

# Jambi's changing landscape: Economic development, transmigration, and environmental impact

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## Abstract

The expansion of agricultural and plantation land has been a major driver of deforestation in Sumatra, with Jambi Province experiencing one of the highest rates of primary forest loss between 1990 and 2010. The Center for International Forestry noted that Sumatra lost approximately 70% of its forest cover by 2010, with an average annual loss of 0.73 million hectares between 1990 and 2000 and 0.25 million hectares between 2000 and 2010. This study aims to analyze the relationship between land-based economic growth and forest loss rates in Jambi Province, and to assess its policy implications for environmental sustainability. Secondary data from provincial Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) reports, land use statistics, and forestry records from 1990 to 2020. The analysis used a descriptive and comparative approach, supported by interviews, to identify trends, trade-offs, and policy impacts. The results indicate that the expansion of oil palm and rubber plantations contributed significantly to the decline in primary forest area, despite these sectors being key pillars of regional economic growth. These findings underscore the importance of sustainable land use policies to balance economic development and environmental resilience.

## Keywords

Jambi, Plantation, Mining, Deforestation

## Introduction

As a historical area of inheritance, Jambi Sriwijaya has abundant power and natural resources. Growing with fertile goods from agricultural sub-sectors, plantations, and products, mining, and fossil fuels. In a way, historiography or literature, another potential issue, Jambi's economy comes from mining and plantations, which get minimal attention, especially from a corner view of Social Humanities. Some sources emphasize Jambi during the Kingdom era with a conventional historical approach (Andaya, 2016).

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Jambi's economy, in general, is highly dependent on two fundamental pillars: agriculture and education. Meanwhile, economic diversification is an important strategy used by State authorities to reduce dependence on a single sector (BPS Provinsi Jambi, 2024).

Historical diversification has potential in the economy-based agriculture and mining sectors, with a clear impact on vertical conflict application percentage profit from public land place exploration with Mining Companies. Nevertheless, the government ignored the matter, as reflected in the Minister of Economy Darmawan Mangoenkoesoemoe's response on November 21, 1952, in a letter to the Director of the Cabinet and the President regarding the results of exploration and exploitation of oil mines carried out by NV (ANRI, 1952). Jambi economy's diversification strategy aims to build skills, secure power, and develop infrastructure as the main supports to prepare the area and its population to face social change and impact the global economy, as well as to utilise the existing economic opportunities. Besides, there is an emphasis on adaptability across sectors, which challenges the evolving environment and society and changes the dynamics of the international market (ANRI, 1968).

Jambi's landscape has undergone significant transformations driven primarily by economic development, transmigration programs, and their environmental impacts. Historically, the Indonesian government, with backing from international financing such as the World Bank, implemented transmigration programs between 1976 and 1989 that relocated millions of people from densely populated islands like Java to outer islands including Sumatra, where Jambi is located (Antara, 9 September 1987; Albetris, 2019). The transmigration aimed to alleviate demographic pressure and boost agricultural production but has been criticized for its environmental degradation and social complications. These programs often diluted native cultures and resulted in inadequate environmental assessments, leading to ecosystem degradation and secrecy around project impacts (Fearnside, 1997).

Economically, Jambi has evolved substantially with the expansion of oil palm cultivation, which has become a dominant crop contributing to the regional economy (Casson, 2014). Studies show that oil palm farming has positively affected farmers' livelihoods by increasing incomes and enabling households to diversify economic activities, thus promoting economic growth locally. However, oil palm cultivation requires less labor than traditional crops, facilitating larger farm sizes and reallocating labor to non-farming sectors, which has broader socio-economic implications (Kubitza, 2018). Nevertheless, this economic specialization toward rubber and oil palm monocultures presents trade-offs at different spatial levels. While intensification and specialization improve economic gains especially at the household and village level, it simultaneously threatens biodiversity and ecosystem functions at larger spatial scales in Jambi. These environmental costs underline the need for policies and landscape designs that balance economic development with ecological sustainability (Klasen, 2016).

Jambi's changing landscape encapsulates complex interactions between transmigration-induced demographic shifts, economic development driven by agricultural specialization (notably oil palm), and consequential environmental impacts like decreased biodiversity and ecosystem degradation (Baudoin, 2017). These dynamics underscore the critical importance of integrating thorough environmental assessments and sustainable development strategies to mitigate negative consequences while supporting economic growth in the region.

## Method

In a study with an aspect synchronous diachronic, the method used is a historical method. According to Kuntowijoyo's study, history has five stages: the selection of topics, the collection of sources, the verification or criticism of sources, interpretation, and the writing of history (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). Sources used in the study. These vary and include two: source literature and oral sources (interviews). Source literature used in the study: results, search of sources, archives, contemporaries. Good. That policy government Colonial, as well as New Order policies until the reform era, and report findings related to Good from the Central Statistics Agency Province to the Center. To strengthen the analysis, the author also uses a source interview with stakeholders on policy regarding the Jambi region, as shown in Figure 1.

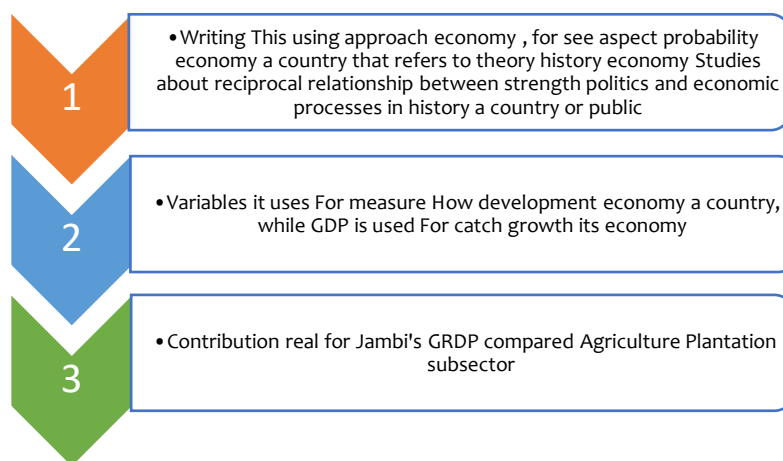


Figure 1. Strength in finding memory

## Result and discussion

### *The influence of the plantation sector on Jambi province's GDRP*

The plantation sector also contributes to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in the agricultural industry. GRDP is one indicator of a region's economic development. GRDP shows the contribution of each industry to a region's production activities. The overall economic growth of a region will be affected if the agricultural sector production increases show in Figure 2. GRDP includes all added value resulting from various economic activities in a region, measured regardless of whether the production factors are owned by residents of the region or by owners outside the region. GRDP with three

approaches: the production, income, and expenditure approaches for a region (Zulhan et al., 2019, p. 157). The growth of the agricultural sector's GRDP in Jambi Province contributes to the province's overall GRDP. The potential for this increase, i.e., further development, can support the growth of Jambi Province's economy. GRDP in Jambi Province's agricultural sector, based on BPS data for 2020-2023, shows strong annual growth. In 2020, it was 39,751.94 billion, rising to 45,697.30 billion in 2023. These increases and figures demonstrate that the agricultural sector in Jambi Province plays a crucial role in driving regional economic growth and confirm that the farm industry continues to support Jambi's economy (Sunandar et al., 2024, pp. 210-211).

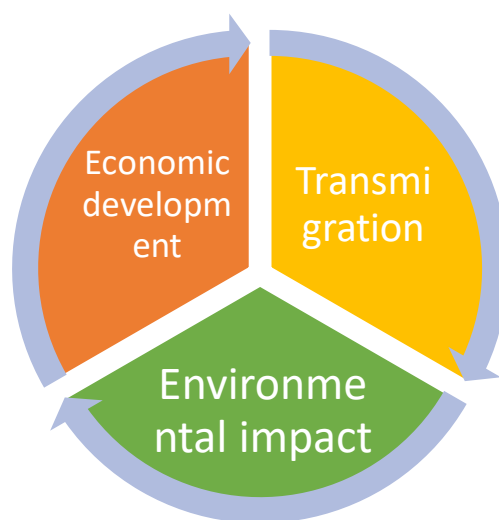


Figure 2. History for development (Jambi, all season)

### *Social problems and mobilization distribution*

The second foundation source, Power Jambi's natural resources, is good, with plantations and mining providing economic stimulus during the New Order era. Growth in plantation rubber and palm oil production pushed the New Order government to build a track across Sumatra in the 1970s. However, the problem has been classic since colonial times: the source of power for humans (power) is difficult work obtained outside Java, like Sumatra. Based on the need for power, the work implemented the transmigration policy in two waves: the first from 1905 to 1925, and then during the New Order era in the 1980s. Impact of migration power: Work from Java to this land of Jambi began in the late 1990s, and large-scale plantations of Coconut Palm Oil and Rubber (Baudoin, 2017) with analytical opportunities in Figure 3.

The growth of land agriculture, as well as plantations, proved highly impactful in the long run. Over farming led to rampant deforestation in Sumatra, especially in Jambi. Indonesia has had one of the highest deforestation rates over the last 30 years (Casson, 2014), with more activities for Figure 4.

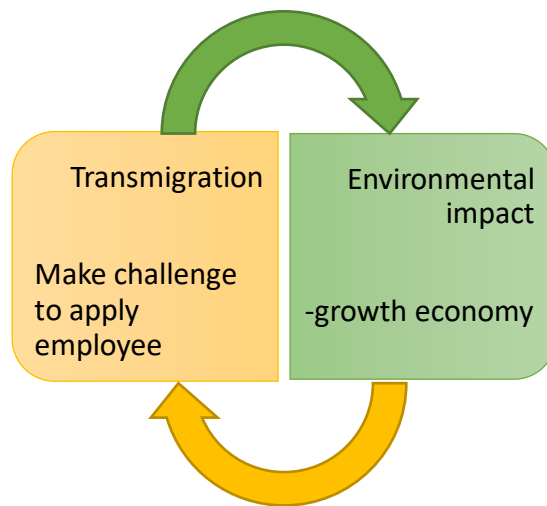


Figure 3. Opportunities from Jambi's historical landscape development.



Figure 4. Coal Transportation in Jambi via the Batanghari River Source: Radar Jambi (2020)

## Conclusion

Jambi Province has oil and gas sources, both oil and non-oil, such as coal, which can have a significant impact on the agricultural system, local public, and communities. Expansion mining often causes changes in land use, including agricultural and forest land, and the conversion of small areas, resulting in the disappearance of agricultural land, agriculture, and the services supporting the ecosystem. At the same time, mining and agriculture can create job opportunities and improve the local community's financial stability, thereby advancing traditional livelihoods and culture. However, the narratives of No, in a way, facilitate a transition to industrial jobs. The impact of mining on agriculture and the local economy is very complex. Although mining can increase several economic indicators, it also poses risks to the sustainability of the environment and the livelihoods of traditional systems. Careful management for the balanced development of the economy with protected land, agriculture, and local food resilience.

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