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# Navigating progress and preservation: village leaders' perspective on sustainability challenges among Indigenous communities of selangor, Malaysia

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## Abstract

This study explores the sustainability challenges faced by Indigenous communities in Selangor, Malaysia, through the perspectives of village leaders. As agents of cultural continuity and local governance, these leaders offer critical insights into how the Orang Asli navigate the tensions between modernization and heritage preservation. The primary objective is to understand how economic, environmental, and cultural dynamics intersect and affect Indigenous sustainability. A qualitative methodology was employed, involving semi-structured interviews and participant observation in five Orang Asli villages representing the Temuan, Mah Meri, and Semai sub-ethnic

groups. The analysis reveals three major challenges: economic marginalization driven by limited livelihood diversification and insecure land tenure; cultural erosion stemming from youth disengagement and modernization; and environmental vulnerabilities including deforestation, climate risks, and coastal degradation. Despite systemic barriers, village leaders demonstrate resilience by advocating for cooperative tourism, intergenerational cultural education, and ecological stewardship. The findings underscore the importance of integrating Indigenous knowledge into sustainability frameworks and call for participatory, rights-based development policies. Future research should explore institutional collaborations and scalable community-led models that honor Indigenous agency while advancing sustainable outcomes. © The Author(s) 2025.

Author keywords

Indigenous; Indigenous tourism; Malaysia; Orang Asli; Sustainable

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**Abstract**

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