

## The Talang Mamak People's Views on Nature

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### 1. Summary

“The indigenous people are the stewards of the nature”, may be the most popular invocation in terms of the relations of indigenous people and nature. This is based on the argument that the indigenous people are living closely to the nature. However, indigenous people vary in terms of their relations with nature, which may be shaped due to their culture, geographical location, belief, etc. Another aspect relates with the impacts of developmental aggression as well as economic globalization, which may influence the relations of the indigenous people and their nature in our modern world.

This paper tries to explore the world view of the indigenous people towards nature, by taking a case study of one indigenous people in Indonesia, named the Talang Mamak people. In addition, the changing livelihood of the Talang Mamak people due to the external pressures which have implication to the life of the Talang Mamak people will be examined.

### 2. Introduction: The Talang Mamak People

Indonesia is the world largest archipelago with more than 17,000 islands which are scattered between 6° north latitude and 11° south latitude and from 95° to 141° east latitude. There are approximately 235 million inhabitants in Indonesia, and according to AMAN (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara/ Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago), it is estimated there are 50-70 million indigenous peoples. While, according to the government, there are 1.1 million people categorized as isolated indigenous community (*Komunitas Adat Terpencil*). Indigenous or tribal peoples in Indonesia comprise more than one hundred different ethnic groups and sub groups: hunters and gatherers in Sumatera, shifting agriculturalist in Kalimantan and present day West Papua, and dispersed maritime nomads (Persoon, 2004).

The term of indigenous peoples in Indonesia is a contested concept. Moreover looking at the history of indigenous people globally which based on the Australian Aborigines and American Indian context, is very much different from the Indonesia context. Bertrand (2007) discussed the issue of prior occupation of territory since the indigenous persons were present in the archipelago before colonial times, except the Chinese who migrated at various historical time periods. The government of Republic Indonesia argued the ‘indigenous issue’ does not apply to Indonesia and claimed that the whole nation consisting predominantly of indigenous populations, so they are not minorities (Persoon, 1998). As mentioned by Indria Wahyuni (2012), there is not yet any consensual agreement or certainty as to correct terminology to describe these people. Apart from that debate, this paper will use the term indigenous peoples, since it is the more commonly used term. Referring to the definition mentioned by AMAN, indigenous communities are “a group of people who have lived in their ancestral land for generations, have sovereignty over the land and natural resources, and govern their community by customary law and institution which sustain the continuity of their livelihood”. While the definition used by United Nations is following the definition formulated by the Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, José Maerinez Cobo (Sanders, 1999):

“[ . . .] having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or part of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural, social institutions and legal systems.”

Based on those definitions, there are several criteria of indigenous peoples, which are historically tied with their land, rights over land and resources, and having their own cultural, social institutions and legal systems.

One of the indigenous peoples in Indonesia is the Talang Mamak people. They lived in the eastern part of Riau Province in Sumatera Island. Most of their area is upland and hills, with the variation of height from 10 m to 450 m above the sea level. The local temperature is about 22°C to 32°C and the average of rainfall is 1,000 mm to 2,500 mm (Central Statistic Bureau, 2010).



Figure 1: Riau Province Map

The Talang Mamak people live in Indragiri Hulu Regency and Jambi province, in where they stay in a wide area. Regards to their history, there are several versions of it. While the Talang Mamak people believed themselves to be the descendents of the ninth generation of Adam and coming from Makkah; some literature mentioned they are coming from Pagaruyung – West Sumatra, and they withdrew from some lands due to the spread of Islam. Most of the writers said the existence of the Talang Mamak people has been influenced by the activities in the Kingdom of Minangkabau – West Sumatra.

### 3. The Broader Outlook of the Environmental Concept within the Tradition

The Talang Mamak people are living inside or nearby the forest for a long time. Hence, they have always been closely interacting with nature since their life cannot be separated from the forest. As the result, their way of living is close to the nature, which reflects on their

customary laws, traditions and belief. For example, the customary laws regard to the certain trees, which could not be cut (the further explanation, can be found in the next section). The Talang Mamak people also believe that certain animals have sacred value, hence they protect those animals. The Talang Mamak people also believed that the nature will do well to the people if they do not bother it. The Talang Mamak views on the universality of ethical principles in terms of environmental concept within the tradition will be described below:

### 3.1. Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism (Greek: anthropos, human being; kentron, center) or human-centered, is centered on the needs of humans, and views nature in the light of these needs (Hoffman and Sandelands, 2005). In other words, humans are the most important factor and value. Drawing upon Christopher Manes, anthropocentrism has been identified as the root cause of the ecological crisis, human over-population and extinction of many non-human species (Aypdeji, 2009). In the modern anthropocentric idealism is the belief that human being can resolve and overcome the natural degradation.



Figure 2: Most of the Talang Mamak people's forests are change into palm oil plantation

The argument that the indigenous people are the stewards of nature tends to believe the indigenous wisdom living in harmony with the nature. However, this view forgets to take into account the impact of economic globalization as well as that the indigenous people are not a homogenous group. The indigenous people have 'human vices just as we do' (Wagley, 1976 in Kopnina, 2012), they may view animals and plants as something not worth protecting (Allendorf et al, 2006; Infield, 1988 in Kopnina, 2012)

and are capable of overuse and poor decision making (Netting, 1993 in Kopnina, 2012). Economic globalization may force the stewards of the nature to practice unsustainable way which gives bad impact to their nature and livelihood.

Even though based on their life philosophy forest is important, the Talang Mamak people have lost most of their forest, which mostly already changed into palm oil plantation or another industrial forest plantation. The entrance of companies to their area, i.e. Oil, Coal, and Palm Oil Plantation Companies and industrial forest plant, which are promoted by the government, has changed the livelihood of the Talang Mamak people. The impact of the incoming capital to the Talang Mamak people will be explored more in section 5. Furthermore, the incoming capital brings in the materialistic culture to the Talang Mamak people and erodes the local wisdom of the Talang Mamak, which reflects on the land selling attitude.

Regards to the importance of the forest and the reality where some of Talang Mamak people selling their forest/ land, I got an interesting answer in interviews, when I asked whether the forest is important or not:

“... [giggle] if it is important we should not sell our forest, but in the reality we sell it. If we said it is not important, according to our tradition, forest has an important role.” (The Talang Mamak women, 28 years old)

If in the past, the Talang Mamak people settlements were surrounded by forest, now as far as our eyes can see, there are palm oil plantations. Ironically, most of the palm oil plantation is owned by the company or the outsider, while few Talang Mamak people have land for agriculture and rubber or palm oil plantation anymore.

### 3.2. Biocentrism

Biocentrism (Greek, bios: life, centism: center) holds the view that humans are just one among a multitude of living species and not more important than others on this earth (Rai et al, 2010). Taylor (2008) argued biocentrism as a system of ethics that attempts to protect all life in nature. The founding idea in biocentrism is that humans are part of nature and that also other living beings have moral significance (Johansson, 2012). Again, everything in nature has value, regardless of the good it does for the human.

The biocentrism value of the Talang Mamak people can be seen through their belief in some living species. Kedondong tree (*Spondias dulcis* - Anacardiaceae) has sacred value for the Talang Mamak people, since it is believed to be the incarnation of humans hence the tree cannot be cut down. If someone cuts it down, burns and makes that tree die, then s/he will get punishment 7 tahlil (the highest punishment) of customary law and pay 15 plates, 3 bowls, 76 fabrics, 1 silver bracelet, as well as providing food (rice and chicken) and drink for the community. The punishment is the same as given for killing a human. Hence, kedondong tree have high value for the Talang Mamak people, which should be protected.

The durian tree (*Durio zibethinus*) also is considered as a respected tree for the Talang Mamak people. When that tree is burned (intentionally or not intentionally), but it does not die; the person will get punishment 2 tahlil. The fine is 11 plates, 3 bowls and providing food (rice and chicken) and drink for the community.

### 3.3. Ecocentrism

Ecocentrism take a point of view centers on the needs of nature and views humans in light of these needs (Catton & Dunlap, 1980 in Hoffman and Sandeland, 2005). It is defined as a philosophical stance that acknowledge nature's intrinsic value (Kortenkamp and Moore 2001; Curry 2006; Almeida and Vasconcelos in press, in Hovardas, 2012). Furthermore, it is related to a need to preserve natural system in their equilibrium condition, which might impose limits on particular human activities (Hovardas, 2012). To put it more simple, ecocentrism concern to the ecosystem as a whole, rather than individual living things.

The ecocentrism view of the Talang Mamak people is reflected in their tradition when they will cut down the trees. Before cutting down the trees, the Talang Mamak people have a ritual to ask their ancestor, whether they are permitted to cut down the tree or not. If their ancestor did not permit them, then they are not allowed to cut down the tree. The same things apply when the Talang Mamak people start their swidden agriculture, before they burn the area for farming, they should hold a ritual called *melambas*, in where the Talang Mamak people ask permission to open a location for agriculture as well as to chase away the bad spirit who stay in that area so they did not disturb the agriculture process.

The Talang Mamak's sacred forest also can be seen as the example of ecocentrism. Since the forest is important, there should be some forests which should be protected. There are four locations of the Talang Mamak sacred forests: Keramat Rimba Puaka Penyabungan and Penganan (1,800 ha), Keramat Rimba Puaka Sungai Tunu (104,933 ha), Keramat Rimba Puaka Durian Berjajar (98,577 ha) and Keramat Rimba Puaka Kelumbuk Tinggi Baner

(21,901 ha). Regards to the forest conservation, in 2003, Laman (the Talang Mamak people leader) was awarded for Kalpataru, the highest award from the government for the environment conservation, due to his effort to protect the forest.

*Pencak silat* (the art of defense), is not only a martial art but it has a philosophy of the spirit of the nature. The techniques are based on the deep observation of animal behavior and the elements of the nature (fire, air, water and earth). The Talang Mamak's *pencak silat* was bound up with the belief in tiger spirit, and the beauty of the fight dancing and music could attract the benign spirits of the ancestors and the natural environment to come down and bless all those present (Kartomi, 2011). Hence, the Talang Mamak people's *pencak silat* is not for the self defense purpose, but it is more about how to please the people, the spirit and the ancestors. *Pencak silat* is developed through the interaction of humans and the rest of nature, in where the nature became the source of learning by human. It is not only reflecting the influence of the nature to the Talang Mamak people, but also important regards to their belief and tradition.



Figure 3: Pencak Silat by the Talang Mamak people

### 3.4. Cosmo-centrism

Cosmocentrism is characterized as a view which (1) places the universe as the priority in a value system, (2) appeals to something characteristic of the universe (physical and/or metaphysical) which may might then (3) provide a justification of value, preferably intrinsic value, and (4) allows for reasonably objective measurement of value (Lupisella and Logsdon, 1997).

There is a premise in the Talang Mamak people regards to land, saying “*bumi diaku ibu, langit diaku bapak, ayik saudara, ambun angin saudara nyawa, rasi tanah kalikku tanah, rasi ayik balik ke ayik, gandarusa-gandarusi, tabor salah tumbuh di lambah, nyawapun kembali ke Allah*”, which means they live only a ride and for a while, so they should take care of the land/ nature. Since the land is like a mother, hence neglecting the land is the same as neglecting their mother. Based on that proverb, the nature is their connection: the earth is the mother, the sky is the father, water and wind is the relative. It means, they feel they were a part of something bigger.



Figure 4: the Talang Mamak's Tomb  
(doc: TN Bukit Tigapuluh)

The Talang Mamak believed, after they died, they will go to the other world. When the Talang Mamak people died, they have a funeral tradition, called *naik tambak*. The Talang Mamak's tomb shaped like the staircase, which reflects the highest place is the sacred place, wherein the spirit of the dead people meets the God. The Talang Mamak people do not believe in reincarnation, death for them is a process of movement from the real world to the faerie world. The afterlife is just the life in the real world, hence the family of the dead people provides several things which can be used for the dead people, for example mat, plate, and stove. There is also an offering, which include *kemenyan* (incense), tobacco,

etc, to help the dead people being accepted in the new world as well as to chase away the bad spirits who want to disturb the dead people and her/ his family.

#### 4. The Human-Environment Relationship: The Talang Mamak People and Forest

Forest for the Talang Mamak people has a sacred value and is an important element in their life, it reflects on their philosophy *idup awak bagantung jan rimbo* or my life depends on the forest. They live inside and nearby the forest, for hundreds years they live depends on the forest, for shifting agriculture and collecting non timber product such as jernang (*Daemonorops draco* - *Arecaceae*), jelutung (*Dyera costulata* - *Apocynaceae*), agarwood (*Aquilaria agallocha* Roxb) and rattan (*Calameae*).



Figure 5: the Talang Mamak, making a basket from rattan

Forest also is important for the Talang Mamak people's ceremony since most of the materials can be found in the forest, and forest becomes a place to bury the dead people. Further, there are some plants in the forest which can be used for medicine. The Talang Mamak people have rich knowledge of traditional medicine, based on the Biomedica expedition by LIPI and Ministry of Health, the Talang Mamak people are able to utilize 110 species of plants to treat 56 types of illness and identify 22 species of medicinal mushrooms (Ministry of Health, 2007). Forest also the source of the Talang Mamak people to get materials for building their house and making household tools.

According to the Talang Mamak people, there are three categories of forest, the first one is the forest area which can be used to live and build the house. The second one is the forest area for agriculture and collecting firewood; and the last one is the sacred forest, where people are forbidden to cut-down the trees. Consequently the Talang Mamak people have the concept of conservation forest.

##### 4.1. Symbiotic



Figure 6: the Sialang tree

A symbiotic relationship is a mutually beneficial relationship of two or more different organisms, which involving close physical contact. Hence the symbiotic relation is based on the idea that human being is dependent on the nature and vice versa. This relation may reflect on the religious and cultural practices.

The Talang Mamak people are living dependent on nature for a long time and as the result they do have a symbiotic relationship with nature. It can be found in their religious and cultural practices as well as their belief. For example the sialang (beehive) tree, which is one of the valuable trees for the Talang Mamak people. This tree has high value economically since in one time harvest, the honey can reach 800 – 1,400 kg.

The logging of the sialang tree is considered as the second biggest mistake after killing someone [which trees are crimes, see above example of Kedondong also], hence if someone cut down this tree, there will be a customary

punishment. The symbiotic relations here is, the people get the benefit (honey) from the sialang tree, in where besides they can use it for themselves, honey has a relatively high price in the market. As one of the sacred trees of the Talang Mamak people, this tree should not be cut and people should take care of that tree.

#### 4.2. Integrationist

Integrationist comes from the word integration (Latin: integer: whole or entire), generally means combining parts so they work together or form a whole.<sup>1</sup> Hence, integrationist relations with the nature can be defined as the act to be more integrate to the nature which is reflected in the sustainable system. The integrationist relation of the Talang Mamak people with the nature can be seen in their way of living, for example in agriculture.

The Talang Mamak people have been practicing swidden agriculture for a long time. Swidden agriculture is a form of slash and burn agriculture where small plots are cleared and crops are planted for one or two season, after which plots in new areas are cleared. The previous plots are left fallow for many years to allow the forest and soil to replenish. Some literature mentions the swidden agriculture gives a bad impact to the environment; in fact it is the oldest form of agriculture as a part of human adaptation in the tropical forest (Lynch, 1990). In ecological terms, swidden agriculture is said to be highly integrated into the natural tropical forest ecosystem (Seymour & Smith 1996, in Dhakal, Suresh, 2000). The benefit of this type of agriculture include improvement of soil structure, organic matter accumulation, and nutrient accumulation in the biomass where tree serves as agents for cycling nutrients, as well as fallows function as weed suppressors and control pests. Further the biodiversity of this type of agriculture is higher rather than permanent agriculture. Mostly the location for agriculture is nearby the river and the crops are planted for 4-5 times, before they shift to another location. The old plot is planted with yearly plant, such as petai or bitter bean (*Parkia speciosa*), jengkol (*Archidendron pauciflorum*), durian, etc. Previously the fallow time is 20-30 years, but currently due to the decreasing of land, it just takes 3-4 years.



Figure 7 the Talang Mamak people burning an area for their agriculture



Figure 8: Talang Mamak's house

The indigenous knowledge and local wisdom which shows integrationist relations of the Talang Mamak people to the nature is also reflected in their traditional house. The traditional house of the Talang Mamak people is wood constructed and raised on stilt, due to comfort and security reason. Since the Talang Mamak settlement is nearby or inside the forest and living in the swamp area and nearby the river. The elevation of their stilt house offers protection of wild animal, flood and muddy. The

<sup>1</sup> Integration, <http://searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/integration>

space beneath the house can be used as firewood storage, a place to keep their livestock, and emergency working place. Further in the night time, the Talang Mamak people used that space to burn wood or thatch to repel mosquitoes. The materials of the house can be gotten from their surroundings. It is built of wood, walled with *terap* (Arcapus) tree bark, roofed with sago palm's leaf or braid of palm leaf and floored with bamboo. The joint on parts of construction elements are tied by various vines, rattan or sliced bamboo.

### 4.3. Apocalyptic

Apocalypse can be defined as a prophetic revelation, especially concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil.<sup>2</sup> The apocalyptic approach emphasizes that human behavior is to be blamed for causing the current environmental crisis and that world is coming to end (Rai, et al 2010). Therefore it is anthropocentrism.

There is a premise in the Talang Mamak people "*biar mati anak, asal jangan mati adat*", which basically means "better your children die, rather than your traditions". According to that premise, the Talang Mamak people put their custom and tradition in the highest position. They believed if their custom and tradition is being violated, they will be in trouble. One of the Talang Mamak people said:

"Do you know why the Talang Mamak's forest is almost finished and change into palm oil plantation? It is because the people did not follow the customary and tradition."

As mentioned before, the Talang Mamak people having sacred forest, which is believed as *datuk*'s place or forest's spirit and the safety protector of the villagers. Hence people are forbidden to cut the trees, hunt animals, etc. If they need to get something from that forest, they should do a ritual; and if it is violated, there will be disaster happening in their village.

### 4.4. Managerial

Human and nature have a relationship of interdependency, in where human is depend on the nature for their living and the nature is depend on the management of human. As mentioned before, forest has important meaning for the Talang Mamak people, as well as several trees and animal which are believed have sacred value. As the result, the Talang Mamak people developed their customary law to protect several things which are important for them. The Talang Mamak's customary law to protect the nature can be seen as the managerial relations of human and environment. For example the customary law for protecting forest and the sacred trees, it reflects how the Talang Mamak people manage their nature.

### 4.5. Apathetic

Apathy can be defined as an absence or suppression of emotion, feeling, concern and passion.<sup>3</sup> Regards to the human – environment relationship, apathetic means the ignorance of concern to the environment. It may reflect on the attitude of some of the Talang Mamak people who selling their land or forest, without considering the impact to the nature and their

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<sup>2</sup>Apocalypse, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/apocalypse>

<sup>3</sup>Apathy, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/apathy>



future generation. Some of them are selling their land or forest in order to buy motorbike or other tertiary goods.

The apathetic relation towards nature also is reflected in some young generations, which mostly are influenced by the external culture. Some of the young Talang Mamak (boy and girl) did not know how to make the indigenous handicrafts, for example rattan basket or pandan (*Screwpinus pandanus*) basket. Indigenous handicrafts making process reflect the connection of the Talang Mamak people; since the materials are provided by the nature hence they should preserve the nature. When the young generations lose the indigenous knowledge of making the handicrafts, it may also weaken the relation to the nature.

#### **4.6. Animistic**

Animistic (from Latin, Anima: soul) can be defined as the belief in the existence of individual spirit that inhabit natural objects and phenomena; the belief in the existence of spiritual beings that are separable or separate from bodies.<sup>4</sup> Thus, animistic worldview is related to the physical world (the seen things) and the unseen or spirit. Nature is believed to be alive and animals may be embodiments of spirits.

Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) for the Talang Mamak people is believed as Rimau's animal, the God who protects their village. Tiger hunting is believed as weakening and destroying their belief and custom (Warsi, 2000), hence it is forbidden for the Talang Mamak people to hunt or kill the tiger. The Talang Mamak called tiger as datuk, and they believed, datuk will be angry and appearing physically if the Talang Mamak violate their customary and destroy the forest. It might be an animistic belief, but it helps to the tiger conservation since the number of this animal is decreasing.

Enggang Bird or hornbill (*Buceros vigil*) is also a sacred animal for the Talang Mamak people. It is prohibited to kill and eat this bird, and Hornbill is believed can tell good or bad news. In the death ceremony tradition, there is a hornbill statue in top of the dead hut, which is believed as the vehicle for the dead people to go to heaven safely. The symbolization of this bird can be seen as the way to protect the existence of this bird. Hornbill is categorized as protected animals; since there are many people wants to hunt this bird for its high value beak.

Cawai bird (a kind of humming bird) is believed as a friend of the hornbill. This bird should not be eaten by the Talang Mamak people, since this bird is believed as clever and wise. Further, this bird is the representative of the dead people.

### **5. The Changing Livelihood of the Talang Mamak People**

As mentioned before, the livelihood of the Talang Mamak people has been changed, compared to the past. Currently, most of the Talang Mamak's area has been converted into palm oil plantations, which ironically is followed by the changing status of ownership. As the result, they lost most of their forest. The drastic change in the Talang Mamak's livelihood started along with the incoming capital as well as the incoming people in that area. If in the past the land did not have economic value, after the incoming company to that area, land has economic value. This is caused by the incoming companies that opening the access to the Talang Mamak's area, which previously are quite isolated area.

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<sup>4</sup> Animistic, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Animistic+beliefs>

The incoming company to the Talang Mamak's area had impact on deforestation in Talang Mamak's area. The government regulation to develop palm oil in Riau Province, made palm oil plantation increase drastically. Riau province is the biggest palm oil producer in Indonesia, with the total area of palm oil plantation reaching 1.4 million ha (Wihardandi, 2012). Further, the deforestation rate is relatively fast there, in 1985 – 2006, the annual rate of deforestation reach 155,076.96 ha (Nurfatriani and Ginoga, 2008). Unfortunately, the incoming companies sometimes neglect the people's rights, as well as there are people who want to take benefits for themselves from the incoming company.

The decreasing of their area is followed by the decreasing of agriculture activity, now the Talang Mamak people depend for their livelihood to rubber and palm oil trees. Currently, there are Talang Mamak people who work for other people's plantation or palm oil plantation company, since they do not have land anymore or if they do, their land is not sufficient for their living.

Furthermore, the changing livelihood also relates to food security. If in the past they are relatively self-sufficient regards to their food production, in where they can get the food from their surroundings and they did agriculture; currently most of the Talang Mamak people should buy their food (rice, fish, etc). Hence money becomes important, when people do not have money it is difficult to get food, and it may put people in debt. Indebtedness becomes one problem of the Talang Mamak people, moreover sometimes their expenses are bigger than their income.

The changing livelihood can be good and can be bad, but when the people do not have enough knowledge and are not ready, it can put those people in the bad situation. This situation is exacerbated with their position as the ethnic minority, which means mostly their rights are being neglected. Regards to the Talang Mamak people's case, the incoming people and company in their area introduce them to the new life style, for example, the use of motorbike. In one side, it can be good since previously the Talang Mamak people should go by foot, wherever they want. The road construction and motorbike give them easiness access for transportation. In other side, instead of having motorbike, they are in debt or losing their land.

It may difficult to find "genuine" indigenous people, regards to our romantic idea about indigenous people, wherein the indigenous people's life truly depends on the nature and less usage of technology, etc. As well as with the Talang Mamak people, it may difficult to find people who still strictly hold on to their previous way of living, moreover regards to their changing livelihood. However, the Talang Mamak's ritual, such as *gawai* (wedding ceremony), *bulian* (medication ceremony), *cuci lantai* (birth ceremony), etc still exist. Even though it seems that the older generation are more concerned to their tradition and belief since the younger generation are very much influenced by the incoming information and technology (television, mobile phone, etc), but I do not want to make generalizations regards to this issue.

## **6. Conclusion**

Most of the indigenous people have a close connection to nature due to their way of living. The Talang Mamak people may be one of the examples of the indigenous people who have a close connection to nature, which is caused by their long interaction to the nature. Their relations with nature reflecting on their way of living, belief and customary law. For the

Talang Mamak people, forest has significant value, not only because their living depends on the forest but also due to their beliefs and traditions.

However, the economic liberation through the incoming capital as well as the development process in their area giving impact to the Talang Mamak people regards to their relations towards nature. Nowadays most of the Talang Mamak forest is gone. As the consequence, since their life is depend on the forest then the changing function of forest have impact to the Talang Mamak people's livelihood. It shows in the change of their way of living as well as the food security of the Talang Mamak people.

It is difficult to mention how many people live close to the nature, since they are living in the quite changed livelihood compare to before. However, some of the traditions are still followed even if they may be evolving to suit modern lifestyles.

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