

## 1. Description

### 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Ogan-Besemah, Komering/Malay/Bahasa Indonesia, Western Indonesian, Austronesian

“Usually named after the stream along which they lived.” (3)

The Ogan-Besemah grouping refers to the Besemah people to the west and the Ogan people to the east. They speak a variety of different dialects (Lematang, Kikim, Lintang, Besemah, Semende, Enim, Musi, Rawas, Ogan proper, etc.) within the Western Indonesian Branch of the Austronesian Language Family; all of which are similar to Malay. (1)

Many of the Ogan-Besemah speakers can also speak the Palembang dialect of Malay and the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. Roughly 395,000 people speak Besemah languages, and about 680,000 Ogan language speakers. (2)

### 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

Komering – kge (4)

Malay – msa (4)

Bahasa Indonesian – ind (4)

### 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

The Ogan-Besemah people are found in the South Sumatra Province of Indonesia and have expanded into Lampung Province. (1)

### 1.4 Brief history:

This society was relatively independent until 1866 when they officially fell under Dutch colonial control. They received independence in 1945, and since then, many Ogan-Besemah people have occupied political offices in both local and national government. They alternate control with Komering people, which intensifies the division between the Ogan-Besemah and the Komering. (1)

### 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

Some Dutch influence, but the Ogan-Besemah area was relatively independent of Dutch rule. Some of Ogan-Besemah’s local leaders organized active resistance from the 1840s on. Indonesia received independence in 1945. (1)

“Islam spread into the eastern part of the area in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but the Besemah districts in the west were converted only in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” (2)

### 1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

Rice land is either swampy or in highland areas. (2)

### 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

There are approximately 3 million Ogan-Besemah people. Their villages vary from several hundred to several thousand people large. The western half (the Besemah) spends much of their time in small dwellings away from the village. (1)

Most houses were single-family wooden structures with iron roofs, a front reception area, a back kitchen, and sleeping rooms. (2)

“House are generally single-family dwellings of three or four rooms raised on stilts, with the lower part of the house used for storage or, in some cases, trade.” (2)

## 2. Economy

“Agriculture is the principal economic activity for most people in the area and is based on the three crops of rice, rubber, and coffee.” (2)

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

They grow 2 tons of rice per acre for producer consumption. (1)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns? :

They construct fishnets, traps, and dams. (1)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Works groups for planting and harvesting consist of both men and women or just men. Men plow and prepare fields and prune and harvest coffee trees. (1)

2.6 Land tenure:

While the land is considered to be within the territory of a village, individuals control it. The land can be sold to other villages, but is infrequently also sold to outsiders. Many participate in sharecropping, renting, and mortgaging land. When land is untouched, the village member who clears it and plants crops assumes ownership. (1)

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

### **3. Anthropometry**

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

### **4. Life History, mating, marriage**

“Marriage rules are the main feature distinguishing among societies within the Ogan-Besemah area.” (2)

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

Households vary in size from one person to several generations. (1)

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Divorce is seen; however, it is subject to permission of the office of religious affairs. (1)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

There are different kinds of marriage in this culture. In the type called *belaki*, the groom secures a bride's place in his household by paying the parents of the bride a bride wealth, or an amount of money or property. In *ambig anag*, the groom pays nothing and moves into the bride's household. (1)

#### 4.9 Inheritance patterns:

"Inheritance is largely a function of the marriage form found in the particular society. Inheritance is usually to one or two children who remained in the village. Common throughout the area is the institution of the *tunggu tubang*, in which one or sometimes two children, with their spouses, receive house space and land from the parents and continue the descent line. In most societies only these children inherit the family estate. Two consequences follow: land is relatively unfragmented, and noninheriting children seek their livelihood elsewhere. Devolution of property onto just one child is the most common pattern in Besemah and Semende societies, and these are the peoples who have been most active in clearing new agricultural land in the region and in migrating to Palembang and to other Sumatran provinces." (1)

Eldest child inherits the bulk of the property in most cases of the Besemah and Semende societies. (2)

#### 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

Both parents are caregivers, as well as children who remain in the household after marriage. They assume some responsibility for younger siblings. Physical punishment is rare; most parents rely on other methods to gain obedience (embarrassment, shame, etc.). (1)

#### 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

#### 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

#### 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

#### 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

#### 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

#### 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape:

#### 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin):

Most societies permit first-cousin marriages, and in some areas, it is preferred. (1)

First-cousin marriages are sometimes preferred for matrilineal cross cousins. (2)

#### 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

#### 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

#### 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

#### 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

#### 4.22 Evidence for couvades

#### 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

#### 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

#### 4.24 Joking relationships?

#### 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:

In the *belaki* type of marriage, all children remain affiliated with the groom's household. In the *ambig anag* type of marriage, children belong to the bride's descent line. (2)

"In Besemah society the norm is the virilocal marriage; in nearby Semende the norm is the uxorilocal variant." (2)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

## **Warfare/homicide**

Village officials force male villagers to resolve most local conflicts with some intervention by the Indonesian representatives of the army and police. Physical confrontations are rare both in- and out-side of the village. (1)

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

4.18 Cannibalism?

## **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

Village populations range from several hundred to several thousand people. (2)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

“In precolonial and early colonial times an independent ruler (*pangeran*) ruled in some parts of the area.” A “supravillage territorial unit” called the *marga* was the main social and political system through colonial times. “The *marga* had residual rights over land, and the *marga* head, the *pasirah*, held high status.” Since colonial periods, the individual village has assumed many of the rights the *marga* once had, and the *pasirah* office no longer exists. Now, the leader of the village, the *tuo Dusun*, has adopted many roles the *pasirah* once had, and they no longer report to the *pasirah*, they report straight to the “government-appointed subdistrict head (*camat*)”. (1)

“Men who can trace their descent from an apical ancestor through firstborns have high status.” (1)

5.4 Post-marital residence:

Married children rarely reside with the parents for longer than 1-2 years after marriage. (2)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

“In some districts, the village is structured by a descent category or lineage (often called *jurai*), which may rest on either patrilineal or matrilineal principles. In these cases, village heads are often chosen from a line of traditional (*adat*) leaders and village affairs is run by the descendants of elder lines. In other districts the focus of village unity is the grave and myths connected with a founding figure (not necessarily an ancestry), whose characteristics and occupations often lend a specific tone to present-day village life.” (2)

#### 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):

In some villages, “characteristics and occupations” of the dead and or present in myths connected with a founding figure “lend a specific tone to present-day village life. “In Oku, for example, woodworking is associated with a particular *dusun*, goldworking with another, and each village possesses stories of its founding and conversion to Islam that set it apart from every other village in the district.” (2)

#### 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

Since the 1980s, most houses had one or more sleeping rooms. (2)

#### 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

#### 5.12 Trade:

Trade is a specialized occupation. Farmers in village markets sell coffee and rubber. (1)

“Trade flows through Palembang. Sundries are purchased in shops located in larger villages and towns, owned by local people or by Chinese.” (2)

#### 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Villages can be divided into many descent-based categories, *jurai* or *rogok* (through either men or women). “In the central Ogan area both kinds of tie are found in the *jurai*; in the west one finds systems strongly favouring patrification (e.g., Besemah and systems strongly favouring matrification (e.g., Semende).” (2)

### 6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

#### 6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

#### 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Clinics, travelling doctors, and powerful antibiotics and vitamins have not killed off older practices involving leaves and spells. (2)

#### 6.2 Stimulants:

#### 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

Sedekah, or ritual meals, are held to celebrate birth, ward of danger, give thanks for crops, and bless the deceased. All baby boys are circumcised. (1)

Ritual meals and Arabic chants (by men) follow funerals. (1)

#### 6.4 Other rituals:

“Chants generate merit that God then converts to blessings on villagers’ activities or relatives. Muslim calendrical feast days are also celebrated.” (1)

Heads of the Sufi order “lead chanting sessions in which a chain of authority (*silsilah*) is recited that links the head to the founder of the order, and in turn to the archangel Gabriel. Participants recite names of God and other Arabic phrases as a means to gnosis and as a way of expiating sins.” (2)

#### 6.5 Myths (Creation):

#### 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Most artistic cultural material is verbal. Telling myths, exchanging stories, and “the singing of songs with stringed accompaniment” are prominent throughout the Ogan-Besemah societies. (1)

#### 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

Adult men may serve as worship leaders, and in practice, learned men, or those of high status are unofficial leaders within worship. (1)

Most men (no women) go to congregational worship on most Fridays. (1)

#### 6.8 Missionary effect:

Islam has been present since the sixteenth century, and the Besemah districts converted in the late-nineteenth century by the Nagshbandiyya Sufi order. (1)

#### 6.9 RCR revival:

#### 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

Like other Muslims, people believe in resurrection and a final day of judgment. (1)

#### 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

#### 6.12 Is there teknonymy?

#### 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.):

Nearly all Ogan-Besemah people are Muslim. (1)

### **7. Adornment**

#### 7.1 Body paint:

#### 7.2 Piercings:

#### 7.3 Haircut:

#### 7.4 Scarification:

#### 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

#### 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

#### 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

#### 7.8 Missionary effect:

#### 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

### **8. Kinship systems**

#### 8.1 Sibling classification system:

#### 8.2 Sororate, levirate:

#### 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

## 9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

### Numbered references

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