

The Effects of Poverty to Housing Condition: Case Study of Kampung Sentosa, Sibul, Sarawak

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Abstract

Poverty is defined as material and non-material dimensions. Non-material dimensions are related to spiritual aspect such as empowerment, self-determination, and freedom, while material dimensions are quantified using income and assets, such as quality and conditions of housing. Housing is one of the basic human needs. This paper examined the relationship between poverty and housing condition in Kampung Sentosa, Sibul, Sarawak. It is one of the state government resettlement village initiatives to provide designated housing lots for squatters. The objective of the resettlement scheme is to provide a better planned and legal leasehold of the lands, where the lot owners can build their own houses. Although the government has provided new resettlement, however, the problem of poverty persists, which is reflected by the conditions of the houses. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to find out the unliveable conditions of the houses and causes of defects and its effects on the occupants. The study employs through a qualitative approach by in-depth interviews and observation. Seven respondents were chosen for the study. The respondents were chosen based on the unliveable conditions of their dwellings. The findings show that the condition of the houses is mainly dilapidated due to a lack of maintenance and repair. There are also problems of overcrowding and illegal extensions to cater for growing and extended families. The area also faces regular flooding due to drainage and soil problems. Poverty is caused by lack of employment opportunities, low level of education and health problems. Although the resettlement solves squatter issues, future resettlement programme should include an integrated provision of economic opportunity to break the poor from the poverty cycle. The study is significant to guide policy-makers in other future planning of resettlement for the poor.

Keywords: Housing, Kampung Sentosa, Poverty, Sarawak, Sibul

Introduction

There are many different definitions used to define poverty from different perspectives, these include the Townsend Deprivation Index, the Human Poverty Index, the General Deprivation Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (Niu, Chen, & Nuan, 2020). The most common measurement used is the one developed by the World Bank in 2018, known as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which includes six indicators, such as consumption or income, educational attainment, educational enrolment, drinking water, sanitation, and electricity. These indicators then are mapped into three dimensions of well-being such as monetary standard of living, basic infrastructure services, and education to construct the MPI (World Bank, 2020). Refer to OECD (2018), poverty is measured by the ratio of the number of people where their income falls below the poverty line, which means as half of the median

household income of the total population. The identification of the poor is by defining the income poverty line, which means the border line income that separates the poor from the non-poor. In 2019, the Malaysian government had revised the national poverty line income from RM980 to RM2,208. That means, over 400,000 households in the country with monthly incomes below this level were considered poor during the year. Meanwhile, the absolute poverty rate in this country has improved from 7.61 percent in 2016 to 5.6 percent in 2019. In 2019, the United Nations reported that Sarawak showed the percentage of low-income earners as higher than the national level figure. In Sarawak, 15.5 percent of households' monthly income are less than RM2,000, compared to only 8.8 percent at the national level (UNHCR, 2019).

Shelter is a basic need, and yet owning an affordable and habitable house is getting more expensive these days. The increasing cost of living makes it more difficult to afford a habitable house. This results in the sprouting up of squatters in towns and cities as a coping strategy for those who migrate from the rural to urban areas. Squatters also provide the cheapest option for the urban poor to achieve an affordable shelter. Most squatters are either on government or private land. When there is a need for development in the areas, the government has no other choice but to resettle the squatters on land with a lower premium. In addition, it is also the pledge and responsibility of the government to providing affordable housing to the poor. Hence, both the federal and state governments have invested billions on affordable and low cost housing for the poor. This includes resettlement programmes of squatters and slums. Apart from that, NGOs and private sectors' CSR programmes have also currently contributed to provide affordable housing. However, problems were assumed to be solved once relocation or rehousing had been completed. This is not necessarily the case, housing problems can persist despite the resettlement. This paper aims to examine in greater depth the issues of a resettled area. Hence, the objective of this paper is to examine the causes of the continuous deprivation of the resettlers in the aspect of housing conditions. This paper, through the case study of "unliveable houses", examines factors that lead to unlivable housing condition in the resettled villages of Kampung Sentosa, Sibul. Consequently, findings from this study will help to determine the issues, problems, and needs of the poor and to find more effective solutions to solve dilapidated housing problems in this area.

Sibu is one of the oldest towns in Sarawak. The district of Sibu covers 2,230 square kilometres with a population of 247, 995 (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2020). Historically, the town of Sibu was developed rapidly during the ruling of Rajah Brooke and the migration of the Foochow clan. At that time, Sibu was the gateway to the logging camps in Central Sarawak. The logging industry has contributed to the rapid development of Sibu. Today, Sibu is still the main gateway to the central region of Sarawak, providing logistic and administrative services to those living in this region. Sibu has attracted many migrants from other rural vicinities, such as from Kapit, Song, Kanowit, Sarikei, Bintangor, and even from the Melanau coastal areas of Mukah Division.

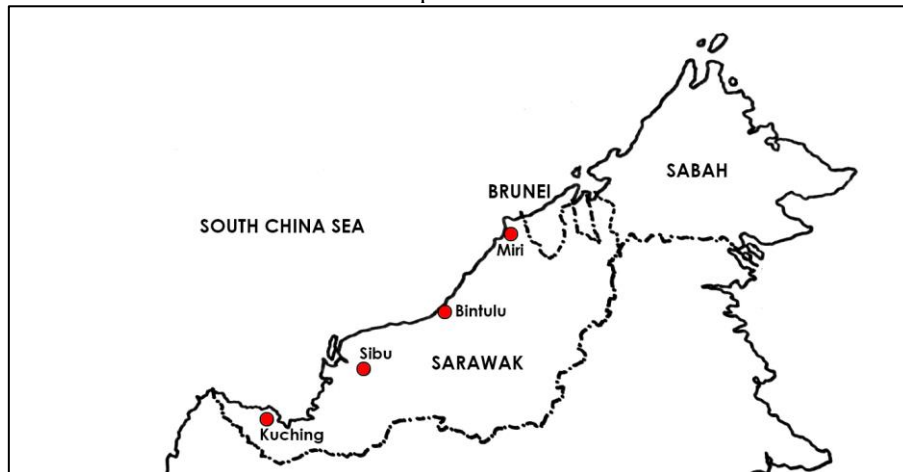


Figure 1: Map of Sarawak, showing Sibul town

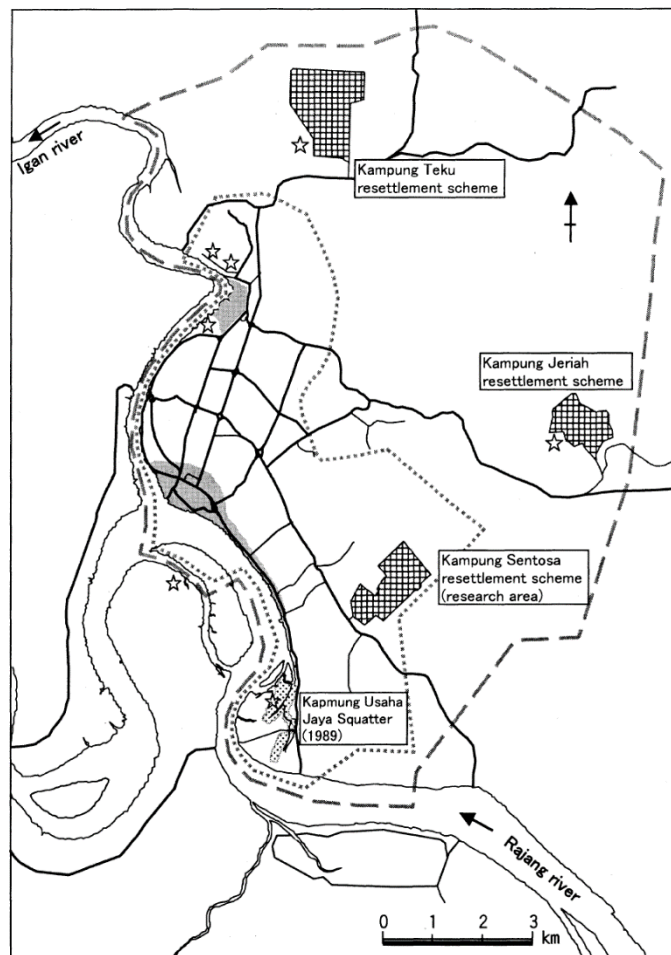


Figure 2: Location of Resettlement Village in Sibul
Source: Soda (2000)

The attractions include employment opportunities, education, health and other urban facilities, such as lifestyle and to enjoy other infrastructural provisions and public amenities. An increase in rural-to-urban migration also caused higher demand for affordable housing. For those who cannot afford it, the option is to find cheaper houses in squatter areas that later

expand and eventually become illegal villagers. The village is termed as illegal as the land where the houses are built does not belong to the villagers. In other words, the villagers just build their houses on any vacant and accessible land. Among the illegal villagers which were found in the early 1980s in Sibuh were Kampung Nyamok near Sungai Merah (currently Jalan Ding Lik Kong) and Kampung Usaha Jaya at Ulu Lanang (currently has been developed as a luxury housing areas for the elites known as Pulau Li Hua through land reclamation). Those originally in Kampung Nyamok were resettled at Kampung Bahagia in Teku, while those in Kampung Usaha Jaya were resettled in Kampung Sentosa. Besides, the original squatters, the settlers of the resettlement project also consist of other lower income groups, who are eligible to apply for housing lots and for those who cannot afford to build their own houses, they can enrol for free housing under the *Program Perumahan Rumah Rakyat Termiskin* (PPRT), provided by the District Office. In the case of Kampung Bahagia in Teku, part of the settlers were also families of the households whose houses were affected by the fire tragedy of 2013 at Kampung Dato Lama. Another illegal village that has been upgraded under the in situ upgrading development village programme is Kampung Jeriah at 6th Mile Jalan Oya Sibuh.

Literature Review

Poverty and Housing

Poverty is usually reflected by the housing conditions of its occupants. In Sarawak, there have been several efforts to resolve housing for the poor by the government and NGOs. An international effort was made in 2014 by Habitat for Humanity Malaysia to build 14 houses for the poor in Kuching, Sarawak. This project was known as Borneo Blitz, providing single storey semi-detached houses measuring 600 square feet with three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom co-built by the homeowners and volunteers (Borneo Post 2014). In 2016, according to the Ministry of State Welfare, Women and Family Development, 109,605 poor people in Sarawak have registered under the E-kasih system with 29,586 households categorised as hard core poor, 35,209 poor, and 6,855 are categorised as at risk to become poor (New Straits Time, 2016). At least five households registering at 40 welfare district offices throughout Sarawak every day, making the number about 48,000 a year. The budget for poverty eradication is huge, in 2016 alone, RM 50 billion was allocated by the federal government to assist 5,000 people under the 1AZAM programme. Priority is given to access to education and housing aid. In rural areas, a mobile team assistance programme was introduced to identify and reach out to the poor. In 2016, 32 new areas were proposed for the mobile team programme.

Despite all the efforts, the average cost of housing in Sarawak is expensive, which is over RM 437,000.00, regarded as one of the most expensive average house prices after Kuala Lumpur (RM 772,000), Selangor (RM 468,000.00) and Sabah (RM 445,000.00) (Solberg, 2018). Even the Penang average at RM 424, 000.00 is slightly lower than Sarawak (Solberg, 2018). The federal government under Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB), a GLC, commenced its involvement in Sarawak in 2004 and completed its first medium cost apartment in Kota Samarahan called Vista Ilmu in 2010, with prices ranging from RM89,500 to RM99,500. SPNB then built 963 units of medium cost houses in Miri, and these were sold out in less than two years after the launch of the project. SPNB has built more than 3,600 units of affordable homes in the state so far and planned to build another 5,270 units in Miri and Kuching. Housing demand is also spurred on by rural-urban migration.

A classic study by McGee (1989) cited in Soda (2000) shows that migration from rural to urban has formed squatters dwellings and its informal economy, which is termed as “shared poverty” or “involution”. Involution means the same or no evolutionary change (Evers, 2005).

Informal housing and the economy provide a transition for the migrants before they can join the “formal” sectors. In the 80’s, McGee (1989) also observed that rural-urban migration was driven by work opportunities in the manufacturing sectors in Malaysia and termed the phenomenon the “proletarianization” of urban cities in Asia. Evers (2005) also observed similar trend in the cities of Indonesia but showed that the involution after the millennium had diminished and replaced by “real urbanism” due to the increasing number of middle-income population in major urban cities. Urban involution also occurred in smaller cities of Southeast Asia as pointed out by Dwyer (1975) cited in Soda (2000). Meij, et al. (2020) coined the term as “socio-spatial inequalities” or uneven development to show socio-spatial disparities between the “rich” areas and the poor settlements in Calgary, Canada. The poor areas were hit most during an economic slump and the occupants are more susceptible to increase socio-economic vulnerability, as budget will be prioritised for the rich settlements deepening increasing socio-spatial disparities. As a reaction to the disparities, there has been a trend, a political and social utopian populist idea, which is of a pro-poor urban development agenda that introduces the concept of “right to the city”. “Right to the city” examines how urban development has negatively affected the poor through oppression, disruption, and marginalisation by the development of areas only accessible or affordable to the rich alone (Harvey, 2008).

Sibu, as a small city of Sarawak, seems to be experiencing similar problems of involution. A study by Zainal, Kaur, Ahmad, & Khalili (2012) showed a significant relationship between housing conditions and the quality of life among the residents. Most of the urban poor residents living in squatter’s area where the squatter dwellings are made of discarded materials like plastic, asbestos sheeting, wooden planks, and the area has high density population (Murad & Raquib, 2007). The dwellings are of poor design, they are too close to each other and lack air wells or windows, making them inhabitable or unliveable (Zainal et al., 2012). A study by Green (2011) also shows a significant relationship between unliveable housing conditions with chronic illnesses among the residents. In India, Patel, Shah, & Beauregard (2020) used the Slum Severity Index (SSI) to capture multiple housing deprivation that includes availability of housing amenities, such as kitchen, clean fuel, electricity, and bathrooms. In addition, UN-Habitat (2002) defined housing deprivation as lack of access to adequate drinking water, sanitation, inadequate space, inadequate structure to protect against climatic conditions and secured tenure. Soma, Sukhwani, & Shaw (2022) further added other attributes such as privacy, physical accessibility, and environmental quality.

Globally, there have been efforts to curb housing for the poor. Countries like Vietnam and Indonesia have implemented low-cost housing projects for the poor. In Vietnam, the housing project was to provide stable but lightweight, permanent but affordable homes within a budget of 4,000 USD per unit with the size of 30 square metres. The rationale of this project was due to the issue of poor structures of housing among the poor. The concept of the prototype is to combine modular components and DIY strategy by considering the following: lightweight, affordable, cheap, easy to maintain, and extend (ArchDaily, 2014). In Indonesia, the Kampung Improvement Project, which was implemented in 1969, aimed to upgrade the urban slums. The issues were poor roofing, poor natural ventilation, and poor lighting. The housing project for the poor was also implemented by a well-known Egyptian architecture, Hassan Fathy. His design utilised traditional styles, approaches and materials, which best suited the local environment. The rationale was to preserve the local unique cultural identities and the needs of indigenous people (Egyptian Street, 2021).

Methodology

The research method of this study is through qualitative approaches. Qualitative approaches include in-depth interviews and observation as data collection methods, and are conducted in households chosen through purposive sampling as an informant by a local NGO. Seven respondents were chosen for the study. The respondents were chosen based on the unliveable conditions of their dwellings. The in-depth interviews help to identify factors that contribute to inhabitable housing conditions. From these findings, factors, issues, and needs of the housing resettlers, can be identified. Data from in-depth interviews was analysed using a thematic content analysis. The themes include unliveable factors and reasons for inability to maintain the house, as well as the impacts of living in an unliveable house. A criteria list will be developed to determine whether the houses are of the “unliveable” category, which are collected through observation of the houses. Criteria include structural integrity, materials condition, roofing, improper extension, leakages, rot, dampness and termite infestation, cracks, and etc.

Findings

Background of Kampung Sentosa

Sibu has experienced a rapid number of squatters since the end of the 1970s to 1980s (Sutlive, 1992). A study by Soda (2000) on Kampung Sentosa found out that most of the settlers' home places were located within 100 kilometres radius from Sibu town. In order to solve squatter problems, a resettlement scheme was developed by issuing Temporary Occupation Licenses (TOLs) to the squatters in a new area. This happened in the 1980s and early 1990s. Kampung Sentosa is one of the few squatters' resettlement schemes in Sibu. Kampung Sentosa has a deliberate ethnic spatial segregation (Soda, 2000).

Table 1: Category of Ethnic in Kampung Sentosa, 1980s-1990s

Phase	Ethnic	Total
Phase 1	Malay/Melanau	246
	Iban	151
	Chinese	94
Phase 2	Malay/Melanau	247
	Iban	268
	Chinese	71

Source: Soda, 2000

This village has two phases. Most of the residents are former squatters from Kampung Usaha Jaya, which was the largest squatter settlement in Sibu (Soda, 2000). The majority of the households are Malay/Melanau, followed by the Iban and Chinese community. There are two phases of resettlement in Kampung Sentosa as shown in Table 1.

Kampung Sentosa is about 350 acres along Jalan Tun Ahmad Zaidi Edruce and Jalan Salim. It is located in a deep peat soil area, near to Bukit Lima Forest Reserve and the commercial areas at Salim, Sibu. The village has a primary school, SK Sentosa, and several secondary schools nearby, such as SMK Bukit Assek and SMK Bukit Lima.

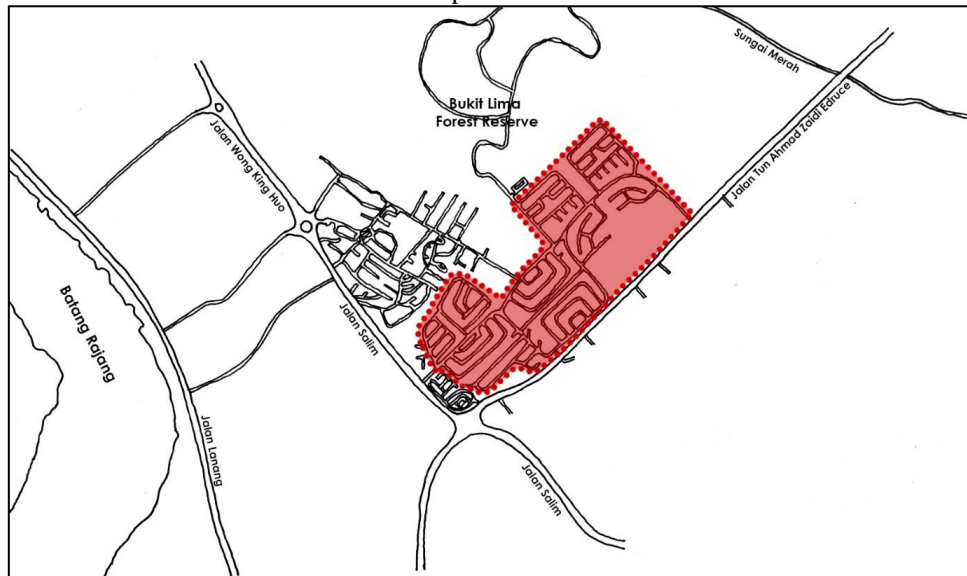


Figure 3: Kampung Sentosa

Background Profiling of Respondents

There were seven respondents chosen for the study, who were chosen based on the unliveable conditions of their houses. Respondent A builds a house with his brother behind the main house (belonging to his parents). This is an example of “deviation” in a housing lot. The terminology “deviation” is used here to indicate the illegal building of a new structure on one lot that is originally allocated for only one dwelling. In this case, Respondent A is actually building 2 new houses (like a semi-detached) in the lot. Figure 4 shows the roof of the additional houses.



Figure 4: Roof of the new semi-detached house, which is lower than the main house

There are 21 family members living in this single lot, who is comprised of three families. Respondent A is one of the head of households of five family members, living next to his house is another family of five, while the main house have 11 occupants. Basically, deviation occurs because of overcrowding in the main house and the children cannot afford to buy separate properties in a new housing area.

Respondent B is an old woman, living alone. She is about 85 years old. She has a nephew who sends her food supply and meals regularly about three times a week but does not live with her because of his work commitment. She has hoarding disorder where she accumulates all things, regardless using them or not (refer to figure 5). The house is not well-

maintained both internally and externally. The house compound was also full of unkempt trees and vegetation growth, which were regularly cleared by the Village Committee on a voluntary basis.



Figure 5: Internal view of the house with hoarded materials



Figure 6: External view of the house

Respondent C is an ill woman, who is on a wheelchair due to brittle bones problem. She lives with her brother and mother. Her house was originally under the *Program Perumahan Rakyat Termiskin* (PPRT) scheme, a programme to provide housing for the very poor. The house was later extended to the front part as the new living room. Her brother does not have a full-time job, working as a contract labour on a daily wage basis, while her mother is working by washing layered cake moulding trays, paid based on how many trays she manage to wash. The housing condition is really bad, the kitchen area is almost collapsing while the roof and ceiling are experiencing leakage. There have been cut off electricity supply because they cannot pay the bill arrears. Even the wheel chair is borrowed from the hospital.



Figure 6: PPRT house with an extended living room

Respondent D is a 38 years old bachelor who lives with his nephew and has suffered from pneumonia for over a year. Due to his illness, he has stopped working. He lives in a PPRT house but chooses to build a small room below the house, fully walled with recycled timber and asbestos panels. His conditions was quite bad and he was on and off warded in the hospital.



Figure 7: Respondent D room, below the nephew's PPRT house

Respondent E is a 38 years old single mother with five children who lives in a PPRT house. Two of the children are working plucking bird feathers, while two are still in school, and the youngest daughter is only three years old. The respondent is earning a living as a seamstress, but her income is based on the amount of work order by her clients.



Figure 8: Respondent E PPRT house

Respondent F is 40 years old, a father with six children with a wife, who like respondent A, chooses to build a new housing structure in his parent's lot to avoid overcrowding in his parent house. He and his brother (5 children and a wife) live side by side in a semi-detached small house. This is again a case of "deviation". He is working as a driver, while his brother is working as a meter reader for a water company. Although, both brothers are working full-time, but their salary is still too low to buy a proper formal house in a housing estate. The housing condition is bad, the flooring is made of linoleum and patches of old carpet, without proper concrete or wooden base. There are visible leakages in all parts of the house, including the roof and walls. Their safety is not guaranteed because snakes and other venomous insects can easily enter the house. The occupants have to wear slippers or shoes into the house due to the dampness and dirtiness of the floor. They have applied to their local parliament representative for housing aid but still in vain.



Figure 9: Internal condition of Respondent F house

The last respondent, Respondent G, was involved in a tragic incident whereby his house collapsed. There were three families with 32 occupants sharing the collapsed house. After their house collapsed, they were forced to live in a temporary tent borrowed from the mosque. There were NGOs providing them with wooden palettes and plywood for the tent flooring. The three families at the time of the visit are still awaiting housing aid.



Figure 10: Temporary tent as shelter



Figure 11: Internal condition of the tent

Unliveable Conditions

The houses are examined from external and internal parts. The external unliveable conditions include poor access to the house, such as broken pathways, landings, and steps. In some houses, the treads are experiencing chipping and are slippery after rain due to lack of maintenance and settlement problems. The lack of maintenance is due to the household's unaffordability to buy new materials and also due to lack of skills in repairing their houses (refer to Figure 12).



Figure 12: Poor Access

Another unliveable condition is due to poor quality materials of the house and lack of maintenance. Some of the houses just simply patch their walls in whatever materials that are freely available, whereas some will choose cheap materials like asbestos and recycled timber. The lack of maintenance is manifested by the conditions of the houses, such as broken wall panel, missing window panes, and broken external ceiling (refer to Figure 13).

Another common problem in the area is damaged houses due to settlement problems. This is because the village is located on deep peat soil. Impacts of the settlement include sagging beam, slanting column, and cracks. These conditions will be exacerbated if not maintained promptly and regularly. As a result, there have been several cases of houses collapsing when the structural integrity is not maintained (refer to Figure 14).

Lack of maintenance and poor quality building materials



Broken external ceiling and leakages

Broken wall panel, missing window panes, building material - asbestos



Poor quality building materials –recyclable materials



Figure 13: Poor Quality materials and Lack maintenance

Structural integrity, timber rot, cracks, missing window panes, missing roof and fascia, settlement problem, sagging beam

Cracks due to settlement problem



Figure 14: Settlement Problem

Another common practice is the improper extension and building of additional structures in a lot meant for one house, or known in this study as deviation. If left uncontrolled, this will cause overcrowding and will recreate a “squatter or slum environment”, where houses are built without proper setbacks and not in the proper order as originally planned (refer to Figure 15).

Improper and unplanned extension



Deviation in a lot, additional house at the back of the main house



Deviation in a lot, sharing of toilet between two houses



Figure 15: Improper Extension and Deviation

The internal parts of the houses also experience defects, especially the ceilings, internal wall panels and beams, flooring, and small spaces for big families. Similar to the external part of the houses, cheap but hazardous building materials are used, such as asbestos ceiling and internal partition. There are obvious signs of leakages on the ceiling, as depicted by the watermark and broken ceilings (refer to Figure 16).

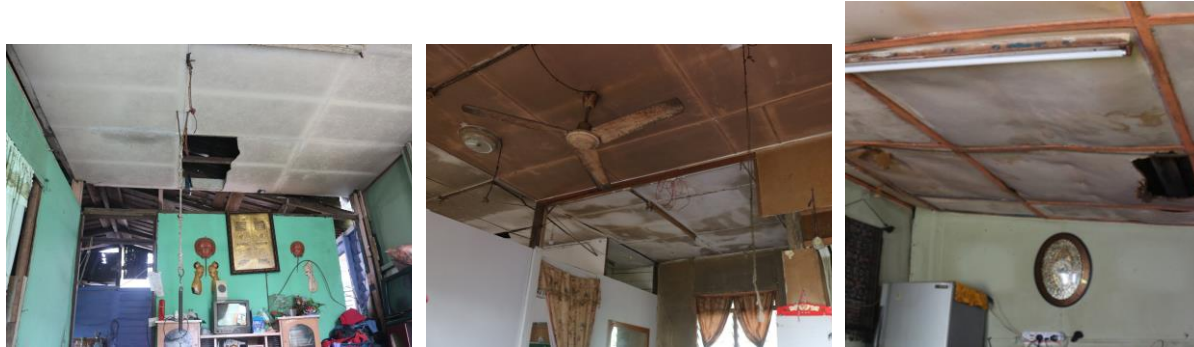


Figure 16: Leakage problem

The settlement problems also affected the internal part of the houses, predominantly related problems include splitting and crack beam and crack internal partition. If the beam problem is not addressed, it may affect the structural integrity of the house and may cause the house to collapse (refer to Figure 17).

Splitting and crack beam



Broken asbestos toilet panel due to
settlement problem



Figure 17: Internal settlement problem

Uneven flooring, worn out and torn
linoleum, lack daylighting and ventilation



Small space in the tent



Figure 18: Poor quality materials and small space

Similar to the external part of the building, internal parts are made up of cheap, recyclable and poor-quality materials. There are even houses without proper flooring, on bare ground and covered only with linoleum mat or worn-out carpets. The house tends to be damp during the rainy season due to lack of daylighting and ventilation. Most of the new structures are small and cramped and do not take into account setbacks with other houses, thus making

them susceptible to the danger of fire hazards as the houses are now built close to each other (refer to Figure 18).

Factors affecting inability to maintain or repair houses

The main factors that contribute to inability to maintain and repair their houses is due to poverty. Poverty in the study area are due to low income per capita and unstable job, which are related to low education attainment and lack of skills. Even for those with stable incomes, the number of households is high, making the per capita income low. Lack of employment opportunities is often seen as the main cause of poverty among the respondents. Most of them are involved in the informal sector such as petty traders and contract workers. There were also single mothers, elderly, disabled, and ill respondents who have no ability to work.

Due to a lack of skills, including knowledge and skills in maintaining and repairing houses, the defects were not addressed immediately, causing the problems to worsen in the long run. Structural problem is common due to lack of maintenance and settlement problem, such as insufficient restraint ties at the roof level that results in lateral movement and horizontal cracking in the wall panel. It is common for them to extend their houses illegally due to the increasing number of their family. This action is very dangerous especially when the construction work is conducted without proper safety procedure, using low quality or dangerous materials like asbestos panels. The changes can affect structural elements such as foundations, ground slabs or load-bearing walls. This action can cause damage to the building, which can also cause the house to collapse.

Physically, the Kampung Sentosa resettlement area is located on deep peat soil. Peat soil has high natural moisture content, high compressibility and water-holding capacity, low specific gravity, low bearing capacity, and medium to low permeability. The low bearing capacity characteristic of the peat soil also leads to structural problems of the houses because the soil structure cannot support the weight of the building, especially if the houses are of heavy weight materials.

Other than that, the location of the resettlement area is quite far from the main commercial and industrial areas in Sibul that offer many job opportunities, making it difficult for those without transportation to commute. Furthermore, public transportation is also not efficient in the area.

Due to poverty, most of the residents here are still heavily dependent on subsidies and government aid from both the state and federal governments, including for the provision of housing and funding from the local authority for repair materials. Although the government provides land and house, some of the settlers prefer to stay together with their big families. This mentality also leads to overcrowded issue and it is difficult for the government to meet all their wish to stay together. Funding provided by the local authority is also not sufficient to repair the house, since the deterioration are mainly major, especially when it involves the structural integrity of the house.

In addition to poverty, there is also a lackadaisical attitude towards maintaining general hygiene in the house, including the house's compound. A major problem is related to the irresponsible attitude of parents towards applying for birth certificates and identity cards for their children. Without both documents, their children will have problem to go to school, applying for government assistances and job. In the long term, these children will fail to find better jobs and better wages due to lack education opportunities. At the end, these children will be trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty.

Discussion

Impacts of living in an Unliveable House

There are many social and health impacts of living in an unliveable house. Social issues include housing condition that is not conducive to raise children due to hygiene issues and overcrowding, which is not comfortable for the children growth and does not promote a conducive environment to study. Overcrowding also affects the general well-being of the occupants, which is also related to privacy and gender issues. The study area recorded a high number of children and youth who either do not attend school or are dropouts. This is partly due to the absence of citizenship documentation or a lost interest in studying. There are cases of drugs problems, illegal motorcycle racing, and vandalism. All of these problems affect the general public safety and peace in the neighbourhood.

Health impacts include sick syndrome building, for example, utilising dangerous materials like asbestos, where it can cause fibrotic lung disease and change in the lining of the chest cavity. As a matter of fact, one of the respondents suffers from lung problem or *pulmonary edema*. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to prove the correlation between the respondent's illness and living in an asbestos wall house.

Poverty is often linked to the inability to get better shelter, where there is a close relationship between prolonged poverty to the conditions of the houses. The increase cost of living makes it more difficult to afford a habitable house. This results in the sprouting up of squatters in towns and cities as a coping strategy for those who migrate from the rural to urban areas. Squatters also provide the cheapest option for the urban poor to achieve an affordable shelter. Most squatters are either on government or private land. When there is a need for development in the areas, the government has no other choice but to resettle the squatters in a land with a lower premium. Both the federal and state governments have invested billions on affordable and low cost housing for the poor. However, problems were assumed as solved, once relocation or rehousing had been completed. This is not necessarily the case, housing problems can persist despite the resettlement, which is confirmed by findings from this study. The implications of the study show that solving one element alone is not enough. There is a need for a more holistic and integrated solutions to resettlement that takes into account the provision of social, economic, and cultural issues of the poor. This includes a resettlement that offers an opportunity to improve and sustain livelihood as well as social amenities to promote and enhance socio-cultural and religious values. Currently there are religious buildings and schools provided in the area, but there are no facilities for youth and socio-economic activities.

Limitation/Implications/Conclusion

The study shows that resettlement of squatters into new areas does not necessarily solved the roots problem. This is because resettlement provides land and new houses but does not solve economic issues, related to livelihood and income generations. The findings show that there is a close relationship between poverty and unliveable conditions of the house. Poverty also affects affordability to repair and maintain existing house, as well as promote illegal extension and building of new housing structure within a limited space of a single lot when the household members increase. These practices actually recreate chaotic and unplanned settlement, similar to the conditions when they were in the previous squatters. Although the government has taken many initiatives to solve housing issues, however, it is also up to the recipients to ensure that the privilege to housing and land provision is maintained, including the willingness and determination to improve their standard of living by breaking the vicious poverty trap cycle. Recommendations to improve the situation are by providing awareness to the community on

the danger of living in an unliveable housing, training to identify defects and providing skills to repair houses, including plumbing and electrical knowledge. It is also suggested that a research on lightweight and affordable materials and easily maintained prototype house should be done to address the settlement issues due to peat soil in Kampung Sentosa. A research on the health effects of prolonged exposure to unliveable housing can also be conducted to link between health and unliveable housing conditions.

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