



**AN ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY OF A
GOVERNMENT AGENCY DEALING WITH
VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN
PERAK**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Recently, good governance, which is translated to high quality performance service delivery, has appeared to be an element in promoting social inclusion for developing countries, including Malaysia. In the realm of service delivery, the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups need special alternatives but the assistance or services are still few or far from their expectation. Hence, this research focuses on the assessment of service delivery performances of a government agency namely the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in Perak, Malaysia, that offers services to the special category of community known as the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. As people begin to have an increased awareness of their rights and expectations, the provision of physical facilities and their surrounding activities also contribute to the achievement of high quality performance service delivery. A mixed method approach of combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodology is applied for this research and a total of four hundred respondents participated in the questionnaire survey and eight respondents in an interview session. The observatory checklist study was done from selected government bodies and non-government organizations that have experienced dealing with the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Perak through access audit analysis. The results revealed that a majority of the respondents had low monthly household income between RM500-1000 and received little financial assistance. It is also found that 53.8% (215) did not own a vehicle which resulted in difficulty in mobility, compounding to the problem of lack of accessibility to the services. In addition, findings from observatory checklist study also revealed that most of the facilities provided did not follow the Universal Design Manual Guideline. The interviews also acknowledged that the facilities provided by the SWD have significantly improved the rehabilitation and quality of life of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, especially in Perak. The outcomes assisted with strong justifications from this research, will offer a set of alternatives to help in the betterment of the delivery system of related government agencies and physical facilities provision dealing with the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Perak.

خلاصة البحث

ظهر الحكم الجيد في الآونة الأخيرة الذي ترجم من خلال تقديم خدمات ذات جودة عالية الأداء وكونه جزءا من عنصر يعمل في ترويج الاندماج الاجتماعي للبلدان النامية، بما فيها ماليزيا. وبالتالي، يركز هذا البحث على أداء تقديم خدمات التقييم للوكالة الحكومية والتي تسمى إدارة الرعاية الاجتماعية في ولاية بيراك، وقد عرضت ماليزيا خدمات للفئات الخاصة من المجتمع المعروفة باسم الفئات الضعيفة والمحرومة. وكما ازداد حذر الناس لحقوقهم وتوقعاتهم، ساهمت خدمات توفير المرافق المادية والأنشطة المحيطة بها في تحقيق جودة عالية لتقديم خدمات الأداء. وقد استخدم المنهج المختلط في هذا البحث من خلال الجمع بين منهج البحث الكمي والنوعي، وقد شارك أربع مائة (400) مشاركا من عينة البحث للاستجابة على الاستبيان طوال فترة المقابلة. وقد أجريت دراسة بطاقات الملاحظة في الهيئات الحكومية المختارة والمنظمات غير الحكومية التي شهدت التعامل مع الفئات الضعيفة والمحرومة في ولاية بيراك خلال الوصول إلى تحليل مراجعة الحسابات. وكشفت نتائج البحث أن الدخل الأسري الشهري لدى المشاركين انخفض بين 500 إلى 1000 رينجيت، وانخفضت المساعدات المالية ولكن مازالت كما وجدت أن 53,8% (215) ليس لديهم سيارات مما أدى إلى صعوبة التنقل، ولذلك تتم المساهمة في مشكلة عدم إمكانية الوصول إلى الخدمات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشفت نتائج دراسة بطاقات الملاحظة أن معظم التسهيلات المقدمة لا تتبع دليل المرشد للتصميم العالمي. وقد أظهرت المقابلات أيضا أن التسهيلات المقدمة لها تقدمات بارزة في تحسين التأهيل وجودة حياة الفئات الضعيفة والمحرومة، خاصة في ولاية بيراك. فإن النتائج بمساعدة المبررات القوية من هذا البحث سوف تقدم مجموعة من البدائل للمساعدة في تحسين نظام تقديم الوكالات الحكومية ذات الصلة مع الفئات الضعيفة والمحرومة والتعامل معهم في ولاية بيراك.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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Centre (MAB)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BOT	Bantuan Orang Tua
CBR	Community based Rehabilitation Centre
df	Degree of Freedom
DOSM	Department Of Statistics Malaysia
DSWM	Department of Welfare under the Ministry
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
E.g.	(<i>exempligratioa</i>); For Example
F	Frequency
Fig./Figs.	Figure/Figures
GP	Launching Grant
GIS	Geographical Information System
GTP	Government Transportation Programme
IDeA	Inclusive Design and Environmental Access
IDR	Institut Darul Ridzuan
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JPBD	Jabatan Perancang Bandar dan Desa
KRA	Key Result Areas
M	Mean
MAB	Malaysian Association for Blind, Kinta Valley Rehabilitation Centre
N	Sample Size
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKRAs	National Key Result Areas
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCB	Public Compliants Bureau
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit
PLI	Poverty Line Index
PWDs	People with disabilities
RII	Relative Importance Index
RP	Revealed-preference
SOCISO	Social Security Organisation
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SP	Stated-preference
SWD	Social Welfare Department
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHR	United Nations Human Rights
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTTC	World Travel And Tourism Council
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Part of sustainability is the longevity of the social well-being of all members of the community. In the context of town and country planning, this safeguard of well-being begins from the planning of the land use through the allocation and determining the location of physical facilities that promote barrier-free environments. Therefore, with the provision of barrier-free environments, the vulnerable and disadvantaged are able to enjoy equal opportunities.

Generally, a barrier-free environment incorporates the components of universal design in its layout and master plan that acknowledges the needs of different groups of the population (Weingaertner & Moberg, 2011; Skoda Design & Architecture, 2012). This in turn broadens the subject of planning as it also integrates aspects of physical and social elements aspects including health, education, social interaction, recreational, religious freedom and cultural-value or beliefs expression, among others (Darchen and Ladouceur, 2013).

In today's challenging world, people are aware of their rights and expectations especially in terms of the provision of physical facilities and its surrounding activities as these factors contribute to the improvement of their quality of life. It was suggested by Syazwani Abdul Kadir and Marian Jamaludin (2013) that social sustainability is among the main agendas of the 21st century that focuses on how the built environment affects the quality of life of the society. The high consideration on a barrier-free built environment through universal design plays a significant role as it allows everybody

to have equal opportunity and treatment in experiencing the benefit provided by the respective Government.

In other words, a socially sustainable built environment should be created through smart planning and design; universal design should be able to cater to the needs of all members of the society.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This research focuses on the service delivery performance of an agency namely Social Welfare Department (SWD) in Perak, Malaysia that serves a special category of community known as the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In Perak, many vulnerable and disadvantaged groups comprise those categorized under disability, including children, youth, women, the elderly, the poor, the disabled, families, single parents; all who are registered under the Social Welfare Department. Around the globe, social inclusion and equal opportunity have been propagated by the town planning profession and social engineering. Physical planning generally consists of everything related to the principal planning guidelines of land use and continues on to the completion of the development, the placement of the physical building and how the end product will impact the betterment of the society (Jorgensen,1991 and McKoy et al., 2008). Hence, to a certain extent the needs and demands of different groups of people comprising the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are also part of the town planning profession.

In Malaysia, the decision and regulation of the design of public buildings, public facilities, public amenities and even public transportation facilities for the marginalized groups (the vulnerable and disadvantaged) fall under the jurisdiction of

the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD). In other words, specific guidelines and standards or codes of practice for the disabled groups are put in place are required in all developments. The guidelines assign a universal development approach and the provision of access to public facilities for marginalized groups is not only required in residential developments but also in other types of developments (TCPD, 2013). This is to ensure that elements such as safety, accessibility, and convenience are considered and allowed for in the planning for residential, commercial, transportation system and public developments through the provision of barrier-free environments (Shahrom and Zainol, 2015).

Additionally, in the context of comprehensive planning, the promotion of an inclusive environment could be derived from public participation especially among the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Research has confirmed that interaction between people without barriers of discrimination within the built environment has enhanced the health and the well-being of those in the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Barton, Thompson, Burgess & Grant, 2015; Ward Thompson, 2010; Maller et.al, 2009; Newton, 2007).

The public participation of these marginalized groups in the planning of such environments is also encouraged. Town planning is therefore not merely the layout plans of residential, industrial, commercial or recreational activities, but a combination of components and elements that help to make the complete living, working and play environment, which determine the quality of life of its inhabitants. This is how the town planning profession plays its role in understanding the difficulties faced by this community, and using this information to provide and formulated possible and appropriate policies to help them.

This research aims to understand and discuss how the service delivery performance of the SWD would benefit the quality of life of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in terms of achieving social sustainability. Over the years, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged have received attention from all parts of the social community at every corner of the world. Social equality and equal opportunity for all has emerged as a crucial component in promoting social sustainability for majority developed countries (Moynihan, 2008).

Furthermore, the Malaysian government aims to strengthen the performance of the service delivery of government department's to the people including the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This is among the aspiration of the government in ensuring this least advantaged group receives equal opportunities and experiences maximum quality of life. Thus, one of the goals of Malaysia's ninth Government Transformation Plan Programme (GTP), 2010 to guarantee equal opportunities to the vulnerable and disadvantaged people. In addition to this, the performance of the service delivery of the Department of Social Welfare in dealing with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups was placed under the oversight of the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The impact of the recent global economic crisis has led to an increased concern on the quality of life and social disparities of the vulnerable and disadvantaged populace. In the realm of service delivery, the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups need special alternatives; however, the assistance or service provided to these groups have been far below their expectation (Auditor General's Report, 2009; Abdullah and Kalianan,

2009; Mzni, 2011; Brix, Lust and Woolcock, 2015). Therefore, this research recognizes four (4) significant problems associated with service delivery to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Past research have shown, that several issues may likely have forced organizations like the Social Welfare Department to measure customer satisfaction after the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups have experienced their service.

1.3.1 Discrimination in Service between Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups against Able Bodied Groups

Evidence has revealed that many vulnerable and disadvantaged groups face great challenges in their lives which increase the potential of social exclusion (Buck et al., 2005; Curran, 2007 and Mzni, 2011). The social exclusion experienced by the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups affects their confidence resulting in low self-esteem and often being denied satisfactory service from both the public and the private sectors (Buck et al., 2005 and Mzni, 2011). This research examines the performance of a government agency, which is the social welfare department, in terms of the service delivery rendered to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The attributes of service delivery performance are based on the client charter used in the SWD and according to reviewed literature. Meanwhile, performance is measured according to the satisfaction level derived from the perceptions of people from the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups’.

Many studies have shown concern on the importance of social equality and equal opportunity for all, especially the disabled, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and the implementation of monitoring the performance of service delivery

provided by government agencies to these groups has become one of the main indicators to measure their effectiveness and efficiency.

In most developing countries including Malaysia, improving the quality of government delivery system is quite a challenge. In other words, the performance of government agencies in Malaysia is quite unsatisfactory (Kamarulzaman Abdullah, 2007 and Kalianan, 2009; Mzni, 2011; Brixi, Lust and Woolcock, 2015). For this reason, awareness of the social rights of these less fortunate groups needs to be promoted as policy and decision makers start to struggle with developers and operators in ensuring that the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are able to achieve maximum quality of life.

There are increasing pressures and demands on the effectiveness and efficiency service delivery, especially to the vulnerable and disadvantaged. The rapid growth of the Malaysian economy has led to the rise of the prosperity level of the population which has in turn increased demands on the quality of public goods and services, including to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. People therefore are not merely satisfied with consuming what is being provided to them but are also concerned about the quality of public services rendered to them (Fatimah Wati Ibrahim and Mohd. Zaini Abd. Karim, 2004). In addition, competition will be present between the normal (able bodied) and the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, where the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are often left behind and isolated. According to Dean (2013), the idea and concept of the provision of quality public goods and services for persons with disabilities have been developed very far on paper, but not in reality, which has resulted in discrimination towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Meanwhile, Lindquist (2010) agreed, that the discrimination in services experienced by the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and those who are able bodied happens in all types of living conditions that surface as a challenge at almost every aspect of the lives of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This is because, there are still societies with social prejudice against the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups who claim that they only want one standard of normal living, which results in public and private places and services, education centres, and social work venues that are built to only serve standard people, thus excluding those with various disabilities (Castaneda and Peters, 2000; Lindquist; 2010; Dean, 2013 and Rottenberg, 2015).

1.3.2 Lack of Accessibility to Provided Services

Statistically, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared, that the total number of the population of vulnerable and disadvantaged people across the globe was approximately 1 billion in the year 2014, which made up 15 percent of the total urban population around the worlds. Thus, 8 percent of the total population was recorded within developing countries (United Nation Development Programme [UNDP], 2013). To date, the World Bank assumes that approximately 20 percent of poor people live with the disability; this is a continually increasing figure (WHO, 2014). The United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA] (2014) had therefore decided to categorize these people as the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the greatest impact of which would be felt by developing country countries, including Malaysia.

It is undeniable that Malaysia also experiences an increasing number of the vulnerable and disadvantaged population, a huge proportion of which huge proportion would consist of those living below the line of poverty , especially in rural areas

(UNFPA,2014). According to statistical reports from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development 2014, the number of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups registered with the Social Welfare Department has shown a notable increase from 314,247 in the year 2010 to 531,962 in 2014.

Philip and Md. Israt (2004) suggested that poverty and vulnerability are often closely linked to each other. Poverty is mainly viewed as an indicator of lack of access to resources and income opportunities. Meanwhile, other aspects, such as geographical location, age, gender, class, ethnicity, community structure, community decision making processes, and political issues, are also contributing factors that determine the vulnerability of the poor (Yodmani, 2001). Previous scholars have also described that, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are denied an adequate accessibility in the basic needs of life such as health, education, housing, food, security, employment, justice and equity.

Unable to receive an adequate education, employment chances, and access to services from government agencies such as SWD and non-governmental agencies has excluded their rights of the vulnerable and disadvantaged from enjoying a high quality living environment (Yodmani, 2001; Philip and Md.Israt,2004; Martins and Mc Kinley, 2011).

1.3.3 Failure in Providing Appropriate Physical Facilities and Services to the Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups has caused the Sub-Par Facilities Provided

In recent years there has been much criticism from the public and handicapped in Malaysia expressing their dissatisfaction with the services provided by the government. It is uncommon in Malaysia for the disabled people to voice their rights