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The Role Of Women In The Terengganu Coastal Fisheries Enterprise Before World War II

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Abstract

This study reviewed the role of women in the Terengganu coastal fisheries enterprises prior to World War II. This study focuses on examining the activities of the Terengganu Malay coastal fisheries enterprises where most are found to be among women. Before World War II, Terengganu indicated that economic improvement is very encouraging as a result of the high demand for fishery products, which include dried fish, anchovies, pickled, anchovy sauce (locally known as budu), shrimp paste and pickled fish. This study used qualitative research methods based on primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data for this study include annual reports, mailings, memoranda and government files obtained from the British colonial documents, Terengganu State Government Office, State Legal Advisor Offices, The Chief Minister of Terengganu Office from 1910 to 1940 and analyzed them using historical approach. In addition, secondary sources such as journals and books are also cited to support the findings. The study found that most Terengganu coastal fisheries enterprises are dominated by women. The coastal Malay women's participation in Terengganu led to the increase of family income, provide vast employment opportunities and economic relations with the local and global community. Various measures were taken by the government and the British Advisers in improving the fishery product resources. It is clear that women play an important role in improving the economy of the community as well as the state of Terengganu.

Keywords: Women, Fishery Products, Coastal Terengganu, Before World War II

Introduction

Terengganu is a state located in the coastal estuary facing the South China Sea and it is rich in marine products. Four major ports in Terengganu, as a center of economic activity in the fisheries and trade before World War II are Kuala Besut, Kuala Terengganu, Dungun and Kemaman. Kuala Terengganu is the royal capital located on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, situated at the estuary of Terengganu river, facing the South China Sea that became the focus of traders throughout the Malay Peninsula, the Malay Archipelago and Europe. There are a lot of fish landing sites to facilitate entrepreneurs in the fishery enterprises for the supply of marine products. Every morning during the summer, there are many boats were fishing along the river estuary and the fishermen would bring the catches in the evening (C.O 840/2, 12 March 1938, p. 41, C.O 840/1, 01 March 1913, p. 8, C.O 840/1, 29 April 1915, p.7).

This explains the Malay community along the coastal areas of Terengganu focused more on the enterprise and production of their fisheries products as their main source of income. The community managed to land many fish thus open up new opportunities to the Malay women in the coastal areas of Terengganu to engage in entrepreneurship producing fishery products such as dried fish, anchovies, anchovies sauce (locally known as budu), shrimp paste and pickled fish. The high demand from the local and global communities leads to vast economic development to its local community as well as Terengganu.

The Role of Women in the Fisheries Enterprise: Women as Entrepreneurs

Fisheries enterprise is one of the main enterprises for the Malay women residing in the coastal areas of Terengganu before World War II. A rough estimate of the people involved in the fishery enterprise either directly or indirectly is 20, 000 people. In the state of Terengganu, women working as entrepreneurs of fishery products is considered as a natural work that has been blended in them from generation to generation (C.O 840/2, 12 March 1938, p. 21).

This is in line with the main occupation of coastal fishing community who mainly works as fishermen. It was estimated that there are 15, 000 people working as fishermen and almost all the young men who lived at the coastal area of Terengganu, aged between 16 and 17 years old become fishermen.

Figure 1: Terengganu Coastal Fishermen Return from Fishing



Source: Terengganu State Museum

The fishermen's catch are usually sold fresh and the remaining fish left will be preserved as dried fish. The fish drying process will be done by the women; fishermen's wives. This helps provide employment opportunities to a large number of women in the fisheries production enterprises. According N.R Jarret, the British Adviser of Terengganu in 1936, he stated that in addition to the women and the fishermen's wives, children whether they are sons or daughters of the fishermen, will also help their mothers in fish gutting, skinning, cleaning and drying process (C.O 840/2, 24 February 1937, p. 22).

Figure 2: Fish Drying Process under the Sun



Source: The Findings of Researchers at the Fisheries Enterprise in Kampung Pachakan, Terengganu on October 1, 2016.

Before World War II, the fishery enterprise in Terengganu managed to offer employment opportunities to women who are wives of fishermen by carrying out works such as cleaning, gutting, preserving (through salting) and drying the fish to expand the state's economic revenues (L.A.Tr 169/37, 21 April 1934). The wages earned by the Malay women employees however are lower than those in the cities, which is about 10 cents for eight hours work a day (C.O 840/1, 07 April 1916, p.6). Although they were underpaid, the women in the coastal areas of Terengganu were seen to show high level of responsibilities and have shown entrepreneurship skills in helping their husbands out with their family source of income, whereby sometimes the income earned by the husbands are insufficient to meet the need of their families. Most coastal women in Terengganu works in the fisheries business to help increase their husbands' source of income. This indicates a positive change in attitude among the fishermen's wives and husbands as well to allow their wives to work in the fisheries enterprise (Ismail, 1990, p. 175).

Table 1: Comparison of the Market Prices of Essential Food in Terengganu and Singapore

Num	Types	Terengganu (Cents/ Catty)	Singapore (Cents/ Catty)
1	Fish	8-15	20-30
2	Beef	18-22	30-40
3	Vegetables	6-12	10-15
4	Mutton	35-45	60-70
5	Rice	16-20	15-20/gantang

Source: C.O 840/2, 6 May 1936, p. 26.

Table 1 shows a comparison of the market prices of essential food such as fish, beef, vegetables, mutton and rice in Terengganu and Singapore. The market price of fish in Terengganu is 8 cents to 15 cents a catty. In Singapore, on the other hand, the fish market price is 20 cents to 30 cents a catty. This shows the cost of living for the community in Terengganu is lower than those in Singapore. According to J.E Kempe, the British Adviser in Terengganu, throughout the year, the market price for fish was very cheap compared to other states in the Malay Peninsular. The overall cost for food such as fish, rice and vegetables is not more than \$7.00 a month. For the community of Terengganu who grow rice themselves, their cost of living will be lower.

This statement is supported by the stanzas of interesting poetry written by Y.M Tengku Dalam Khaltum (TDK), which reads: "*Ikannya Banyak Bukan Sebarang, Tenggiri, Kembung, Aya, Peparang, Suatu Tidak ada yang Kurang, Harganya Murah Bukan Sebarang*". The poem shows the privilege that the local Terengganu community has to offer when he mentioned about the exceed quantities of fish available in Terengganu such as Indo Pacific King Mackerels, Mackerels, Skipjack Tuna and Machete. Not only that the quantity of fish is outstanding but the market price for each is also very cheap (Abdullah, 2003, p. 8). The outstanding number of fish caught by the local coastal Terengganu fishermen therefore exceeds the daily needs of its local communities. Thus, all the exceeded fish were processed by the women community in a form of dried fish, then exported throughout the Malay Peninsular and Singapore. The average price for dried fish in Terengganu is \$7.15 per picul (a picul equals to a load) (C.O 840/2, 12 March 1938, p. 27, C.O 840/2, 5 May 1933, p. 11). Before World War II, dried fish and fermented fish products are the main products exported from Terengganu as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Types and Total Amount of Fisheries Products Exported from Terengganu in 1910-1912

Num	Products	Year/Amount		
		1910	1911	1912
1	Dried Fish and Salted Fish	\$464,288	\$577,986	\$571,718
2	Tin Ore	\$313,177	\$457,086	\$485,201
3	Coconut	\$281,813	\$225,708	\$240,380
4	Paddy	\$174,295	\$265,403	\$198,295
5	Pepper	\$152,707	\$160,351	\$93,382
6	Cane	\$28,039	\$19,747	\$10,877
7	Rice	\$24,746	\$9,011	-
8	Rawhide	\$14,946	\$20,948	\$31,685
9	Damar Resin	\$12,251	\$14,576	\$19,337

Source: C.O 840/1, 31 May 1911, p. 8, C.O 840/1, 25 June 1912, p.1, C.O 840/1, 01 March 1913, p.1.

Table 2 above contains data related to the types and total amount of fisheries products exported from Terengganu prepared by the coastal Malay community in 1910 until 1912. From the table above, dried fish and fermented or salted fish which were mostly produced by the coastal Terengganu women becomes the main export products from Terengganu compared to other exported products such as Malay tin ore, coconut, paddy, pepper, cane, rice, rawhide and damar resin. This is based on the total exportation of dried fish and fermented fish to Singapore, Siam, Annam and Cochin China, which was recorded as the highest, reaching up to \$464, 288 in 1910. In 1911, the exportation of dried and fermented fish rose up to \$577, 986. In 1912, however, it decreased slightly to \$571, 718. However, the exportation of dried fish and fermented or salted fish remained the highest compared to other export volume. It is through such outstanding revenues that the local state government began to make fisheries products as an important export commodity throughout the year, particularly to Singapore, in line with the outstanding demand from the global market (C.O 840/1, 25 April 1924, p. 10). The production of fishery products is mainly undertaken by the Malay women entrepreneurs who live in rural communities of many coastal areas such as in Kuala Besut, Kuala Terengganu, Kuala Setiu, Batu Rakit, Kuala Ibai, Marang, Dungun, Kemaman, Kemasik, Kertih and Chukai.

Table 3: Total Exports of Fishery Products Managed by Women in Kuala Terengganu in 1911

Num	Types	Quantity/Picul
1	Dried Fish	24,169.73
2	Anchovies	1,590.84
3	<i>Kikit</i> Fish	3,766.69
4	Anchovies Sauce (Budu)	510
5	Pickled Mackerel	106
6	Shrimp Paste	833
	Total	30,976.26

Source: C.O 840/1, 25 June 1912, p.1.

Table 3 shows the total exports of fishery products managed by women in Kuala Terengganu in 1911. The total exportation of fishery products in Terengganu in 1911 was 67, 638 piculs (a picul equals to a load). Out of 67, 638 piculs of total exportation, 30, 976.26 piculs are managed by the women community in the Kuala Terengganu district. The remaining total of 36, 661.74 piculs are fisheries products managed by the women of other districts such as Kemaman, Kuala Besut and Marang. Among the types of fishery products exported from Terengganu include dried fish, anchovies, *kikit* fish, anchovies sauce locally known as budu, pickled mackerel and shrimp paste. Dried fish products exported from Kuala Terengganu is the highest which is 24, 169.73. For anchovy products, however, it reached up to 1,590.84 piculs. In the anchovies business enterprise, four spaces are needed to process them which include; a barn to be made as storage for the anchovies, a barn to preserve or season the anchovies, a place to deep fried the anchovies in a large pot called *kawah* and a place to dry the anchovies, (L.O.M 359/1940), as shown in Figure 3 and 4 below:

Figure 3: Women are Drying Anchovies off the Coast of Setiu, Terengganu



Source: The Findings of Researchers at the Fisheries Enterprise in Kampung Beting Lintang, Setiu, Terengganu on October 15, 2016.

Figure 4: Dried Anchovies



Source: The Findings of Researchers at the Fisheries Enterprise in Kampung Beting Lintang, Setiu, Terengganu on October 15, 2016.

Women and wives of the fishermen in Terengganu also ventured into making anchovies sauce, locally known as budu to top up their daily source of income, to help their husbands in fulfilling their families' needs and living expenses. The production of anchovies sauce or budu is neither small scaled nor made as a part time jobs because there are a lot of women and fishermen's wives who are making anchovies sauce, particularly during the anchovies season where abundant of anchovies are caught by the local fishermen throughout the coastal areas of Terengganu such as Kuala Besut, Setiu, Kuala Terengganu, Dungun, Marang dan Kuala Kemaman.

When the sea is calm, during summer, anchovies can be caught within two to four months a year. This is when the women entrepreneurs will be busy making anchovies sauce to meet the local and global demands. Women make anchovies sauce or budu to be sold and traded across the Peninsular Malaya, Singapore, Cochin China, Siam, Pattani and Annam. Based on Table 3, a total of 510 piculs of anchovies sauce were exported from Kuala Terengganu. The women in the coastal estuaries of Terengganu normally make anchovies sauce or budu in a barn located near to the drying racks (where they dry dried fish). There are also some women who make anchovies sauce in their own homes (L.A.Tr 169/37).

Figure 5: Anchovies Souce (Budu) Processed by the Women in Terengganu



Source: The Findings of Researchers at the Fisheries Enterprise in Kampung Beting Lintang, Setiu, Terengganu on October 15, 2016.

Before World War II, there were no refrigeration or freezer system in Terengganu. Thus, many of the fish caught need to be exported in a dry condition (preserved) whether through open air drying using the sun and wind or cooked. Exported dried fish will be wrapped in bamboo containers called '*jak*' or in wood containers (C.O 840/2, 5 May 1933, p. 11). In addition to the dried fish, anchovies and anchovies sauce productions, the Malay women in the coastal areas of Terengganu also involve in the production of shrimp paste which is locally known as *belacan*. Shrimp paste is a traditional food consume by the traditional community of Terengganu as well as those in the Malay Peninsula, to be made as a flavouring (other word; seasoning) in cooking either by merely adding it to their dishes or toast it first to bring out the flavour. Traditionally, shrimp paste are made of krills, also known as *geragau*, *geragok* or *baring* in the local community. Shrimp paste has its own distinctive characteristics which are sticky, salty and has a strong odor of shrimp. When the shrimp paste is matured, its color will turn to dark purple (C.O 840/2, 5 May 1933, p. 11, C.O 840/2, 12 March 1938, p. 27).

Figure 6: Women are Making Shrimp Paste



Source: The Findings of Researchers at the Fisheries Enterprise in Kampung Rhu Muda, Marang, Terengganu on October 29, 2016.

Figure 7: Shrimp Paste that is already being Formed



Source: The Findings of Researchers at the Fisheries Enterprise in Kampung Rhu Muda, Marang, Terengganu on October 29, 2016.

This fishery products can last longer and can be exported to more distant places. This way is surely can improve the lives of the local community thus not waste the abundant catch caught

by the local fishermen. Each of the coastal community fishing families' house has spaces for fresh fish, drying fish and dried fish. Throughout March to October every year, thousand piculs of dried fish can be found on the drying racks along the coastal estuaries. Anchovies sauce and shrimp paste were also made in a large quantity by the local Terengganu women.

Total 4: Total Export of Shrimp Paste in 1931-1936

Year	Quantity (Picul)	Value (\$)
1931	2,541	\$20,764
1932	3,273	\$25,976
1933	2,662	\$26,653
1934	2,348	\$12,371
1935	7,718	\$75,587
1936	13,640	\$131,799

Source: C.O 840/2, 13 March 1939, p. 27 and 72. C.O 840/2, 5 May 1933, p.14, C.O 840/2, 17 May 1934, p. 19 dan 22, C.O 840/2, 18 April 1935, p. 22, C.O 840/2, , 6 May 1936, p. 21-24.

Table 4 above shows the data related to the total export of shrimp paste produced by the Malay women in the coastal estuaries of Terengganu in 1931 to 1936. Within that period, the exportation of shrimp paste showed an increase from 2, 541 piculs worth \$20,746 in 1931 to 13, 640 piculs worth \$131, 799 in 1936. This shows an increase of more than 10, 000 piculs of exported shrimp paste in the last six years. This is due to the extensive demand from Singapore, Hainan, Cochin China, Siam and Kelantan.

The Role of Women in The Fisheries Enterprise: Women as Trader

Women play an important role in the economic activities of the community and the state of Terengganu. Some of the roles played by women are trader who sell in the market by day (from morning to evening). This is because entrepreneurship and trading has become a significant part of their lives. According to Munshi Abdullah in his visit to Kelantan and Terengganu in 1836, he reported that many women in the state of Terengganu will balance a basket each on their heads to sell goods in the market. Most markets in Terengganu are open at 3.00 or 4.00 p.m in the evening. Food items namely fishery products such as dried fish, anchovies, anchovies sauce, shrimp paste and pickled fish as well as a variety of traditional cakes, vegetables and fruits are sold in the markets (Munshi, 1960, p. 30, Yaacob, 1993, p. 188).

This is foretold in the form of poetry narrated by Y.M Tengku Dalam Khaltum (TDK), which reads: "*Waktu Petang Pukul Empat, Di Tengah Jalan Penuh Tempak, Banyak Penjualan Bilang Tak Dapat, Bakul dan Raga Jarang dan Rapat*". The poem narrated by the Y.M Tengku Dalam Kalthum foretold the surroundings when the local Malay women in Terengganu who do business at four, describing how the surrounding is like. This proves that the Malay women of the coastal estuaries of Terengganu are very industrious and are capable of producing their own proprietary products (Hashim, 1991, p. 543).

In the 1920s, Terengganu women trader began to market their local products along the roads near to Payang Market, on both sides. This has been going on since 1838, as stated in Abdullah Munshi's writing when he visited Terengganu (C.O 840/1, 25 April 1924, p.14). Normally, fishery products produced by the Malay community along the coastal estuary of Kuala Kemaman will be marketed to Chukai. When the fishery products are sold out, they will bring back goods that are not available in their hometowns (Ismail, 1990, p. 175). According to M.C.F.F Sheppard, the Malay community in the coastal estuaries of Terengganu showed less interest in farming or agriculture. Local Terengganu men preferred working as fishermen than farming. Their women also preferred entrepreneurship and trading their local products. This shows that fishing, fish drying and trading has become a significant way to increase locals' source of income in Terengganu (M. C. ff Sheppard, 1949, p. 45).

Apart from marketing their products in the market, the fishery products produced by the coastal Malay women are also brought to rural area in exchange for gold dust and black pepper, as shown in Figure 8 below:

Figure 8: Boats Used to Bring Fishery Product to the Rural Area



Source: National Archives of Malaysia Kuala Lumpur

The fishery products enterprise is not only produced for daily needs, but they are also made as the main export products of Terengganu at the time (Wan Hisham Wan Salleh dan Wan Muhammad, 2006, p. 34, 1999, p. 4). Before World War II, there are three markets that have become the spot of attention by the local coastal women of Terengganu to market their fishery products and buy their daily necessities which include Hilir Market situated to Kampung Tanjung, Tanjung Market and Payang Market. Their buying and selling process were done similar to what is practiced at flea markets today, since there were no constructions made, no stalls or places built to market their products (Hashim, 1983, p. 70).

Apart from the three markets, there are also other markets such as Pengadang Buluh Market offering a variety of daily necessities such as vegetables, fruits, traditional cakes, anchovies sauce, shrimp paste, pickled fish and dried fish sold by the Malay women living across the coastal estuaries of Terengganu. The landlord who owns the land of the Pengadang Buluh Market built two rows of stalls for trader to rent with a rental payment of two cents a day. The

existence of this market gave opportunities to the local women living 10 metres away from the Pengadang Baru Market to market their fishery products produced by them. This shows that most of the trader in the Pengadang Buluh Market is made up of women just like those in the Hilir Market, Tanjung Market and Payang Market in Kuala Terengganu, (C.O 840/1, 07 April 1916, p. 6) as shown in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9: The Malay Women went to Market to Sell the Local Products



Source: National Archives of Malaysia Kuala Lumpur

Women trader came from various corners of many villages bringing and carrying baskets on their heads full of their own goods to be sold at the marketplace. According to Walter D. Scott, a British Agent in Terengganu, he described the Terengganu Malay women as an industrious, hardworking, diligent and open minded community in producing products that cannot be found in the Malay Peninsula (C.O 840/1, 31 May 1911, p. 8). This statement was also supported by J.L Humphreys, a British Agent in Terengganu in 1915 who stated that Terengganu women trader are well skilled, efficient and often earn a lot of profit in the business ventures. J.L Humphreys also said that the market system practiced in Terengganu managed to bring about change in the lives of the coastal Malay community, with the encouragement and support of the local government (C.O 840/1, 07 April 1916, p. 6).

Developments of Fishery Products Enterprise

The development of the fishery enterprises is crucial to the Terengganu's economical boom before World War II. In order to develop the fishery products enterprises, a Community Committee need to be set up in order to help the coastal Malay women who mostly work as entrepreneurs and traders (J.M.B 61/1360). This committee needs to be established to monitor the local communities' entrepreneurial business ventures thus help increase the production of the products as well as get a place in the lucrative global market (C.O 840/217 May 1934, p.19). The British Adviser of Terengganu, N.R Jarret said that the fishery products produced by the local women entrepreneurs is very important to the economical development of its local community and the state of Terengganu, thus become the main revenue for Terengganu.

In developing this production business, the Head of the Department of Fisheries Malaya should give extra attention to the entrepreneurs and traders needs in terms of financial

contributions and sufficient capitals to develop the business. Therefore, with the establishment of the Community Committee, they provide opportunities for the Malay women to change for the better thus can transform the lives of the coastal communities in Terengganu (J.M.B 61/1360). The Malaya Fisheries Department is under the supervision of the Straits States Fisheries Department. Mr C.C Green as the Director of the Fisheries Department in the Strait States during his visit to Terengganu in June and July 1924, gave ample advice and guidance that is valuable and useful to a number of matters relating to fisheries enterprises. Among the guidance he gave is the methods of fishing and fish drying to get good quality results. During the visit, Mr C.C Green also visited the ports, barns and fish ranges where the fishery products are made by the local coastal Malay women (C.O 840/1, 20 April 1925, p. 12).

Sultan Zainal Abidin III was so proud of the coastal Malay women's industrious and hardwork spirits in the fisheries products enterprises. Women are seen as having the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur. The assumption that the Malays are lazy is untrue looking at the total quantity of exported dried fish, anchovies, anchovies sauce, shrimp paste and pickled fish produced by the Malay women entrepreneurs in coastal estuaries of Terengganu (C.O 840/1, 25 June 1912, p. 2).

Table 5: Quantity and Exportation Values of the Fishery Products in Terengganu in 1931-1938

Year	Quantity (Picul)	Value (\$)
1931	116,827	806,641
1932	121,702	902,929
1933	85,902	783,691
1934	99,188	818,438
1935	140,997	1,020,008
1936	117,178	858,390
1937	93,695	666,201
1938	115,717	813,606

Source: C.O 840/2, 5 May 1933, p. 14, C.O 840/2, 17 May 1934, p. 22, C.O 840/2, 18 April 1935, p. 22, C.O 840/2, 6 May 1936, p. 24, C.O 840/2, 13 March 1939, p. 27 and 72.

Table 5 shows the quantity and exportation values of the fishery products in Terengganu in 1931 until 1938. All year-round, there has been a huge increase of exportation in marketing fishery products produced by the local coastal women such as dried fish, anchovies, shrimp paste, anchovies sauce and pickled fish. This is due to the fact that fishing is the main occupation of the Malay communities in the coastal estuaries of Terengganu. The fish caught bring many employment opportunities to the Malay women to commercialize and export their products globally. From the table above, a total of 85, 000 to 150, 000 piculs of fishery products produced by the coastal Malay women were exported mainly to Singapore, Cochin China, Annam and Siam. Since it has gained lucrative revenue, the Terengganu government began to make fisheries products as the most important export commodity. The government is also very proud of the achievements made by the Malay women community living along the coastal estuaries of

Terengganu in this business ventures. The fishery products to be exported out of Terengganu were also taxed (J.M.B 371/1352).

Table 6: Total Exportation Tax on Fishery Products in Terengganu

Num	Types	Total Tax
1	Dried Fish	40 cents/picul
2	Anchovies	\$1.00/picul
3	Anchovies Sauce	\$1.00/picul
4	Belacan	\$0.15/jar
5	Pickled Fish	\$2.00/jar

Source: C.O 840/1, 25 June 1912, p.3.

The exportation tax on dried fish products is at the rate of \$0.40 per picul. Anchovies and anchovies sauce are taxed at the rate of \$1.00 per picul. Shrimp paste costs \$0.15 per jar and pickled fish cost \$2.00 a jar. The tax revenues obtained from the exportation of fishery products help increase the income and prosperity of Terengganu.

Conclusion

The production of fishery products run by women community resulted to a major exportation in the economical development of the local communities as well as the state of Terengganu. With the establishment of its fishery products, the economical status of Terengganu began to change and the exportation of goods also vary. As local products exported locally and globally began to gain huge returns, it indicates that the coastal Malay women in Terengganu are among those who are industrious, hardworking, competitive, and are able to produce innovative and creative products. Although the women merely use their hands and traditional tools in the production process, the coastal Malay women are able to produce their own fishery products in large quantities to meet the demand of the local and global communities. The production of fisheries products, namely the fishery enterprises has groomed many Malay women entrepreneurs and traders of dried fish, anchovies, anchovies sauce, shrimp paste and pickled fish. The coastal Malay women of Terengganu showed outstanding attributes of an entrepreneur thus shape them to become better to a whole new field. This is a positive step in safeguarding the welfare of the coastal Malay communities whom majority of them are fishermen, therefore help increase the number of employment opportunities, income and food supplies.

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