

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Objective**

The pace of land development in Malaysia is increasing from time to time. However the pace varies according to location. Land around town areas has experienced a more rapid rate of development compared to rural areas. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of Malay Reserve Lands (MRL). Even if MRL is in the town vicinity, the pace of development is far below compared to a non-MRL in the same location.

One of the main obstacles to the development of MRL is the Malay Reserve Land Enactment. Discrepancies in the enactments among the states in Malaysia is one of the main hurdle in developing MRL. Underdevelopment status of MRL has slowed down economic and social progress of the Malay race itself.

All the MRL in Peninsular Malaysia is facing similar kinds of problems. Therefore through this research paper, it is hoped that some of the problems will be highlighted further and at the same time some suggestions to overcome these problems will be put forward. Sungei Penchala which is in Federal Territory (Kuala Lumpur), will be used as a case study to project the whole issue.

## 1.2 Research Scope

Land use in Peninsular Malaysia has been changing from time to time. During the Malacca Sultanate, land had almost no function, besides serving as a tool to keep life going. However during the colonial period, land became an important business tool.

Unfortunately, the Malay community could not see the importance of holding on to their land. This has caused a few individuals especially foreigners to take advantage of the ignorance, where in a short period time, many Malays sold off their land. The situation became worse with the introduction of rubber and other cash crops in the country.

The situation began to cause some anxiety among the British administrators. They did want to see Malays as tenants in their own country. To overcome the situation, British introduced the "Malay Reservation Land" (MRL) Enactment. By 1941 all the non federated Malay States had this enactment enforced in their respective states. From time to time this enactment was amended. Although this enactment is sanctioned through the constitution however the variations in the enactment itself has become a major obstacle in developing MRL. These differences will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

Almost all the MRL in Malaysia faces the same problems. To understand the problem at greater length, Sungei Penchala and Segambut, located in Federal Territory were chosen as the sites to carry out the study.

In Chapter 4 matters ranging from social to economic issues were discussed. Due to the lack of response from Segambut residents, the analysis was limited to questionnaires returned by residents of Sungei Penchala. However certain aspects, such as public ownership and land valuation, which were gathered from secondary sources were used to discuss the issues of MRL for both the Sungei Penchala and Segambut.

An analysis of the survey conducted will be done in Chapter 5. The analysis will spell out at greater length, the problems, such as multiple ownership and fear of losing identity, faced by the Sungei Penchala residents.

In addition, some suggestions to overcome these problems will be highlighted in the following chapter. Since these problems are not only faced by Sungei Penchala MRL but also by other MRL as well, therefore the discussion will not be limited only to Sungei Penchala.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The research was conducted through a survey. A total number of 150 questionnaires was distributed through various individuals to residents staying in Segambut and Sungei Penchala. However only 23 questionnaires were returned by the Segambut residents. To avoid 'biasness', the analysis was therefore based only on 93 respondents gathered from Sungei Penchala. Nevertheless, general matters such as 'public facilities', which were gathered from the visits to these areas, were used to make a comparison between these areas.

Secondary sources such as articles and journals were used whenever possible. **F**acts such as MRL enactment was taken from National Land Code (NLC).

Another main source of information was through interviews conducted with **t**he Sungei Penchala residents. Besides the residents, a few government officials, **s**pecifically those working in the Federal Land Valuation and Federal Territory Land **D**epartment, provided some useful points and facts in writing this research paper.