

## **Food Security Transitions and Constraints in Sipora Island, Mentawai Islands Regency**

Erwin<sup>1)\*</sup>, Ade Irwandi<sup>2)</sup>, Andry Ramdesta<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)\*</sup>Departemen Antropologi Sosial, Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia, [erwin@soc.unand.ac.id](mailto:erwin@soc.unand.ac.id)

<sup>2)</sup> Antropologi, Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia, [adeirwandi07@gmail.com](mailto:adeirwandi07@gmail.com)

<sup>3)</sup> Program Magister Antropologi, Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia, [ramdestaa@gmail.com](mailto:ramdestaa@gmail.com)

### **Abstrak**

Studi ini mengidentifikasi intervensi sistem pertanian pangan dengan potensi transformasi yang tinggi untuk Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai yang berlangsung sejak tahun 1970-an oleh pemerintahan Indonesia. Hal ini menindaklanjuti intervensi terhadap pangan lokal yang selama ini dimanfaatkan oleh masyarakat Mentawai khususnya di Kepulauan Sipora beralih ke sistem pertanian yaitu sawah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Peralihan sistem pemenuhan pangan ini juga diimbangi dengan peralihan mata pencaharian melalui sistem berkebun. Awalnya berkebun pisang, keladi dan perladangan campur yang juga digunakan sebagai sumber makanan beralih ke komoditi dagang seperti cengkeh, pinang dan nilam. Peralihan ini menyebabkan penanaman makanan lokal terganggu dan kurang maksimalnya pengelolaan pertanian. Analisis dari penelitian ini menggarisbawahi perlunya pendekatan kebijakan yang holistik dalam upaya mencapai berbagai tujuan keberlanjutan. Menerapkan perpaduan kebijakan yang dirancang untuk mendorong keberlanjutan sistem pangan dan ekonomi secara bersamaan dapat mendorong Kepulauan Mentawai menuju sistem pangan yang berkelanjutan dan tangguh, dengan mengatasi interaksi yang kompleks antara pembangunan ekonomi, mata pencaharian dan peningkatan tanaman pangan.

**Kata Kunci:** Ketahanan Pangan, Peralihan, Sipora, Kendala.

### **Abstract**

This study identifies the intervention of food farming system with high transformation potential for Mentawai Islands Regency that took place since 1970s by Indonesian government. This follows up on the intervention of local food that has been utilised by the Mentawai people, especially in the Sipora Islands, to switch to the agricultural system, namely rice fields. This research uses qualitative method with descriptive approach. The shift of food fulfilment system is also balanced with the shift of livelihood through gardening system. Initially, banana, taro and mixed farming which were also used as food sources were switched to trade commodities such as cloves, areca nut and patchouli. This shift disrupted the cultivation of local foods and resulted in less than optimal agricultural management. The analyses from this study underscore the need for a holistic policy approach in an effort to achieve multiple sustainability goals. Implementing a blend of policies designed to promote food system and economic sustainability simultaneously could propel the Mentawai Islands towards a sustainable and resilient food system, by addressing the complex interactions between economic development, livelihoods and food crop improvement.

**Keywords:** Food Security, Sipora, Transition, Constraints.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is committed to realising the 17 targets in the SDGs, which include zero poverty (target number 1) and ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture (target number 2). Therefore, food issues are not just about fulfilling nutrition, but it is important to look at how sustainable food is in a society. Thus, the creation of food security that supports the survival of the community (Rosegrant dkk., 2024).

The historical experience of Indonesia's development shows that food security issues are closely related to economic stability (especially inflation), aggregate economic production costs (cost of living), and national political stability. Therefore, food security is an absolute requirement for the implementation of national development. FAO defines food security as an absolute requirement for the implementation of national development. FAO defines food security as a situation where all households have access, both physically and economically, to food for all family members and households are not at risk of losing both access (Ferranti dkk., 2018). Food security is an important and strategic issue, and the experience of many countries shows that no country can properly implement development unless it is able to realise food security first.

Food issues are not only about ensuring adequate levels of food and nutrition for people at the household level. However, it is important to ensure food safety and security. Food and nutrition development in Indonesia is closely related to the realisation of food security, this statement has been affirmed in the food law number 7 of 1996 concerning food and government regulation number 68 of 2002 concerning food security. Food security for a country is very important, especially for a country that has a very large population like Indonesia, the population of Indonesia is estimated to reach 220 million people in 2020 and is projected to reach 270 million people in 2025 (Rozaki, 2021).

Food Security is a condition of food fulfilment for the state to individuals, which is reflected in the availability of sufficient food, both in quantity and quality, safe, diverse, nutritious, equitable, and affordable and does not conflict with religion, beliefs, and culture of the community, to be able to live healthy, active, and productive lives in a sustainable manner (Rozaki dkk., 2023).

Sustainable food security will require: (a) sufficient food availability or food production, (b) access to food and the ability to eat, (c) adequacy in terms of nutrition including energy, protein, and micronutrients as well as safety, and (d) stability and predictability of these conditions.

Indonesia actually has the potential availability of a very large food diversity, so the development of local food sources should be based on carbohydrate sources such as sweet potatoes, rice, corn, and cassava which have the potential for diversification of products that are quite diverse in processed products and have a variety of nutritional content. According to Feryanto dkk., (2022) with the increasingly narrow agricultural land in Indonesia, it is difficult to expect our farmers to produce optimally. Estimates that the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land in Indonesia will increase with an average of 30,000-50,000 ha per year, which is estimated that the number of farmers has reached around 12 million people (Gina dkk., 2023). According to Nasikh dkk., (Nasikh dkk., 2021) food security is a challenge that gets priority to achieve national welfare in this millennium century. Based on the basic concept of food security above, the strategic aspects of food security can be divided into four, namely food availability, stability, access and use.

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However, there are still many regions that have not reached the level of food security, one of which is in West Sumatra Province. In the Indonesia Food Security and Vulnerability Map (FSVA) report in 2023 stated that the Mentawai Islands Regency is a vulnerable area (priority 2) for food problems and is the only Regency in West Sumatra with a vulnerable status (Erwin, Irwandi, & Ermayanti, 2024). In addition, the poor population in the Mentawai Islands Regency community in 2021 was 14.31 thousand people or around 14.84% of the total population of the Mentawai Islands (Erwin dkk., 2022). So it can be said that the poverty rate in the Mentawai region is high compared to other regions in West Sumatra (Erwin dkk., 2023).

Based on data published by the Food Security Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the World Food Programme in 2015, one of the regions that has not reached the level of food security in the Mentawai Islands Regency (Erwin, Irwandi, Ermayanti, dkk., 2024; Erwin & Irwandi, 2023; Ridwan dkk., 2019). The food stock of the people in Mentawai is currently still dependent on supplies from mainland West Sumatra and assistance from the government. The most exported food commodities from Mentawai Islands Regency are bananas and taro, while rice is not widely produced in this area (Erwin & Irwandi, 2024; Mitra & Erwin, 2022).

Therefore, it is necessary to look back at the history of food transition of Mentawai people in Sipora Island and how food security (sustainable food) for Sipora people until now.

## Method

The method used in this research refers to the basis of anthropology, where a very close method is ethnography (Putra, 2022). People ethnography to describe texts that provide an understanding of the setting and that explain theoretical implications through the use of sketches, based on field notes from observations, interviews, and group member products (Creswell, 2015).

Sampling in qualitative research is all about purposeful sampling and the focus in qualitative research is on relatively small samples, sometimes single cases, selected purposefully (Afrizal, 2014). Sixteen informants were interviewed, consisting of farmers, village heads, NGOs and the general public.

This research was conducted in Sipora Island (North Sipora and South Sipora sub-districts), Mentawai Islands Regency. Sipora Island was chosen because it is the centre of the district and has different characteristics from other islands in Mentawai. The community on Sipora Island still maintains a traditional life of gardening and farming. The crops grown in gardens and fields are food crops such as taro, bananas and a small portion of sago. This can be found in the villages of Matobe, Saurenu, Sioban and Nemnem Leleu. The villages in the centre of the government are different in that they depend on the market for their needs. They buy rice, vegetables, fish and other basic needs. Although the villages in the southern part of Sipora Island are also very dependent on the basic necessities available in the market, they still grow some food crops.



Figure 1. Sipora Island Map. *Source: Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai Dalam Angka, 2024.*

Mentawai Islands Regency is one of the regions that has a fairly high diversity of biological resources, including local food source plants. Local food sources that have the potential to be utilised as a source of carbohydrates are sweet potato, taro, sago, and banana. The local food have been widely utilised by the Mentawai people (Irwandi & Saleleubaja, 2021).

People who live in mountainous areas generally consume sweet potato, taro, and banana. Consume sweet potato, taro, while those who live on the coast utilise sago and banana as their staple food utilise sago and banana as staple food (Delfi, 2018; Ernawati dkk., 2018; Pradipta, 2019). Some types of sweet potato, taro, and sago have been well adapted and consumed by the community for generations. for generations. Thus, these commodities commodities need to be developed as the main food source for the community so as to reduce dependence on food derived from rice. food derived from rice. Apart from being used as the main food source and for traditional ceremonies, these local food commodities have the potential to be developed as processed product commodities in industrial scale industry scale outside the main food needs of Mentawai people (Irwandi & Taufik, 2023).

## Result and Discussion

In general, the Mentawai ethnic community is well known by outsiders that sago, taro and bananas are their staple foods in daily life. People who still live with farming and livestock systems make them not lack of food in survival. Each household in the Mentawai ethnic community in Sipora Island has at least a plot of land as a place to fulfil their needs. In general, each household has a piece of land with an area of about 2-3 hectares. They cultivate this land to be used as agricultural land and agriculture becomes one part of their life. In the agricultural land, Mentawai people plant various kinds of plants as their source of livelihood. In a farm, they plant various crops, such as banana, taro, cloves, nutmeg, durian, areca nut, and coconut. Almost all Mentawai ethnic communities in Sipora Island have this kind of cropping pattern. They plant these crops not separately, but mixed together in a farming location. These plants are very fertile, so they get abundant agricultural products.

They sell cloves, nutmeg, durian, areca nut and coconut to suppliers who come to the village, while they grow bananas and taro with the main purpose of consuming them in their daily lives. They sell the bananas and taro when outsiders come to Sipora Island to buy them. Pisang and Keladi are referred to as local food for the Mentawai ethnic community, because both plants are consumed every day in survival. These local food plants have been

around since their ancestors and have always been inherited by children and grandchildren in Mentawai. They really appreciate and maintain the local food that is a legacy from their ancestors. The local food of the Mentawai people is still maintained by generation to generation, even though there is already rice or other foods that enter the area.

In Sipora Island, the people still maintain the local food. The local food of Mentawai ethnicity that still exist today in Sipora Island, Mentawai Islands Regency, namely:

### **Availability of Banana**

Banana plant or banana is a type of fruit plant. But in Sipora Island, banana is also one of their main local food sources. So that the people of Sipora Island plant more bananas in their plantation areas and fields.



Figure 2. Banana Field in Sipora Island.

Sipora people call bananas *Magok*. On Sipora Island there are several types of banana plants that grow in the fields owned by villagers.

Some of the bananas planted by the community are almost all types of super bananas or buai and stone bananas, because these bananas are not only delicious to eat but also have economic value that can be sold. This indicates that for the people of Sipora Island, bananas are not only a food crop but also a commodity for trade and an economic resource for the local community. However, not all of the many types of bananas can be sold because they depend on the market. Likewise, for consumption needs, almost all bananas can be consumed other than magok sogunei because it is usually used for medicine and the taste of the fruit is also not good to eat. According to Aman T and BS:

*'Forest bananas grow in the forest and cannot be eaten. However, they can be used for medicine. The shoots and stems are usually taken for medicine. Usually if there are bananas growing in the field, they are left alone, not cut down because they are useful too and often bush and wrapped around by root grass and different from other bananas that are treated'.*

For *Janang* bananas and *Boji* bananas are bananas that are commonly consumed to be processed. Processions such as boiled bananas and mashed bananas. These bananas are green in colour and when ripe have a bright yellow colour. The fruit is not so elongated but rather large and long. So it has sweet and soft contents. The *janang* and *boji* banana types do not have large seeds, and the trees are small and tall and often fall down. Usually the people of Sipora Island put a support on each stem when these bananas start to bear fruit. In one bunch there are about 15-20 combs where in one banana comb there are a total of 10-15 bananas. This banana can be harvested in about 3 months. This banana is mostly planted in fields and next to houses with the aim of making it easier to harvest it because it is a food crop that is often consumed by Sipora Islanders.

Similar to other types of bananas such as *babui*, *tasoppo*, *sibeklu*, *sipongin*, *taksoppo*, *sirartdat* are types of bananas that are only for consumption either ripe or processed bananas such as boiled, fried and mashed. All bananas in Sipora Island village can be harvested on average around 3-4 months. However, the above banana types are rarely planted by people on Sipora Island. Because it is less desirable, it is also rarely found in the fields of Sipora Islanders. It's just that the number is very small, sometimes just one or two stems and that's all they take care of and if they grow new shoots, they just let them grow and so on.

*Simindik* banana or in Minangkabau, often called lidi banana can only be consumed when it is ripe and the colour when ripe is light yellow and the fruit is long and not so big. With its sweet flavour and slightly cold banana flesh, it gives a different sensation of eating it. The same goes for the sweet banana or sareu banana as it is called by the people of Sipora Island. The word sareu suggests that this banana is not from Mentawai and that it was brought from outside Mentawai. In Minangkabau, it is called sweet banana. It is usually made into banana chips, goring bananas or *lapek* (processed banana with sticky rice). However, on Sipora Island, this banana is also a non-routine food and is consumed only when the banana is ripe. This banana has leaves and a fairly low stem of about 3 m. When ripe, the colour is dark yellow and slightly blackish with a rather dense and hard banana flesh. This banana is also rarely grown and consumed by the people of Sipora Island and only a few can be found in their fields.

People on Sipora Island don't usually go to the fields for very long. Sometimes they leave at 7.00am and return at noon. They clean the fields every day and it is gradual. Because usually they also have other activities besides in the fields. The equipment used in cleaning the fields is a very sharp and long machete. The Sipora people will sharpen the machete or they call it *teiget* with great care and precision so that the machete becomes sharp and shiny. A sharp machete can make it easier for them to take care of the fields.

### **Availability of Taro and Caladium**

Taro (*Colocasia esculenta* L. Shott) is one of the plants that is a type of functional food crop. According to Minister of Forestry Regulation P.35/2007 on Non-Timber Forest Products, taro plants are included in the starch-patian plant group. In Sipora, *gettek* or taro is not a trading commodity. Taro or taro is a food item, not to be sold as an economic good for the community. Because there is no demand for taro outside Mentawai. Taro is a food crop that has high production on Sipora Island. There is a lot of taro planted in farming areas. Likewise, areas such as taro gardens in swamps, roadsides, and house yards are also planted with taro. This is because taro plants are easy to live and grow.

*Gettek* in Sipora Island village has different locations where it grows. The first is in the fields, where different types of taro grow or what is often called *sikobu*. The expression *sikobu* is a general expression for the type of taro that grows in the fields. Then there is also *gettek onaja*, which is taro that grows in swamp areas only. However, the types of taro in Sipora Island village are varied and of various types. But in general, we can classify them into two common names, namely *sikobu* and *gettek onaja*. The striking difference between the two types of taro is the location where the taro is grown. So it also has different taro characteristics because it is influenced by environmental conditions such as dry, soil, and swamps (water).

There are 6 types of taro in Sipora with local names. This classification may arise from differences in plant colour, growing sites and characteristics. For taro that lives on dry land or farming areas called *sikobu* are taro species with the names *silatjang*, *sikobu*, *luju*, *siroti* and *gettek simabogat*. This taro can only grow in fields with dry and wet soil conditions. This

taro is quite widely planted because it can be planted anywhere in the field and does not require a lot of water.

For example, *sikobou* taro is a type of taro that is planted in fields and on dry land, not watery or swampy. Because if planted in a swamp, sikobou will rot and die. Sikobou has red leaves, the stem is slightly red, the contents are white. Before cooking, it must be peeled and cleaned first. For the contents or tubers of this sikobou, one sikobou stem has one large tuber that is not stringy like other taro. Sikobou is ready to harvest if there are some leaves that have turned yellow and withered, then this taro is ready to be harvested.

The *silatjang* type has large and tall leaves and stems. The leaves are wide so that in the type of taro or taro, silatjang is a large taro and can be as tall as an adult or even more if left alone. Silatjang has green leaves and stems and one silatjang stem has a large tuber as well. Unlike luju and siroti. Both types have small stems and the leaves are not so wide. They are about 1-1.5 m tall when ready to harvest. The colour of the leaves has black spots and sometimes yellow. There are several tubers on one tree. Usually one stem has 4-3 tubers so when harvesting it must dig to collect the tubers stored in the soil. Gettek simabogat as the name suggests is taro with a red heart colour. This taro also has many tubers and is not too tall. It's just that the stems and leaves are liver red in colour and the tubers are slightly reddish.

Unlike the *gettek onaja*, where this taro grows in swamps and must have plenty of water. Onaja means swamp, as the name implies, this gettek is indeed a native plant in swamps that require more water. When harvesting gettek onaja, you must be careful because it is very itchy. To harvest, it must be dried in the sun first before being taken home. After the sap has dried, it is put into a basket (oppa). Gettek onaja is usually planted only one type, because not many taro can grow in the swamp. However, the tubers are very soft when boiled or made into subbet.

To plant *silatjang* taro, do not plant it too close. Likewise, sikobou must be spaced apart, the same with gettek onaja. Usually, the women go to the garden to clean the gettek from the disturbing bushes. Usually the women go in the morning and come back in the afternoon. Rarely do they go to the garden until the afternoon because they have to cook at home. Usually when they return from the garden, the women bring a little taro to cook at home.

The planting of taro for Sipora Islanders is irregular. But for farming areas taro is planted in between other plants. Usually planted around banana trees. Because taro plants can be planted anywhere and it is easy to plant them. How to plant it is only cut the leaves and discarded a little root and then make a hole as big as the tuber and as deep as the root limit. Then put in the hole and stockpiled and slightly compacted. Taro will also sprout and have many children, so this plant will grow more and more in a certain period of time.

For the Sipora people, taro is not a trade commodity. But sometimes it is only sold in the domestic area. Which means in the village area only. Because sometimes not many people on Sipora Island have taro because the land is already full of bananas or at that time the taro cannot be harvested. So sometimes it can be traded but not on a large scale. The price is also relatively uncertain, but usually one kilo or 3 tubers of taro is priced at Rp. 4,000.00, sometimes cheaper depending on the type of taro being sold. The most expensive type is the silatjang taro because it has large tubers.

There are also tubers that are planted by the people of Sipora Island, namely yams. The types of yams grown are cassava and sweet potato. Both yams are grown for consumption as a variety of food in the village of Sipora Island. Sweet potatoes can also be sold if grown

on a large scale. However, not many people in Sipora Island plant sweet potatoes on their own land because it is only a distraction if the land is still empty.

Broadly speaking, the people of Sipora Island plant taro and yams anywhere. Planting can be in the fields, in swampy areas, by the roadside, in the yard of the house, in separate gardens and in between banana plants. So it is indeed irregular that taro plants live in the village of Sipora Island. However, if a separate garden is made, it also exists. For example, a garden with an area of  $\frac{1}{4}$  ha is planted with sikobu or onaja taro planted in swamps. This is indeed the goal so that it can be harvested on time with the same large growth and of course with intense care.

### **Processed Food of the Sipora People**

As local foodstuffs, bananas and taro/keladi are processed to make food. There are two general types for the people of Sipora Island to modify these food plants, including:

#### *Tekgi'*

*Tekgi'* is a processed food whose raw material can be banana or taro. However, *tekgi'* does not have any mixture except when boiling it only needs salt. So *tekgi'* is just boiled bananas or boiled taro. After boiling, it can be eaten in the morning, afternoon or evening. According to Mrs. MT, Mrs. S, Mrs. R and Mrs. SF, *tekgi'* is very easy to prepare:

*"Our people here (Sipora Island) process bananas or taro into tekgi' by boiling only. We just take a ripe banana of any type and put it in a pot and cook it until the banana color turns brownish and the banana flesh becomes soft. After that, the banana is ready to be enjoyed"*.

This *tekgi'* is usually used by Sipora Islanders when they go to the fields or work in the forest. This is because it is long-lasting and easy to carry. It is also filling even if eaten without any other side dishes.

*Tekgi'* is also what Sipora Islanders eat in the morning. Sometimes it's also a nighttime meal if you're hungry. Because *tekgi'* can be consumed cold or hot, it is just as delicious. In the morning, friends enjoy *tekgi'* with a cup of hot tea or black coffee.

#### *Subbet*

Unlike *tekgi'*, *subbet* is a food that goes through a boiling process as well but after boiling the banana or taro/talas is mashed until smooth and sprinkled with grated coconut. How to make *subbet* usually uses a mixture of bananas and taro. The banana or taro used can be any type but the most delicious are janang banana and *sikobu* taro. Subbet made from banana is called *subbet bagok* by the people of Sipora Island and *subbet gettek* is made from taro.

After the taro and bananas are boiled, the skin is peeled and put into a *panudukkat* (a type of small mortar) or *lula* (eating place) and pounded using a *tutudduk* (wooden pounder) until smooth. After it is smooth, it will be sprinkled with coconut that has been grated using *gigiok*. After the taro is smooth, it will be rounded to the size of a baseball and then sprinkled with grated coconut to prevent sticking.

For Mentawai people on Sipora Island, eating this *subbet* is usually with side dishes boiled in bamboo (*ougbuk*). Usually river fish, sea fish, crabs, river or sea prawns and chicken. These types of fish and shrimp will be boiled in the bamboo and then enjoyed with the subbet. The cooking method in the bamboo also does not use a lot of spices, only salt, sliced chili peppers, shallots and garlic and flavoring then the bamboo is burned in the fire until it boils, and the fish is cooked. This is a very delicious food for the people of Sipora Island. If there is no fish, Mentawai people on Sipora Island rarely make *subbet* especially



during stormy season and high sea waves and fish are very difficult because fishermen do not go to sea.

*Subbet* can produce nutrients as much as 382.4 kcal so that it is higher than the nutritional standards that must be met in a day which is 2200 kcal. Likewise, carbohydrates contain as much as 62.0 grams. This data does have limitations, for research purposes, a simple nutritional value analysis was carried out which shows that *subbet* is a staple food for people on Sipora Island which contains energy and carbohydrates, so it is good for consumption for food needs. According to informant M (23 years old) as a nutrition counselor from the Healthy Archipelago Program (NS) of Sipora Island said that "*subbet contains the needs for the body (energy and carbohydrates) which allows Sipora Island people to have enough nutrition per day from this local food*".

### **Availability of Fresh Worms (*Toek*)**

Fresh worms or locally known as *toek* in the Mentawai community. According to the people of Sipora in the Mentawai Islands area, *toek* is most widely cultivated in Matobe and Saurenu, because the two villages have many streams and lots of wood as a place for *toek* to nest.

*Toek* is cultivated using wood decay in the river. Many people choose to cultivate *toek* for consumption and sale as household income. To cultivate *toek* in the river does not require a lot of money but only requires strong energy and a long wait of about 3 months. *Toek* is the most typical local food on Sipora Island, because on the other two islands, *toek* is rarely found. *Toek*, which has a high protein value, keeps the Mentawai ethnic community healthy.

According to the Mentawai ethnic community in Goiso Oinan village on Sipora Island, *toek* is best eaten without cooking. *Toek* after harvesting can only last for one day at most, and after that it can rot and cannot even be consumed anymore. They harvest it usually only when they want to consume or when someone has ordered the purchase beforehand. The price sold is 50-75 thousand per kg. Not a few people want to order *toek* for consumption, both for consumption within the family and during traditional events. The availability of local *toek* food is still widely cultivated by the Mentawai people on Sipora Island. They are eager to cultivate *toek* in the rivers to fulfill their food needs and as an income value for the community.

### **Switching Local Food to Rice**

Local food in general states "local food is now difficult to obtain, for example, such as sago", this is understandable, because sago plants as raw materials for local food are now difficult to find. This is because the area of sago plantation in recent years has tended to decline. The decrease in sago area in Matobe Village, Sipora Island, is mostly caused by land conversion to other commodities, as well as because sago cultivation is not well developed. During this time the sago plant is not cultivated, it only grows naturally in suitable areas, although there have been efforts to cultivate, but the amount is still relatively limited. Therefore, sago local food is usually only an alternative food for some people on Sipora Island.

*"Siburuk kai Matobe tak pei mareirei rakop berak, komenra senen gogoi iate sagai kalulut maigi peile loinat sagai samba malegre peile ka pulaggaijat oto kenanen makabesi galai ia musagai samba mauju itungena ibara bagat sagai butoi ia leu et ibailiu komen. But if you're aiming for success, don't worry, you'll be able to enjoy your rakop as a kalulut aibara berak samba tak aimagi loinat samba leu ai mareunan ka pulaggaijat. Bulat tak arakop sagai geti kalulut aimagi sipasisasakiake berak samba leu arapangurep berak sakalaggaijat bailiu malabbeinangan ibara berak"*.

This means that before the community did not consume much rice, sago was a staple food or food that was often consumed by our people in Matobe Village, it was also supported by the large number of sago trees and not so far from community settlements, although the processing was quite difficult and the process of forming sago to be consumed was also fairly long but this did not affect the community to consume sago. Over time, the activity of processing and consuming sago slowly began to disappear.

Most informants said they preferred to consume rice food rather than local food such as sago, this is because on average all household family members prefer rice consumption. Since the New Order, rice has become a politically strategic commodity, so the government's role in the development of rice production and consumption is very intensive. The government has established various policies related to rice, ranging from upstream to downstream industries. These policies are carried out continuously, including the rice for the poor policy known as Raskin, which is applied to all provinces. The impact of rice-biased policies is a shift in local food consumption patterns, especially in areas where the staple food is not rice.

It is known that the community has switched from consuming local food to rice food. More clearly, the impact of changes in local food consumption patterns of sago into rice consumption. Changes in local staple food consumption of sago have decreased while rice consumption has increased. This condition seems to illustrate that the source of carbohydrates only comes from rice, so that food consumption patterns that are too dependent on one type of food can cause shortages in household food types. Food consumption patterns that prioritize one type of food cannot ensure adequate nutritional balance, as a result, household lifestyles and food consumption patterns tend to be unhealthy. Respondents said that if a day provides types of food such as (sago and rice) most of the household members prefer to consume rice/rice rather than sago. Respondents felt that they had not eaten even though they had eaten bread, instant noodles but not rice. Rice is the belle of the ball for some Sipora Islanders, as a result the participation rate of rice consumption reaches almost 100% and rice is used as the main and sole staple food. In eating patterns, people sometimes act irrationally, the prestige factor is sometimes more dominant than the health aspect. This includes people's awareness of food safety. These changes show that the level of preference for rice consumption is increasing compared to the consumption of local sago food. This change is in accordance with the results of Darmanto (2022, 2023) which shows a change in the level of household preference for consuming rice food compared to local food.

On the other hand, there are also some of our people, especially in families who already understand the nutritional content of rice so that some family members prefer to consume rice rather than sago. Of course, it is true that consuming rice is not direct but through several stages or processes so that in consuming rice is not done in one full day, but there is still an interlude sometimes in one day it consumes sago once. However, there are some people who we see consuming sago at certain times, meaning when they get fish that are suitable for consuming sago such as boiled fish and curried fish. This process always takes place every day so that there are several changes until now that make our people on Sipora Island prefer to consume rice rather than sago. Therefore, it can be concluded that the process of changing from consuming sago to rice is more to family members who already understand the content in rice so that family members already like and consume rice more often, as another supporting factor for people's habits in consuming sago is influenced by the nature or habit of choosing suitable forms of cooking in consuming sago such as boiled fish and curried fish.

Another thing that affects food switching from local food to rice is the problem of affordability, one of which is price. The affordability of rice food prices is getting cheaper

and is also helped by the existence of Raskin assistance for the community managed by the local government. The price of rice in terms of production with the market price of IDR 10,000.00/kg to 13,000.00/kg. Coupled with government policy through Raskin assistance channeled by the government. Raskin that is distributed results in the development of rice food consumption easily accessible to households. Various policies and rice food self-sufficiency programs launched by the Mentawai Islands Regency Government, with the intention of facilitating community access to food in terms of production and productivity of rice that is easily accessible for consumption.

In addition, the social behavior of the community also affects the consumption of rice, because it can be done with a barter system, meaning that when there are people who cannot afford rice, they can exchange some agricultural products or other products with neighbors who can afford rice such as coconuts, vegetables and others. Thus, the community is also facilitated in consuming rice.

## CONCLUSION

Food security is a condition of food fulfillment for households that is reflected in the availability of sufficient food, both in quantity and quality, safe, equitable and affordable. The mission of food security in the world food policy implemented by the United Nations in 1971 was to free the population from the crisis of production or supply of staple foods. So that a strategy is needed to avoid the population from food insecurity in order to strengthen food security to achieve prosperity and alleviate poverty. Therefore, sago local food is highlighted in the food security of Mentawai people. The sago plant is a biological wealth that is quite widely found throughout Indonesia. At least Indonesian sago forests control about 51.3% of the world's forests. Therefore, sago is one of the staple foods for people in Mentawai. Sago plays a very important role in efforts to develop food diversity in rural areas to support food security because the raw materials are available sectorally. If food security is the key to the beginning of prosperity, why should it be rice instead of sago.

Now, sago is no longer the main thing. Rice may have replaced it. However, the realization that "Mentawai is sago" is sometimes forgotten. This is because if Mentawai people force themselves to eat sago they will be considered 'not advanced' 'uncivilized' and not modern' and access to sago is already switched and limited to get. However, if they insist on eating rice, they might be considered advanced and modern. But the power and socio-cultural spaces are not supportive. Rice is expensive, not filling, and cannot replace sago in ritual offerings. So, this simalakama happens in the life of Mentawai Mentawai people which makes them have to choose and quibble under the hood of development program.

Back to the initial assumption that sago is not just a matter of food (stomach) for the Mentawai people. Instead, it becomes the starting point of infection and spreads to other parts. Damaged ecosystems, disrupted lifestyles, disturbed natural and human balance and continued exploitation. This is too high a price for Mentawai people to pay in the name of progress (sago to rice). But optimism returns as the burden of the transition is only temporary until rice can be eaten without having to produce it themselves.

The intervention of development discourse on sago and its transition (*to*) rice will make them lose their cultural identity. For the sake of 'progress, modern, and following the flow of globalization' through development run by the government, they are increasingly marginalized. So it seems that to reach Mentawai people in a 'civilized' state, identity is also politicized in various ways that confuse the individuals of Mentawai people. Of course, the politicization is under the shadow of the hegemony of power and government that runs the 'civilization building'. Food security in Mentawai is not only about food, culture but also

about politicized identity. The process is still running and rolling until now and no one knows when it will end.

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