



Sustainability of Orang Asli Indigenous Knowledge and Practices of Green Technology in Medicine

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the sustainability of Orang Asli Indigenous Knowledge and Practice of Green Technology (IKPGT) in the field of herbal therapeutic medicine at selected Orang Asli settlements in Peninsular Malaysia. A case study with multiple sites was used as the research design. Interview protocols and observations were used to obtain the qualitative data. The interview involved 13 informants from Mah Meri, Semai, Bateq dan Semaq Beri tribes. The interviews were video and audio-taped, transcribed verbatim, analyzed, and imported into Atlas.ti software for data processing. The findings showed that the Orang Asli tribes were using their indigenous knowledge to prepare traditional herbal medicine to cure certain diseases using selected herbs from the forest. This ethno-medicine especially in herbal therapeutics is pertinent in Orang Asli culture. Orang Asli tribes utilized medicinal plants to heal various health conditions in treating both children and adults. The plants were hand-picked and processed with natural “green” methods without damaging the natural habitat and without using synthetic chemicals. This explorational study found that Orang Asli’s practices of making traditional medicine from selected plants were environmentally friendly and could be sustainable if the practices were passed down to the younger generation. However, the younger generation of Orang Asli seemed to be less interested to learn and to practice the making of herbal medicine to treat common illnesses among Orang Asli community. Another major weakness of Orang Asli IKPGT in making therapeutic herbal medicine was the lack of documentation of the medicinal procedures and processes. In conclusion, the main result shows that most Orang Asli tribes still maintain and practice “green technology” based on their indigenous knowledge in their daily lives. As an implication, Orang Asli IKPGT, based on the empirical data, could be used to develop as a new “Green ethno-medicine framework” with respect to Orang Asli traditional herbal medicine preparation.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge, IKPGT, green technology, Orang Asli, ethno-medicine