

# Low Class Community in Rapid Growth Urbanization in Kerinchi

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## Abstract

Kerinchi area is a quite compact grown up area in Kuala Lumpur. With the new development of Bangsar South City, the density of the area is getting higher with the traffic overcrowded and brick towers climbing the sky. The rapid growth in the area arose a few problems to the existing community. The abundance of cars passing by making the traffic overcrowded. Therefore this research carried out to highlight some of the projection which are congestion of the high density of urban living, the connection which linkages and context accessibility and improving the socio-culture interaction and integration. By using architectural platform, the dense in the area can be organize by proving a centre for community as a social hub for interaction and integration to merge to the current surrounding and serving a better facilities to the users in the compact grown up region.

**Keywords:** new development, traffic overcrowded, linkages, community, interaction and integration, social hub

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Kerinchi is located in Pantai Dalam region or be specifically in Bangsar South area. It is just beside Federal Highway which is the main network connecting the area around Kuala Lumpur. Originally, Kerinchi is a big settlement of squatters many years ago consist of local people as well immigrant from Jambi, Indonesia. There are a few main attraction surround the area such as Telekom Tower, University Malaya, Mid Valley Megamall and Angkasapuri. The area is really approachable by own vehicles as well as public transportation. The nearest is LRT University and LRT Kerinchi. Besides that, there is bus depot and taxi stand underneath the LRT rail to facilitate the users to any area of destination easily. During the peak hours, this area is very busy and compact with traffic. In addition, there are compact residential along Jalan Kerinchi from lower class to the high end group. There are the main users in this area together with the office workers at UOA Towers at the end of the road. Yet, the public amenities are really poor and not satisfied. Furthermore, rapid developments keep on growing along the road with multistory offices tower, premium residential and shopping attraction that might give many impact to the existing setting of the Kerinchi.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The development of Kerinchi

According to Merriam-Webster, urbanization is the process by which towns and cities are formed and become larger as more and more people begin living and working in central areas. Formerly, urbanization is closely related with industrialization. Starting from industrial revolution in 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe countries, people from rural area migrated to the city where innovation and industrialization were rapidly growth (History.com). With that, the city area was being fulfilling with big societies from different kind of people and background to work in the industrial factory.

Back to the Kampung Kerinchi history, it was founded by Haji Abdullah and his people, a group of Sumatran from Kerinchi, Jambi in Indonesia (ibid, 2010). Kerinchi people were from rural and hilly area in Sumatra. So, they had settled in Malaya at the area which almost the same like their origin so that they can do the farming like grew pineapples, paddy and fruits (ibid, 2010). They settled at Kerinchi over the years by built up squatters settlement that later become very big area of slum squatters. However, according to the interview with the old residents at this area, the squatters not only consist of people from Sumatra, but local people also migrated from hometown to the city and settled in this area.

In 1990's, the authority, DBKL was decided to develop the area with low cost flats and middle cost apartment in this area. Some of the squatters were demolished and they were moved to the new flats provided by DBKL in 1993. But some of them were move in around 1998. Nevertheless, day by day, the development was rapidly growing in Kuala Lumpur city with every single piece of the land were developed with commercial and high end residential. Including Kerinchi, the development so called Bangsar South City hastily growth by UOA Group changed the original landscape of the area. According to David Khor, the General Manager of UOA Holdings Sdn Bhd, they are uplifting the image of Kerinchi by providing better facilities, upgrading the linkages and access road and offered new jobs to the people here (The Star, 2010).

The new development that coming in, most of them are provided for the high group community with grade A offices, retail avenues, boutique condominiums, service suites and clubhouse. The market strategies more or less were attracting the international people and high class group. Yet, the existing residents which are still in the low to middle class community will be affected by this development.

## 2.2 The effects of development to the low class group

The cost of being urban is quite high. The child-raising, utilities, household and transportation are killing the urban middle and low class community. With high cost of living especially those with families, urbanization are somehow affects the lifestyle especially those who has low income. It is necessity both husband and wife regardless have to work to raise their kids and continue live in urban atmosphere. They had no choice to still stay in the low cost flats with a big family grown up since to buy a new house is a ridiculous thing to do in Kuala Lumpur region.

With the development expanding in Kerinchi area, somehow threaten the existing community in a way to survive with the facilities provided by the developer. Despite that, they have no hole to escape otherwise move out to nowhere, since every part of the city is fulfilling with new development of bricks jungle. In discussing the effect of the urbanization in Kerinchi area to the existing community, the writer rather look forward to be more specific in socio-culture development of the low class community. The new development coming in was looked no such dedicated community facilities to serve to the overall community in the region for example the open space area for interaction and others. With that, it brought even worst effects to the low class group where they have no social interaction in merging to the development surrounding and yet just interaction within the resident compound with limited amenities.

According to the guideline from Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa, the development of the low cost house is very tight with 80 units per acre. With that, there are no in house facilities to be provided in the low cost residence compound. However, there is always a guideline from the authority to serve the community better whether for the low cost or high class group. However, in Kerinchi area, there are no such amenities provided to the residents. In facts, under own initiatives with observation by the authority, the facilities were slotted in to the residential blocks such as surau, kindergarten, small hall for community meeting and grocery shop.

Table 1: The guideline of the community facilities by JPBD.

Bil.	Jenis Kemudahan	Piawaiian Penyediaan	Keluasan Minimum	Jarak Kesampaian
1	Tadika	2,500 penduduk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 kelas : 0.1 hektar</li> <li>▪ 8 kelas : 0.2 hektar</li> </ul>	400 meter (5 minit berjalan kaki)
2	Sekolah Rendah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Min – 3,000 penduduk (12 bilik darjah)</li> <li>▪ Mak – 10,800 penduduk (40 bilik darjah)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tanah rata : 2 - 4 hektar.</li> <li>▪ Tanah berbukit / cerun landai : 3 - 4 hektar.</li> </ul>	Mak – 0.8 km (5 – 10 minit berjalan kaki)
3	Sekolah Menengah	9,000 penduduk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tanah rata : 3 - 6 hektar.</li> <li>▪ Tanah berbukit / cerun landai : 4 - 6 hektar.</li> </ul>	Mak – 1.6 km (10 – 20 minit berjalan kaki)
4	Balai Raya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Min – 1,000 pddk</li> <li>▪ Mak – 3,000 pddk</li> </ul>	0.1 – 0.4 hektar	400 meter (5 minit berjalan kaki)
5	Dewan Komuniti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Min – 3,000 penduduk</li> <li>▪ Mak – 10,000 penduduk</li> </ul>	0.1 – 0.6 hektar	0.8 km (10 minit berjalan kaki)
6	Dewan Serbaguna	10,000 penduduk	0.1 – 0.8 hektar	1.0 km
7	Perpustakaan	5,000 – 10,000 penduduk	0.1 – 0.2 hektar	1.0 km
8	Poliklinik	15,000 – 20,000 orang	2 hektar	1.0 km
9	Pondok Polis	5,000 – 10,000 penduduk	0.4 – 0.8 hektar	1.5 km

**Sumber:** Draf Garis Panduan Perancangan Kemudahan Masyarakat, JPBD Semenanjung Malaysia (2011).

Besides that, the area provided for activities are no more used for community activities but they are used for car parking. This is because; they are abundance of vehicles with limited parking spaces due to many

renters with own vehicles rent houses or rooms in this low and middle cost flats. So, the open areas were now using to accommodate the residents' vehicles.

### 2.3 Community concept

According to Smith, M.K. (2001) in his article of Community, the term community has remained to some extent related with the hope and wish of reviving once more the closer, warmer, more harmonious type of bonds between people vaguely attributed to past ages (Elias 1974, quoted by Hoggett 1997:5). Besides that, the other definition of community refers to the group of people live in an area and shared a common of life (Smith, 2001). Referring to the Smith study, there are three different ways in describing community (after Willmott 1986; Lee and newby 1983; and Crow and Allen 1995).

i. **Place**

It is the place that living by the community and has something in common and the sharing element is understood geographically. On the other hand, the term locality is best used in community study based on the focused spatial divisions of labor and sense of place.

ii. **Interest**

In interest, the community shares a common characteristic other than place. The factors that linked together are like religious belief, occupation or ethnic origin. This is referred to the 'Chinese Community', 'Indian Community' and so forth. The development of such interest might be called the sociology of identity and selfhood that played important role 'opening out the conceptual space within which non-place forms of community can be understood' (Hoggett 1997:7).

iii. **Communion**

The weakest form of communion approach from the previous studies is a sense of attachment to a place, group or idea which in other words, is a spirit of community. However, in its strongest form of communion, involve a profound meeting or engage not just with other people but also with god and creation (Smith, 2001). For example, the Christian communion of saints, the spiritual union between each Christian and Christ.

In addition, the community not only involves the people that live permanently in a certain area, but it might be the users that come there every day to work but using the same facilities in that area. So it can be said that the people that engage to that area by living there or working there but having the same commitment and sense of place to the area. They might not stay there but they are giving the services to the community of that area.

### 2.4 The club house concept

In order to strengthen and serve community to the best, the introduction of the clubhouse seems to be effective. The clubhouse's main objective is to foster the community ties and serving the better quality of living to the community. According to the International Center for Clubhouse Development, clubhouse is a local community centre that provides the opportunities to the members of community to build long-term and strong relationships that in turn support them in obtaining employment, education, housing and others. The participation of the members of community in clubhouse is important in making the decision regarding matters arise in the community area. In addition, through clubhouse, the evening or weekend social and recreational events can be done in organize way and more contribution can be get. Nowadays, the criminal happen almost everywhere and the security in the community area also important. Again, with the strong relation and participation to the clubhouse, the assistance in securing and sustaining can be well maintained.

The club house is an organization in the community area where built to support people to live in a better environment of locality. It is important to unite the members of different ages and cultures background to agree and share same ideas besides working together to achieve same objectives. Through clubhouse community, there are opportunities for various kinds of people with different background of education, culture and social; to meet and making friends to everyone on the community members.

The strategies to build a clubhouse community are varies. One of the main focuses is to build up relationship between members in the community. According to the Museum of Science, the relationship may foster through the people, friendship and conflict resolution.

i. **The people**

The clubhouse is about relationship among the community members from all ages and races. This is the opportunity to express skill of everyone and learn from each other. Exposure to all the members, like adults and youth in community let the members to be more exploring, experimenting, expressing them with new advancement that can give the clubhouse a better service and finally improve the community development.

ii. **Friendships**

Members' interactions and integration with the diverse learning through the clubhouse community leads them to gain new knowledge and enhancement and contribute something to the community. Besides that, through the friendship also encourage the strong ties between members to cooperate and helping each others in difficulties.

### iii. Conflict resolution

In a big group of people with different thought, there are something comes to a point of conflict. It is necessary to resolve conflicts in a comfortable and safe environment so that the strong relationship of community would not tear off. The conflict may arise of different opinion and interest. Yet, through clubhouse, there is a platform to discuss and changing views among all the members. With that, the conflict will resolve with all agreement and cooperation.

## 3. DATA COLLECTION

To carry out this research, the data collection methods have been identified is questionnaire and observation. The finding and result will be discussed in the next topic. However, the literature reviews also important to know the user behavior in the community and the different perspectives of the people in describing the community. The information are mainly derived from the article from The American Magazine, 'The Luxury City vs. The Middle Class', May 2009, the article from Metropolitan Housing and Communities Centre, 'Effects from Living in Mixed-Income Communities for Low Income Families' by Diane K. Levy, Zach McDade and Kassie Dumlao in 2010. Other than that, there some information gathered from the website.

## 4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The strategic location of Kampung Kerinchi as Kuala Lumpur gateway and nearby the main attraction uplifts the potential of the area to be upgraded and develop. The hilly setting along Jalan Kerinchi will enhance the area itself and the development along the road. However, the compact development somehow most focusing on the new potential market which is offices tower and premium residential rather than serving the existing community better life. Besides that, the introduction of the heavy blocks of towers will give many impacts especially to the lower class community at Vista Angkasa, DBKL flats and PKNS flats since all the new improvements were become high end and executive. It will make the area become more crowded and packed unless the current problems are totally taking care of.

Through the survey conducted, there are a few solution and strategies that might be useful and possible to overcome the problem of the Kerinchi community.

### **1. Providing better linkages that connecting the development blocks to the lrt university station.**

The developments in the Kerinchi area are in walking distance to the main effective public transportation, LRT Putra. However, the current linkages provided seem not worked properly to serve the pedestrian better. Besides that, with current width of the walkway, had being disturbed by the hawkers that doing their business at the walkway making the path even more cram. After that, they also did not aware about the hygienic and left the walkway dirty and inconvenience to walk by.

The strategy that can be done is to have an elevated pedestrian linkage that will link the civic centre and surrounding blocks directly to the LRT University which is the famous public transportation used. This elevated pathway also will let the vehicle maximize use the road width so that will reduce the traffic cramming along the road.

### **2. Building a multi level parking spaces for the users and residents**

There is abundance of cars at this area especially along Jalan Kerinchi due to the uncontrolled quantity of residents' vehicles of Vista Angkasa, PKNS flats and DBKL flats. Besides that, during day time, the transit workers that used LRT also park their car illegally by the road side. Since the area is located nearby to the University Malaya, there are many students rented room there instead of staying inside the campus. The number of vehicles will increase and the parking spaces inside the resident compound were not enough to accommodate all the residents' car. So as the solution, most of them parked their car outside the compound illegally by the roadside.

Therefore, a multistory car parking should be introduce to overcome the problem and reduce the traffic cramming along the road. Besides that, it will self generate income to the authority by getting some entrance fee. It will be use for the maintenance cost for better condition. In addition, the multistory parking also can incorporate with the civic centre that house the facilities to the community in Kerinchi area.

### **3. Introducing the civic centre that housed enough facilities for the existing community and all the users**

The new development of the premium resident and corporate offices will creating a big gap between the lower class community and the high class group in the area. The new development will facilitate their users with enough facilities such as cafe, retails, gymnasium, multipurpose hall and others. Yet, the existing community that stayed here for years has to suffer with limited amenities in their compound. The community will have no

proper activities during their leisure times since they have to go outside of the compound to do the activities like park and sports court. By going there, they have to go through the traffic jam that later will wasting their time. Teenagers will loiter around at the ground level of their house chit chatting with friends while kids will have their football along the road which is not secure with cars coming in and out. By having a civic centre, all the facilities to the community can be in house in a building so that all the family can have their leisure time safely and secure. Besides that, the workers in this area also can make full use of the centre before they go back to the house avoiding the traffic jam almost everywhere in Kuala Lumpur. The gymnasium and sports centre will be useful to the workers and residents to enhance the healthy lifestyle.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is very important to have a master planning of certain area so that the development can be control and the density of the area can be determined properly. In this Kerinchi area, the development seems to be very dense and every single piece of the land are waiting to be develop. Furthermore, the area is the prime area so the developers make full use of the land to invest and making profit. Yet, the existing community suffers with the construction and all kind of development which can be said that ignore their right and the socio-culture of them. The social activities will not be really improved among them and the community strength also fragile since there is no platform to foster it. The development has its own advantages and disadvantages. It could not be denying the facts that the urbanization will keep on growing to ease the people in the city. The urbanization process also gives benefit to the country by attracting the international market to invest in our country and enhance our economy.

However, before going too far beyond the boundary, the existing people that trapped in the city area could not be neglected off. They have their right to still have their life there since majority of them are from lower income class. There are not affording to buy a comfortable house which is really expensive. They only live in their comfort zone which also not really convenience. By using architectural platform, this problem and issue can be solve by injecting the new program to the existing community so that they can have a better living and merging with the surrounding development. In that case, they will not be threatening by the development beside their house and in addition they also can be a part of the urbanization too.

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