

CHAPTER 4: SUNGEI PENCHALA - THE MALAY RESERVE LAND

4.1. Introduction

Federal Territory (FT) of Kuala Lumpur was established on 1st February 1972 with a land area of 60,160 acres. Initially it was a part of Selangor. Overall there are 6 areas gazetted as MRL in FT.

Table 4.1

Location And Size Of Malay Reserve Land In Federal Territory

Area	Size (Acres)	%
Gombak	918.00	29.83
Sungei Penchala	743.00	24.14
Segambut	728.00	23.66
Kampung Bharu	257.55	8.37
Kampung Datok Keramat	226.00	7.34
Selayang	205.00	6.66
TOTAL	3,077.55	100

Source: Land Department, Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (adjusted).

Total MRL in FT will actually accumulate to about 5.12 percent of the total land area of FT. All these 6 areas lie within the radius of 16 Kilometres. Only Kampung Baru is situated in the heart of Kuala Lumpur.

In all these MRL, Malay race is the most dominant, however Kampung Bharu, which is located in the trade triangle has an almost equal number of Chinese.

Table 4.2

No Of Households And Population In MRL In Federal Territory
(As in 1970)

Area	Households		Population	
	Numbers	Per acre	Numbers	Per acre
Kampung Baru	3,559	13.8	19,143	74.3
Dato' Keramat	2,372	10.49	12,550	55.53
Gombak	1,559	1.70	9,202	10.0
Selayang	432	2.11	2,180	10.63
Segambut	364	0.5	1,949	2.67
Sungei Penchala	234	0.31	1,441	1.94
TOTAL	8,520		46,455	

Source: From National Census, Statistic Department 1970 (adapted).

As expected, Kampung Baru has the most number of households and persons per acre. Even in terms of concentration, Kampung Baru recorded the highest with 13.8 households per acre or 74.3 persons per acre.

Segambut is another area with MRL. Location wise, it is nearer to Kuala Lumpur than Selayang, yet Selayang has more number of households and population per acre. Selayang has a concentration of 2.11 households per acre while Segambut has only 0.5 households per acre.

When analysing land use in terms of population, Selayang too shows a better rate compared to Gombak. Only Kampung Baru and Dato Keramat, which are located closer to the trade triangle, have a better land use rate compared to Selayang.

As expected, Sungei Penchala shows that the number of households and persons per acre are the lowest among the MRL in FT. There are only 0.31 households per acre or 1.94 persons per acre.

When a comparison of development is done between all these MRL we could conclude that Sungei Penchala is the least developed compared to the others, although it is situated closer to town. Not only is Sungei Penchala least developed compared to other MRL, its impact is also realised in other areas close to Sungei Penchala. A few residential areas such as Taman Tun Dr. Ismail and Bandar Utama is a testimony to this fact. At a glance anyone can conclude that these areas are in a very advanced stage of development compared to Sungei Penchala.

4.2 Sungei Penchala as Malay Reserve Land.

4.2.1 Location and Structure

Sungei Penchala was gazetted as MRL in the year 1916. It is situated to the west of Kuala Lumpur. Sungei Penchala is actually situated at the border of Selangor and FT. A road which bypasses Sungei Penchala acts as the boundary. Sungei Penchala's MRL and the Segambut's MRL are both located side by side. Sungei Penchala which is located in FT, has a rectangular shape. (Refer to Appendix 4).

Table 4.3

Distribution Of Lots In Segambut And Sungei Penchala

Area	Total Area (acre)	No of Lots	Size of lots (acre)					
			0 - 1		1 - 2		2 - above	
			No	%	No	%	No	%
Segambut	728	414	274	66.2	81	19.6	59	14.2
Sungei Penchala	743	564	258	45.7	284	50.4	22	3.9

Source : Land Department, Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (adjusted).

Although Sungei Penchala is slightly bigger than Segambut, it has been broken up to more lots than that of Segambut. If we were to assume that every lot is of the same size (which is not), then Segambut does better. On average (total area divided by number of lots) every lot in Segambut is 1.76 acre, while that of Sungei Penchala is only 1.32 acre.

Almost all aspects related to size of lots, Segambut seems to be in a better condition. For example 14.2 percent of the lots in Segambut are bigger than 2 acres, while only 3.9 percent of lots in Sungei Penchala is bigger than 2 acres. However in both these areas, lots bigger than 2 acres are located far from the main road. In fact most of them are inhabitable where they are either unattended or converted into durian orchard. This is one of the many reasons for the difficulty in developing MRL, because many of the sizeable lots are either in remote area or land topography is either too high or too low.

Initially Sungei Penchala was an agriculture based society, especially planting of rubber. At present, there are no rubber tappers in Sungei Penchala. However, rubber trees are still present in the area. From the interview it was gathered that there is a durian orchard at the fringe of Sungei Penchala.

4.2.2 Economic Activity

From the observation, it was noticed that the majority of Sungei Penchala residents are either wage earners or are involved in business activities. Many of them are working in Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam or Bukit Damansara industrial areas. Where else Segambut residents prefer to work in industrial areas such as Kepong and Sri Damansara. However a link road connecting Segambut and Petaling Jaya via Hartamas has encouraged many Segambut residents to work in Petaling Jaya.

One interesting aspect in Segambut compared to Sungei Penchala is that, many Segambut residents especially women and old folks like to indulge in business. The most common one is setting up sundry shop. The number is quite large where on average for every ten houses along the main road there is a shop, thus forcing diseconomies of scale to take place.

About 47 percent of residents from Sungei Penchala and Segambut earn more than RM900 per month. However, among the respondents who completed the questionnaire were pensioners staying in Segambut. From the observation it was noticed that there are more ex-government servants staying in Segambut compared to Sungei Penchala. One reason attributed to this factor is that Segambut is located

nearer to Bukit Damansara where many government departments are located. Lower rents in Segambut compared to Sungei Penchala has acted as a stimulus for many to stay there.

4.2.3 Public facilities

(a) Transport.

There is a public bus service to Sungei Penchala and Segambut. Segambut enjoys a better bus service because, it is served by buses that follow the Sri Sinar or Bukit Maluri routes. On the other hand Sungei Penchala residents have only two bus routes to choose from i.e. those going to Sungei Penchala and Taman Tun Dr. Ismail. Even in terms of buses providing services to these areas Segambut is in a better position because of the availability of Intrakota and Park May. On the contrary, Sungei Penchala is only served by Intrakota.

(b) Electricity and Water

Some elders who had stayed in these areas throughout their life had some interesting facts to tell. One of the resident of Sungei Penchala said that back in 1970's they used to collect water from the Sungei Penchala river for their daily life. Today, no one collects the river water because all the houses are supplied with pipe water. A few houses have wells in their compounds, but the wells are not used.

All the houses in Segambut and Sungei Penchala are supplied with electricity. However there are some who still keep generators in their houses. Most of these generators are old and are not in working conditions.

(c) Schools

In Sungei Penchala there is a primary school which caters for the locals. However there are still some who send their children to the primary school in Taman Tun Dr. Ismail citing that the 'environment' there is more conducive for learning. Nevertheless, the enrolment in Sungei Penchala primary school has increased from time to time.

There is no secondary school in Sungei Penchala. Some of the residents expressed that it is high time that the government provides a secondary school for them. It is a matter of time before the government builds a secondary school there, since there was a policy emphasising the provision of school in every residential area.

There are also a religious schools in Segambut and Sungei Penchala, where *fardu ain* classes are conducted. The people in these areas pay a lot of attention in the spiritual development of their children. This can be seen by the total enrolment in these schools.

(d) Mosque.

There is a mosque each in Segambut and Sungei Penchala. Besides the mosques there are also a few "Suraus". Almost all the residents, especially the old men, visit the mosque quite frequently. The mosque seems to play an important role in the residents' lives. For example there was an old man, who initially owned 10 acres of land, but later sold his land to 63 people. He feels that this would encourage more people going to the mosque.

(e) Graveyard

There is a large graveyard in the interior part of Sungei Penchala. Although some would argue that graveyards should not be included as public facilities, one would have to bear in mind that the Muslim religion does not allow cremation. Therefore, it is important to have a graveyard, and the community is putting efforts to maintain the graveyard. This is to avoid such cases where graveyards have been converted into housing areas.

4.2.4 Land Value

Similar to other commodities, land value is expected to rise over the years. Land value in Sungei Penchala is no exception. On the whole land value in Sungei Penchala has increased by almost four folds. However the gap between the prices has widened according to the location. For example in 1975 the difference between land with road frontage and interior land was only about RM10,000 an acre however the difference in 1983 has reached almost RM45,000 an acre. (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Value Of Land (Sungei Penchala)

Area	Price Per Acre			
	1975- 1977*	After 1977*	1982	1983
Land fronting Jalan Damansara	30 000 - 40 000	50 000 - 60 000	110 075 - 120 182	120 182 - 129 904
Land with road frontage	20 000 - 25 000	30 000 - 40 000	110 075 - 120 182	110 075 - 120 182
Interior land suitable for residential or agriculture use (more than 1 acre)	10 000 - 15 000	15 000 - 20 000	65 154	65 154
Other interior land (more than 1 acre)	-	-	50 181	50181

Source: Property Market Reports (adjusted).

* Value based on the land transactions that took place

The rapid development that took place in the vicinity of Sungei Penchala has caused a positive spill-over effect. This can be seen by looking at the land value. For example, land value in Sungei Penchala has increased as a result of the development that took place in Taman Tun Dr. Ismail in later half of 1970's. (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Land Values In Sungei Penchala

LOCATION	Before Taman Tun Dr. Ismail (RM per acre)	After Taman Tun Dr. Ismail (RM per acre)
Land located beside the road which is suitable to build houses (more than 5 000 square feet)	30 000 - 40 000	50 000 - 60 000
Land located further from the main road which is suitable for both agriculture and housing (more than 1 acre)	20 000 - 25 000	30 000 - 40 000
Land located in the interiors (more than 1 acre)	10 000 - 15 000	15 000 - 20 000

Sources: Ismail (1980), *Tanah Rezab Melayu: Cadangan Penyelesaian Masalah dan Pembangunan - Suatu Kajian Keatas Kampung Sungei Penchala*. (adjusted).

As a consequence of the development of TTDI, land value in Sungei Penchala has increased almost double. For example, land located along the Jalan Damansara was only around RM30,000 per acre but, the price of this land reached almost RM50 000 per acre after the completion of TTDI project. There are also some Sungei Penchala residents who believe that their land value would increase after the construction of the Damansara-Puchong highway which is currently under construction.