K.K.) had requested the Department to visit the area and recommend possibilities of developing the cash cropping but up to this date there had been no response from the Department.

In eight years since Kg Tilis was established not a single land title had been given. The people had only to hand in their receipt of application for these grants.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, it was not surprising to discover the people's dislike of the Government whose actions were considered unhelpful.

The Government had made a policy in 1987 that priorities in development would be given to the rural areas. This was done through the Yayasan Sabah. However, progress in development is yet to be seen in many areas.

From my own observations, it will be necessary for the Government to understand the needs of the people and the possibilities for improving and developing the kampong. An area where the Government can focus its attention is in agricultural and crafting production. With good facilities and concentration on cash cropping in Tilis, it will be possible for the Government to improve their standard of living.

CHAPTER 6

THE FUTURE OF THE TAGAL MURUT IN SABAH

6.1 COMMERCIALISATION AND MONETISATION

The penetration of capitalism in the Tenom area has brought about increased commercialisation and monetisation. Nowadays people even sell their products from subsistence activities. This happens especially when there is a direct request for certain products such as basket ("buyung") and cap ("silaung") which are crafts made from bamboo and rattan. The people are willing to sell these items at any time if they want an immediate cash income. These items are usually sold in Kemabong, Tenom or to the workers in the logging companies.

There has been a marked impact on the growth of profit making enterprises and the changes in sharing practices, and it can be assumed that, in the future, this will dominate in the Tagal Community.

The introduction of money into the Tagal Murut economic life has had a devastating effect on the Tagal. As a standard of value, money has introduced the forbidden element of calculation into economic exchanges among the

Tagal. This is especially true in the Tagal communities who have introduced money to their dowry systems. I observed that even their traditional customary obligations and items were ignored, to be replaced with money instead.

This resembles Bohannans (1968 : 246) observations on the impact of money in the Tivs economy. They noted that "It is the nature of the general purpose of money, that is, standardised the exchangeability of all items on a common scale." However, this was criticized by Gregory who pointed out that the gift exchange systems are destroyed by the "foreign institutions" and not money itself. (Gregory 1980)

In my opinion, both Bohannans' and Gregory's argument are complementary because the availability of money makes it easier for the Tagal Murut to obtain their dowry request. At the same time it broke the local exchange system.

We should also take into account the impact of commercialisation and monetisation among the Tagal people in Tilis on the development of the institution of private property. The principles of ownership and control of property among the people in Tilis was outlined in Chapter 4. In respect of land ownership, it was noted that the villagers collectively claim ownership or have control over certain areas on the basis of their direct ties or kinship to the group of original owners of the land.

However, since the logging activities have intensified in the area the people are now encouraged to apply for legal rights to their own land that they claim as "pahaka" members. This means that communalism has turned into individualism in the sense of ownership of the land. A similar condition is seen in the Fijian people (Long 1979: 108-113) whose desirability for individualism was fostered by the extension of the plantation economy and the decline of "matagali" (communal) practices. It appears, that the Tagal Murut social will be similarly transformed patterns by the capitalist economy.

The development of private property can also be seen in the property ownership in Tilis. Even though initial ownership of the material is based on cooperation and sharing, it can be dominated by one person. For example, the only vehicle in Tilis is owned by eight persons of which four of them are related (a father and 3 sons).

Therefore private property is more compatible with commodity production. This was argued by Ennew (1977 309 in Gomes 1986: 192).

Commodity production - supposes private property or social division of labour, and production for sale by individual producers (and their families) who own

the means of production (Ennew 1977: 309
in Gomes 1986: 192).

Thus it seems clear that the economy of Kampong
Tilis has been heavily influenced and modified by the
existence of these factors related to capitalism. The
penetration of capitalistic economy is thus a two edged
sword - it creates new and formerly unforeseen possibilities
and thence new techniques of production; the possibility of
improvement in education; and wider horizons. On the other
hand it causes the breakdown of traditional practices such
as the family norms and many of its spontaneous cultural
manifestations.

1. Detailed description of capitalist penetration see
Clammer 1985 : 143)

The Murut in Tenom have been engaged in the plantation economy (cash crop plantation) since the colonial period. The people in Kg Tilis not only cultivate coffee but also cocoa and rubber. Although this initial stage of transformation of their traditional subsistence activity is a very long process, it can already be markedly observed during the process of change from communalistic practices into individualistic ones.

Almost everybody in Tilis has their own coffee or cocoa plantation. To fulfil their perceptions of required improvements in their lives, the people tend to commit themselves to cash crop plantation. However due to the lack of technological facilities and knowledge, the optimum yield can not be achieved. These form of production in peasants' society have provided a complementary function to capitalism (Meillassaux 1972, Long 1978). This fact is traced through the peasant's ties to the non-peasants and their abilities to draw upon products from non-capitalist modes. This was stressed by the articulation of a "dominant" in spite of "subordinate" activity (Dupre and Rey 1973, Althusser 1970, Terray 1972).

The impact of a capitalist economy has affected the peasants in their traditional activities and basic

social life. This can be seen in the decline of rattan collection, hunting and fishing and the development of more private properties and self esteem ideology in acquiring wealth.

6.3 LOGGING IN TILIS

In Sabah, between 1981 to 1985, a total of 1.3 million hectares (3.2 million acres) of forested land was logged to generate \$3,775 million in revenue for the State (Makitaak 1987). In Kemabong area, in the district of Tenom, more than a million acres were logged (Makitaak 1987:

2) In Tilis itself there are two companies engaged in logging namely Unikaya Sdn Bhd and Saliwangan Timber Sdn Bhd.

These logging activities has destroyed the natural environment of the country, through water pollution and soil erosion. This land exploitation has seriously affected the Murut people who inhabit the rural areas. Consequently the people have begun to protest against these industries by putting up blockades and human barricades to stop the logging activities. About 2,000 Muruts were reported recently to be involved in these protests in Tenom in order to secure their communal land and to prevent further destruction to the environment.

I wish to emphasize here how much these logging activities have affected the Tilis Tagal community. Firstly, most of the hunting and fishing is now carried out far away from Tilis because the logging activities has either contaminated the water or have frightened the animals into the deep jungle due to the destruction of their natural habitat. As the village headman indicated logging has resulted in the decrease of hunting activities among the people. The headman further added that this has caused a reduction in their subsistence derived from the river and the forest which have been always very important to them.

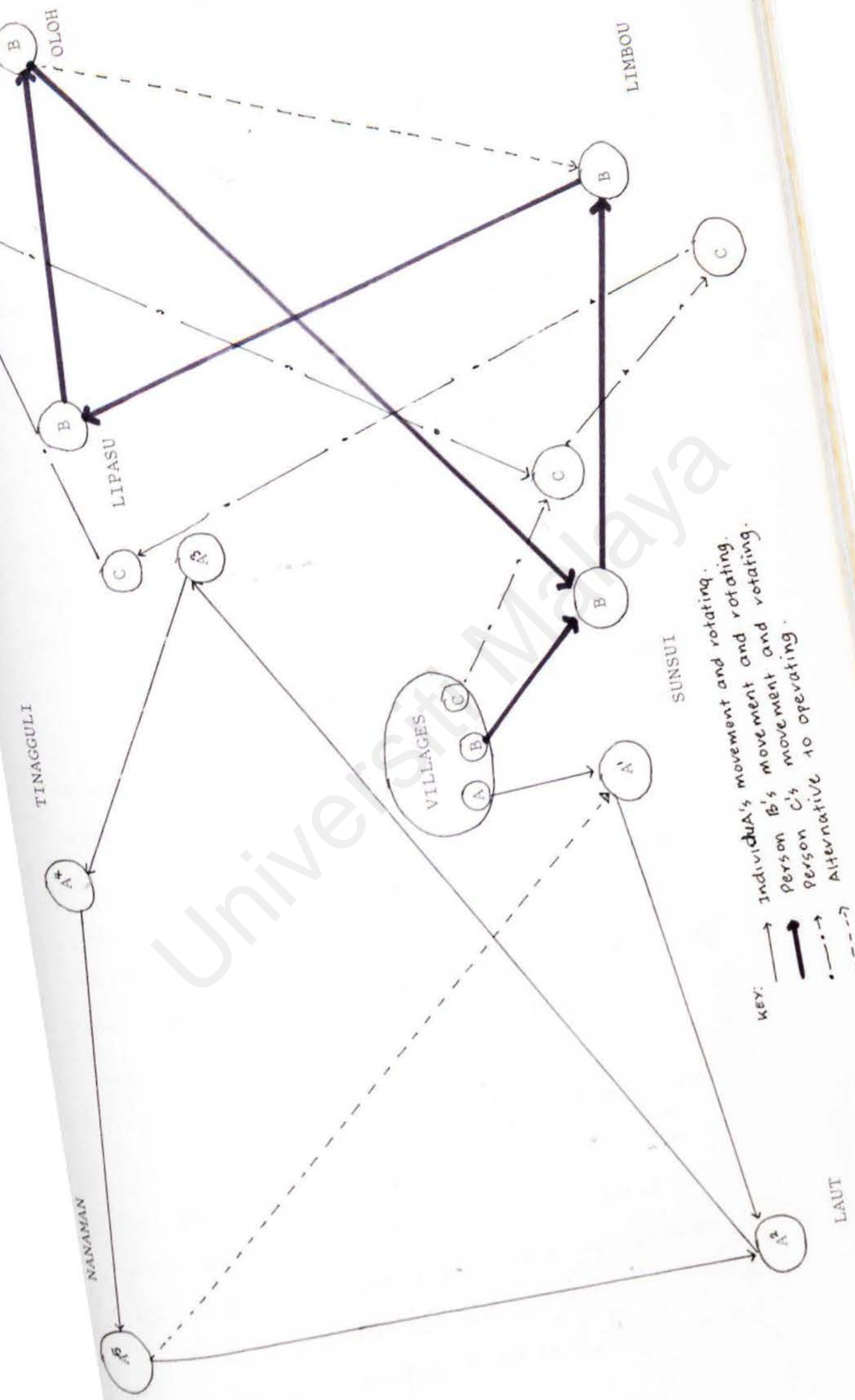
The rivers has become polluted and as a result it was unsafe for drinking. Fish, which are considered as a secondary source of food are also not safe to be consumed. In fact the river itself cannot sustain the big fish due to this pollution. The muddy water on the Tilis river is constantly visible. As for drinking water the people used water piped from the spring up on the hill and were connected to the houses in the kampong as their source of water supply.

Recently, the State Government has make statements that "shifting cultivation" practised by the Murut people, has caused the forest destruction (Makitaak 1987). These statements were made to encourage the people to be involved actively in cash crop production. On the contrary, the

government is aware but does not take any action to the damage caused by the logging activities.

There have been lobbying in logging activities in the State Government to reiterate that the timber industry continues to play an important role in the development of the state as it provides a substantial portion of the state revenue. This was claimed to be an important benefit of development enjoyed by all the people. In addition, the Government accused that shifting cultivation has denuded much of the land and as such is to be blamed for the pollution and destruction of the natural environment.

This is a misconception regarding shifting cultivation because the same fields are reused in based on cycles of four to ten years. These are actually rotation cultivation. Usually the site chosen are secondary forests which will revert to its original state in six months. (See Diagram 6.1).



Furthermore clearing of the fields and burning were done during the dry months thus minimizing the loss of top soil and the haphazard placement of the unburnt logs in fact helps to prevent soil erosion. The fields are planted soon after clearing and burning and the crops planted are seen to grow fast of resulting thus in the ground covered being visible a few days after the first rain. (Makitaak 1988). Perhaps what alone is sufficient testimony for the ecological soundness of rural agriculture is the fact that these agriculturalists have been able to sustain such a way of life for a very long time.

The logging activities is estimated to have destroyed 40% to 60% of the land. These is due to mainly caused by heavy vehicles travelling on the forest ground and which scrapes the top soil and churns up the earth. The logging roads are usually cleared of trees and undergrowth on either side to enable the sun to dry out the surface. What will happen after the next five years when the logging expands its activities?

In Tilis, protests to stop the logging activities does not exist. The people still continues to open new areas in the forest for swiddening with purposes of getting the land title. The loggers have given in to the demands of the people by constructing a dirt road up to the logging road and fixing in pipes from the spring to the kampong for their daily needs.

The villagers however do not realise that the value of these facilities cannot match or equal the lost of natural resources in the next five to ten years. They do not realised that the roads built by the loggers are not for their convenience but for the loggers'. These roads are not permanent roads and as such their usefulness is usually outlived by the logging operations. Our argument here is "What is the actual benefit the people derived from the logging activities particularly the people involved in the logging area?"

Records showed that politics played an important part in these activities, as it was found that large concession areas are given to very influential and political persons. For example, it is reported that 65,000 hectares (Makitaak 1987:5) of timber concession have been given to seven parties in Tenom which included the politicians. This means that only certain privileged people could reap the benefits.

This is one example of the impact of developmental and capitalist economy in Tilis. The domination of the lands by the loggers which are owned usually by influential individuals or politicians, the oppression and exploitation of the natural environments which are the major source of livelihood for the people has caused the emergence of

"internal colonialism" (Wolpe 1975),

The interference of these politicians and external agents who have the power in the mode of production in Sabah and the exploitation through the logging activities have been noted by Nicholas (1988).

The fact is that the logging in Sabah, as is generally the case elsewhere, is intricately linked to the holders of political power in the state. Perhaps for this reason, there has never been a constant policy on the extraction of timber in the state that can be considered comprehensive and which was effectively implemented. Government policies, in the main, invariably ignore the plight and interest of the people affected. The recently launched state action Blue Print* is one testimony to this (Nicholas 1988: 2)

Related to this environmental exploitation and the domination of the land, the traditionalism practices of the Tagal people is fast vanishing and in its place a new social formation is in the process of development. This bring the people into difficulties.

* Sabah Action Blue print is a Sabah² Government strategies in managing the transition to a diversified value-added economy launched by the Chief Minister in September 1987.

The decision to expand or curtail production of the farm, family unit is considered social and biological units, founded on marriage. This is argued by Mann and Dickinson (1987) that "...thus every family farm, depending on its stage in the life cycle, represents a particular ration of producers to consumers" (Mann and Dickinson 1987: 277)

For the Tagal subsistence economy is quite ideal to that characterized by Marx dictum "From each according to his ability, to each according to need." This is established in the household in which a son no longer participates in his father's rice production unit.

The fact I described above is characteristic of a form of economy of the Tagal people. In this section, I will delve into the society's problem - poverty. As Kahn (1979) argues:-

some of the characteristic features lumped together under the gloss underdeveloped economy, or 'peasant society' must be understood not primarily as a technological problem, but as a social problem. (Kahn 1979: 131).

Rural poverty is still widespread. Both the literacy rate and health standards are appalling. In Sabah they are well below the national average (Kitingan 1988:1). The incidence of poverty in Sabah is almost double that of Peninsula Malaysia. It was revealed by State leaders in November 1987. The latest figures showed that the incidence of poverty in the state is (officially) 33.1%, whereas in the Peninsular it is 18.4% (Makitaak 1987: 10). This fact shows that poverty is spread over more than three quarters of the state's 1.3 million people. 70% of the state's poor population resides in the rural areas.

1. Poverty is generally defined by an index of composite factors comprising income level, nutritional food basket, non-food personal effects and utilisation of public utility services, using the Income-Poverty line approach, the Agriculture census 1977 recorded 42% of rural households in Sabah earning income less than \$200 per month in 1979.

2. Literacy is defined as a person above 10 years of age who can read and write in any language used in the country. According to the Population Census of 1970 and 1980, the literacy rate in Sabah in 1970 and 1980 censuses.

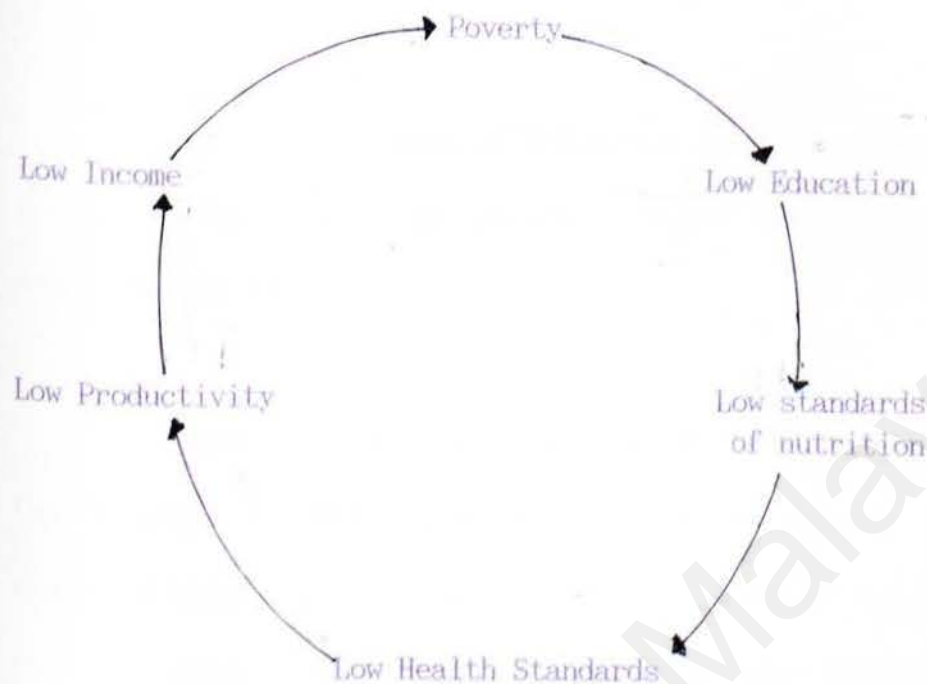
3. Health standard is reflected by using indicator such as infant mortality rate and person per doctor. According to the 1984 figures released by the Ministry of Health, Sabah has an infant mortality rate of 21.7% compared to 17.5% for the country as a whole, and the number of persons per doctor in Sabah was 6,761 compared to 3,309 for the country.

(For a detailed information, see example: Kitingan 1987:5) and Sabah Blueprint: Managing the transition to a diversified value-added economy 1987:3-5).

The Tagal Murut in Tilis are "extremely" poor and far below the poverty line. How do we categorise them into the GNP (Gross National Income) calculation? It is true that economist argues that if the GNP increases it means that the national economy has increased? And that poverty has decreased? A lot of arguments in various disciplinary background attempts to offer an explanation in this debate. However, in my opinion, the increasing figures in GNP do not mean that the people are well-off. We should consider their state of affairs and the social life as a whole including the psychological and cultural dimensions.

Old typologies by developmentalists illustrate the situations of poverty in the region as a "vicious circle", for example, poverty caused by lack of sufficient education in term causes bad health, which yields low productivity and generate low income and finally ends up again in poverty. See Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Vicious circle of Poverty



Other explanations of poverty in the rural areas consist of the people's attitude (Kitingan 1987). The Institute of development study seminar in Kundasang has pointed out that "conservative attitudes towards modernisation and economic growth has resulted in rural development programmes being rejected by the people" (Makitaak 1987:7).

I feel that in Tilis, the above statement does not apply because during my time with the people, I did not observe any rejection of the Government's development Programme by the people. Thus it can be said that the cause of poverty in this case is caused by the introduction of capitalist economy and also the increased infiltration of

rejects development project such as school's building, and the introduction of other modes of modernization.

As in the case of Tiliis the vicious circle of poverty is happening to the people. However, my argument is based on outside factors.

First of all, it is because of the existence of the capitalist economy which exploits the environment (the source of natural production). The dominations of the land and the exploitation of the people through the forces of production depletes the people's natural economy vanishing. Poverty will be reduced much more rapidly if any given rate of economic growth is accompanied by a declining concentration of incomes. This is because there is a direct link between per capita income and the numbers living in poverty in income distribution.

Secondly it is because of the phenomenon of "internal colonialism" in terms of economic activity which I mentioned earlier. The authority of certain parties in Sabah Government shows that these people (Tagal Murut) are "subordinated". The direct link of political power and economic domination keep the people in rural areas alienated from their land and the environment.

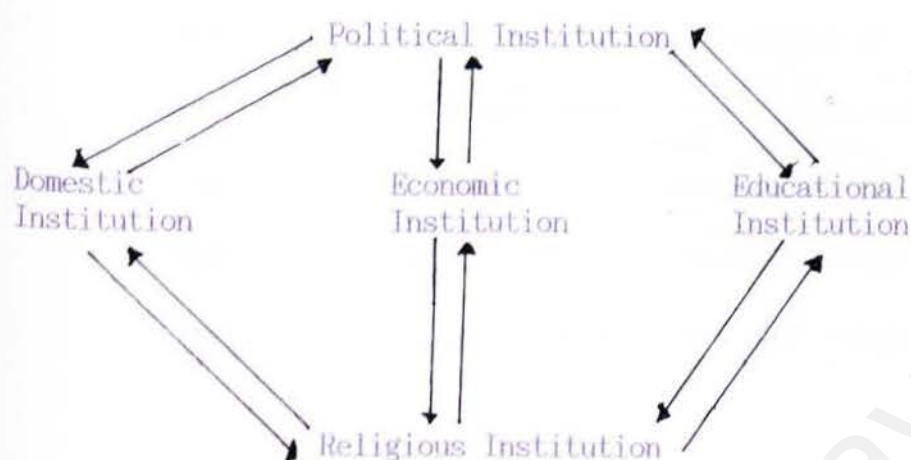
Finally, it is because of the social formation in the national level which affects the rural people. The pattern of social formation itself affects the economic equality and distribution. In Sabah, in particular, and in Malaysia in general, the resources are dominated by the elite groups, whereas the lower classes (rural people) which provide the resources get less. This is an obvious example of inequality in power distribution and domination.

6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have documented the economy of the Tagal Murut in Sabah who are still practicing subsistence production and the egalitarian system which are integral to their livelihood and traditions. For example the Tagal marriage system of "irau" exchange distribution, cooperation and sharing practice of the people.

The survival of Tagal economy and the social formations were seen to be vacated to both internal and external factors. The system of production based on the power machine, has become very congenial to the human culture. I summarised this in the model below. (See Figure 6.3)

Figure 6.3: The Part of Institutions in Society
on the Production Activity



Generally, it is paradoxical to state that poverty was due to the traditional way of life. However, in the paper which emphasized on the external factors of poverty proved that modernization introduced into the rural area does not bring much benefit except difficulties to the lives of the people. The Government diffuses policy (Frank 1985:21) to increase the multi-national scale economic activity which is detrimental to the traditional system of the people. It only create greater dependancy on the capitalist economy.

There are a few points recommendations below that I think will be able to fulfil the Government's desire to eliminate poverty and improve the standard of living of the Muruts.

- a) Progressive groups and individuals who are genuinely concerned with the holistic development of the less privileged and deprived in Sabah have worked out concrete programmes of action in order to implement the Government's policies. Hence there is a need for all to come together and work collectively since we are concerned with the creation of a truly democratic and just Sabah.
- b) To response to the People Development Concept by Yayasan Sabah, (Kitingan:1987) which focuses on peoples' development rather than on projects. Grants should be given for implementation. The in-situ development which includes educational improvement and domestic activity which fosters self-reliance and develop the creative potential of the people should be duly implemented.
- c) Land titles should be given to the people, so that the Tilis people would not lose their land to the giant logging companies.
- d) A study of possible profitable income activities should be done in Tilis to help the people to resort to either a subsistence or capitalist economy in order to be more productive and generate more income. For example, the Tagal are

encouragement and facilities should be given to them to harness this ability.

e) To focus on the need to control deforestation, and to monitor closely the rising of standard of living as the main criteria.

f) Social education in terms of proper regular education and technological knowledge be imparted to the people to encourage them to do settled cultivation instead of rotation cultivation. Such knowledge could include perhaps the application of fertilisers to improve the soil so that more areas can be planted with paddy at the same time and as such their income can be increased. However appropriate technology must be considered seriously in order to prevent the depravation of basic human needs and the destruction of Sabah's ecology.

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