

## **AFFECTED COMMUNITIES – RISING SOCIAL DISPARITIES**

### **FORMULATING A BALANCE BETWEEN MAINTAINING UNIQUE VALUE OF AN ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY AND THE NEEDS TO IMPROVE ITS QUALITY OF LIFE – A CASE STUDY OF KAMPONG BHARU; A TRADITIONAL URBAN VILLAGE IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA.**

By Abd Muluk Bin Abd Manan  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
*abdmuluk@utar.edu.my*

#### **ABSTRACT**

The *Kampong Bharu* community was established by the Colonial British government in the late nineteenth century as a ‘Malay Agricultural Settlement’ – a riverside area strategically removed from the old city centre of Kuala Lumpur, where many of the economic activities fuelled the city’s early growth. Ethnic Malay families from several villages were relocated here and given exclusive land rights to maintain a ‘village life’.

Due to complex land rights enactment, entitlements and inheritance laws, many parcels in this neighbourhood have remained untouched for more than a century. The appearance and lifestyle associated with *Kampong Bharu* today are seemingly at odds with a city that aggressively grows around it. This paper explores the neighbourhood and documents the complexities and contradictions of urban development that the area encapsulates.

*Kampong Bharu* today sits in the heart of the city. Many parcels of the land have changed ownership. The agricultural land with its modest original house gradually expanded into a sprawling, ramshackle home for dozens of extended families. It has become the hotspot for resettlement for new urban migrants that come to the city to resettle during pre and post-independence. Many historical events have happened here and it has become one of the most well-known neighbourhood in the city.

Efforts by the authority to develop this area had failed due to various reasons. They had tried to establish a balance between the concerns of long-term inhabitants and the demands of modern development. This paper examines the reasons and also explores how stakeholders in *Kampong Bharu* have been involved in recent redevelopment efforts. Key stakeholders including landowners, residents, village heads, and leaders of local associations were interviewed, and their concerns and aspirations were documented.