UTAR NEW VILLAGE COMMUNITY PROJECT

REPORT

NAME OF NEW VILLAGE:

BEMBAN 民万

PERAK

Project carried out by:

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<th>Student Name</th>
<th>ID Number</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Year/Semester</th>
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<td>10AAB03032</td>
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<td>Y2 S1</td>
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ABSTRACT

Bemban New Village is located in Batu Gajah, it is just 2-3 kilometer away from downtown Batu Gajah. The population of this village is around 4000 to 5000. This village is populated mainly by Chinese. Most of the villagers are Buddhists and Taoists. Villagers are engaged in plantations agriculture, livestock rearing and small businesses such as grocery shops and food stalls. The main concerns of the villagers are the lack of infrastructure and the younger generation.

This project group was fortunate to interview Mr. Ho Boon Siew, the head of village. He provided us with useful information about the village.
HISTORY

Bemban new village was founded in 1949. During the period of Emergency in Malaya, General Sir Harold Briggs ordered that Rural Chinese be moved to new villages. This was to prevent the rural population from providing supplies to the communists. At that moment, Mr. Ho was still a small boy but he always hear the sound of guns that fire during the night where the British soldiers try take down those communists.

Originally, this village wasn’t known as Bemban New Village. It was known as “pu tao yuan”, which means Grape Garden in Chinese. This was because there was many grape trees- a unique type of grapes around the world. Later, the village was renamed (民万).
Entrance of the village

Mr Ho Boon Siew and the project team
The “putao” tree

The special type of grape found in the village
“Grape” trees
EDUCATION

In Bemban New Village, there is only one primary school, known as SJK(C) Bemban. Up until now, there are 203 students in this school while out of 203 students, 4 Malay students, 2 Indian students, and the rest are Chinese students. Student who graduates from this school will proceed to their higher education at Batu Gajah. According to Mr. Ho, the school is fully sponsored by the government. The school has brought up a lot of talented student since the school was established. The school facilities include two kindergartens, and a fully equipped computer laboratory.

SJK(C) Bemban Entrance
The computer lab of SJK(C) Bemban

The new kindergarten building in SJK(C) Bemban
HOUSING AND POPULATION

In Bemban, there are 500 houses and a population of 4000-5000. In the past, most of the houses were wooden houses, but as time passed more and more concrete houses are built. Recently, the government built a multi-purpose hall for the villagers.

*Shops and villagers house*

*The villagers’ houses*
One of the concrete houses in the village
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY

There is a multi-purpose hall and a small clinic in this village. However, the clinic is for expectant mattress and infants only. There is also a wet market in this village. Villagers buy vegetables and meat from this market. Furthermore, there is an alumni building for SJK(c) Bemban. Bemban new village does not have the following facilities:

- Post Office
- Fire Station
- Bank
- Payment counter/office of Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Lembaga Air Perak

The lack of such facilities means that Bemban villagers have to travel to Batu Gajah often.

In the past, there was a police hut and RELA to take care of the village’s safety. However, the district official of Batu Gajah closed the police hut in the village and froze the operation of RELA too. If there is any issue regarding safety, Jawatankuasa kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kg baru Bemban will handle it first. This means that the head of the village is responsible for the safety and peace of the village. Fortunately, the village does not have serious problems with crime currently.
The signboard beside the village hall

The village hall
The only clinic in this village

The only wet market in the village
SJK(C) Bemban alumni society building
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

During our interview with Mr. Ho, he lamented the out-migration of the younger generation to urban areas in search of better work opportunities. Currently, villagers are engaged in the following economic activities: plantation agriculture, livestock breeding, fish rearing and small businesses such as grocery shops and food stalls.

We visited a local food stall after the interview with Mr. Ho

We had a great time talking with the head of the village
Villagers have their breakfast here

Fish ponds in the village

Water buffaloes grazing in the village
CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Most of the villagers are Taoists and Buddhist. The village has a beautiful Taoist temple that worships “Tai Shang Lao Jun” (太上老君) who is the God of Tao. During occasions such as the Mooncake Festival and the birthday of Tai Shang Lao Jun, there will be a grand celebration in the village. A karaoke concert will be held annually at the stage beside this temple.

The temple of “Tai Shang Lao Jun”

The God of Tao “Tai Shang Lao Jun”
One of our project team members looking at the amulets in the temple

Kitchen used by villagers to cook food during event organized at the temple
The stage that villagers use during annual karaoke concert
CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

There are some challenges that Mr. Ho faces while leading the village.

Insufficient financial support is one of the problems. The village is mostly self-supported, i.e. most of the money used to develop the village comes from the villagers. The money provided by the government is far too little for the village. Villagers need money to repair roads, to operate a garbage truck, to clean drains, and to cut in public areas. As Mr. Ho worked as a building contractor before, he is able to put in some money for some development projects. Nevertheless, his funds are limited.

Another problem that Mr. Ho faces is getting support and help from the villagers. For example, when Mr. Ho wants to have a “Gotong-Royong” to clean public facilities, some villagers do not participate. Many of the villagers are children and old folks whereas youngsters from this village migrate to other state and even foreign countries to work and study. Furthermore, the public facilities of the village such as playground, basketball court, and road are in bad condition. In order to get all these repaired, the village needs funds which it does not have.

The damaged telephone booth
The abandoned playground

Seat at the basketball court have been vandalized
The broken facilities of the basketball court

The garden chairs near the playground have been vandalized too
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In order to improve the peoples’ quality of life in this new village, funds are needed to improve its public facilities, e.g. roads, playground, public telephone booth and basketball court. The assistance of the government and NGOs could improve this situation.

Perhaps the government could help introduce new technology in the plantation and animal breeding industry in Bemban to encourage young people to engage in such activities. This might reduce the tendency of young people to migrate to urban areas.

DISCLAIMER:

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