

Strengthening Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for Children in Pasir Putih Hamlet, Dwi Karya Bakti Village, Pelepat Subdistrict, Bungo Regency, Jambi Province

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ABSTRACT

This program aims to strengthen Islamic education and character education among the Anak Dalam tribe. Researchers observed in the field that there are differences in the beliefs of the Anak Dalam tribe (SAD) living in Pasir Putih Village, Pelepat Subdistrict, Bungo Regency, Jambi. This empowerment initiative employs the PAR (Participatory Action Research) method. This method fosters an understanding and awareness that enables the community to transform their own circumstances through their own efforts, rather than in response to directives from outside parties. The PAR cycle begins with problem identification, potential identification, action planning, and reflective evaluation. This community empowerment process involves stakeholders from the planning stage through action and evaluation, with the following empowerment steps: First, the Pre-Mentoring Process, which was already carried out during the implementation of the 2019 UIN Jambi Student Community Service (KKN) Research Action Program; this stage involves identifying problems occurring at the research site. Second, the Acculturation Process, which involves mapping the SAD community—which adheres to two religious beliefs—as well as observing and adapting to the activities carried out by the SAD community, with the aim of fostering good communication between researchers and the SAD community. Third, the First Action Program, which involves developing learning modules and simultaneously providing guidance to SAD children. Fourth, the Evaluation Program was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring provided and the SAD children's mastery of Islamic religious education and character education. The research findings indicate that despite differences in religious beliefs, SAD children are enthusiastic about learning about Islam and character education. Challenges in implementation include a shortage of educators and a lack of adequate educational resources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Isolated Indigenous Communities” is a term used by the central government to refer to isolated communities throughout Indonesia, spread across all of the country’s provinces. In Jambi Province, these communities are known as the Anak Dalam people. The people of Jambi Province are more familiar with the terms “Orang Kubu” or “Orang Rimbo.” Of the many ethnic groups found in Jambi, one that is relatively well-known and has garnered attention is the Anak Dalam Tribe (SAD). The Kubu people—also known as the Anak Dalam or Orang Rimbo—are one of the ethnic minority groups living on the island of Sumatra, specifically in the provinces of Jambi and South Sumatra. The majority of them live in Jambi Province, with an estimated population of around 200,000 people. According to oral tradition, the Anak Dalam people are the “Maalau Sesat,” who fled to the dense forests around Air Hitam in Bukit Dua Belas National Park. They were later named the Moyang Segayo. Another tradition states that they originated from Pagaruyung and fled to Jambi. This is supported by the fact that the Anak Dalam people share linguistic and cultural similarities with the Minangkabau people, such as a matrilineal system.

In the Sumatra region, particularly in Jambi Province, there are several ethnic groups, including the Malay, the Kerinci, the Batin, and the Kubu. Among these four tribes found in Jambi Province, there is one tribe that remains a hot topic of discussion among the public and academic researchers alike: the Anak Dalam (SAD) tribe. This is largely due to the lack of historical clarity regarding their origins, compounded by the multitude of theories explaining the origins of the Kubu or SAD tribes.

The Anak Dalam people are scattered across the border region between Jambi Province and South Sumatra, with another portion scattered along the border between Jambi and Riau. This community has always moved from place to place within the forest, leading them to be regarded as a people who remain culturally and socially isolated. Today, a small portion of them has settled down and begun farming, much like their neighbors. Although some have settled down and are learning to farm, the residents’ primary livelihoods—gathering forest products, hunting, and fishing—remain their main occupations. Some of those who have settled work as loggers or rubber tappers on other people’s plantations (Hidayah: p. 14).

The Anak Dalam (SAD) community is part of a group of isolated communities located in the province of Jambi, with a total population of 2,951 households—or 12,909 people—spread across three regencies: Batang Hari Regency, Bungo Tebo Regency, and Sarolangun Bangko Regency. They live in remote, isolated areas and are economically, educationally, health-wise, socially, politically, and religiously marginalized. Their living conditions are dire, exacerbated by the depletion of forest resources in Jambi and South Sumatra, as well as processes of “marginalization” carried out by the government and the dominant ethnic group (the Malay) in Jambi. The majority of the Anak Dalam/Kubu people practice animism. They believe in spirits and also regard certain places as sacred, though there are also several dozen SAD families who have converted to Islam (mu’alaf) and Christianity. (Interview, September 4, 2021).

The lifestyle of the Anak Dalam tribe in the Pasir Putih hamlet is no longer like that of the seemingly primitive Anak Dalam tribe of the past; they now wear clothes like ordinary people, rather than garments that cover only part of their bodies. In fact, the Anak Dalam tribe appears more modern, as evidenced by their lifestyle—they own brand-name items, use smartphones and motorcycles, and some even own cars. Quite a few of them have built homes outside the traditional Anak Dalam settlement area. Some members of the Anak Dalam tribe living in the Pasir Putih Village area also own palm oil and rubber plantations. What’s even more interesting is that the number and total area of the plantations they own can reach dozens of hectares, and they also employ workers—paying people from outside the Anak Dalam tribe—to harvest and maintain their plantations. Even when the Anak Dalam tribe spends the night in the forest, they now travel by vehicle. It’s no wonder that the people of Kampung Pasir Putih say that while their appearance may seem humble, their wealth is their top priority.

The Anak Dalam tribe's settlement in the Pasir Putih village area is located in the hills, approximately 1.5 km from the local residents' settlement. In 2013–2014, the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs provided 60 housing units made of asbestos and corrugated iron for the Anak Dalam tribe in the Pasir Putih village area. The Anak Dalam tribe has occupied this settlement for about five years, although some of them still live in the jungle. It can be said that the Anak Dalam tribe has become an integral part of Pasir Putih Hamlet. They are unfamiliar with and have no knowledge of the civilization of the hamlet's residents. The Anak Dalam live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, as they traditionally move from one place to another in search of a livelihood.

From the author's observations, it appears that the Anak Dalam tribe has embraced Islam, but their practice of the faith does not yet meet expectations. This is evidenced by numerous studies concluding that the level of adherence to Islamic teachings among the SAD remains relatively low. As found in a study conducted by Mailinar & Bahren Nurdin, the main obstacle preventing the SAD from practicing Islam like the general Muslim Malay community is a lack of knowledge about Islam. Knowledge of Islam among the SAD is typically obtained only through religious community service programs conducted by specific groups or institutions—programs that are rare and, even when they occur, are short-lived. In fact, even the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Jambi region does not have a specific, ongoing religious guidance program for the SAD living deep in the forest. This situation, if it does not receive special and sustained attention, raises concerns that they may abandon Islam and return to the beliefs of their ancestors, given their tradition of always sleeping in the forest to earn a living and spend the night.

It is this situation that the author is concerned about, based on our observations over the course of one month. Consequently, the author was motivated to submit a proposal to provide support to the Anak Dalam tribe in Kulukup Pasir Putih Hamlet, Dwi Karya Bhakti Village Pelepat Subdistrict, Bungo Regency, Jambi Province. Accordingly, this planned assistance program is titled Strengthening Islamic Religious Education and Character Education among the Anak Dalam Tribe in Pasir Putih Village, Pelepat Subdistrict, Bungo Regency, Jambi Province. It is hoped that through intensive and sustained efforts to strengthen Islamic Religious Education and Character Education, it is hoped that this will make a positive contribution to improving the quality of life for the SAD in Jambi Province, particularly in the area where this program is being implemented.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach, which aims to uncover empirical facts objectively and scientifically based on scientific logic, with procedures supported by robust methodological and theoretical frameworks in accordance with the relevant academic discipline. Qualitative research is designed to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, and the attitudes and thoughts of individuals and groups. The research conducted is a qualitative descriptive field study, which is more accommodating and representative when the data collection techniques are carried out according to the needs of the research.

The social context studied was the "3T" community. The research conducted was qualitative in nature. In qualitative research, the concept of "representativeness"—that is, using examples or samples to generalize findings to the population—does not apply. The research subjects were Quran teachers, the head of the SAD, community members, and children, with community members serving as key informants. This method of selecting samples or subjects based on specific needs is known as "snowball sampling." The subjects designated as the sample are first selected as "key informants." The second stage includes teachers who teach the Quran and members of the community.

The data collection methods used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques offered by Spradlaey, which focus on analysis based on cultural and social domains, and there are other analysis techniques as well. As stated by Miles and Huberman, this is the flow model of data analysis. According to them, there are four activities carried out through this approach: First, data collection. Second, data reduction. Third, data display. Fourth, verification/drawing conclusions. The researcher then added Triangulation (Emzir, hal 210).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the research have to be supported by sufficient data. The research results and the discovery must be the answers, or the research hypothesis stated previously in the introduction part.

3.1. Mentoring Method

This empowerment activity uses the PAR (Participatory Action Research) method. This method is intended to help participants develop the understanding and awareness needed to change their overall circumstances on their own, rather than in response to orders from others. The PAR cycle begins with problem identification, potential identification, action planning, and reflective evaluation. This community empowerment process involves stakeholders from the initial stages through action and evaluation, with the following empowerment steps:

1. Pre-Mentoring Process

An initial observation process to assess the general conditions of the Anak Dalam tribe. This process was already conducted during the student-led action research program (KKN). In 2019, it was implemented by UIN Sulthan Taha Saifuddin Jambi in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Division of Islamic Education. Additionally, during this mentoring process, researchers sought to group the children of the Anak Dalam tribe by age and educational level to facilitate mentoring efforts aimed at strengthening Islamic religious education and character education.

2. The Inculturation Process

In this process, the facilitators enter a community where some members have embraced Islam and others still adhere to traditional beliefs. The facilitators participate in and adapt to the activities of the Anak Dalam tribe, both individually and in groups. All activities at this stage are aimed at fostering good relations and mutual trust between the facilitators and the community.

3. First Action Program

Once integration is successful and a good relationship has been established, the facilitator proposes a program to be implemented, which involves providing guidance to the community on the importance of religious education and character education. At the same time, the researcher develops learning modules or guidelines for the Anak Dalam tribe in the field of Islamic religious education, using modules that cover instruction on wudhu, tayammum, obligatory bathing, prayer, and prayer practices, as well as character education.

4. Second Action Program.

The second action program involves implementing all the programs that have been mutually agreed upon. The second action program consists of routine activities that include instruction on Islamic education and civic education (character development). In the second action program, all learning materials in the modules are applied, supplemented by instruction on the adhan and iqamah for male students.

Through this program, students are expected to understand the practice of wudu and perform prayers properly. This action is intended to achieve the fourth educational objective—experiential learning—in the sense that the Islamic teachings which have been believed in, understood, and internalized by the students are able to foster motivation within them to act upon, practice, and obey religious teachings and values in their personal lives—as people who have faith and are God-fearing toward Allah SWT—and to actualize and realize these in their lives within society, the nation, and the state

In this second phase, the implementation of this educational program—which began six months ago—has been assisted by two Quran instructors, though only one of them is paid by Baznas. Previously, there was one Quran instructor who was appointed solely as an educator. However, this arrangement did not last long, as the instructor ceased his service and left the village of Pasir Putih for unknown reasons.

Since this activity involved providing support to 3T regions, the researchers also enlisted student teachers to instruct students from the Anak Dalam tribe. In addition to teaching about faith in Allah

SWT, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum also covered the practices of performing wudu and prayer. These practices were demonstrated in turns so that the students could understand how to perform wudu and recite the prayer after wudu. This was followed by a group prayer session until completion. The key takeaway from this training and prayer practice was that students must remember to perform wudu before praying, as it is a prerequisite for a valid prayer. This was followed by the practice of prayer and the recitations that must be memorized.

What students learn from this prayer training or practice is that, before performing prayer, they must first perform wudu, which is a prerequisite for a valid prayer. This is followed by prayer practice and the recitations that must be memorized. The following table summarizes the stages of guidance based on the description above.

No.	Phase	Objective	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
1.	Pre-Mentoring Process	To identify the initial conditions and mentoring objectives.	Observation, data collection, and grouping of children based on age and educational level.	Initial data to serve as the basis for developing the Islamic Education (PAI) and character education programs.
2.	Inkulturation	To build relationships and trust with the community.	To integrate with and participate in the activities of the Anak Dalam tribe.	To establish good relationships so that the program is accepted by the community.
3.	Action Program I	To foster an understanding of the importance of religious and character education.	Outreach and development of PAI modules (wudu, tayamum, obligatory bathing, prayer, and character).	Learning modules are available, and the community's understanding has increased.
4.	Action Program II	Implementing the learning program on an ongoing basis.	Regular PAI and character education classes, practice of wudu, prayer, the call to prayer (azan), and the iqamah, as well as guidance from teachers and students.	Students are able to understand and practice religious rituals and apply religious and character values in their daily lives.

Results of the Mentoring Program.

The implementation of the program to strengthen Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and character education for the Anak Dalam tribe was carried out in phases through four main stages: pre-mentoring, enculturation, Action Program I, and Action Program II. The pre-mentoring stage yielded initial data on the conditions of the community and the students, which served as the basis for program development. Subsequently, the acculturation phase successfully fostered harmonious relationships and built community trust, ensuring the program received strong support.

During Action Program I, the community gained an understanding of the importance of religious and character education, and PAI learning modules were developed to serve as guidelines for program activities. The program then continued through Action Program II with regular learning and

mentoring, so that students not only understood religious material but were also able to practice acts of worship such as wudu, tayamum, salat, the adhan, and the iqamah, as well as implement character values in their daily lives. Overall, this program demonstrates that a sustainable, community-based mentoring approach can enhance the understanding, worship skills, and character development of students from the Anak Dalam tribe.

3.2 Evaluation and Reflection

Evaluation was conducted through process and outcome assessments. Process evaluations were carried out during each mentoring session and action activity. This was done to determine the extent to which the process was proceeding as expected, as well as to identify obstacles encountered during the action activities.

In this section, the researcher also conducted an evaluation by taking turns performing wudhu, focusing on the areas to be washed—from the face down to the feet. The Anak Dalam students performed this well, as they had previously been taught by the on-site mentor teacher. In the final section, the researcher also evaluated the girls' practice of wudu and obligatory bathing, which was assisted by a female supervising teacher. It turned out that many of them only understood the intention for bathing and wudu in Indonesian. Meanwhile, they had not yet memorized the Arabic terms. The evaluation results showed that these children were able to receive practical instruction on religious practices, and what is most needed is a Quran teacher who can be available at all times, as their ambition to learn about Islamic education is very strong. The findings of this study are as follows:

1. Conditions of the Students

The conditions of the students vary in terms of age, gender, and educational level. The total number of Anak Dalam students is 20, consisting of 10 girls and 10 boys. Among the 10 females, only 2 have completed junior high school, while 6 have completed elementary school and 2 have never attended school. Among the 10 males, 2 have completed junior high school, 5 have completed elementary school, and 3 have never attended school.

2. Condition of Learning Facilities

Another issue identified was the condition of the learning environment: there was no dedicated space, and classes were held in a prayer room that lacked equipment such as a blackboard and other supplies. Additionally, there were no facilities for performing wudu or restrooms near the mosque. Students could only perform a simulated wudu without using water. This is due to the limited supply of clean water in the Pasir Putih hamlet.

The issue of a dedicated learning space is urgent, in the author's view, because the Anak Dalam students span elementary, middle, and high school levels. Consequently, this poses a challenge for higher-level education, as students at these levels have a greater understanding compared to those in elementary school. It is advisable to separate students according to their educational levels.

3. Teaching Staff Conditions

The teaching staff in Pasir Putih Hamlet consists of core educators prepared by BAZNAS Bungo, comprising two individuals—Mr. Sumingan and Ms. Sumirah—who have been entrusted by BAZNAS Bungo and receive a monthly honorarium of 1,000,000 each. For two people, this amounts to 2,000,000 from BAZNAS. Paying these teachers' salaries every month—if we look at what the government is doing to advance the SAD, there is good intent, but the system in place has not yet met expectations because there are still many obstacles, such as the quality of the teachers, the methods used, and discipline, as well as inadequate facilities like blackboards, textbooks, and long tables for placing the Quran—and the lack of fans due to the stuffy room—all of which dampen the children's enthusiasm for learning. Some of these children attend elementary and middle school because they live in a developed community, except for those who are not yet enrolled in school; however, their parents are happy that their children are attending school. The elementary and middle schools are about three kilometers away, and the children are able to integrate with the community in that village. The religious classes held there are not only for teaching children to recite the Quran but also include Yasinan sessions for the mothers; this is a BAZNAS program. The children's classes are held after Maghrib

prayer, where they are taught to read the Quran and how to perform prayers. However, they do not have a textbook to guide them in learning the prayers, and their performance does not yet meet our expectations—particularly regarding the recitation of the prayers. The same applies to their reading of *Iqra* and the Quran; their tajwid and makhraj are not yet correct, and some still stumble over their words because The researchers directly assisted the two Quran teachers in teaching the Quran and leading prayers. They also provided character education to the children of the Anak Dalam (SAD) tribe.

The researchers prepared a module on performing prayer, covering everything from how to perform wudu to the procedures for prayer, complete with illustrations and written text beneath the images, while the Qur'an was already available. During the mentoring sessions, the researchers directly conducted tests and divided the students into several groups based on their academic ability—both boys and girls—after consulting with their teachers beforehand. Each group was assigned one teacher to instruct them; the teaching method for the Iqra' method covered only half a page, and for the Quran, only 3 to 5 verses were covered. This was carried out continuously. There were 4 teachers serving as assistants and 2 permanent teachers, for a total of 6 teachers, and each night there was a rotation of teachers instructing each group. The time allocated for studying the Iqra' and the Quran was only one hour, followed by instruction on performing the prayer ritual, interspersed with character education for the children—which lasted about half an hour—using the Akhlakulkarimah method, lectures, and question-and-answer sessions. This was the system the researcher implemented for one month at that location.

In addition, we also teach the procedures for the adhan and iqamah; girls who have reached puberty are taught the proper way to perform the obligatory ritual bath and to use a nipas. The character education we implement includes greeting others when entering the house, kissing both parents' hands before leaving for school and upon returning home, showing love and care for one another, behaving politely toward teachers and parents, saying "Bismillah" before eating and drinking, kissing the teacher's hand before leaving, as well as teaching them to express gratitude when given something by others, and learning about the history of the Prophet. Over the course of about one month, noticeable changes emerged in the children—for instance, in the mornings they appeared clean, both in body and clothing, and they were taught healthy living habits such as taking morning and evening baths. In reality, the Anak Dalam tribe is just like us; if someone takes care of and guides them, they can be just like us. For the future of these children's lives, I believe there needs to be ongoing guidance from knowledgeable people, and this must be sustained—not just for one month, but for a year, and even beyond—specifically for them.

The character education taught to the Anak Dalam tribe includes saying "thank you" when given something, kissing both parents' hands, sitting neatly and politely, listening when others speak, greeting people upon entering a home, refraining from using rude language toward parents, elders, and teachers, helping and caring for friends, always sharing what one has been given, kissing the hands of those who give, and saying "thank you"—these are the character education practices taught to the Anak Dalam tribe. To improve these practices, researchers and mentors must first ensure the children maintain discipline in their studies before conveying these values to them so that the mentoring program can be effectively implemented. Funding is a critical factor, and we also share with them what we eat. Teamwork is essential for the smooth operation of the mentoring process, accompanied by patience and a sense of care. To keep the children cheerful, they are occasionally

they are given treats such as candy, bread, and snacks. Whether the Anak Dalam tribe progresses or not depends on the government; if the government is serious about caring for them and pays special attention to them, they will certainly progress, because they now know people like us and are familiar with our culture—unless, of course, they have never left the jungle and have never seen people like us.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions above, the author concludes as follows: First The conditions of the 3T-Region-Based Community Service Mentoring Program for the Anak Dalam tribal community in Dusu

Jambi are generally good; however, the living environment of the Anak Dalam children is a cause for serious concern, as the community residing in the village of Pasir Putih consists of members of two religious faiths: Islam and animism. A total of 20 students participated in the Mentoring Program, consisting of 10 boys and 10 girls. Their educational levels varied, ranging from elementary school (SD) to junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA). Second The Mentoring Program began with an initial phase of observation and identification of the target community, during which the community responded very positively to the program. The second phase involved directly implementing Islamic religious education and character education. This was done by preparing teaching modules tailored to the students' ability levels. This was followed by directly guiding students in the practice of wudu (ablution) and ritual bathing, as well as performing the five daily prayers. Additionally, character education was provided by teaching students to show respect toward parents and teachers, as well as how to express gratitude when receiving something from someone. The third step was an evaluation of the activities that had been carried out, which revealed several obstacles: learning facilities that did not meet general educational standards, and a lack of permanent teachers, as there was concern that while Baznas was still disbursing funds, the teachers' needs could be met, but if Baznas stopped disbursing funds, the teachers might no longer be willing to teach. Finally, students must be grouped by educational level so that those at higher educational levels do not have to repeat lessons intended for elementary school students.

With the completion of this study, I would like to offer the following recommendations regarding Community Empowerment Assistance in 3T Areas. First This research on community empowerment assistance in 3T areas must be continued for the advancement of communities across Indonesia. second The government must pay closer attention to ensuring that the SAD community receives the same education as other communities. Third The government must allocate special funds for the development of the Anaka Dalam Tribe (SAD) so that they can progress just like the rest of us.

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