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Quality of Life Issues on Pangkor Island, Malaysia

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Abstract: The total population of Pangkor Island in 2013 is about 17,162 and is made up of two major groups, Chinese residents (48.46%) followed by Malay residents (41.98%). The main economic activities of the residents here are fishing and tourism-related services. In 2010, more than 700,000 visitors came to Pangkor Island. Although Pangkor managed to attract many tourists to the island, its infrastructure facilities require urgent upgrading. Despite a huge budget had been allocated for the constituency of Pangkor, the bulk goes to the Royal Malaysian Navy for upgrading the military facility such as the TLDM navy patrol boats. The main problem facing development on Pangkor Island is the lack of space for development. This is due to limited suitable land for development. Due to topographical constraints, only 10.3% of the total land space are suitable for development. Incidence of poverty is still high among the residents. Shortage of low-cost housing to meet the increasing demand of low-income groups has led to a proposal for the redevelopment of the southeastern portion of the island. These issues of social well-being are also linked to the political aspirations of the islanders.

Keywords: Quality of Life, GIS, Pangkor Island, poverty, development, island development

INTRODUCTION

There are hundreds of beautiful islands in Peninsula Malaysia and normally, the islands are divided into the western peninsula and the eastern peninsula. One of the major attractions in Malaysia is small island tourism [1]. Together with the Langkawi and Penang, Pangkor Island is the best choice to visit on the western side of the peninsula. Moreover this small island is the nearest island from the Kuala Lumpur city. This island lies within the state of Perak, about one hour from Ipoh and three hours from Kuala Lumpur.

Pangkor Island also is known as the island where it is worth to go when one wants to enjoy the nature and beaches. The small island destinations are capable of attracting visitors far beyond their permanent local resident's population [2]. The most other islands are industrialized and there is nothing interesting to do or to see. Although this is good for the tourist side, but the Pangkor Island is a little bit behind from the view of development and quality of life for the population.

The total population of Pangkor Island in 2013 is about 17,162 and is made up of two major groups, Chinese residents (48.46%) followed by Malay residents (41.98%). In 2010, more than 700,000 visitors came to Pangkor Island. Although Pangkor managed to attract many tourists to the island, its infrastructure facilities require urgent upgrading.

Specifically, this research aims to study the quality of life in Pangkor Island. Commonly quality of life is studied at regional and country level. Studies that show the small scale variability of quality of life are however, rare although it is often the case that interventions are targeted and implemented at smallest administrative levels [3]. In spite this study at smallest level can approach quality of life slightly from a different perspective.

PROBLEMS STATEMENT

From the perspective of Jabatan Perancangan Bandar & Desa Semenanjung Malaysia (JPBD), the main issues in Pangkor Island is the lack of space for development. This is due to limited suitable land for development. Moreover due to the topographical constraints, only 10.33% of the total land space are suitable for development (Figure 1). Most of the Pangkor Island lands are covered with hilly site with a slightly sloping area in the northern part of the Kampung Teluk Dalam and in the western part, Kampung Teluk Nipah and Kampung Pasir Bogak. The highest peak is mounted in the central part of the island with a height of 371 m.

The main beach is Pasir Bogak, Teluk Nipah, Teluk Dalam and Teluk Belanga. From the study in Croatia, suggest that satisfaction with island life and the assessment of its quality of life are not directly related to the size of an island, but to limitations of its natural and economics resources, the extent of transport connections to the mainland and to other islands, the

migration experience, the histories of their communities, and the proportion of elderly citizens in their populations [4]. This size of an island issues not only happened in Croatia but most of the small island in

development country including Malaysia. Moreover this issue was raised as to focus on tourist satisfaction and not because of the resident's satisfaction itself.

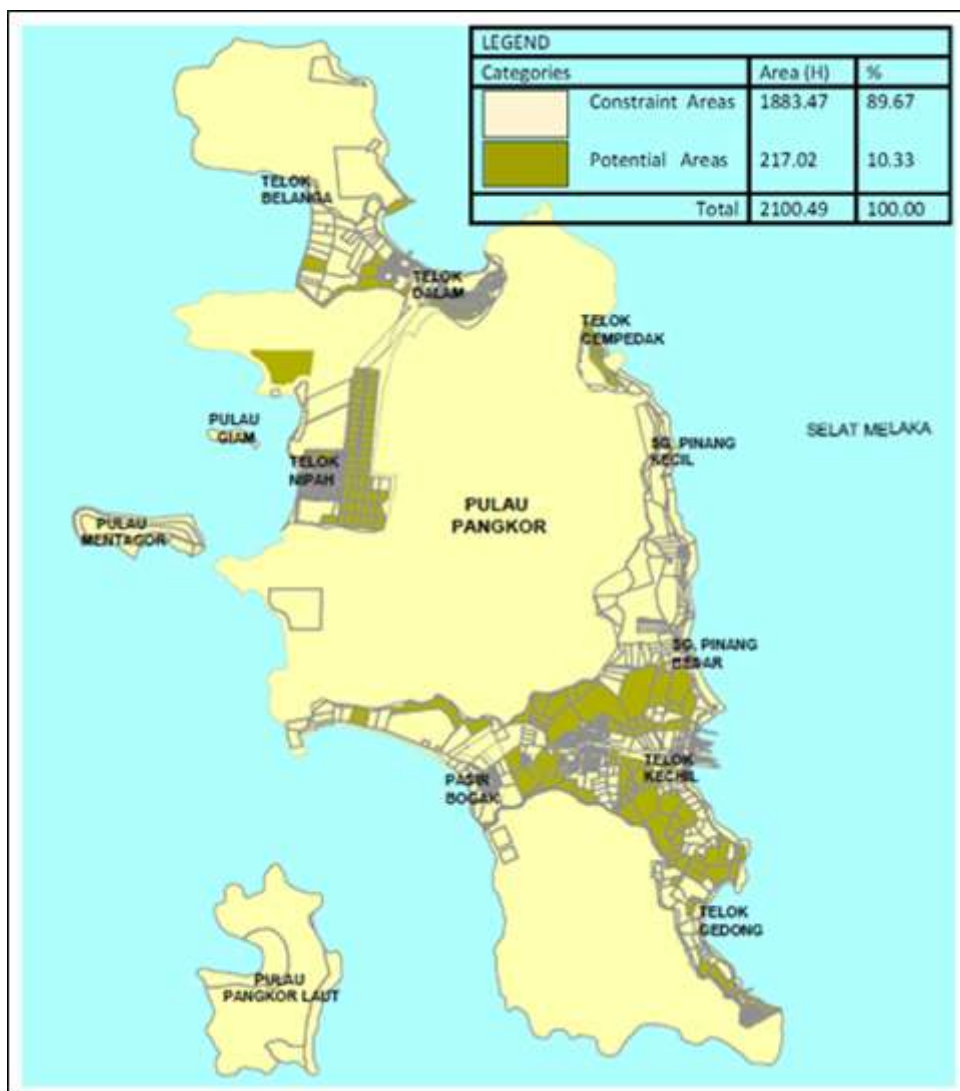


Fig-1: Potential and Constraint Area of Pangkor Island

Source: JPBD (1999)

Investors sometimes gave too much attention on the tourists' satisfaction or development for tourist rather than residents' interests. It might result either satisfaction or dissatisfaction among residents' who are the origin of the place [5]. In terms of quality of life there are a lot of aspects that needs to be cultivated and enhanced not only for the satisfaction for tourist but also for the main residents of Pangkor Island. Moreover the incidence of poverty is still high among the residents. Shortage of low-cost housing to meet the increasing demand of low-income groups has led to a proposal for the redevelopment of the southeastern portion of the island. Most villagers live in scattered settlements on the eastern side. All of this issues must be overcome first before focusing on tourists side.

Although a huge budget had been allocated for the constituency of Pangkor, the bulk goes to the Royal Malaysian Navy for upgrading the military facilities such as the TLDM navy patrol boats. Furthermore some of the development is not well designed. This result in wastage of funds that have been granted. For example the development along the road of Pasir Bogak and Teluk Nipah. All of these lead to the quality of life issues. Thus, this study aims to look on the perspective on how quality of life residents in Pangkor Island.

METHODOLOGY

Conceptually, the information gathered in this research drawn from various primary, secondary and spatial data. Questionnaire surveys, interviews and observation are the main techniques implement in order

to gather the primary data. Geographical Information System (GIS) used to extract the spatial data. GIS techniques will furthermore use in analysis to obtain spatial information of each variable in the study and for the GIS database management system for the island.

The main focus is to study the quality of life issues in Pangkor's residents. Definition for quality of life in simple terms it can be referred to as "an individual's overall satisfaction with life" [5,6]. Quality of life is a term that is widely used in various fields. Each defines its own field according to different viewpoints. Quality of life is very important to know at the small scale. This is because the small scale can help the administration in particular to monitor district in a

better view [7]. This study takes into account current issues of Pangkor development by interviewing some people, companies, officers, governance that involved in the development of Pangkor before running questionnaires.

This research area is focused on Perak State Legislative Assembly (Dewan Undangan Negeri Perak, DUN). DUN Pangkor contains of eight voting districts; Damar Laut, Pengkalan TLDM, Telok Muroh, Sungai Pinang Besar, Sungai Pinang Kecil, Pekan Pangkor, Telok Gedong and Pasir Bogak. Three voting districts are located in mainland area while others located in island (Figure 2). Questionnaire surveys have been answered by the 370 respondents.



Fig-2: Map of DUN Pangkor

DISCUSSION

Quality of life in terms of economics of the villagers in DUN Pangkor can divide into two categories which are education level and income. From the survey, most of the villagers in each voting district

highest level of education that have completed are SPM level (Figure 3). While in terms of income, most of them received below then RM1500 (Figure 4). This shows that the majority of the populations are below the poverty line.

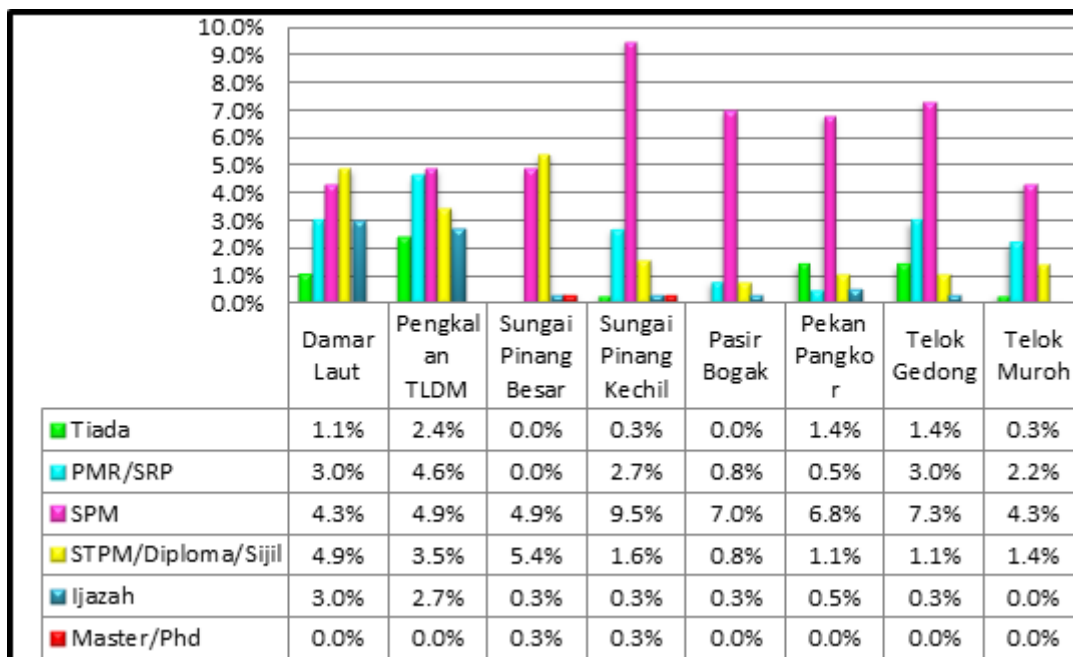


Fig-3: Level of education

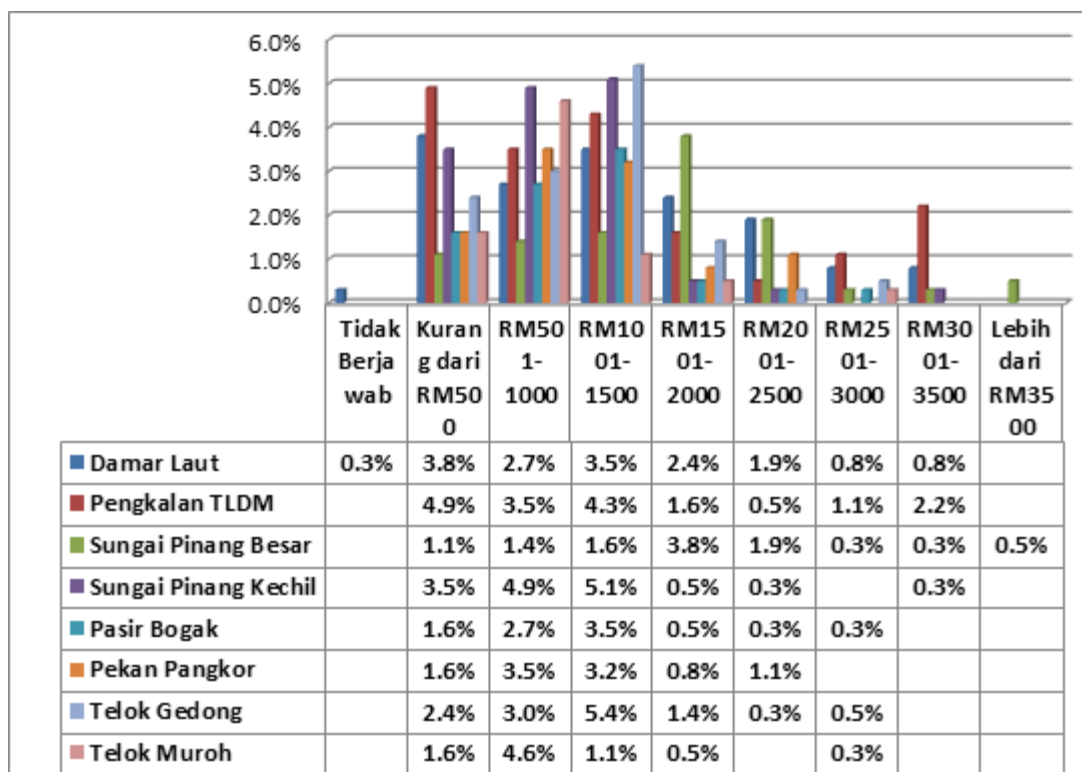


Fig-4: Income of villagers

From the interviews and observation, there are 14 aspects that relate to the negative issues in DUN Pangkor (Figure 5). And from the survey, the main quality of life issues that affect the daily life of villagers are mostly related to economic issues which are rising

cost of living, GST, increase in electricity and water charges, high numbers of illegal fisherman and the opening of Vale' Factory. All of these economic issues are becoming a burden to the villagers when the income they earned are below the poverty line.

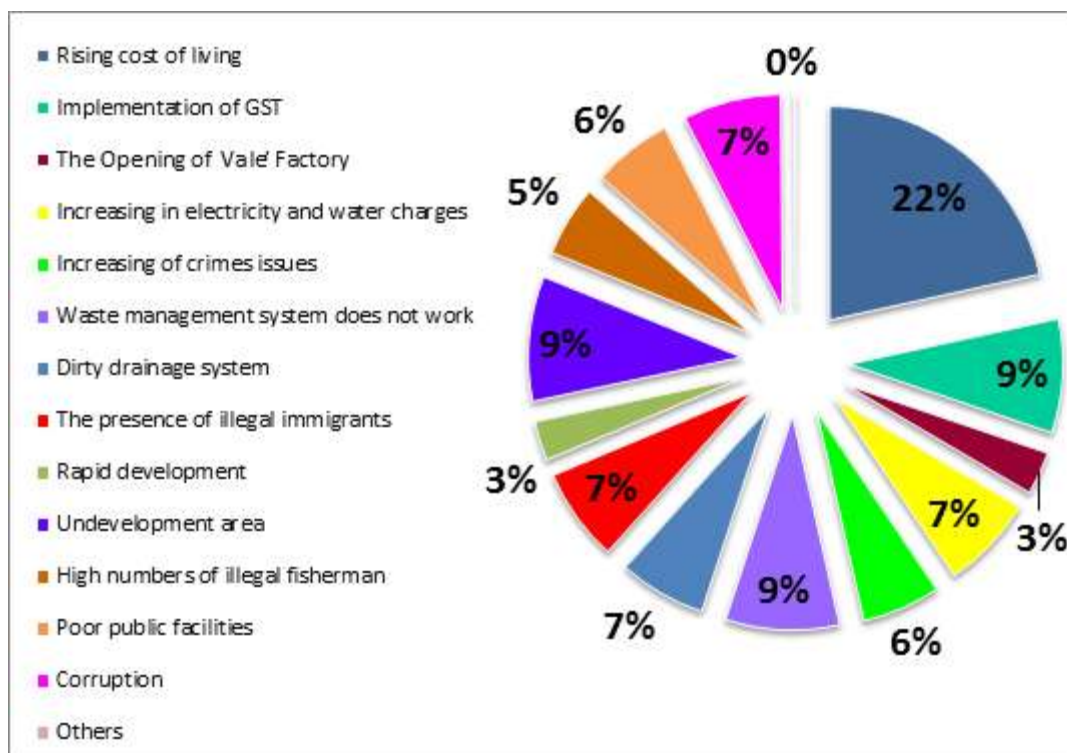


Fig-5: Quality of Life Issues

Furthermore, there are also a critical issues related to hygiene and the impact on tourism such as waste management system, dirty drainage system and poor public facilities. Water resources in the island, especially in small island require a systematic management of water as a limited resource of clean water supply [9]. Although this is one of the comand issues in small island, but from the view of tourism, it gives a bad impression.

From the perspective of the villagers, the main issues are to overcome problems related to population first before we proceed to the next issues that related to development and space. There is a need to improve the facilities for villagers and tourists by providing necessary equipment such as transportations, stalls, convenience stores and others. Upgrading the houses in this community because most of the houses were in a poor state in comparison to the mainland community before focusing on building a new area of houses. In developing countries like Malaysia, needs to address problems such as public infrastructure and transportation, cost of living and negative influence of political activities in order to achieve a livable environment and a good quality of life [8].

CONCLUSION

The main problem for Pangkor Island is not the lack of space, but the quality of life issues. Although a lot of the budget had been allocated for the constituency of Pangkor, most of it is for TLDM. Besides enhancing the quality of life of the villagers a balanced development should be encouraged so that the

benefits are shared equally and fairly among the local villagers. All parties including government, industry players, and other individuals involved in tourism, development as well as the host and guest communities should be seen as participating in upgrading the quality of life of Pangkor Island.

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