CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Each and every life on the planet earth produces waste. Human being as a civilised group of life produces more waste than any other forms, and the amount of waste produced daily grow in tandem with the growth in population. The wastes need to be efficiently and optimally disposed in order to ensure that they are economical and occupy minimal space. In addition, the disposal method must also comply with environmental and related laws.

The planning involved in this, is so complex that effective mechanism for efficient management of solid waste disposal is rather difficult. In October 1994, as part of Vision 2020, the federal government of Malaysia initiated the privatisation of the waste management system by issuing a call for proposals. Prior to this, the respective local authorities managed the solid waste disposal.

In the year 1998, an action plan for A Beautiful and Clean Malaysia (ABC) was formulated. The implementation of this plan led local authorities to manage solid waste with much guided support and assistance from Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) and Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA).1 In the same year an interim take over in transferring the ownership of

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solid waste management system through concessions was initiated. Up to now, it is estimated that full divestment will take place in mid-2001.

Under this concession, Alam Flora Sdn. Bhd. (AFSB) has taken the responsibility in handling the solid waste management of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and four other states, i.e. Selangor, Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan. Waste management does not only involve the concessionaire alone but also the community. The residents are also lacking in awareness of their misdeeds to the environment through the indiscriminate wastes they produce. On top of these, the participation level of local communities in Malaysia is said to be very discouraging.

Greater and effective awareness especially in solid waste management can be a success provided there is public participation in activities run by the authorities concerned, including AFSB. A key inducer to greater participation is the formation of community organisation to voice out the collective opinion of the community.\(^2\) This is imperative as the community participation in solid waste management in a number of countries across the world have recorded success.

There are a number of studies from various countries concerning this field. The research brings to attention the awareness

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of waste management in residents and also their participation in this issue.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The findings of a research carried out on Asia’s environmental crisis indicate that 13 of the world’s 15 most polluted cities are located in Asia. Furthermore one-third of Asians do not have access to clean water and one half do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities.³ Research shows that an average Malaysian produce between 0.5 and 0.75 kg in rural areas and 1.15 to 1.57 kg in urban centres.⁴ The amount of solid waste generated is expected to exceed nine million tones by the year 2000 in Malaysia.⁵

These figures are relatively lower than in Canada with 1.7 kg per person per day. Nonetheless, they are relatively higher than those in Australia, Europe, Japan and China.⁶ Realising the damages to the environment, there have been numerous appeals by various authorities to reduce waste at source.

AFSB and local authorities are working together to provide garbage collection from the areas under their jurisdiction to the landfills for disposal. At the landfill sites, contractors carry out the separating process for recycling purposes while the remnants would

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be levelled. Hence, there will be a great demand for more landfills in the future in tandem with growing population and industrialisation.

Apart from this there is a growing demand for proper disposal of garbage, including having treated landfills so as to care for the environment and ensure a sustainable development. Along this, the 3R concept in management of solid waste, i.e. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle gives priority to waste reduction.

An effective solid waste management system also requires active participation of residents and city folks, failing with all system that has been planned, will prove to be a failure. Many have regarded their poor response to lack of awareness, or having a lackadaisical attitude, or even blame others or other agencies to take care of the functions for them. In most of these, the users themselves avoid their own participation in the 3R concept or even proper disposal of their wastes.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research focuses on the following objectives:

i) to acquire in-depth knowledge on the type of solid waste, its disposal and the waste reduction programs.

ii) to seek information on the participation and the current awareness level of the community groups and units in Petaling Jaya. Their involvement in contributing to reduction by the waste produces and in preventing illegal dumping are also given due attention.
iii) to understand the role of AFSB including examining their role in providing services, specifically in Petaling Jaya; and also seek the respective area’s resident’s perception on their provided services.

iv) to seek information whether there are any waste reduction programmes introduced by AFSB in association with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and residential communities in Petaling Jaya.

1.4 Scope of Research

A research was conducted to gather information on the awareness level of the residents in Sections 17, 10, SS 9A and Kampung Lindungan in Petaling Jaya which has been the source of data for the related topic.

In terms of community groups, this study focuses on the interest groups, especially NGOs or Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Petaling Jaya namely, Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), Treat Every Environment Special (TrEES), World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia (WWF), Petaling Jaya Community Centre (PJCC) and the Residents Association of Section 10, in instilling awareness and participation in solid waste management programmes involving the people of this area.

A research also has been conducted in AFSB as the solid waste manager to understand the procedures and activities that are involved in managing solid waste. These were followed by diagnosing
their role in urban services and efforts towards reducing waste products. For this, the study has been focused on AFSB office in Kelana Jaya.

In addition, some residents in Sections 17, 10, SS 9A and Kampung Lindungan in Petaling Jaya have been the source of data on participation and level of awareness.

1.5 Significance of Research

This research is expected to provide an insight on the role of the solid waste manager in providing the service of environmental protection, health and enabling sustainable development.

This research focuses on the awareness level of the communities, especially in environmental issues concerning wastes that they dispose of and also the acknowledgement of the NGOs/CBOs in Petaling Jaya. This study is expected to be an important source for government officers, and other researchers in understanding the scope and functions of AFSB as well as understanding the level of awareness of environmental protection across various components of the society.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Data Collection Strategies

Primary and secondary data sources have been used in this study:

a) Primary data

Data are collected by means of interviews with the management of the organisation such as AFSB, Petaling Jaya Municipal Council
(MPPJ) and member of related NGOs/CBOs in Petaling Jaya. In addition interviews with six residents per area and residents’ associations are also interviewed. Conversations are recorded with permission to take notes during interviews.

b) Secondary data

This was done through the research in the library sources in University Malaya, NGOs/CBOs and the AFSB in Kelana Jaya.

1.7 Limitations

There were few problems in accordance to the completion of this research report, they are as follows:

i) getting co-operation from the residents while carrying out the survey was a main problem. This occurred especially in the area of the wealthy residents who refused to extend co-operation with the researcher.

ii) lack of time had also been a major problem since the duration given for the completion of the research report was only six months and more time was needed for the survey.

iii) interview techniques did not pose a problem at all as the researcher had been trained in other surveys prior to this.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The following chapter would indulge on a review of literatures on the concept of solid waste, its disposal and management in a global perspective. This would deal with the various categories of solid
waste and waste reduction programs that has been widely implemented in other countries to understand the concepts and the best practices of solid waste in various countries across the globe, which involves a greater participation level from the community of the respective countries. The means to privatise the service also will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three would emphasise on AFSB as the solid waste manager, NGOs/CBOs and MPPJ. Discussion will focus on the organisation as a whole and also its function in providing the service to the community as well as the residents of Petaling Jaya. This includes services provided and the regularity of the service given for the case of AFSB.

Chapter four will focus on the analysis of the interviews with the residents on their awareness on the related issue. This will also bring forward the interactive role of NGOs/CBOs in Petaling Jaya and MPPJ with the residents in effort towards increasing the awareness of the people in the above topic.

The final chapter will focus on summary of findings, challenges and concludes with some recommendations.