

The Community Leaders as a Catalyst for Rural Community Development in the State Of Terengganu

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Abstract

Community leaders is recognized as a catalyst in changing and improving the living standards of community. To ensure the effectiveness of rural community, the development participation of community leaders is necessary in particularly to development projects in rural areas. This article aims to point the influence the of community leaders as a catalyst for rural community development which affects the direction of rural community development. A survey was conducted on rural community in state of Terengganu, Malaysia consist of Kg Kayu Kelat, Kg Guntung Luar, Kg Banggol Katong and Kg Rawai. The community is chosen based on their performance in a number of development projects, and has successfully improve socio-economic status of the population. The data for this study was gathered from interview, field observation and 40 informants was involved in this study. The informants consist of local leader, local residents and government officer. The finding showed that, effective community leaders was able to play a positive roles to help their community as a catalyst for community development process. Besides that, the finding from survey show important roles of local leader as a major factor affecting the success of development program. Local leader in Kg Kayu Kelat, Kg Guntung Luar, Kg Banggol Katong and Kg Rawai have initiative and a clear vision in ensuring their future progress of improvement for their community.

Keywords: Community Leader, Leadership, Rural Community, Community Development.

Introduction

The success rate of development of rural regional development is determined by the extent of the community leader's involvement. Despite the differences in culture and philosophy have influence the performance of rural community development which more oriented to the human development in the implementation of very requires the direct involvement of the beneficiaries of the program development (Green and Haines, 2015; Phillips and Pittman, 2014). It is obtained by the participation of the community leaders in the community program increase the success rate with such development especially in rural area would be appropriate with the aspirations and needs of the community itself (Mohamad Hafis *et al.*, 2015). Participation of leaders in in the planning stages of community development is considers as a highest level in the degree of involvement (Salahuddin, 2012; Wates, 2014). Leader participation will occur when they play role as a perpetrator or organizer in implementing the new development programs in the region are make the people to trust his integrity (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002) Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe, 2015).

The leader will encourage the community to exert all the capabilities and the potential for the success of the project or program (Mediawati, 2011). The success of development also requires the provision of the government responsibility to the people to determine their own activities required to process and execution maintenance of the activities undertaken by the community, in addition to the public participation in development (Mardiansyah, 2003). The community leaders influence the project success rate. These because the community leader is the person who responsible for the implementation of the any project in order to ensure the standards of quality, costs, and time (Dale, Van Der Wiele, and Van Iwaarden, 2007).

Participation of community leader in rural community development is a subjected to the development of various interests to the society itself and involve the community actively. The development was carried out using the paradigm empowerment which is necessary to establish leaders participation in good planning, implementing and controlling development in the countryside, villages, and in the district (Mohamad Hafis *et al.*, 2015). On other hand the participation of community leaders also to find solutions to the existing problems in order to create better community by opening more opportunities for community to contribute to the implementation of activities more effective, efficient, and sustainable (Mulyono, 2006). In order to ensure the development rural society the community leaders involvement can be encouraged the public to understand and believe in the benefits of development, equity, respect for people's rights and respect local customs according to the needs of society, and supported by the ability of leaders in create enthusiasm especially in rural areas (Safar, 2007). Thus this paper intent to explain the influence of Community Development Programs in Malaysian.

Strategy of community development in Malaysia has undergone various changes in accordance with development for few decade. The community development in Malaysia was more planned and it can be found from the terminology used is National development Plan or "Rancangan Pembangunan Negara". National Development Plan was started 1957. The National Development Plan was well planned in order to determine how the human condition that are directed and arranged deliberately aimed ensure the achievement of the identified changes and that without their intervention will not necessarily happen (Abdul Aziz, 2000). Meanwhile Ibrahim (2003) and Ohmae (1995) stated that the planned development can be

divided into four phases. These four phases is known as laissez-faire phase (after Malaysian independence until 1970); The state interference phase (1971-1980), the liberalization phase of, and privatization of Malaysia Incorporated (1981-1996) and a phase of slowdown (from 1997 onwards). In these phases was play important role in the development of its citizens regardless of social development or economic.

On other hand in Malaysian case the rural development is known as Transformation Rural Development or *Transformasi Pembangunan Luar Bandar* which under the development phase of the New Economic Policy (NEP). development process rural communities have been started since the country gained independence in 1957. At that time the economic status and achievements of rural communities are lower than in the urban community. Because the government has launched various programs for rural development city. Development strategy village or rural community is named Transformation of Rural Development First. It was introduced by Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia's second Prime Minister (Balwi, 2005). The main goal of the first transformation was more to the development of physical infrastructure and supply for Extensive amenities to the people in the rural community. At present, Malaysia has stepped up to Foreign Second Transformation City (Salleh and Meyanathan, 1993). The second transformation is also contrary not only to strengthen the physical factors, but mainly develop the human factor development human or human with a new paradigm that is positive in the rural city (Mc Gee, 2008). The Malaysian ministries have given an important responsibility for developing the rural communities through the Ministry of Rural Development. As an evidence the program called *Gerakan Desa Wawasan* (GDW), which was launched in 1996 by Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (Balwi, 2005).

The Economic Planning Unit (2014) stated that to encourage the participation of rural communities, there were some activities was launched which known as *Gerakan Desa Wawasan* which play an important role to bring a paradigm shift in among the villagers so that they no longer depend solely on the government when want to develop their own village. Instead of moving on their own initiative and led the effort to change the direction of development in the local area with the help and guidance by government agencies. This paradigm shift is a practical thing for improve the villagers because of over-reliance on government aid (subsidies) This makes them weaker, not motivated and failed to develop their own village. Thus, the villagers through *Gerakan Desa Wawasan* is necessary to set up a human capable of working to develop the village itself through the agreement, the structure of the organization efficient and able to think of new ideas that are practical and profitable. Community leaders as a catalyst for rural community development that becomes very important in order to achieving success and sustainable development in rural community development. This paper is construct based on review of literature that become evident in support the issue of influence of community leaders as a catalyst for rural community development.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the State of Terengganu using the qualitative phenomenological approach to address the issues raised in the study. Research is conducted using qualitative methods that seek out to response this research issue. The use of qualitative methods can help researchers gain comprehensive data, more accurate, clear, and allows

researchers to connect descriptive aspects of the study (Creswell, 2013). Four communities in the state were chosen as the study area and the data were collected from interviews and observations. The use of different data gathering techniques provides an advantage to this study because the technique analyse triangulation view more precisely. In the meantime, interview was the main method for collecting information from the respondents. This technique was used to understand the role played by community leaders as catalyzed of transformation in rural development. Interviews session held with community leaders and the local community which probed on daily activities, the role of leaders and approaches used to succeed the affairs of the community, such as meetings, gatherings and also the relationship between local communities and related external agencies.

In this study, the researchers have identified the appropriate informants to clarify questions that have been raised. Consequently, a total of 40 informants, comprised of community leaders, locals residence and officials in the relevant government agencies. In addition, relevant documents were analyzed to obtain further data for analysis. The researchers evaluated several relevant documents that were considered as appropriate and may be used as evidence. Once the data were collected, analysed and prepared, they were analysed using the ATLAS.ti software. The software has helped researchers to compile, analyse and make the connection between the themes.

Result and Discussion

Community leaders serve to train and familiarize the community to do their own work and will make it easier for them to continue working or to follow up on later. The community leader also responsible in ensure the process of planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement of community development (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). Moreover Black and Conway, (1995) stated that through the participation the communities leaders not only acting as an active participant and they also contributing towards meeting the objectives of the program. These because through participation in an organized activity the community leaders can provide a sense of common and responsibility for the success of activity. If the community leader accomplish successfully the assigned project, it can lead to the feeling of proud by the effort that they serve for community benefits which people will remember the efforts of the community leaders in the future (Bowler, and Lewis,1991)

Influence of Community Leaders in Community Development

Many studies has proven that the community leaders participation in rural area development it could change in rural area people's attitudes, opinions, ways of thinking, values, actions, communication and interaction, perception, abilities and personal skills, leadership by community members involved (Brown, 1991; Bowler and Lewis,1991; Zaller, 1992; Christens, 2012). On other hand a very important responsibility of the community leader is to ensure that community members can rate their communities with the objective, expressed problems and identify priority needs to be given based on the situation at hand. The community leader characteristics in general can be described by the diversity of the unique characteristics possessed (Wiist, Jackson and Jackson, 1995). These because the community leaders is selected up among the members that have the same or different interests and individuals who belong to the various different communities and have direction different (Taylor, 2007). However, despite a variety of interests, needs and different

objectives, this group still share the same values and goals as well as significant forming a community group that is effective (Arunachalam & Lawrence, 2010).

Meanwhile Arnstein (1969) also expressing that the community participation basically involves distribution, recovery and re-power activity which enables them to encourage and enable the social to share mutual benefits in the community. Arnstein continues that the main thing is participation with respect to the redistribution of power because without the development program by the community leader it more looks empty and disappointing to their carrier. In contrast the Arnstein opinion is also supported by Rogers et al. (2008). Rogers expressed a similar concept to express community leaders participation can be expressed to the proprietary sense of ownership and a feeling of shared responsibility shared responsibility especially to the rural community development. Moreover these entries are capable of creating sustainable communities that live high and provide psychological effects and motivate the stakeholders to have a sense of sense of ownership for example in respect of a development project even more so if the cost of the project is shared by them. Conning and Kevane, (2002) argues that community leaders participation should be molded and targeting changes or developments to the affected communities to generate change for the better in addition to improvements in quality community life. These because the work carried out by organized communities and according to the principles and methods which should certainly be able to bring development or positive change to the community involved.

Roles of Community Leaders as a Catalyst

Basically the community leaders were actively play role by engaging in any activity or program. In generally the goal of their participation is to take care the community live in in organizing a program starting from the lower level of planning until to the stage of implementation and monitoring (Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone, 1998). In the rural context, the active participation of community leaders is claimed to determine the direction and ensure the success of a program development held mainly related to the economy. The basic elements of participation refers to how the locals determine themselves in accordance with what they find and use in improving life and how to solve the problems faced in order to increase their area of more advanced (Hunt, 1990). Community leaders participation in matters relating to the community also act as monitors political activities as it seeks to eradicate the issues that threaten democracy such as nepotism and opportunity for members highlighting the community's attention and concern on issues common to development fair and equitable (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Transformation Agent

One of the main roles of the community leaders was transform their rural community to bring changes in the community. The respondents point out that most often there was a need for social-economic development in the communities. For this to happen they had to conduct the relevant programs and activities for the communities that included programs in the areas of economic, religious and social activities safety, education, entrepreneurship, health, infrastructures. These programs were conducted for various groups in the communities such as children, youths, women, single mothers, the handicapped and adults.

Community as catalyze need to create initiative to create a platform that will help their community people. The respondents also indicated that community leaders need organized special program for community members. Some of the courses that they had organized were

sewing and cooking courses, computer training, sports training, cleanliness campaign, social awareness courses and also study visits. In attempting to bring about changes to the community, the respondents also indicated that there was resistance to the programs and training implemented. But as a good leader, they must take all obstacles as a part of their duties.

Problem-Solver

There exist several socio-economic problems in the community. The leaders have to tackle and solve these problems. Some of the ways they solve those problems were through making reports and consultation with relevant agencies such as to the district office if they related to community wellness, the police for cases involving drugs, thefts and fights. This important roles to make sure the development process is not interrupted. The determination that they function for community will help community to go further.

Motivation Expert

The findings of this study indicate that the rural communities have benefited from the development of basic facilities and services provided by the government. Community leadership in the rural area has also served as a motivating factor in optimizing the opportunities provided by the government to develop local resources available for the benefits of the population. Consequently, the involvement of local communities in social and economic activities generated by the leadership through effective communication process have appeared to be successful. In this regard, the process of effective communication practiced by the leadership enables it to act as an agent of change at the grassroots level to act as an intermediary in the process of information sharing between the government and residents. Furthermore, it also acts as a catalyst for development. Hence, administrators should strengthen the collaboration among the residents and create a harmonious cooperation with the government. The study's findings provide evidences that community leader in are capable to fulfil the aspiration to bring changes in Kg Kayu Kelat, Kg Guntung Luar, Kg Banggol Katong and Kg Rawai, which is in line with its position in the development team. Based on this study, it was found that the local leader institution plays a well needed and significant role in the context of rural development.

Conclusion

The level of influence of the community leader area generally refer to effort and initiative itself to engage in a program organized to the rural community development which they collaborate and share ideas towards improving rural community programs. The issue of the community leaders influence in rural community development should also be seen in the context of the broader view of this area has good potential to be developed and expended again in future. Factors and weaknesses that should been identified to impact and the effect on the community leaders influence in terms of capital and training courses, cronyism, connection with politicians will gain deeper understanding rural community development issues and efficient in helping and encouraging community leaders participation that will be able to strengthen and highlight the potential development in rural areas.

The local leaders in Kg. Guntung Luar, Kg Kayu Kelat, Kg Rawai and Kg Banggol Katong have played an excellent and effective roles in steering their community away from poverty and recession. They can be described as effective leaders as they are able to steer their village to succeed in various development programs. Their active involvement is well received by the

local community as their leadership styles enable them to influence the locals to get involved in the development process. Their strong influences over the local public have eased their attempts their role as rural development transformation agent. In this regard, it is easy to execute any development programme as there are unity and tolerance among the community leaders and the government. Such success is not an easy feat and it is a testament over how leadership can influence the execution of the government's development agenda.

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