

## The Involvement of the Brunei Malay Community in Education on the West Coast of North Borneo, 1881–1963

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### Abstract

The colonialist-created administration in North Borneo is a reality that has altered the native people's mindset and way of life while also providing them with much-needed exposure to the value of education. This paper attempts to explain the changes that occurred to and within the Brunei Malay community in the advent of modern education from 1881 to 1963 and how continued opportunities and exposure by colonialists have finally persuaded their minds to accept Western-style formal education. The objective of this writing is to analyse their educational involvement in colonial education through three time periods, namely the administration of the British North Borneo Company (BNBC), the Japanese Occupation, and the British Colonial Administration. This study used the methodology of historical studies by conducting analysis on primary sources such as C.O. 874/235, C.O. 874/242, NBCA 73 Native Chief's Advisory Council Meetings, the British North Borneo Administration Report, the British North Borneo Annual Report, and interviews with five informants among the Brunei Malay community who were involved in colonial education. The study also found that the transition of Brunei's Malay society to modern education occurred slowly compared to other ethnic groups. This happened because the colonists were selective in their efforts to provide early education opportunities to the locals, making education accessible only to aristocrats who had influence and were interested in serving the colonists. As a result, the Brunei Malay community has had trouble competing with other more educated ethnic groups, especially in maintaining their influence, role, and position after the independence of Sabah.

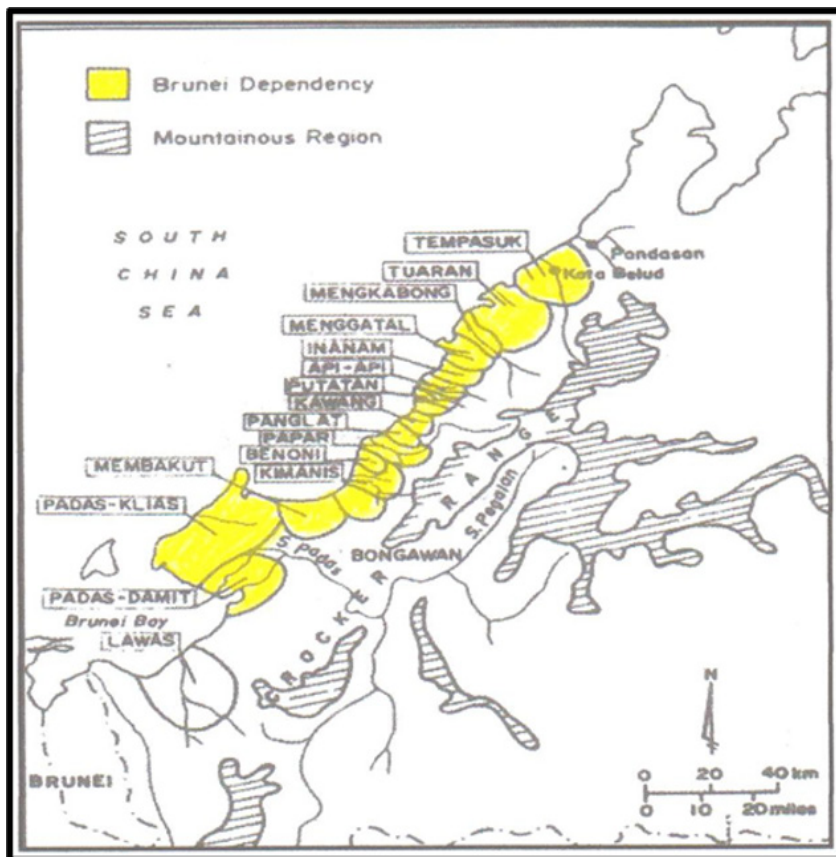
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### Introduction

The colonisation by Western powers in Africa and Asia has led to changes not only in the political and economic aspects but also in the traditional and social aspects. The views of two scholars of colonial education, namely Gail P. Kelly and Philip G. Altbach, defined that the process of colonisation was an attempt "to aid in the unification of foreign rule" to be more significant to Western identity. It should be noted that education in North Borneo already existed before the advent of Western powers. Still, the teaching aspects was different from what were introduced by the colonialists.<sup>1</sup> It is imperative to understand that the education system in North Borneo before the arrival of the colonisers was less clear and difficult to identify, as there was no written record of it. Nevertheless, around the 18th and 19th centuries, there was a traditional education whose characteristics were localised and not influenced by modern education. The priority given in formal learning was to recite the Qur'an and learn the laws of Islam. These educational facilities, however, were only concentrated in villages. In remote villages, non-formal education continues to be practised.<sup>2</sup> Other native communities that

do not profess Islam, such as the Dusun, Murut, and other ethnic groups, also do not have a formal education system. Their children's education is only based on the customs and practices inherited from their parents or through certain ceremonies such as marriage, death, and the rice harvest festival. This is because formal education for these native communities only began when the bodies of the Christian religious movement established private schools at the end of the 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

The administration set up by the colonialists in North Borneo identified the Brunei Malay community's traditional education as having undergone significant changes. In the preliminary stages of education for the Brunei Malay community, their traditional education is only based on the teachings of Islam by prioritising the application of Islamic beliefs and Syariah in daily life.<sup>4</sup> During the reign of the Sultanate of Brunei on the west coast of North Borneo, the educational aspect of the Brunei Malay community was not emphasised, as the ruler's focus was only to trade and become landlords, and obtain taxes from the people. Accordingly, the formal education system did not exist except for religious knowledge, which includes lessons about Fardhu Ain and Fardhu Kifayah conducted by scholars, imam, and Ustaz. Usually, children's early education is instilled through family institutions based on the importance of the role of the family. Family members, especially parents, play an essential role in planting and shaping their children's personalities.<sup>5</sup> In this context, it can be observed that the early education of the Brunei Malay community before the arrival of the Western powers only hovered in the space of traditional religious knowledge. This situation continued until the British North Borneo Company (BNBC), Japanese and British Colonial, took over the west coast of North Borneo from the Sultanate of Brunei.



Map 1: The West Coast of North Borneo  
Sources: Baszley Bee Bin Basrah Bee.<sup>6</sup>

## Literature Review

In terms of literature review, most of the research on the Brunei Malay community is in the form of full research results covering political, social, and economic aspects. Therefore, only a small number of scholarly writings explain aspects of education that focus on Brunei Malay, and most of them are only inserted within the scope of social themes. Researchers have cited several articles and books, including two works by Sabihah Osman.<sup>7 8</sup> Sabihah Osman's first writing<sup>9</sup> relatively analyses the education of native people in North Borneo during the British North Borneo Chartered Company (BNBC) administration from 1881–1941. This article describes the formal education system that BNBC introduced to Islamic and non-Islamic communities, which has generally altered the social landscape of native communities in North Borneo. This article talks about a lot of different aspects of education, including how missionary schools were set up in Sabah and how local communities were involved in the school system. However, the part about how Brunei Malays were involved in the school system is general because the focus of the paper is on how education was developed for the whole native community in Sabah. However, this article is a significant reference to use to complete this study.

Meanwhile, Sabihah Osman's second writing<sup>10</sup> explained the politics of BNBC's administration in North Borneo, beginning with the formation and implementation of the Western system in the west coast region, which was later extended to the east coast of North Borneo. Interestingly, this study shows that the authors have successfully discussed the administrative changes that took place in North Borneo, especially regarding the native institution council establishment. Although her research did not elaborate much on the educational aspects, especially those involving the Brunei Malay community, this study is suitable as an additional guide and reference to find out the important elements that led to the change in the administrative structure of BNBC in North Borneo. Also, Dayu Sansalu's book,<sup>11</sup> talks about a lot of important aspects of how education has changed over time in Sabah. These include the rise in the number of schools, teachers, and students, as well as the type of school, the language of instruction, the curriculum and syllabus, and the systems used for administration, management, and education policy. This book explains two things, which are the education of the Muslim communities and non-Muslim communities. According to the author, the native community in Sabah has undergone change because of the educational reforms carried out by Chinese, Islamic preachers, and Christian church bodies. This transformation in education further helps in the process of building the identity of the nation by race and uniting the people, as well as playing a role in the agenda of building a nation-state. However, this book does not specifically explain the education involving the Brunei Malay community, as the author's description focuses more generally on changing the education received for the whole race in North Borneo.

There are also other books that write about the educational aspects of the community in Sabah during the time of the BNBC and the Japanese and British colonisation of North Borneo. These include books written by D.S. Ranjit Singh,<sup>12</sup> and Siti Aidah Hj Lokin.<sup>13</sup> Both books are full works covering the political-administrative, social, and economic aspects. The author of this book chronologically discusses the administrative and socioeconomic changes that affect Sabah's native communities' educational systems from the time of BNBC, Japan, and British colonialism. Although this book does not discuss the educational aspects in detail, the author has managed to provide insight into the changes in the development of modern infrastructure and education introduced by the colonists. In conclusion, the main strength of this study compared to previous studies is that it focuses more on the educational aspects of the Brunei Malay community in the west coast area of North Borneo during the colonial period from 1881 to 1963. The main aspect of this study was related to the involvement of Brunei Malays in colonial education during the administration of BNBC, Japan,

and British Colonials in North Borneo. Due to the scarcity of reference materials and the challenges in determining how Brunei Malays participated in colonial education, Brunei historical researchers have never written about this topic. Therefore, this study will try to improve the shortcomings found in previous studies and further complement the clearing ground for social changes experienced by the Brunei Malay community after the end of the reign of the Brunei Sultanate in North Borneo.

### **Research Methodology**

This qualitative research study discusses the development of education for the Brunei Malay community on the west coast of North Borneo before independence from 1881 to 1963. This study will examine the involvement of the Brunei Malay community and their acceptance of the modern education system introduced by the colonisers. In this study, there are minimal primary sources because most of the sources obtained are general and cover the entire society in North Borneo. Therefore, it is challenging for researchers to identify the position of the Brunei Malay community in the reports documented by the BNBC as the Brunei Malay community is grouped along with other minority races. However, several documents from primary sources have been used to complete this study, such as the British North Borneo Annual Report, the NBCA file, Educational Policy of the State General, and the Native Chief's Advisory Council. This NBCA file includes the minutes of meetings related to the administration and implementation of the Native Chief Advisory Council (NCAC) in North Borneo. Other documents referenced are the North British North Borneo Herald, Kents College Annual Magazines, Gaya College Annual Magazines, and the Sabah Times. In addition, secondary and oral sources have also been used to further strengthen the data in the primary sources. A total of six informants were interviewed in this study, and their selection was based on their experience, family background, and level of education before Sabah became independent. Among the informants interviewed were Ampuan Mumin bin Ampuan Tuah and Ampuan Matiaman bin Ampuan Matali. They were proto witnesses who lived during the BNBC, Japanese, and British administrations. The next informants were Pengiran Ahmad Fauzi Bin Pengiran Abdul Rahim, Pengiran Yassin Bin Pengiran Alli, and Taib Bin Haji Aliumar. They are the Native Chiefs (NC) among the Brunei Malay community who took over during the British colonial era. They are also experienced in conducting NC tasks based on what NC has previously revealed.

### **BNBC Era (1881-1941)**

When the BNBC government ruled in North Borneo, they embarked on various efforts to develop the people of North Borneo by starting a formal education system to overcome illiteracy among its population. The existence of this school system is in line with the educational provisions contained in the company's charter. In the charter, the BNBC stipulated that the government should provide educational facilities for the native community. In contrast, for non-Indigenous people, the focus on their academic affairs is a secondary matter for the BNBC. There are two main objectives in the education policy of the BNBC. The first is to increase the literacy level among the population and provide technical training to improve their skills in employment. The second objective is to educate the children of Native Chiefs to expose them to administrative duties.<sup>14</sup> The first official education programme for Muslim native and non-Muslim children did not emerge until the end of 1881 in North Borneo's first BNBC administrative centre, Sandakan. William Hood Treacher, as a Governor of BNBC in North Borneo, endeavoured to provide a place for the school's establishment and provide a donation. However, the school was forced to close due to financial issues. In 1886, William Prayer continued an attempt to start the school by providing classrooms at the BNBC government building.

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The school funding provided by European benefactors in Sandakan was for the exclusive use of their children. In fact, native children were unable to attend the school because it was reserved for European students only. However, the school was also forced to close due to a lack of students. This arose because the Europeans themselves did not send their children to the school and instead sent their children to the Christian Missionary School.<sup>15</sup> In the interior of North Borneo, a number of active Christian organisations, including the Borneo Basel Self-Established Church and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), the Mill Hill Fathers, and the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, and Basel sects, have erected schools.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1881 and 1930, Christian missionaries played a significant role in establishing modern education in North Borneo. In the early stages, most of the school's establishment was concentrated in the main areas of BNBC's administrative and economic centres. Therefore, most of its students were only Dusun, Chinese, and Europeans, because other ethnic groups were not interested in entering missionary schools, not only because they were worried about Christianity but also because their locations were in the interior. In addition, the Brunei Malay receptivity to contemporary schooling remains poor. They do not make any effort to send their children to school because they believe it is a pointless exercise and causes a decrease in their income. This occurs because their children are unable to help them in the fields and farms. Consequently, Muslim native children continue to be idle and disadvantaged in modern education.<sup>17</sup>

Education in the West Coast area only began in 1889, when the Catholic Church opened St. Joseph Primary School in Penampang, which uses English and Dusun as its medium languages. This marked the beginning of formal education for the native people of the West Coast. However, the number of native students enrolled at the school is unknown, but belief has it that it was negligible in comparison to the Chinese and European communities. The school also had Brunei Malay and Bajau students.<sup>18</sup> In 1915, the BNBC built a special school for the children of the first Native Chief in Jesselton. The construction of this school was intended to provide exposure to the children of local chiefs for administrative duties and train them to be Native Chiefs like their fathers.<sup>19</sup> However, for the Brunei Malay Native Chiefs, there was no representative among their elected children because most of the children of the Native Chiefs selected at the beginning of the establishment of the school were from the Dusun and Bajau communities. For example, in the Papar area, the sending of children among Native Chiefs only took place until 1917, and after that year, Papar and Keningau withdrew from joining the school. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the early stages of the introduction of this formal education system, not many children in the Brunei Malay community could get an education. This is because the admission of students to the school was limited and only provided for the children of Native Chiefs. The selection was also rigorous and only done by BNBC residents.<sup>20</sup>

At the beginning of the establishment of the Native Chiefs School, the number of students studying in the school was only five. Nevertheless, the number continued to increase to twelve students in the following years. However, in 1918, the number of students attending this school declined until the school had to close in 1930. This situation occurred due to local leaders' lack of interest and support for the school. At that time, only thirteen students were still studying at the school, while others had withdrawn. Most local Muslim chiefs preferred to send their children to study Islam in the villages. The closure of the school was also done because the BNBC incurred huge losses when most of the school graduates did not return to their original districts to replace their father's duties as Native Chiefs, instead choosing to serve in government departments.<sup>21</sup>

In the west coast area, the establishment of government primary schools only occurred between 1921 and 1922, when the BNBC government established several vernacular schools in Papar, Putatan, Jesselton, Tuaran, and Kota Belud. For example, in the Papar district, BNBC only provides English education facilities at the primary school level. This is because the BNBC does not

encourage its residents to learn English in secondary and higher education. Most Brunei Malays are also more inclined to send their children to government primary schools because their school fees are cheaper than those of missionary schools. This was acknowledged personally by Ampuan Mumin bin Ampuan Tuah, who had attended the Missionary School in 1933. After graduating from the school, he was offered a job as a surveyor in Jesselton. However, due to the remote location of his home to Jesselton and his parents' concerns about his safety, he turned down the offer and worked as a farmer to help his family.<sup>22</sup>

Most of the Brunei Malay parents initially showed little interest in the modern education system that the BNBC introduced because they were more focused on meeting their children's basic needs for survival. This is evident when many of these Brunei Malay parents do not allow their children to go to school because that means they would have more help working in the fields. In other words, the Brunei Malays' struggle with daily life was not a result of a lack of food but rather a lack of money to buy other necessities. In the days of BNBC, the need to own money became important to the native community for business and to pay taxes. This practice of a capitalist economy is different from the traditional way of life for the native people in North Borneo. They have been educated to trade through the barter system. During the Sultanate of Brunei, the owners of Sungai Tulin and Kuripan could receive taxes through the payment of goods or agricultural products that they considered valuable.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, when the situation and demands of life begin to change, the Brunei Malay community is more likely to choose to do agricultural work, carpentry, and labour rather than meet their educational needs. Children are often reminded from one generation to another to work hard so they can inherit the field of employment of their parents as farmers and skilled artisans so that their lives will be more secure.<sup>24</sup> However, for the children of Native Chiefs among Brunei Malays, the establishment of vernacular schools by the BNBC in 1921 was an early start for them to get an education after failing to be nominated for education at the Native Chiefs School. The number of Native Chief children among Brunei Malays who go to school is higher than that of other Brunei Malays. However, the number of Brunei Malays attending school on the west coast only increased in 1926, when the BNBC appointed an imam to teach the Qur'an in the school.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1: A comparison of the number of students by race in the North Borneo West Coast area (1889-1929)

Year	Schools	Race	Total number of students	Intermediate language
1889	St. Joseph Primary School, Penampang	Dusun	*	English/Dusun
1891	St. Augustine Primary School, Penampang	Dusun	120	English/Dusun
1910	St. Aloysius Covent Primary School, Penampang	Dusun	47	English/Dusun
1914	Basel school Jesselton	Chinese/Dusun	57	English/Chinese
1914	Anglican School Jesselton	Chinese/Dusun	34	English/Chinese
1914	Basel school Papar	Chinese	39	Chinese
1914	Basel School Beaufort	Chinese	8	Chinese
1915-1930	Training School for Native Chief Children	Brunei/Bajau/Dusun/Murut	13	English

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*	St. Marry Primary School Limbahau Papar	Dusun	30	English/Dusun
*	St. Aloysius Covent Primary School, Limbahau Papar	Dusun	47	English/Dusun
*	St. Francis Primary School, Membakut	Dusun	32	English/Dusun
*	St. Micheal Primary School, Penampang	Dusun	129	English/Dusun
*	St. Peter Primary School, Putatan	Dusun	62	English/Dusun
1921	Government Vernakular School (GVS) Papar	Brunei/Bajau/Dusun	27	Malay
1921	Government Vernakular School (GVS) Kota Belud	Bajau/Dusun	18	Malay
1925-1935	Government Vernakular School (GVS) Ranau	Dusun	498	Dusun
1928	Government Vernakular School (GVS) Membakut	Brunei	77	Malay
1929	St. John Primary School, Tuaran	Dusun	44	English/Dusun
*	St. Catherine Primary School, Inanam	Dusun	30	English/Dusun

Sources: British North Borneo (1915-1922); Sullivan, A.<sup>26</sup> \* Untraceable.

Based on Table 1 above, it was determined that the participation of the Brunei Malay community in formal education between 1889 and 1929 was significantly lower than that of the Dusun and Chinese. This indicates that early education in the West Coast region was dominated by the Dusun and Chinese compared to other Muslims, while most schools were formed by Christian organisations, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. Only a few Muslims native, particularly in the Brunei Malay community, were interested in sending their children to the school out of concern that Christianity would influence them. Most of these children are from noble families chosen by the BNBC as the Native Chiefs under the administration of the BNBC in North Borneo.<sup>27</sup> By 1930, there were 10 Malay schools established in North Borneo with 377 male students. In 1935, school uniforms were introduced in government schools. At that time, physical training and garden work were also taught in schools. This gardening programme was held in government schools to teach male students to grow food crops with better cultivation methods to increase their production. In addition, the program also aimed to expose students to consuming their crops for the benefit of their health. The proceeds may also not be sold or given to others. It should be noted that although the education system has improved during the era of the BNBC, there are still significant constraints from parents, especially in allowing their daughters to go to school.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from that, the BNBC government also does not recommend that English be taught in Malay schools because they are worried about the birth of a highly educated society. If these native communities are allowed to get a higher education, they will not return to their hometowns to work as farmers and fishermen but instead expect a job equivalent to their qualifications. The BNBC is also worried that if higher education is given to the native community, there will be awareness and opposition from the native community.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the BNBC has always rejected the demands of the Native Chiefs to ask for English to be taught in vernacular government schools. In 1935, the Native

Chief Advisory Council (NCAC) was very vocal in voicing their desire for English to be taught in Malay schools to compete and get opportunities to hold important positions in the civil society service. Among the Brunei Malay Native Chiefs who loudly voiced their desire to ask BNBC to teach English in government primary schools was O.K.K. Pengiran Serudin. The BNBC, however, rejected his claim.<sup>30</sup>

Table 2: Number of Missionary Schools and Government Vernacular Schools (GVS) in North Borneo (1888-1942)

Schools	Location	Total Number of Students	Intermediate language
St. Joseph Foreign	Sandakan	82	English/Chinese
Missionary Society, Mil	*Jesselton	32	English/Chinese
Hill Fathers, Roman	*Papar	57	English/Chinese
Katolik	*Putatan	60	English/Chinese
Society for Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) Anglican	Sandakan	60	English
	Kudat	48	English
	Jesselton	17	English
Borneo Basel-Self established Church (Basel)	Kudat	40	English/Chinese
	Jesselton	12	English/Chinese
	Papar	15	English/Chinese
GVS	West Coast	15	Malay
GVS	Kudat	2	Malay
GVS	Sandakan	1	Malay
GVS	Tawau	2	Malay
GVS	Interior	8	Malay

Sources: British North Borneo Annual Report; 1926-1938; Dayu Sansalu<sup>31</sup> \*West coast region.

### Japanese Era (1942-1945)

In May 1942, there was a change in the organisational politics of North Borneo. This situation occurred when Japanese troops occupied the west coast of North Borneo. Since then, whole of North Borneo has fallen under Japanese military rule. During the Japanese occupation, they sought to eliminate Western influence by establishing a Japanization policy in all aspects, especially in education.<sup>32</sup> Japanese education is more comprehensive and practical because school construction is concentrated in urban and rural areas, especially in the villages with the largest population. This was also confirmed by Pengiran Ahmad Fauzi Bin Pengiran Abdul Rahim, who stated that the students would sing the Kimigayo song and bow to the Japanese flag every morning. The villagers will do the same if there is a patrol from the highest generals of Japan. They will sing the song Kimigayo while paying homage to the Japanese soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

Early in 1943, according to Shuhaibun Yussuf, his father sent him to a Japanese school in the town of Papar. As is customary in Japanese schools, before entering the classroom, they will be required to stand in a field area to pay homage to the Japanese national flag while singing the Kimigayo song. After singing the Japanese national anthem, the principal will give a speech and give advice, so that each student always respects the Japanese soldiers. While attending a Japanese school, he and two hundred other students throughout Papar used to walk in the military style while singing the song Mio Kato Acara Kete three times until they reached the paddy fields cultivated by the Japanese soldiers. There were dozens of paddy fields grown by the Japanese, but unfortunately, the paddy could not thrive despite using fertiliser from human faeces. The students' arrival at the paddy field area was to see the perseverance of the Japanese soldiers in working on the paddy field, and to help the Japanese soldiers uproot the grass that grows in the paddy field area. These pupils were also



forced to uproot the grass in the paddy fields fertilised with human faeces for five hours before being allowed to go and clean their hands using the soil on the banks of the river.<sup>34</sup>

Most of the Brunei Malay community living around Papar, Benoni, Kimanis, Membakut, Bongawan, Buang Sayang, Putatan, and Tuaran also felt the heat of Japanese military brutality given its proximity to Jesselton, which was the Japanese administrative centre in North Borneo. The spirit of the Japanese, or Yamato Damashi is also emphasised in the daily life of the native community. The Japanese made efforts to enable the local community to learn the Japanese language to build that spirit. The Japanese language Nippon-Go, was taught in schools every day, including Katakana and Kanji. Therefore, to ensure that students master the Japanese language quickly, they had to speak Japanese either in school or outside of school hours. Most of the teachers were also sent to Brunei to take intensive Japanese language courses, and they were taught by Japanese military education staff. At that time, all schools opened by the BNBC in the west coast area were closed, and the use of English was prohibited in daily interactions and in schools. However, the English school was reopened after several months of closure due to a lack of school buildings and teachers. Most of the teachers who used to teach during the BNBC rule were educated in Japanese ideology and language.<sup>35</sup>

The Japanese also established physical training and gardening in their schools. The aim was to create a sense of responsibility among students while overcoming the problem of food shortages during the war. However, this Japanization policy was found to be less effective because it was implemented during the war. Therefore, the implementation of this policy failed to achieve its goal.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, it was initially believed that Japanese education had successfully removed Western influence and produced high morals and discipline among the native community. However, throughout the Japanese reign, North Borneo experienced political and economic instability, which ultimately stimulated all Japanese attempts to develop the political, economic, and social aspects of North Borneo's native peoples. Because of this, the Japanese put North Borneo's economic recovery ahead of meeting the social needs of the people, especially those related to education.<sup>37</sup> While Japan was experiencing economic instability because of the war, most of the Brunei Malay community was also more concerned with obtaining food supplies than acquiring an education.<sup>38</sup> As the situation of food insufficiency worsened, fewer pupils attended school. This indirectly led to the closure of schools on North Borneo's west coast. In 1945, eighty-six schools were destroyed, and forty-six others were damaged during World War II. After the end of the conflict in North Borneo, only thirty-three school buildings were left standing.

### **British Colonial Era (1946-1963)**

After about three and a half years of the Japanese occupation of North Borneo, the Allies finally overcame Japanese power. This Allied victory led to the withdrawal of the Japanese from the west coast of North Borneo. In October 1945, North Borneo was administered by the British Borneo Civil Affair Unit (BBCU) and later became an official British colony on July 15, 1946. During the British colonial rule in North Borneo, they prioritised the educational development of the native population. This was evident when the British colonialists created a more sustainable education policy to reduce illiteracy. Under this policy, the British colonialists introduced two main goals in developing the education system in North Borneo: short-term goals and long-term goals.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, the British colonialists also encouraged students studying in primary schools to further their education in secondary schools, and follow the learning process for six years, or attend vocational schools. Scholarship facilities were also provided to students who wished to further their studies in the Malay Peninsula or Hong Kong at Chinese schools. According to Pengiran Ahmad Fauzi bin Pengiran Abdul Rahim, the Brunei Malay community successfully obtained a British government

scholarship, namely the Colombo Plan Scholarship, and sent their children to study in New Zealand and Australia. They were Datuk Salleh Sulong, Datuk Dzulkifli Hj. Abdul Hamid, Pengiran Tahir bin Nasaruddin, and Pengiran Othman Rauf. Most of the recipients of these scholarships were Native Chief children and teachers. Usually, after graduation, they were allowed to hold important positions in the government sector. This was evident during the United Sabah Nasional Organisation (USNO) and Sabah People's United Front (BERJAYA) administration eras, more Brunei Malays obtained scholarships from the Sabah State government and successfully pursued their studies abroad.<sup>40</sup>

Based on the experience of Shuhaibun Yussuf, who studied at the Pekan Papar Malay School in 1946, after the end of the war, many parents, including those among the Brunei Malays, began to send their daughters to school. At first, many parents refused to do so. They felt that girls only needed to study at the Suraus near their homes because they were worried that immoral things might happen at school. However, around 1946, parents living near towns and cities began to slowly reject that perception. As a result, many parents started to send their daughters to school. Most of these female students were taught how to make flowers, sew figurines, and so on. In this Malay school, the principal and other teachers would distribute the area to the students to plant various types of crops that they liked. At that time, only forty-seven students registered to go to Malay schools in Pekan Papar. Of that number, only twenty-one students were selected to get planting areas, and each student was given 10 x 10 feet for gardening. The work of cleaning and planting was left to the students themselves.<sup>41</sup>

In 1947, most students only had to study up to fifth grade because fifth-grade graduation was already considered enough education to become a teachers. Students who passed this examination and reached the appropriate age could become teachers, while students who passed grade five but had not reached the age of 18 had to continue their studies at other schools. However, not all Brunei Malay students were qualified to advance to secondary schools due to factors such as age restrictions and students from government vernacular schools having difficulties gaining passing marks in the Bridge One Examination. The final examination was usually conducted for three days on the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of October each year. At that time, two students from the Brunei Malay community, namely Pengiran Tahir Bin Pengiran Patera and Pengiran Haji Jalaludin Bin Pengiran Abdul Rahman passed the examination with distinction. They were appointed as teachers, while Shuhaibun Yussuf received a British government scholarship to further his studies at Sekolah Menengah St. Joseph Papar. He was still 12 years old, not old enough to be a teacher.<sup>42</sup>

In 1950, the British government opened 45 schools in the West Coast area with 1623 students, 59 male teachers, and 5 female teachers. In the same year, a total of 665 Brunei Malays, consisting of boys and girls, attended government primary schools. However, most Brunei Malay communities only participated in primary school because they did not have the opportunity to further their education in secondary schools like other races, such as the Chinese, Dusun, and Bajau. However, students who obtained British government scholarships could continue their studies at the secondary level. However, while the number of Brunei Malays who attended government primary schools was higher than the Bajau and Murut, but based on the Perry report, the Dusun, Murut, and Bajau were mostly studying in Christian missionary schools that prioritised English in their syllabus. At that time, the Chinese and Dusun were the two races that dominated the education system in North Borneo. Therefore, their chances of furthering their education in secondary school were higher than those of the Brunei Malay community, which primarily only studied in government primary schools. Typically, these government primary schools did not use English in their syllabus. Therefore, the Brunei Malay community's chances of studying for secondary school were meagre.<sup>43</sup> Apart from that, the distance factor of the schools built by the British colonialists also influenced the ability of the Brunei Malay community to go to school. Most of the schools built by the British colonial government were concentrated in urban areas. At the same time, many of Brunei's Malays still lived in rural areas with limited facilities.

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At that time, the number of secondary schools in North Borneo was not only insufficient, but the number of students who could enter secondary school was also minimal.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, before entering English secondary school, native children studying in government primary schools had to sit for a qualification test before entering secondary school. Among the subjects assessed in the test were English, mathematics, and general knowledge.<sup>45</sup>

In 1951, it was found that out of 83,072 children aged five to fourteen who were eligible for school in North Borneo, only 28,072 were in school.<sup>46</sup> In 1960, 55 percent of the Chinese and Dusun began to recognise letters and go to school, while other races, especially the Brunei Malay community, were far behind. Although it was found that the British colonial government sought to increase the level of secondary education among government primary school leavers, the government was not keen on increasing the number of secondary schools available on the west coast of North Borneo. This situation caused the number of students entering secondary school to become increasingly limited. Therefore, students who could join a missionary secondary school were allowed to obtain a Cambridge School Certificate. Nevertheless, for most native communities that failed to enter missionary secondary schools, the British colonial government encouraged them to learn basic skills in the vocational schools established in August 1949. The British colonial government's primary purpose was to train native children in general mechanical work, carpentry, and building architecture.<sup>47</sup> Even so, most Brunei Malays who graduated from primary school preferred to become farmers or inherit their parents' work rather than continue their education to secondary school because of the demand to help their parents in the fields.<sup>48</sup>

Table 3: A Comparison of the Number of Government, Missionary and Chinese Schools in North Borneo (1946-1956)

Year	Government Schools (GS)	Missionary Schools (MS)	Chinese Schools (CS)	Others
1946	46	43	51	2
1947	60	45	52	8
1948	66	56	63	8
1949	65	58	73	8
1950	70	59	77	12
1951	71	58	82	8
1952	73	62	86	7
1953	70	68	81	14
1954	80	67	81	21
1955	84	69	79	30
1956	86	69	81	46

Sources: North Borneo Annual Report (1956); Dayu Sansalu.<sup>49</sup>

Table 4: The Total Number of Students in All Types of Schools in North Borneo (1946-1956)

Year	Total number of Students (Government Schools)	Total number of Students (Missionary Schools)	Total number of students (Chinese Schools)	Total number of students (Others)
1946	2706	3160	4402	-
1947	3304	4661	5868	219
1948	3920	5767	5955	210
1949	3811	6601	7406	202
1950	3904	7019	8489	212
1951	4044	8016	9028	300
1952	4310	8790	9479	412

1953	4739	9167	9361	838
1954	5776	9764	9800	1080
1955	6168	9596	10130	1105
1956	6905	10867	12479	1893

Sources: North Borneo Annual Report (1956); Dayu Sansalu.<sup>50</sup>

Table 5: The Total Number of Students by Races in North Borneo 1956

Race	Total number of Students
Dusun	5131
Murut	817
Kwijau	74
Cina	20149
Brunei & Kedayan	2020
Bajau	1409
Suluk	206
Sungai	194
Iranun	40
Tidong	38
Bisaya	287

Sources: North Borneo Annual Report.<sup>51</sup>

According to Tables 3, 4, and 5, there was significant growth in the number of schools and students during the British colonial development process in North Borneo from 1946 to 1956. However, it was also discovered that the proportion of native Muslim children enrolled in school was still lower than that of non-Muslims native. In 1956, there were only 4,000 Muslims native enrolled in school in school, including Brunei and Kedayan (2020 students), Bajau (1,409 students), Suluk (206 students), Bisaya (287 students), Iranun (40 students), and Tidong (38 students). However, there were 6,022 non-Muslim native people, including Dusun (5,131 students), Murut (817 students), and Kwijau (74 students), enrolled in school. The number of Chinese children enrolled in school was greater than the number of native North Bornean children, which was 20,149. This is due to the fact that children of of Muslims native, such as Brunei Malay, Kedayan, Bajau, Suluk and Bisaya, are less likely to receive free education, study English, and receive scholarships for secondary and college education. Regarding the situation, they were attempts to persuade the government to establish more public elementary schools in rural areas and near their villages. However, the British government was unable to fulfil this request until the native community had developed school structures and appointed teachers who had attended government primary schools and missionary schools to teach at the Native Voluntary School (NVS).<sup>52</sup>

According to Mudin Bin Bakar, although many Brunei Malays who excelled in English schools were offered to teach in the Native Voluntary Schools (NVS) during British Colonial rule, most of them rejected the offer because the salary was very cheap at 70 ringgit per month. This was compared to the rubber tapping wage, which was 80 ringgit to 120 ringgit per month. Therefore, most teachers must do other side jobs, such as tapping rubber, to earn extra money to cover their daily expenses. He was once appointed as a teacher at a people's voluntary school in Bongawan but did not last long because the salary given was very cheap compared to the wages for tapping rubber. At that time, he would tap rubber in the morning and teach in the evening. At that time, the demand for rubber increased, and the wages for tapping rubber were also becoming more lucrative. Then he stopped being a teacher and worked only as a rubber tapper.<sup>53</sup>

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The establishment of the Teachers Colleges in North Borneo is a response to a string of teacher shortages that often occur in North Borneo schools. This situation has hampered the development of the education system in North Borneo and limited the opening of many schools on the west coast. Therefore, to overcome the problem, the British tried to send teachers to North Borneo to undergo training at the Sultan Idris Teachers College and Sarawak Teachers College. However, the college only provided a small amount of space. The problem led the British government to build the first teacher training college in North Borneo. The first teaching college in North Borneo was constructed on October 18, 1952, in Tuaran and named the Kent Teachers College. The college could accommodate 96 students, namely 72 male students and 24 female students selected from the Government Vernacular School. The British North Borneo government's Development and Welfare Fund provided all of the funding for the establishment of the college. From 1955 until the 1960s, many children of the Brunei Malay community were allowed to enter this teaching college; among them were Awang Besar Bin Awang Burut, Mohd. Ali Bin Awang Besar, Awang Besar Bin Adnan, Mohd. Junaidi Bin Awang Ismail, and Dayang Saadiah. All of them were among the students at Kent Teachers College from 1955 until the 1960s.<sup>54</sup>

However, before the existence of the Kent Teachers College, the British government had established the Teachers Training College (TTC) in Menggatal. At that time, three students from the Brunei Malay community from the Papar district were selected to undergo training at TTC; among them were Pengiran Murshid Bin Pengiran Abbas, Pengiran Dahlan Bin Pengiran Abu Bakar, and Awang Salim Bin Awang Ahmad. Most of the teaching staff at this teacher training college were graduates of Tanjung Malim Teachers College, Perak. The Menggatal Teachers College also allocated 8.00 ringgit per month to teenage students to make it easier for them to buy daily necessities such as soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc. Adult students who had teaching experience were given a full salary from the government. Apart from that, the Education Department was also responsible for bearing the food and beverage expenses of the students who followed the teacher training. However, the students of Menggatal Teachers College only attended training at the college until the end of 1952. After establishing the Kent Teachers College in Tuaran, all students were transferred to the new college.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, the first students at Kent Teachers College, Tuaran were TTC students in Menggatal. The second selection of new students at Kent Teachers College was successfully screened and, at the following interview, reported to the college in April 1953. Each candidate wishing to enter Kent Teachers College had to meet certain conditions, such as having five years of teaching experience and passing fifth and sixth-grade examinations in Malay schools. For Chinese students, they must pass the form 2 test. Adult teachers were only given one year to study at the Kent Teachers College with a full salary. At the same time, junior students who passed grades five and six were required to continue their studies at the Kent Teachers College for two years and were given an allowance of 8.00 ringgit per month.<sup>56</sup>

The Gaya Teachers College was opened in April 1963 to train teachers in English primary and secondary schools. Sir William Goode, the governor of North Borneo, inaugurated the college in July 1963. The first principal of the Gaya Teachers College was J.E. Todd.<sup>57</sup> The conditions for the admission of trainees to this college for primary school courses were to pass the Sabah Junior Certificate of Education or General Certificate of Education. Meanwhile, candidates must pass the Overseas School Certificate for secondary school courses. Due to that, not many children of the Brunei Malay community could further their studies at this college compared to Kent College because they did not meet the conditions set by the British colonial government. Most of the trainees who entered this college were native children, such as Dusun, Murut, and Bajau, who attended government-aided schools because these schools were more advanced than government primary schools. However,

researchers do not deny that a small number of Brunei Malays successfully entered Gaya Teachers College, even though their number was tiny compared to the number of Brunei Malays who successfully entered Kent Teachers College, which were Dayang Fatmah Omar and Encik Hassan bin Mohd Ali.<sup>58</sup>

In 1963, despite the increasing number of secondary schools built by the British colonialists on the West Coast, very few candidates from secondary schools passed the Overseas School Certificate; of the 1,962 students who sat for the examination, only 193 passed. This indirectly reduced the number of trainees who took secondary school courses at the college. At the same time, the British colonial government had also created a new scheme to train teachers serving in Native Voluntary Schools. The director of education in North Borneo was G.D Muir, who opened the Native Teachers Training Centre on July 12, 1962. However, this centre only provided training for a brief period.<sup>59</sup>

In addition, the British colonial government also provided opportunities for English high school graduates to further their studies at the certificate, diploma, and degree levels abroad. Most of the students who successfully pursued their studies abroad were given scholarships under the Colombo Plan programme and the British colonial government's Development and Welfare Fund. A total of ten native students were sent to study in Australia and New Zealand in 1960. Two Brunei Malays were selected to study in New Zealand, and eight more students were sent to Australia. Datuk Salleh Sulong and Datuk Dzul kifli bin Abdul Hamid from Papar were sent to study in New Zealand, while M. Daim and P. Majanggil from Papar, Thomas Koroh from Keningau, Thomas Majanil and Louis Chee from Penampang, Martin Bingsan from Menggatal, and Haris Salleh from Labuan were selected to be sent to study in Australia. After they graduated and returned from New Zealand and Australia, they were given the opportunity to work in government administration.<sup>60</sup>

The increase in the number of primary and secondary schools, whether established by the government, local boards, or voluntary bodies, increased opportunities for the Brunei Malay community to obtain a formal education. This situation indirectly raised awareness among parents about the importance of education for their children. The revelation also led to political awareness among the Brunei Malay community. The construction of the Kent Teachers College, Gaya Teachers College, and Native Teacher Training Centre succeeded in overcoming the shortage of teachers for schools in North Borneo. This was a notable change in the field of education during the era of British colonial rule.

## **Conclusion**

Prior to the arrival of Western forces, the Brunei Malay community's education was exclusively traditional and informal. After the arrival of the BNBC in 1881, Christian missionaries and the Chinese community established schools in BNBC's major administrative centres, especially in the Sandakan and Kudat regions, which allowed the native population to begin receiving modern education. Consequently, the level of education among the Muslim native community and the non-Muslim native community became unbalanced. Compared to the non-Muslim native communities in the north of North Borneo, the Muslim native communities on the West Coast, especially the Brunei Malay community, had much less access to modern education and learned about its importance much more slowly. Indirectly, the development of uniform education prior to 1900 resulted in substantial disparities in the mastery of literacy skills between North Borneo's Muslim native and non-Muslim communities. From 1900 to 1963, however, it was discovered that the BNBC invasion, the Japanese occupation, and British colonial dominance in North Borneo slowly influenced not only the pattern of life but also the successful implementation of modern education among the Brunei Malay community and the Muslim native community. Although at the beginning of the establishment of schools in

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the West Coast area, the participation of the Brunei Malay community was very low compared to other races, the situation began to change with the existence of Malay government primary schools. However, the Brunei Malay community's tendency to study in Malay government primary schools and voluntary schools has resulted in their chances of attending secondary schools being exceptionally low compared to other races who attend missionary schools. This is because the missionary school prioritises teaching in English, and most of the Chinese, Dusun, and Murut who study in those schools have excellent mastery of the English language. The situation has given them many advantages and opportunities to be involved in the colonial administration and caused these races to be seen as more prominent in terms of political, economic, and social development after Sabah's independence. After 1963, the Brunei Malay community had trouble competing with other races to maintain their influence, role, and position in North Borneo. This difficulty was also attributable to a low level of education and a lack of awareness of the importance of education introduced by the colonists to ensure the continuity and retention of Brunei Malay leadership in administrative politics from a more expansive and future-oriented perspective.

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