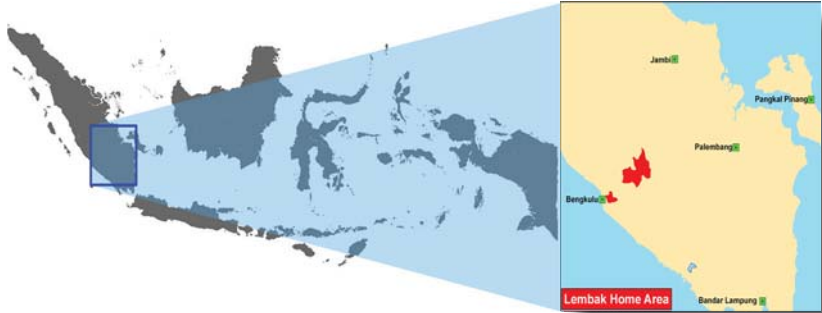


LEMBAK



Demographics	Lembak Language	Status
Location: South Sumatra, Bengkulu	Bible: No	Served: Yes
Population: 208,000	Jesus film: No	Believers: <10
Major religion: Islam	Radio evangelism: No	Local churches: 0

Who are the Lembak?

The Lembak live in the provinces of Bengkulu and South Sumatra. In South Sumatra Province, they live scattered throughout the entire region of Lubuk Linggau City. These areas include the Muara Beliti, Muara Kelingi, Batu Kuning Lakitan Ulu Trawas, and Tebing Tinggi districts in the Musi Rawas regency. In the Bengkulu Province, they live in the Padang Ulak Tanding and Sindang Kelingi districts in Kepahyang regency. They also live in Karang Tinggi and Talang Empat districts in the North Bengkulu regency. In Bengkulu Province they call themselves “Sindang Kelingi” or “Lembak Sindang Merdeka” (meaning ‘free’). While in the areas of Muara Beliti and Muara Kelingi, they call themselves the Saling people because they live along the Saling River. However, residents around them call them the Cul people because the word *cul* in their language means “no”. In the Karang Tinggi and Talang Empat districts the Lembak call themselves Lembak Delapan. It is said that this name emerged because they used to only consist of 8 villages.

What are their lives like?

The Lembak family system is patrilineal with a bilateral (traced through both parents) lineage of descent. There are three common ways of living for newlyweds. First, they can live in their own home. Second is the *bejojoh* custom of living with the groom’s relatives. The third is the *semendo* custom of living with the bride’s relatives. The Lembak’s main source of livelihood is through cultivating rice in both irrigated and un-irrigated fields. Not many of them work in the rubber plantations. Many Lembak also have small-scale brick-making factories in rural villages. The women help work in the rice fields and also manage the household. Among the Lembak, there is a tendency for individuals to leave their homes in order to gain more work experience elsewhere. However, when leaving the home, there is an obligation of *dua beradik* which

means two relatives must go with the person leaving. Their other common means of livelihood is as coffee and rubber farmers. The Rawas rely on rubber farming more in order to support their economic needs. Rubber can be harvested daily to provide income for people’s daily needs. The Lembak sell various types of produce which are not sold by others in the area such as katu leaves (a type of bush yielding edible leaves and berries), cassava leaves, guavas, bananas and more. The Lembak often give away their crop yields because they only grow them in small quantities and they would be ashamed to sell their produce to their own relatives. However, they are allowed to sell goods to each other such as those found in small neighborhood shops.

What are their beliefs?

Most Lembak people have embraced Islam, although a large part of the community still adheres to animistic beliefs also. Most believe in the power of unseen spirits inhabiting sacred places. The services of a shaman are often sought for healing the sick, exorcising evil spirits, and for other reasons. In one notable case involving religious differences, there was an incident in which a Christian volleyball player’s house was burned down. It started with a volleyball match between residents and transmigrants. One player was a Christian. The residents were defeated and, not being satisfied with the outcome, they were angry and burned down the house of the Christian player. Even though the emotions of keen sporting competition was a factor, religious differences seem to have been the primary cause.

What are their needs?

They also need to raise the standard of education and training for young people so they can qualify for better jobs. Raising their standards of practice for coffee farming will also help them to be more productive as coffee farmers.^(E-RD)