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Barriers in the Development of Malay Agricultural Settlement. Case Study: Kampong Bharu, Kuala Lumpur

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Abstract: Kampong Bharu is a settlement located in one of the most strategic areas in Kuala Lumpur and the only land that is gazetted as Malay Agricultural Settlement (MAS) in Malaysia. However, the development of Kampong Bharu is still stagnant and under pressure due to several factors and challenges that prevent the development of this land to be developed by the authorities. Therefore, this research is important to identify issues and problems in the development of Kampong Bharu particularly the barriers that prevent the development of MAS. The data were collected through primary and secondary data. Structured interviews have been conducted with the expert officers from Kampong Bharu Development Corporation (PKB) and officers from the Administrative Board Office (MAS) Kampong Bharu. The findings revealed that individual barriers and regulatory barriers were among the major obstacles that led to the development of the Kampong Bharu been hindered. Hence, recommendations were suggested based on the findings, particularly in revising the restriction of the development of MAS and strengthening the cooperation between the land owners, authorities and other stakeholders in ensuring the betterment of Kampong Bharu, Kuala Lumpur.

Keywords: Malay Agricultural Settlement, Kampong Bharu, Land, Development, Barriers

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's economic growth and property development have arisen rapidly as a result of the development’s impact achieved by the country. However, the development of Malay reservation land (MRL) is less concerned and under pressure, because there are several factors and challenges that prevent the development of this land to be developed by the authorities. A challenge and barrier that prevent the development of MRL can give a bad effect on economic performances of such land rights in Malaysia. The Malay Reservation Land (MRL) is introduced by British Colonial in 1913 to protect and preserve the right to land ownership of the Malays in Peninsular Malaysia. The main factors which always been discussed under the MRL over the decades are exclusive of ownership. Due to the socio-economic upheaval of the Malays from the New Economic Policy as well as a strong and rapid economic growth in the country has improved the Malay Reservation status (Ismail et. al., 2009). The purpose of this research is to investigate the barrier in the development of urban Malay settlement namely Kampong Bharu. The area has been established since 1899 by the British government known as “Malay Agricultural Settlement” (MAS) as a special area reserved specifically for the Malays in Kuala Lumpur. Although MAS is not Malay Reservation Land (MRL) per say, but the characteristic of MAS is similar to MRL particularly in preserving the Malays.

CASE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

Kampong Bharu, Kuala Lumpur is selected as a case study for this research because it is located in the heart of the rapidly developing Kuala Lumpur City Centre and the only MAS in Malaysia. Kampong Bharu is governed under the administration of Kuala Lumpur City Hall since 1974. Previously, Kampong Bharu was under the administration of Selangor State Government. The total area of Kampong Bharu is 301.8 acres, which consist of two parts, namely the Malay Agricultural Settlement (MAS) which is the study area and the outside area of MAS (Figure 1). Based on the Draft of Detailed Master Plan Kampong Bahru (2014), the area of MAS is 220.6 acres and consists of 880 lots whereas the outside area of MAS is 80.71 acres with a total of 474 lots. The MAS area is administered by the Board of Management, which is known as ‘Lembaga Pentadbiran (M.A.S) Kampong Bharu’.
The primary data were obtained from the observation of the study area and a structured interview. Observations survey has been conducted to look at the current developments taking place in Kampong Bharu and surrounding areas. Some pictures were taken to indicate the current situation in Kampong Bharu. Observation of the study area is important to identify the current condition and the existing issues and problems in Kampong Bharu. The structured interview was conducted with four officers from the Management Board of MAS and Kampong Bharu Development Corporation (KBDC). The secondary data were collected from reports, articles, papers works and planning books, particularly involving Kampong Bharu such as Kampong Bharu Special Plan (2016 amendment) and Kuala Lumpur 2020 Structure Plan and Kuala Lumpur City Plan 2020.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Development Trend of MAS Area

Based on the primary data and secondary data obtained, the trend of development of Kampong Bharu occurred especially in the MAS area and its surroundings. According to the interviews, the size area of MAS is remained since it was gazetted in 1900 until now. This is because MAS has a specific law that stipulates this settlement is for Malays only and is not allowed to non-Malays. Moreover, if the land is taken, it must be replaced by the government with the same size and area.

Barriers in the Development of MAS

Although the proposal for the development plan of Kampong Bharu has been gazetted, the MAS area is still stagnant and disrupted. This is due to the barrier that has been identified in the interview conducted.

1) Financial Barrier
Financial problems were contributed to the development barriers in MAS area. This can be seen through the land size of MAS which are approximately 4,000 to 8,000 square feet per plot. Therefore, Principal Assistant Director of Land Management Division in KBDC recommends the amalgamation of land method during the interview. Land in MAS area should be amalgamated when development is to be done. However, due to the cost involved and the financial burden among the land owners, the amalgamation process cannot be done.

2) Individual Barrier
The individual barrier is the major problem to develop MAS in Kampong Bharu involving land ownership. Previous studies also identified that the most challenging problem is to solve land ownership issues before the development can be carried out (Azima et al, 2015). The findings from the data obtained from the KBDC
indicated that there is multiple landownership in Kampong Bharu. In fact, there are the highest numbers of land owners in one lot. For example, there were 208 owners in one lot. This caused difficulties in the development process.

3) Regulatory Barrier
The legal restriction of MAS was also highlighted by the respondents as a barrier that needs to be resolved. This is because legal restrictions have been enshrined and gazetted in the Malay Agricultural Settlement rules and Federal Constitution regarding the restriction and enactment of Malay reservation land. Consequently, it caused difficulties for developers to enter and carry out development because of the regulatory barrier.

4) Physical Barrier
Due to the size of land and lot of MAS that are small to develop, the related agencies must do an amalgamation before development can be carried out. The road in MAS area is also narrow and difficult to access. Most of the respondents claimed that these are the physical barrier that also caused problems in the provision of good infrastructure and transportation for Kampong Bharu.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, the development of MAS area in the Kampong Bharu can be accomplished if the barriers can be overcome. The Management Board of MAS, Kampong Bharu Development Corporation, Kuala Lumpur City Hall, land owners and other stakeholders need to collaborate and cooperate to find the best solutions to develop Kampong Bharu.

REFERENCES
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