

ABSTRACT

The growth of urban population in Riau province since last few decades has shown a trend of continuous increase. Although, there were some trends of constant and slightly declining percentage of population in some urban areas and newly formed districts, in overall the number of population was increasing.

This phenomenon can be observed in the number of population growth since last few decades. During the years of 1971 to 1980, the average growth of urban population increased about 1.53 percent annually. The growth was continued to increase in the next decades which was during the years of 1981 to 1990 to an average of 2.67 percent annually. Furthermore, it was recorded in many literatures that since 1930 to 1990, despite of the fluctuation in the percentages, the increase of the percentages were significant. The increase is predicted to be continued to higher levels in the future years.

The rapid growth of urban population in Riau has arisen several implications. First, the central government and its urban development regulation have issued development schemes which are centralised in urban areas. As a result, several sectors which have been placed or localised in certain areas develop rapidly. Those include housing development which is based on public housing regulations. The housing regulations have stimulated the housing development in some urban areas which is financed by housing ownership credit (kredit kepemilikan rumah (KPR)) issued by Bank Tabungan Negara. In addition, real

estate development is also growing which is generally financed by private developers.

Secondly, in order to find low cost land (profit oriented), the developers tend to choose the sub-urban areas to build very simple houses (*rumah sangat sederhana*) and simple houses (*rumah sederhana*). This will give more pressures to the sub-urban areas. As an effect of that, re-classifications take place in some urban areas or districts.

Thirdly, relocation of urban population to the sub urban areas occurs. This is because of high pressures and lack of comfort in urban area. For example, from medical point of view, the rate of pollution and noise in urban area as central of activities (business, education, trade, administration) is considered beyond healthy environment. In term of urban development in Riau, that is also worsen by the increase of areas which have insufficient drainage, squatter houses, lack of clean water, bad traffic systems, low quality of air and uncompleted waste problems (Bagong, 1995).

The next implication is that the urban growth follows urban development or the opposite way. Migration is included in this relation. Migrants will find a settlement which suitable to their needs and profession. In their efforts to find settlements, they will face difficulties such as expensive house rent. Anticipating that, (since the urban government has not yet shown any effective mechanism) they may choose to find houses in the sub urban areas. This assumption is according to the fact that the cost of house rent in sub urban areas is cheaper. If by some reasons they would still have to stay in the urban areas, the alternative might go to staying in cheap houses at the slums or stagger houses.

Another important implication is the sharp change of population proportion since 1990 to 1995 which was caused by inter-regional development and expansion activities in the scope of economic development regulation such as *Sijori* (Singapore, Johor and Riau which is now well known as IMS-GT) and North growth triangle (Sumatra Utara, Malaysia and Thailand). Other than that, the implication is also influenced by the trend of transition in economic sector to focus on services and manufacturing.

Further meaning of those implications is that there is an imbalance distribution of population in the district and urban areas in Riau province. As a result of that, a more serious effort needs to be performed by the provincial together with the districts or city governments to improve housing programmes which is not only in the administrative but also to the further aspects such as sufficient public facilities to support urban life (urban community).

Efforts to improve the comfort or to organise urban area can be set by integrating or involving all parties to make them more clever and applicable. In the past, the administrative procedures and regulations are very dependent to the police and programmes issued from Jakarta and related province. However, since local autonomy implemented, urban or city authorities has performed studies and develop suitable designs to manage the urban areas. These efforts shall continuously be improved. On the other hand, if the actual development of urban areas is not organised or left as what is progressing now such as in the case of Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia, the pseudo urbanization may occur in the area.