



The Batin Sembilan People facing forest restoration pressures in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to reveal the conditions of the Batin Sembilan indigenous population in the Hutan Harapan area within the PT REKI (Ecosystem Restoration) concession in Jambi Province. The Batin Sembilan community's presence, is a paradox amidst efforts to preserve the forest facing an escalating rate of destruction and necessitates efforts of restoration. LLC (PT) REKI-Hutan Harapan requires not only a focus on restoring the forest, but also upholding the rights of the indigenous people residing within it. Ethnographic research conducted of the Batin Sembilan community in the Hutan Harapan area reveals a correlation between forest restoration and the sustenance of human existence in the area. The findings indicate the Batin Sembilan population, who rely on forest resources, persistently endeavor to adjust to the constraints imposed by the limited forest access. The Hutan Harapan concession implements a comprehensive approach that includes resettlement, empowerment, and active involvement of the Batin Sembilan community in forest conservation. This strategy aims to ensure the long-term viability of the environment, which in turn has positive effects on both the livelihoods of the community and forest sustainable productiveness.

1. Introduction

Forests are not only areas of fauna and flora richness, but also support communities who reside in those and depend on forest resources for their survival. Based on the analysis of the Archipelago Indigenous Peoples Alliance (AMAN), there are approximately 2,371 indigenous communities connected with forest management in Indonesia (AMAN, 2012). The province of Jambi is rich in functional lowland forests environments and subject to fierce direct land competition of a powerful modern oil palms agroindustry. This while those forests are also the prime habitat of indigenous groups who have settled in the forests since long. In Jambi province, those indigenous groups include the Orang

Rimba or Rimbo, Kubu and Batin Sembilan groups, formally known as *Suku Anak Dalam* (SAD) (Mubarok, 2017). The SAD term has been updated by law and are now officially known as the *Komunitas Adat Terpencil* (KAT) or tribal forest people groups. They inhabit tracks in the forests of the Bukit Dua Belas National Park area (Aritonang, 2010). The Batin Sembilan people are mainly concentrated in the Hutan Harapan area and partners in an Ecosystem Restoration program, a forest concession managed by PT REKI¹. Those two communities have a recognized Adat customary law with rightful customary territories. The forests are designated as customary forests², and considered their principal place of habitation.

Husein (2010) asserted that Adat customary law communities are territorial and genealogical community units with have their own prosperity, and are citizens who can be distinguished from citizens of other legal communities. They can act inward or outward as an independent legal entity and govern themselves independently. Actually, this meaning is somewhat different from the concept of indigenous peoples, where it implies more to the concept of certain characteristics that exist in a particular society. However, the researcher's view here distinguishes more on the material reference of the law where there is a rule of law that is strengthened by the government against the *Masyarakat Hukum Adat* (MHA) or people with traditional law. Therefore, both the Orang Rimba KAT and the Batin Sembilan KAT, are indigenous people who have certain socio-cultural characteristics and considered to have always lived for generations in those forests.

However, the existence of Adat customary law communities within the forest areas in Jambi is different. The difference can be seen from the forest range where they live. Their territory provides a very significant difference between those two groups. The Orang Rimba live in a National Park area and the Batin Sembilan are located in a forest area earmarked for restoration. Thus, different characteristics show up in habitat patterns and problems caused by the condition of the forest that require restoration. The management indicated to PT REKI in their forest concession, intersects with community life that is to be restored in conjunction with the forest environment recovery.

The initiative of PT REKI through Hutan Harapan is to provide the communities limited forest access provisions. In general, the indigenous people do not wish to give up their forest habitat, although they are already disturbed and displaced. The many oil palm plantations and HPH/IPK³ have destroyed many parts of their habitat, but somehow

¹ ("PT" is "Limited Liability Company" or LLC in English) Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia No. P.17/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2020 concerning Customary Forests and Forest Rights article 1 paragraph 7 states that Customary Law Communities (MHA) are a group of people who have lived for generations in certain geographical areas due to ties to ancestral origins, a strong relationship with the environment, and a value system that determines economic, political, social and legal institutions.

² Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia No. P.17/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2020 concerning Customary Forests and Forest Rights article 1 paragraph 8 also states that Customary Territory is customary land in the form of land, water, and/or waters along with the natural resources on it with certain boundaries, owned, utilized and preserved for generations and sustainably to meet the needs of the community's life obtained through inheritance from their ancestors or ownership claims in the form of customary land or Customary Law.

³ According to the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Number 51 of 1998 on Forest Resource Provisions, a Forest Concession Right (HPH) is a right to cultivate forests within a forest area

they have resisted and survived in the remaining mixed forest and plantation landscape (Weni et al., 2020). This condition has caused conflicts, but the indigenous people have resisted these challenges, in order to save their remaining forests as a place to live and keep the legacy of their ancestors. Restoration efforts from Hutan Harapan and the Batin Sembilan community in the Hutan Harapan area are carried out together in order to protect the forest from further conflict and prevent land sales.

The Batin Sembilan community live and depend on the forests, manage and utilize biological resources in the forests, close to the tradition of their indigenous culture. This certainly raises their dependence on a biological diverse forest. It is based on local knowledge and traditional ways of life, incorporating sustainable management and utilization as well as an ultimate preservation of the forest itself. (Apriyan et al., 2017). The relationship between the community and the forest appears to be symbiotic whereby the community is integrated in the forest. It indicates that it must be protected and nature to be secured from destruction. In order to achieve this, a partnership was formed and a communication post established in the Hutan Harapan watch station in the created Mitra Harapan village.

Although they have been re-settled, their knowledge of the forest has not faded away and remains preserved. Knowledge that includes; when the particular fruit season starts, the honey bee season is most prolific, and when and where to hunt is best. Not only those matters of food gathering importance, but they can read the landscape and know which forest boundaries can be managed and what soils are rich or poor in minerals or fertility. In this way local knowledge is their main capital to survive in the forest area. Besides that, there is currently assistance from Hutan Harapan in empowering them through a social forestry program. The social forestry program itself, delicately limits the community's access to the forest with the insistence on restoration by Hutan Harapan (Widianingsih et al., 2019). This is an issue, how to delicately manage a forest that requires to be restored, and that provides natural resources to indigenous people. The principal aspect of "living environment" is the reason that the Batin Sembilan community cannot be separated from the forest. The forest is a sustainable and interdependent livelihood for them. Referring to the opinion of Lahajir (2001), he notes that forests and land must be seen in its function. Meaning that land has no meaning if it is seen at the same time as the forest. In this case, the division of the cultivation ecosystem ought to be seen in three main elements. Where there are humans, there is forest-land and the upper world. All of these must be framed in a functional-structural relationship. Humans themselves have types that help to relate to the forest and the supernatural world. Therefore, the concept of forest management, for Hutan Harapan (PT. REKI) essential has two perspectives that both 'restore' the forest and of course the Batin Sembilan indigenous people.

which includes activities of logging, forest establishment and maintenance, processing and marketing of forest products by the Forest Concession Work Plan according to applicable regulations and based on the principles of forest sustainability and company principles (Article 1 Paragraph 3) and Timber Utilization Permit (IPK) is a permit for logging, transporting and using timber from a forest area that has been designated for non-forestry purposes or industrial plantation forests (Article 1 Paragraph 5).

In addition, forest destruction caused by outsiders or some members of the Batin Sembilan community have caused landscape degradation. Thus, Haba (2010) perceives indigenous peoples as a discourse matter as long as the status of their rights has not been officially and fully guaranteed by law or implemented throughout the territory of Indonesia. This is also in line with the opinion of Zamroni (2021) and Delfi (2017), where recognition of Masyarakat Hukum Adat (MHA) and their traditional values can be preserved and remain in the forest. This is the dilemma faced by PT. REKI as the holder of concession rights and the Batin Sembilan community as the indigenous people who have Adat power over the forest. It has raised efforts to harmonize the insistence on forest restoration in conjunction with the indigenous people indicating a bigger role for the Batin Sembilan community. Their existence in the middle of the forests that needs to be restored, needs further scrutinizing as the concept of forest recovery versus a combined human and forest recovery, is very different. Another factor is the overall masterplan of PT REKI (Hutan Harapan) to produce those dual aims in their forest concession.

2. Method

The basic tenets of ethnographic research are characterized by diversity rather than consensus. In practical terms, the term ethnography usually refers to a form of social research that emphasizes the exploitation of the nature of certain social phenomena. According to Atkinson & Hamersley (1994) This ethnographic data analysis includes interpretation of the meaning and function of various human actions, explicitly as a product of descriptive and verbal explanations without having to utilize too much quantification and statistical analysis. Data collection techniques used participatory observation and in-depth interviews. Informants were selected using purposive sampling technique, where researchers provide or set certain criteria to select informants (Creswell, 2015).

Tabel 1. Batin Sembilan Group in the Hutan Harapan Area, Jambi Province.

No	Population	Number (people)	Location
1	KTH Maju Bersama	224	Simpang Macan Luar
2	Tanding Groups	72	Bungin
3	Gelinding Groups	29	Bungin
4	KTH Lamban Jernang	99	Bungin
5	Ruslan Groups	89	Simpang Macan Dalam
6	Herman Groups	91	Simpang Macan Dalam
7	Khotib Groups	81	Km. 45
8	Jupri Groups	150	Jerat River
	Total	805	

Source: (Hutan Harapan, 2020).

The informant groups to be interviewed are: (1) the Batin Sembilan Anak Dalam tribe, (2) PT REKI-Hutan Harapan, (3) traditional leaders. Data analysis is carried out when data collection is still ongoing. Empirical data results will be grouped (coding) based on

categories and concepts that have been determined in the research. Data triangulation will be carried out to sharpen empirical data findings.

Through an ethnographic approach, researchers try to capture the views of the actors, namely the Batin Sembilan community about the forest and their lives. What makes them survive and want to maintain the forest? Likewise, with Hutan Harapan, how much they understand about the existence and importance of the Batin Sembilan people and the forest. This emic view is the basis of data that provides explanations interpretations and assessments to conclude. In addition, data validation is supported by policies and programs carried out by Hutan Harapan both for forest restoration and empowerment of the Batin Sembilan community. After that, the analysis relies on explanation, because ethnography is a description of an ethnic group (object of analysis) and contains interpretations from the researcher.

3. Result and discussion

- **Hutan Harapan: A Scheme for Lowland Forest Recovery in Sumatra**

In 2004, environmental issues became a major part of the global narrative. The issue of forest destruction, depletion of the ozone layer due to forest fires caused by forest management, and use of production forests. Many international NGO⁴s campaigned on environmental issues throughout the world including Indonesia. The Indonesian government immediately responded to the issue by issuing the Indonesian Minister of Forestry Regulation No. 159/MENHUT-II/2004 on Ecosystem Restoration Policy in Production Forests.

PT Restorasi Ekosistem Indonesia (PT REKI) is a corporate entity established in 2006. The company has a close relationship with Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan Indonesia (YAKEHI) which is a consortium of three NGOs namely; Burung Indonesia, Birdlife International and RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). The birth of the consortium at the initiative of these institutions to support the establishment and existence of PT REKI shows that they are institutions that are very concerned about forest saving issues and make it an institutional platform (Mardiana, 2017).

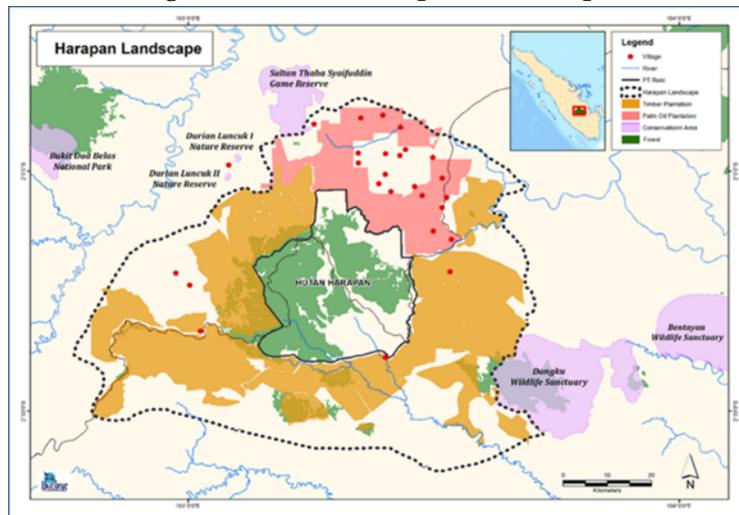
Burung Indonesia led a consortium to conduct a long study between 2000 and 2010 to implement a concept to save lowland forests in Sumatra. The studies and advocacy carried out by Burung Indonesia with several local NGOs (Warsi and Gita Buana) helped influence the birth of the Indonesian Minister of Forestry Regulation No. SK.159/Menhut-II/2004 concerning Ecosystem Restoration in Production Forest Areas followed by P.18/Menhut-II/2004 concerning Production Forest Criteria that can be granted timber forest product utilization business licenses in natural forests with ecosystem restoration activities. This regulation, issued by a ministerial-level public official, became even stronger when three years later the issue of ecosystem restoration was included in Government Regulation (PP) No. 6/2007 on Forest Planning and the Preparation of Forest Management Plans and Forest Utilization. Further advocacy also influenced the issuance of the Regulation of the Minister of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia Number: P.50/Menhut-II/2010 concerning Procedures for Granting and

⁴ Non-Governmental Organization

Expanding Timber Forest Product Utilization Business Licenses (IUPHHK) in Natural Forests, IUPPH Ecosystem Restoration, or IUPPHK Industrial Plantation Forests in Production Forests.

The policy that was "hatched" through the results of the study and advocacy became the basis for PT REKI to apply for a permit to manage a Limited Production Forest and Permanent Production Forest area of approximately 98,555 ha located in two provinces. The permit issued by the Minister of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia is a business license for the utilization of ecosystem restoration timber products in natural forests. In 2007, the Indonesian Minister of Forestry Decree No. SK. 293/Menhut-II/2007 was issued for a production forest area of 52,170 ha for Musi Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra province. Three years later, another Decree of the Minister of Forestry No. 327/Menhut-II/2010 was issued for an area of 46,385 ha of forest area in Sarolangun Regency and Batanghari Regency, Jambi province.

Figure 1. Hutan Harapan Landscape.



Source: (Hutan Harapan, 2020).

The forest area in Jambi Province proposed for management by PT REKI under IUPHHK-Restoration Ecosystem is the former working area of PT Asialog. On February 12, 2008, prior to the expiry of the license, the company handed over its assets to the Jambi provincial administration, citing losses. Some information states that there was a 'riot' due to attacks by residents. The concession granted by the government to PT Asialog was a HPH or Forest Concession Right. It is defined as the right to cultivate forests within a production forest area which includes planting, maintenance, security efforts, harvesting, processing and marketing of forest products based on applicable regulations and based on the principle of sustainability.

It can be assumed that the management of the area under the HPH scheme at that time would only 'rub shoulders' with the surrounding community in relation to the "illegal logging" practices carried out by the community. Meanwhile, community activities that lead to land utilization efforts will tend not to become serious conflicts as long as these activities are carried out in an 'inconspicuous' manner. It can be assumed that the area is basically already covered by signs of community control, both indigenous and

migrant populations. The forms and types of signs of land tenure are generally only understood, comprehended and recognized by fellow communities who are in regular contact with the forest area (Amalia & Afiff, 2017).

The transfer of PT Asialog's assets to the Jambi provincial government in 2008 had created a perceived "absence of owners" in the area. Community groups continued to invest in the land that had been marked as under their control. This trend is reflected in the rate of deforestation, which illustrates the existence of land cultivation activities at that time. Land cultivation began in several villages, namely Kunangan Jaya I, Tanjung Mandiri and Alam Sakti, starting in 2005 with an area of 361 ha when this area was reserved as an area for ecosystem restoration activities. Then it increased sharply in 2006 with an additional cleared area of 2,399 ha and increased again in 2007 with an additional cleared area of around 6,379 ha. In 2008, land clearing was reduced to 314 ha as PT REKI was present in the area, but a total stop could not be maintained as legally the concession status was given to PT REKI in 2010.

PT REKI, through the Hutan Harapan has a vision, namely Restoring Forest for Future Need with the aim of restoring Indonesia's forests for future needs. In fact, now, Hutan Harapan is surrounded by monoculture plantations, namely oil palm plantations. It is as if it is surrounded by thousands of soldiers who are 'neatly lined up' and 'threatening'. However, a strong belief can be realized through a mature strategy with one goal: ecosystem restoration.

Ecosystem Restoration is an effort to restore biological elements (flora and fauna) and non-biological elements (soil, climate and topography) in an area to their original types, to achieve biological balance and ecosystems. According to the Minister of Forestry Regulation No. SK.159/Menhut-II/2004, ecosystem restoration activities can be carried out in Production Forest areas through an Ecosystem Restoration Timber Forest Product Utilization Business License (IUPHHK-RE). Hutan Harapan management is oriented towards ecosystem-based forest management to improve the economic value of forests, restore flora and fauna that have important values and provide economic benefits to communities around the forest. Hutan Harapan ecosystem restoration efforts are a real effort to maintain and restore the condition of Sumatra's very important lowland forests.

After PT REKI obtained forest tenure rights in the Jambi and South Sumatra areas, much work piled up and had to be completed. On that basis, problems that arise start from natural, community and conflict problems. Where nature and forests must be restored and sterilized from community activities and oil palm plants. Because a lot of land clearing is carried out by the community when the power over the forest area is vacant, thus land clearing activities for oil palm plantations were rampant. Likewise, the indigenous people who lived in the area ought to be taken to where restoration efforts have been initiated. The Batin Sembilan people experienced a bad impression with the previous company, which left deep wounds and trauma. Therefore, it was necessary to approach them carefully in order they jointly could rebuild the forest. Because in addition to nature, the forest is affected by the damage of irresponsible people, as well as the Batin Sembilan community who depend on the forest resources (Beckert et al., 2014; Nilakarisna et al., 2016; Sopyan et al., 2021).

In addition, also tenure conflicts and land claims occurred, thus the transfer of a concession to PT REKI became an obstacle. A handful of people who had unpleasant intentions of land destruction became involved with dire consequences. Issues such as; widely totally cleared land, forest land claimed as private property, undocumented land planted with oil palm and other encroachers piercing the forest from the inside. Issues of that nature resulted in horizontal conflicts in the Hutan Harapan area on a regular basis. Therefore, accurate mapping on the part of PT REKI is required to deal with those complex issues. In additions we are dealing with indigenous communities who need those natural resources for their daily use. Therefore, the concept of partnership is applied by REKI.

Some of the steps taken to restore the forest is by replanting the cleared area and the fire damaged parts. Secondly take an emotional community approach, requesting the indigenous people, namely the Batin Sembilan people, to participate and convince them that a healthy forest is very important to protect. Place warnings signs on the land, carry socialization and intensive approaches to parties who have already cleared land. Notify already planted oil palms in the area or take action with local police officers.

Mang R said:

"When PT. REKI first came in, I didn't believe them, but after I followed them and talked to them, it seems that we have the same goal, which is to not destroy the forest". From then on, the Batin Sembilan group began to get close and in line with Hutan Harapan to protect the forest. They had previously had a bad relationship with PT Asialog and thought that PT REKI would do the same thing to drive them out of the forest and destroy their forest.

Mr. F (HRD of Hutan Harapan) mentioned:

"The efforts made by PT. REKI to approach the Batin Sembilan SAD were very difficult and took time because they considered us (Hutan Harapan) their enemy who would influence them but slowly and gradually they finally understood and wanted to come with us".

The same approach is taken with illegal forest encroachers to get them out of the forest and not encroach again. It is this effort that until now still often occurs, namely encroachment because those who do the encroachment are outsiders or migrants. According to Mr. M (Hutan Harapan):

"Those who encroach are outsiders such as the Javanese, or Batak people, Bengkulu people and there are also Batin people themselves who have long left the forest and settled outside". This last activity is rarely mentioned because they encroach on land with the help of insiders to enter the forest. Many Batin Sembilan in the forest are also used to launch their actions by providing goods and food to them. So that the Batin Sembilan people do not prohibit and allow them to encroach and clear land.

To deal with these encroachers, sometimes they rely on the Batin Sembilan people themselves to drive them away and there is also the Hutan Harapan LINHUT Team who conducts warnings (I, II, III). If they do not stop then, direct action is taken. However, it is different for those who commit illegal logging and forest burning. If caught, they will be prosecuted and taken to the police authorities.

Because according to Mr. M and Mang R (Hutan Harapan, Batin Sembilan):

"Because they burned the forest and cut down trees, they must be arrested immediately. Otherwise, they will be able to burn and cut down trees again and again. The consequences of their actions are also very fatal, namely killing us, the forest and the biodiversity (flora and fauna) in the forest".

In their customary system, they are rather strict, but after PT REKI arrived, all enforcement worked together with the local police. For the prosecution of people who have already planted oil palm in the forest area, compensation will be given and understanding will be given to them not to plant oil palm again. This happens frequently in the Simpang Macan Luar and Kunangan Jaya I and II areas. One resident named R (Simpang Macan Luar-Batin Sembilan) who had already cleared land and planted three-hectare oil palm. "When PT REKI came in, the palms had already grown big and were about to bear fruit, so REKI could not cut down or compensate because the cost was very expensive. Therefore, it was left alone to grow old and after that it was no longer allowed to plant oil palm in that location".

Mr. A (Hutan Harapan) said:

"There is a lot of land in Hutan Harapan that has already been planted with oil palm, including Simpang Macan Luar, Kunangan Jaya I and near the Kelumpang River area and at several points in South Sumatra".

It is true that land and forest destruction in the Hutan Harapan area is caused by the massive actions of several factors, namely encroachers, illegal logging, land claims or illegal land occupation and forest fires. In addition, the work of PT REKI is also coupled with settlements, farming and plantations with primary sub-agriculture in the form of oil palm, rubber and secondary crops and horticulture. This is due to the presence of indigenous people who still live in the forest and former forest encroachers who settled in the Hutan Harapan area, making the work more difficult for restoration activities.

However, as an indigenous community, the Batin Sembilan people have been legally empowered by the government to save forest rights and their status as KAT. The concept of social forestry and forestry partnerships is strengthening for the Batin Sembilan people to survive and maintain their lives assisted by Hutan Harapan. In 2018, President Jokowi Widodo issued a decree on social forestry and forestry partnerships for indigenous peoples in the forest zone of Jambi Province⁵. The recipients of the decree on the recognition and protection of Forestry Partnerships (kulin-KK) in the social forestry scheme, are three groups of Batin Sembilan, KAT communities. They are the Batin Sembilan group who have been living in Hutan Harapan, an ecosystem restoration area managed by PT Restorasi Ekosistem Indonesia (REKI). The Batin Sembilan who received the decree are the Tanding Group, the Gelinding Group, and the Lamban Jernang (Sungai Kelumpang) Forest Farmers Group (KTH). The Tanding Group consists of 17 members, the Gelinding Group 10 members, and KTH Lamban Jernang 23 members. Then for Social Forestry (PS) Batin Sembilan community members

⁵ President Jokowi, on the occasion, said that the social forestry that was handed over to Jambi communities in nine districts, including the KAT community, was quite extensive, namely 91,997.54 (ha). The Social Forestry Decree was given to 8,165 households. While the Social Forestry Decree given was 92.

who received the Social Forestry Decree, namely the Tanding Group of 17 families, the Gelinding Group (10 families), the Lamban Jernang / Sungai Kelompang Forest Farmer Group (23 families) and the Maju Besamo / Simpang Macan Luar Forest Farmer Group (51 families). The area of social forestry handed over to the four Batin Sembilan KAT groups reached 505 hectares. Thus, their rights and status in maintaining the forest and protection for them have been fulfilled.

- **From Moving to Settling: A Jungle Traveler's Story**

The origin of Batin Sembilan people has no clear artifact or archival evidence. Their origins are conveyed through the memories they have from stories told by their ancestors for generations. Referring to Hidayat (2012, pp. 22–23) said the origin story of the Batin Sembilan people is as follows:

"The story of Puyang Semikat is the ancestor of the Batin 9 people who came from Palembang. Puyang Semikat traveled along the Lalan River (South Sumatra) and came to the Bahar River (Jambi). In the Bahar River area, Puyang Semikat met Depati Seneneng Ikan Tanah. He married two of the Depati's daughters, Bayan Riu and Bayan Lais, and later had offspring from them. His descendants developed in nine tertiary rivers in Muaro Jambi Regency, Batanghari Regency and Sarolangun Regency in Jambi Province. These rivers lead to the Batang Tembesi, Batang Hari and Lalan rivers."

Some Batin Sembilan people still have memories of their origins. They received this from their parents in the past. According to Mang R (55th) and Mang M (64th) as group leaders (community leaders) of Batin Sembilan in the Hutan Harapan area said:

"We come from the Bahar River. Our ancestors came from Palembang (Sriwijaya kingdom) and we lived in the rivers in this forest" (Mang R).

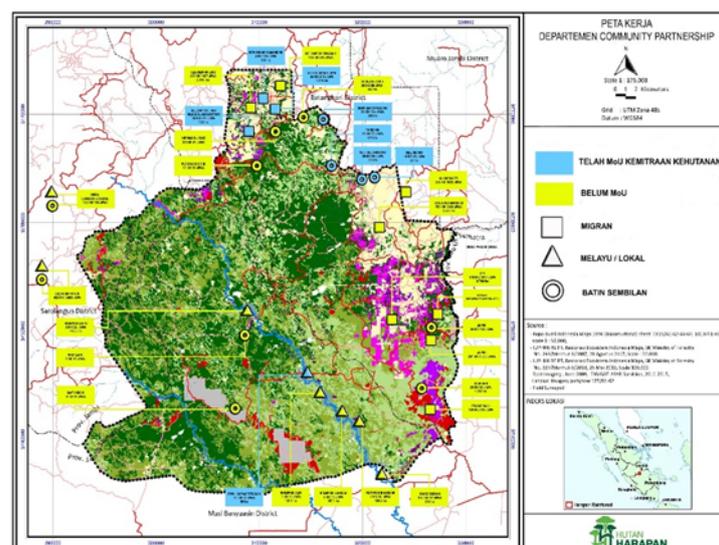
"I came from Rumah Tinggi, which is near the Kapas river (South Sumatra) then moved and according to the river flow of the Bato river, the Jerat river and arrived here (Hutan Harapan)" (Mang M).

The story communicated above indicate the origin of the Batin Sembilan people is related to the Malay people in the province of South Sumatra. The language they use is also similar to the Malay people. The Batin Sembilan people live in the forest on the border with South Sumatra, so it can be assumed that they are part of the Sriwijaya kingdom and are influenced by Malay culture. On that basis, they (Batin Sembilan) do not want to be equated with the Orang Rimba who have ties to West Sumatra, namely the kingdom of Pagaruyung (Minangkabau). Thus, the two groups of people who live in the lowland forests of Jambi have very clear differences in origin. The assumption that the reference to the people who live in the lowland forest area of Jambi province are known as the Orang Rimba. However, the classification is historically different between the Orang Rimba and the Batin Sembilan people. For some researchers discussing tribes in the forests of Jambi Province call them Orang Rimba or Orang Rimbo (Persoon, 1989; Prasetijo, 2015; Rokhdian, 2011; Sandbukt, 2000; Sutomo, 1995; Tirtosudarmo, 2022). Orang Rimba or Rimbo people are attached to a group of people who live in the Bukit Dua Belas and Bukit Tiga Puluh forests. Thus in the past, the term Orang Rimba was often referred to as Kubu or The Orang Kubu of Sumatra (Sandbukt, 2000). The term kubu here generalizes all people living in the forests of Jambi, Sumatra.

The term kubu also refers to the labeling of people 'outside the forest' to indicate people who are in the forest. But the connotation of kubu is more derogative (Prasetijo, 2011). The term kubu also refers to the Orang Rimba and the Batin Sembilan people, who are often called Orang Dalam. The term Orang Dalam is because they consider themselves different from the Orang Rimba/Kubu.

Actually, the labels or stigmas given by some writers who are not in the forest are more indicative of their situation which is not the same as outsiders (Jambi Malay and Palembang Malay). Thus, the Orang Rimba or Kubu also have the assumption that people who live in the 'world outside the forest' are known as the Orang Terang. This term emerged from both people who live in the forest, namely the Orang Rimba community and the Batin Sembilan community. Interestingly, the two communities do not want to be equated with each other. Orang Batin Sembilan do not wish to be called the same as Orang Kubu or Orang Rimba because they live in different forests and their origins are also different. The Orang Rimba are closer to the history of the Pagaruyung Kingdom while the Orang Batin Sembilan is closer to Palembang and the Sriwijaya Kingdom. Nevertheless there is also a minor connection to the Pagaruyung Kingdom (Tirtosudarmo, 2022). This is due to the fact that they are Batin ulu people and Batin ilir people. But after they settled in the Jambi forest both the jungle people and Batin Sembilan were regulated by the Jambi Malay Sultanate. (Hidayat, 2012). On that basis, to equalize people's perceptions without misunderstanding, those who live in the forest are referred to as Suku Anak Dalam (SAD). Currently the Remote Indigenous Community term or KAT⁶ is used, to prevent the prejudicial term such as SAD. In the end the two communities living in the forest are known as KAT (the Orang Rimba and Batin Sembilan).

Figure 2. Distribution of Batin Sembilan in the Hutan Harapan Area.



⁶ KAT is the non-derogative term for Masyarakat Terasing as based on Presidential Decree No. 111/1999.

Source: Hutan Harapan, 2020.

The indigenous people who live in the PT REKI concession area are generally the Batin Sembilan people. Some are now registered in the administration of the Bungku village in the Batanghari Regency. Originally they possibly came from; (1) the Markanding community settlements in Markanding village in the Sungai Dayo area or unit 13, Tengalung, Muaro Merkanding, Bunut and Talang Merindu/Bangkai Tigo, (2) Tanjung Lebar village (community settlements in Tanjung Lebar, Sungai Beruang, Mangkubangan/Pangkalan Ranjau and Penyerokan) which is included in the area of transmigration unit 15 Sungai Bahar, (3) Pompa Air Village (community settlements are in Pompa, Tiang Tunggang, Kalabau/Sungai Kalabau and Betung), (4) Nyogan Village (Nyogan village settlements are Bangkai Tigo/Nebang Para and Segandi/Sungai Segandi), and (5) Bungku Village (community settlements are in Abling II/Markanding, Temidai/Johor, Tanah Menang, Sedayu, Jentikan and Bungku). These five villages are the places where their settlements are allocated as indicated on the settlement programs or as a result of conflict factors over customary territories. The conflict arises due to the limitations of the management area, or as a result of land sales, moving migrants, company HGUs and their desire to find new areas. So those people have two main goals, namely; running away from a conflict or the need for a safe place to live and settle.

This is reinforced on the basis of the concept of customary law recognized during the Dutch era. It specified and recognized the Batin Sembilan Bahar customary territory. This document was issued by the colonial government in 1940, establishing the Merkandang / Kandang and Merkanding rivers as borders for the Kubu Lalan and Batin Bahar communities. Of course, the Dutch made this recognition with the aim of controlling the natural resources there. In Bajubang there is an oil pipeline that is close to Batin Bahar. This pipeline is often called the 'horse road' which lies from Bungku village to Tanjung Lebar village (Mardiana, 2017). So they are subjected to violence, programs and incitement. Maybe because of this they returned to the forest and stayed in the forest because they were afraid and did not want to meet outsiders or they called people light.

The existence of the Batin Sembilan people in the Hutan Harapan working area based on interactions with other ethnicities can generally be grouped into 2 large groups. Namely the groups that live in areas with an ethnic composition dominated by Batin Sembilan people and groups that live in areas with a dominant migrant composition. The first group is located in; the Simpang Macan Luar area (Hasan Badak Family), Simpang Macan Dalam (Ruslan), and Mitra Zone / including Camp. 35 (Rusman, Sumo, Dulhadi, Gelinding and Kunca families). The second group is located in; the Kunangan Jaya I (Alif, Amir, Amran, Jailani, and Acil), Kunangan Jaya 2 (Basri's family), Alam Sakti and Tanjung Mandiri area (Mat Arus's family), and Pangkalan Ranjau (Jufri's family who is listed as one of the residents resettled in transmigration unit VII). Pangkalan Ranjau is the name used by the Jufri Group to name their domicile and emphasize their existence as a Batin Sembilan community, while referring to one of the hamlets from Tanjung Lebar Village. Jufri leads this group and is quite active in buying

and selling land. However, with assistance from Agra and Scale Up-FPP, this group began to be controlled.

In the restoration efforts, it is not only the forest that is restored. But all the contents of the forest from animals, to the people in the forest. It is aimed that the existing living space can return to normal functioning and the forest ecosystem can return to beauty and optimum resource richness. With the Batin Sembilan people in the forest area, which is the concession right of PT. REKI or Hutan Harapan area, the Batin Sembilan people directly become part of the "recovery" agenda as well. The approach is to empower, their participation, and intervention power when needed. The cooperation of the Batin Sembilan people is a determining factor in this restoration effort. According to Mr. D of Hutan Harapan: "The presence of the Batin Sembilan indigenous people adds to PT REKI's work so that inevitably they must strive for their welfare and their independence in surviving in the forest with a large enough share to jointly defend the forest from all kinds of damage".

The Batin Sembilan people who have a long history with the forest and have lived in the forest for generations have certainly not been forgotten. Their existence is not the main key, but is very influential in terms of reciprocity, if left unchecked it will increase forest damage and it is good to be a pioneer in driving forestry to recover. This is an important point so that not only nature but the people in it need to be restored. However, it is not so easy to convince the Batin Sembilan people and needs mountains of hard work. Mrs. D of Hutan Harapan said: "Many of them still reject our invitation to join and make an MoU agreement, in order that they can be in the control partnership of the forest management, because they are still happy with the situation, they are currently living in. Especially those who have known the outside world by planting oil palm because the money earned will be more without paying attention to the forest".

"The efforts are very demanding as it changes the habits of those who used to escape the 'wild' in the forest. They are now empowered and fostered in a form that they have not known before. But slowly slowly, it takes time, some of them begin to understand and comprehend the good side of it, while some still do not understand the good work which is put in", according to Ms. D and Ms. H at Hutan Harapan.

They continued:

"Sometimes they are complacent about their lives wandering in the forest, so they are invited to change for the better. Many peacocks among them, refuse and do not want as there may be many factors that they can complain about, such as not being able to plant, settle and eat where if not in the forest. Plus, those in the forest have difficulties to find food now, as the forest has been damaged and the weather is unstable. This awareness came from one or two people who joined in after they saw it and united".

This may pose a dilemma, between changing their habits and the new ones. Mang M and Mang R (Batin Sembilan) said: "PT REKI forced us to do gardening when we could not and never do. Thus, we don't want to do it, and be changed to settle down and become farmers. Even though we don't understand what it entails.". This complaint is often heard and mentioned by them. They are indeed nomadic in the forest and

activities to fulfill their needs only rely on natural products, namely animals, yams, as well as fishing and shifting cultivation in the forest. They do not have the traditional background of farming or gardening. Nor the cultural tradition or settling in at one location, or taking care for the sown or planted vegetation. But with the guidance provided from the PT REKI, they have increasingly become aware and the understanding of the power of gardening.

In the development of the Batin Sembilan people in the Hutan Harapan area by relying on gathering of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and land use based on agroforestry and planting crops, life has been enhanced. This program has been carried out as it supports the welfare of the Batin Sembilan community itself and not solely dependable on forest products. The gathering of forest valuables is not a steady way of gathering food or income, therefore they have made up their mind and feel settled. In this capacity they have more responsibilities beyond their basic needs, such as the costs of their children's education.

For the remaining forest products that they still collect they will be traded to PT. REKI and purchased according to market prices. The most dominant NTFPs are resin and honey. Jerenang and jelutong are difficult to encounter in the forest. So that these forest products are collected and purchased to increase their economic income so that they can buy other needs such as clothing, staples such as rice, fish or chicken.

Other forest products are seasonal crops such as petai, jengkol or durian fruit. They can also sell the fruits of these plants when they are in season. However, the price is not always high and sometimes the demand is limited. In between the seasons they are required to plant agroforestry products and other secondary crops. These plants support their needs for the long or short term. Rubber trees are almost the most prevalent crops recommended. Hutan Harapan assists and provides understanding on how to maintain those until harvest. After harvest care is also accommodated by PT. REKI and negotiate proper factory door prices. This agroforestry is a long-term aim for the Batin Sembilan people because between planting, harvesting and monetizing, it takes time. The types of rubber, petai (*Parkia speciosa*) and jengkol (*Archidendron pauciflorum*) that are being planted in their concession areas as partners in social forestry and KTH are sought to be able to prosper them in the future.

In addition to the agroforestry crops, soybeans, rice and corn are also planted. This is to fulfill and supplement their own food needs. Therefore, the family-level food security can be fulfilled from these crops. Likewise with daily needs such as horticultural crops in the form of chili, eggplant, long beans, peanuts, ginger, turmeric, lemongrass and cayenne. These can be utilized every day for their food needs.

Mrs. Ros of the Batin Sembilan people "I planted chilies given by PT REKI, when we were in the forest, we never planted things like. Only after REKI introduced those we planted those in gardens and fields".

In one part of the Batin Sembilan people's fields they grow rubber trees as the main cash crop. In addition, they tend to grow seasonal crops such as jengkol, petai and secondary crops and horticultural along with intercropping such as cempedak, avocado, tampui, areca nut, coffee, cocoa and salak. This is indeed a variety of crops with guidance from PT REKI on how to plant, distance and maintenance.

4. Conclusion

Restoration is an effort to return a forest to its original form of self-sustaining productivity. Here the goal is to work on forests that have been damaged by human interaction, to restore the functions of forest environments as a good source of oxygen, biodiversity and natural wealth. PT REKI-Hutan Harapan, the agency responsible for this recovery, provides several programs and performances for forest recovery. In its performance there are many challenges and discrepancies in the planned programs. It needs the right thoughts and actions to produce a good working strategy.

In addition, the presence of the Batin Sembilan people who inhabit the forest area, adds to PT. REKI's work load. Not only restoring forests but also by empowering indigenous people who are dependent on forest resources. Damaged forests certainly have an effect on the lives of the Batin Sembilan people who still live in the forests. It can be said that there are many tactics carried out by PT. REKI to minimize friction due to forest damage. As well as to reduce the vulnerability of the Batin Sembilan indigenous people who have been tossed around in the past.

Therefore, a series of policies and strategies have been presented in this research as well as types of restoration efforts. Diving deeper, the local knowledge of local communities is also included to help in the restoration efforts. The main issue remains; "Is the forest getting better?" The Batin Sembilan people are still in fear of not able to survive in the forest. This is the issue faced in the Jambi Hutan Harapan area program. On the one hand, the forest is increasingly upheld as the lungs of the world, but it is shrouded by the company's relentless haze of hot smoke. From a distance, the government seems to be running out of ideas to curb the rate of deforestation due to the attractive economic aspect of the oil palm monoculture. The stakeholders are limping through the options. The Batin Sembilan indigenous people continue to adapt to limited and restricted forests.

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