Development Planning of Aboriginal People Resettlement Programme: Parliamentary Constituency of Cameron Highlands

Asan Ali Golam Hassan¹ and Devamany S. Krishnasamy²

¹ UTM International Business School (UTM-IBS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Kuala Lumpur, Jalan Sultan Yahya Petra, 54100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel. 0124176614. asanali@ibs.utm.my

² Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman. Tel. 0125021470. devamany@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
Among the governmental strategy to enhance the quality of life of the indigenous community is the implementation of the Resettlement Plan (RP) (Rancangan Penempatan Semula) and Village Reconstruction Programme (VRP) (Program Penyusunan Semula Kampung). RP involves the relocation of remote aboriginal communities scattered in an area and equipped them with basic amenities and economic activities for commercial agriculture in a specific location. The amenities and homes of the settlements are restructured with additional socio infra components in VRP. However, infrastructure and social amenities assistance including houses and the location of RP or VRP among indigenous communities may not be compatible with the choices they desire. In addition, their living standards may not have a significant change in the resettlement vicinity. After about 35 years of implementation, this study evaluates the impact of settlement/restructuring of indigenous people in the RP and VRP, located in the Parliament of Cameron Highlands, Pahang. The design of this study is descriptive quantitative and qualitative (surveys). Impact and satisfaction of the relocation program are evaluated using five indicators in terms of economic opportunities, social relationships, ability to maintain tradition, public utility services and satisfaction with the size/location of the village/house in the settlement area. In general, the results show that the RP and the VRP have managed to improve the quality of life of indigenous community. This study has found that the aboriginal satisfaction has increased compared to their previous village dwellings. However, these achievements are still low when compared with the same indicators at the national level. In fact, the study found that indigenous communities living in the RP are more successful than the VRP.

Keywords: indigenous people, aboriginal resettlement program, quality of life, Cameron Highlands.

Introduction
The aboriginal people or Orang Asli is a minority race and represents only 0.63 per cent of the total population of Malaysians. According to the records of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (DOAA), up until 2010, there were 178,197 Orang Asli comprising 36,658 head of households (HH). Up until 2010, there were 852 Orang Asli villages in Malaysia. These villages can be categorised into three, based on their location, level of economic development and the basic amenities that are made available to them. Around 61 per cent of the Orang Asli
live on the fringes of the towns, 38 per cent in the interiors and only one per cent live in the towns (JAKOA 2011).

The development Planning for the Orang Asli comprise the Structured Resettlement Programme, the Economic Development Programme and the Social Development Programme. The Structured Resettlement Programme involves the structured resettlement of Orang Asli villages systematically, equipping a house with water and electricity. In some areas, building a school, health clinic, police station, a DDOA office, tarred road and economic resources are providing land for the planting of rubber/palm oil.

Table 1: Orang Asli Development Planning

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection and Security from communists threats and teachings</td>
<td>Commercial land</td>
<td>Society and human development Plan</td>
<td>Special Programmes for those earning 40 per cent and below</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instill the spirit of integration</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Poverty Eradication</td>
<td>Programmes providing house, better infra and social amenities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Opportunities</td>
<td>Development of education and skilled Training</td>
<td>Education plan</td>
<td>Development Programmes to raise the standard of living</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-situ Settlement Programmes-Regrouping Programmes</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Training</td>
<td>Access to technology and communication information</td>
<td>Land ownership for commercial agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening up of new land, agriculture and fisheries programmes</td>
<td>Raise the quality of the public service</td>
<td>Village Info Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing basic facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eco-tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical and health</td>
<td></td>
<td>Land ownership</td>
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b 10th Malaysia Plan, p.115

Resettlement policies for the Orang Asli were undertaken since the emergency (1946-1960) for security purposes to protect the Orang Asli from communists influence. After the end of communists’ insurgency, in the 1980’s, the resettlement of the Orang Asli policy was more focused on raising their socio-economy profile and quality of their life (Mustaffa 2008).
The Structured Resettlement Programme for the Orang Asli is divided into two categories. The first category is Resettlement Plan (RP) (Rancangan Penempatan Semula), that was undertaken since 1979 in the Fourth Malaysian Plan and later re-enforced in the Fifth Malaysian Plan and Sixth Malaysian Plan as the main strategy to raise further socio-economic status of the Orang Asli community. Through the RP, the Orang Asli villages which were dispersed far in the interiors and were gathered together in one area that was provided with basic amenities and economic commercial agricultural activities (rubber and palm oil). The families that were involved were transferred to resettlement areas.

Through this planned programmes, amenities were easily made available and effective and was able to prevent the communist elements from influencing the Orang Asli in the interior areas. Besides raising the quality of life of the Orang Asli, this programme also gave them a chance to be involved in the modern economic activities. Through the rubber and palm oil planting programmes, the Orang Asli community received dividends from the crops, apart from being given a chance to be plantation workers. Until today, there are about 17 RP, that is, 6 in Perak, 7 in Pahang, 3 in Kelantan and 1 in Johor (JAKOA 2010). Around 14 percent of the Orang Asli live in RP areas (Mustaffa 2008).

The second category is and Village Reconstruction Programme (VRP) (Program Penyusunan Semula Kampung) where villages which are already in existence are rearranged and provided with basic facilities and economic activities like commercial farming. This programme was implemented since the Seventh Malaysian Plan (1996-2000) that involved around 217 Orang Asli villages (12,264 HH). The objective of this programme was to raise the standard of living of the Orang Asli community in the already existing villages through social-infra components like that, undertaken by the RP.

The environment of these relocated areas had far better conditions in terms of available infrastructure and social amenities than that available in the traditional villages of the Orang Asli. Having said that, however, the reallocation to the new areas was found to be not suitable for the culture, lifestyle and economic activity (mainly for forest produce) of the Orang Asli. Nevertheless, assistance in terms of infrastructure and social amenities including homes and the location of the area of the RP and VRP amongst the Orang Asli were likely to be at odds with what they desired. Some new houses were left empty by the registered residents. This is highly likely to be the result of the lifestyle of the Orang Asli community for whom the forest is an integral part of daily activity. Besides that, the Orang Asli’s choice of the specific area they stay in and the facilities they chose to have in their homes are heavily influenced by their social and cultural backgrounds as well as their beliefs.

The quality of life as well as the income of the low-income Orang Asli cannot be improved if their villages are a great distance away from the centre of local development (the town or city centre). This is because a significant number of the Orang Asli are involved in traditional

1 The third Structured Resettlement Programme for the Orang Asli is the New Villages Programme (Rancangan Kampung Baru). This resettlement programme is specially designed for the Orang Asli villages which border Thailand and are in KESBAN areas. The participants are equipped with SRP infra-social amenities as RP and VRP. The approach taken by KESBAN is – “Security and Development”, to provide security and economic stability in the boundary areas around a radius of 25 kilometer (km) from the international Malaysia – Thailand border. KESBAN was undertaken in 1979 with basic housing facilities in place together with economic programmes like agriculture, husbandry and village industries. No Orang Asli New Villages Programme locates in Cameron Highlands.
farming or tapping the forest produce which have low economic value (they usually work individually). Where the villages have been located near local development centres, a majority of Orang Asli have started working in the private sector or with the Government and thereby securing a higher and more consistent monthly income. Hence, a conflict exists between the areas of the housing programmes and their source of income. If the Orang Asli do not work individually, it is more likely that they will be more inclined and predisposed to living in villages that are closer to the centre of development.

Materials and Methods
This research will analyse the impact of resettlement programmes on the socio-economic level of the Orang Asli in the RP and in the VRP. Specifically, this research will analyse the economic impact in terms of type of job, location of the working place and income and expenditure. Besides that, this research will also ascertain how far the Orang Asli can retain their relationship with their own community and to ascertain the level of satisfaction of the Orang Asli of the basic facilities that are available in their villages now and what are the other facilities that they require. The structure of the research is descriptive that is both quantitative and qualitative (mixed-method). The research uses primary data that was obtained from the questionnaire through face to face interview with the respondents.

In this research, the area that was chosen covered the Orang Asli villages that were involved in the Structured Resettlement Programme in the Parliamentary Constituency of Cameron Highlands, in Pahang. The Parliamentary Constituency of Cameron Highlands covers all the districts (Tanah Rata, Ringlet & Hulu Telom) in Cameron Highlands and the district of Hulu Jelai in the district of Lipis (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Research Area
This research used the stratified random sampling method. This method was used to allow the HH from each village in the area of research that was chosen the probability of becoming a potential respondent. From the whole area of research in the Parliamentary Constituency of Cameron Highlands which has a HH population of about 2,260 (86 villages), 1,235 HHs were chosen as research samples. This figure represents 54.6 percent of the total population in the area of research in the Parliamentary Constituency of Cameron Highlands. The total number of villages involved in this research is 23 RP and 46 VRP area. In terms of distribution according to districts, 18 villages are in Hulu Telum (Cameron Highlands) and 51 villages are in the district of Hulu Jelai (Lipis). For the whole research, a total of 69 villages were involved with the resettlement programme in the district of the Parliamentary Constituency of Cameron Highlands.

*Paired Samples t-Test Statistics* (also referred to as *correlated groups t-test*) used to compare the average income of the HH prior to and after shifting. The research will also evaluate the level of satisfaction amongst the HHs based on five indicators:

1. Economy Opportunities
2. Community Relationship
3. Ability to retain traditional practices
4. Size and location of the village and house
5. Public amenities

Results and Discussions
There is a significant change in the type of main occupation and increase in income in the current settlements. If in the earlier settlements the main occupation of the HH was the foraging of jungle produce, in the current settlements, the main occupation of the HH in the RP area is working in the rubber and oil palm small holdings, whereas the main occupation of the HH in the VRP area is farming (subsistence agriculture). Foraging of jungle produce is now the second main occupation in the area of research (RP and VRP). In the current settlement, there are also member of households with part-time jobs, especially farming (subsistence agriculture). As for the location of the main occupation, a large number of the HHs work in the villages/settlements. At the same time, the HHs who are not working have decreased in both areas of research.

In terms of increase in income, there were significant changes after the HHs were involved in the resettlements whether in the RP or VRP area. In the RP area, the income of the HH had increased around 66 percent whereas 61 percent in the VRP area and VRP area. Even though relatively the average monthly income from the main occupation of the HH in the RP area (RM229) is less than the VRP area (RM232), the average monthly income from the part-time occupation and other sources of income which is high in the RP results in the total average monthly income of the HH in the RP area to be higher than the VRP area.

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<th>Table 2: Summary of the Economic Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Main previous occupation of the HH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main current occupation of the HH currently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of HH who were not working previously</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of HH who are currently not working</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location of the main occupation of the HH previously</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location of the main occupation of the HH now</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of HH who had part-time jobs previously</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage HH who had part-time jobs previously</td>
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<tr>
<td>The main part-time occupation of the HH</td>
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<td>Location of the current part-time</td>
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At the same time, 18 percent of the HH in the VRP area stated that their economic satisfaction remained unchanged in the new settlements compared with 15 percent HH in the RP area. Whereas, around 11 percent of the HH in the RP and VRP area stated that their economic satisfaction had decreased in the new settlement areas. A large part of this group (satisfaction remained unchanged or decreased) are those above 55 years and still retain their activity of foraging for jungle produce as a main occupation. At the same time, the age factor of the HH that is relatively high and the decrease in forest resources whether naturally or because of the change in the status of the jungle for purposes of development and commercial agriculture, results in decrease in the income obtained from forests.

In the RP area satisfaction increased between 64 to 78 percent. The highest percentage in increase in the RP area was for community relationships (family relationship of the HH, relationship of the HH with the local community, outside community, Batin, head of religion/imam, JAKOA officer, Local Councillor and with the Member of Parliament (which had increased). This situation was followed by economic satisfaction (economic opportunities, increase in the income of the HH and MH in the current village/scheme) satisfaction with ability to retain traditional practices of the Orang Asli community (in wedding, religious community and Sewang ceremonies) and lastly in satisfaction with the size and location of the current village/scheme.

In the RP area, an increase is visible in community relationships in cluster houses (78%) compared with previous settlements which are dispersed. Satisfaction here is also high compared with other areas of satisfaction (economic, traditional, village) and is higher in community satisfaction in the VRP area (71%). At the same time, RP has also been successful in increasing economic satisfaction and increasing the income of the HH and MH where 74 percent of the HH stated that their economic opportunities had increased. This number is much bigger when compared with the VRP area (71%). This is the same where retaining traditions and their daily practices are concerned which is higher in the RP area compared with the VRP area. However, in terms of satisfaction towards the size and location of the village, relatively, this is very low compared with satisfaction towards community, economy and tradition.

In the VRP, satisfaction in terms of size and location of the village and community relationship increased when compared with economic opportunities and retention of

<table>
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<tr>
<th>job of the HH</th>
<th>(90.4%)</th>
<th>(94.0%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average monthly income of the HH from the previous main occupation</td>
<td>RM77</td>
<td>RM90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly income of the HH from the current main occupation</td>
<td>RM229</td>
<td>RM232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly income of the HH from the current part-time occupation</td>
<td>RM115</td>
<td>RM47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average monthly income of the HH from the current other sources of income</td>
<td>RM63</td>
<td>RM58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Monthly Total Average Income of the HH</td>
<td>RM407</td>
<td>RM337</td>
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traditions. Differing from the RP area, the VRP programme did not involve moving village. Due to this, satisfaction towards the size and location of the village and community relationships remained significantly unchanged when compared with the RP participants.

In the early stages of the implementation of this RP programme, each participant was given some economic opportunities where they were given land for commercial farming and it can be in term of rubber or oil palm with the assistance of the relevant government agency. In the VRP area, commercial farming programmes depended on the land reserves that were already available for development.

Relatively, the distribution of land to the HH (participants) in the VRP area is much smaller than the participants in the RP area. In relation to this, the size of the land which is small is suitable for subsistence cultivation and is not suitable for cultivation of rubber and oil palm. This factor is also related to income from the main source of occupation of the HH in the RP and VRP area. The main occupation of the HH in the RP area is working in the rubber and oil palm small holdings whereas in the VRP it is cultivation of subsistence crops. The income from rubber and oil palm is also much higher than subsistence cultivation of crops in the research area.

In terms of satisfaction in retaining traditions, it was found that the percentage in the RP area was much higher than the VRP area. The age factor of the MH in the RP area which was much higher in the VRP area (age structure which was young) results in more youth (secondary school leavers) in the RP area compared with the VRP area. Activities like wedding ceremonies, community celebrations and Sewang were held more often in the RP area compared with the VRP area.

By rearranging the research indicators to only two choice answers, which is satisfied and not satisfied, in the RP area the percentage of HH most satisfied (highest) was with community relationships (1), economic opportunities (2), ability to retain traditional practices (3), size and location of villages (4) and lastly related to the public services that were available in the RP area (5). Whereas in the VRP area, the percentage of HH most satisfied were with the size and location of the village (1), community relationships (2), economic opportunities (3), ability to retain traditional practices (4) and lastly related to the public services that were available in the VRP area (5).

In the RP area satisfaction towards the size and location of the village is the fourth compared with the VRP area. This is because, as discussed in Chapter four, RP involves moving from village to village, whereas in the VRP area it only involves restructuring the villages which are already there. Satisfaction with the size and location of the village in the VRP area is high because they have lived in the same area for a long time (since their previous generations) and much of the VRP areas are near the Malay community villages and close to the main road to the towns.

However, the satisfaction towards economic opportunities for the population in the RP area is much higher compared with the population in the VRP area. This is because the resettlement in the RP is planned for more structured economic opportunities. Besides this, the satisfaction for retaining traditions in the RP area is also much higher when compared with the VRP area. This situation is related to the age factor of the household and the location factor of the
settlement area. The process of cultural assimilation of the Orang Asli community and the Malay community took place more in the VRP area. Whereas, in both the areas, the percentage that were most dissatisfied were towards the public facilities that were available.

**Conclusion**

Orang Asli represents the minority race whose percentage is less than the total population of Malaysia. In Malaysia, the focus on the development policies of the Orang Asli has been undertaken since 1954 through the Orang Asli Act (Act 134) and the establishment of the Department of Orang Asli (DOA). However, till today the Orang Asli community remains a minority group that is marginalised from mainstream national development or at the international level, they are still termed as “the most marginalized sector of society”. In Malaysia, even though the percentage of the population who live in town areas is increasing, but only about one percent of Orang Asli community live in town areas.

In general, the Restructuring Programme in the research area, that is RP and VRP was successful in achieving the target in terms of raising the standard of living of the Orang Asli community. The satisfaction of the Orang Asli community that is measured in terms of community relations, economic opportunities, ability to retain traditional practices, location and size of the village had increased compared to their previous settlements.

However, in general, the objectives of the developmental plans for Orang Asli had assisted in increasing the quality of life of the community. This achievement is still low compared with the national average. When a comparison is made between the RP and the VRP, research indicates that the success in increasing the quality of life of the Orang Asli community was more in the RP than in the VRP (based on the indicators used in this research).2

However, in terms of economic impact, their income and involvement in the modern agricultural activities had increased but the rate of increase is still low compared with the average monthly income of the population of Malaysia. Almost all (90%) of the Orang Asli community in the research area are in the below of 40 percent group of households with the lowest income threshold. Besides this, the poverty rate amongst the Orang Asli community is still very high. Around 80 percent of the population are within the poor households.3

Besides, even though foraging for jungle production is not the main source of income for the Orang Asli community, this practice is still the second main source of income in the research area. In relation to this, the objective of the 10th Malaysian Plan to reduce the poverty issues amongst the Orang Asli community from 50.0 percent in 2009 to 25.0 percent in 2015

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2 As an example, the research of Muftaffa, (2008:186) shows that amongst the weaknesses of RP are (1) dependency on traditional economy, (2) limited job opportunities and insecure future (3) low awareness regarding the importance of education (4) insufficient infrastructures as planned. However, through this research, it was found that achievements (1) to (4) were satisfactory in the RP compared with the VRP. Research done by Devamany & Asan Ali (2016a; 2016b) found that the RP and the VRP have managed to improve the quality of life of indigenous community.

3 The findings of this research is similar to the findings of Juli Edo et.al (2008) in the Batu Berangkai area and in Kampar, Perak; Sungai Ruil and Cameron Highlands, Pahang; Bukit Lanjan and Tanjung Sepat, Selangor which found that around 80% of them earn an income of less than RM800 and below (poor).
requires a holistic approach to enhance the earning potential and capacity of the Orang Asli community.

It cannot be denied that the location factor of the villages of Orang Asli community which is far interior, limits the accessibility of development to their areas thus resulting in limited job opportunities in the area of research. However, by increasing access to transportation and implementing special capacity building programmes for the Orang Asli community, it is felt that their monthly income will be increased.

Besides, a large part of the location of the main occupations and part-time jobs (income source of the Orang Asli community) are in their villages including reserved land, customary land within the ‘rayau’ area. The researcher observes that the Orang Asli community (including the youth and especially women) seldom migrate from their settlement areas. They are more comfortable and feel ‘safe’ staying in their current community.

In relation to this, the policy that “if development cannot be brought to people, bring the people toward development” is very inappropriate. What is more important is how these development projects (or rural areas) which are becoming closer to the Orang Asli community are able to assist in raising the standard of living of the Orang Asli community. As an example, in the category of unskilled workers, (including hotel and restaurant workers), a suitable policy that has been drafted is to limit the involvement of foreign workers and replace them the involvement of the Orang Asli community. Nevertheless, policy and formulation preparation of psycho-socio programs for the youth have to be undertaken to strengthen their preparedness to capitalize on available opportunities and resources.

In the research area, economic development through the planting of rubber and oil palm together with the relevant government agencies has to be reevaluated. Land size for each participant of between two to six acres is found to be not economical to support the income of Orang Asli households which have member of household who are relatively high in number. Besides, the issuance of land title and grants to the participants will increase the participants’ efforts which will then directly increase productivity on the land which is available. In comparison, the participants of the FELDA scheme are given 10 acres of land and individuals are issued title documents after they have settled payment of the cost of development of the land/said settlement to FELDA. The FELDA Model which has been recognized at the international level as a success model to increase the income of rural people can be adopted for the Orang Asli community. The terms of agreement can be restructured and modified to minimize abuse and to increase sustainability of ownership.

Socio-cultural and demographic factors of the Orang Asli community also have to be taken into account when drafting resettlement programmes, including the type of houses, number of rooms and the area size of the house. As an example, the house of the Special Housing Programme (PPRT) which has two rooms and is without a balcony is found to be unsuitable for the Orang Asli community. Besides, the Orang Asli community prefers the toilets to be outside the house and there are amongst them who prefer houses on pillars and not on the ground. Due to this, it is more suitable if the Orang Asli community is given a choice on the type of houses in the Special Housing Programme (PPRT) with the same costs. These houses must be suitable and can complement their culture, customs and tradition. In addition, they do
not like to have houses that are very close to each other. Usually, they will build a house next to their own house for their married children, thus requiring the space around their home. This is because of the emotional and family bondage that is very deep and has been strongly rooted amongst the Orang Asli households.

The highest percentage of those who are not satisfied is in relation to the availability of transportation. All the resettlement areas should be connected by tarred roads. Tarred roads will help in improving the quality of life in terms of opportunities to increase the income and providing easier access to education and health. At the same time, Health Clinics (KR1M) can be introduced in the Orang Asli settlements. With the high number of youth, public facilities for them are also very important, like playing fields (football, sepak takraw, netball / futsal), telephone connections for the hand-phone, tuition classes, internet centres and skills training workshops. On the whole, this research found that 70 percent of the participants in the resettlement programme were satisfied with the scheme that was available. However, a special policy must be drafted for the 30 percent who are not satisfied with the available scheme.

References


