

Economic Solutions Upon Rural Community : Simplistic Denotations of Kuala Kangsar and Sabak

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DOI : 10.5281/zenodo.18230078

Abstract

The rural community would usually be far less prosperous than it's urban counterpart. There are numerous studies that defined these contrasting features and one of the primary contrasting features would be the income acquired by individuals. There are several approaches to mitigate this predicament, and this paper delineated these approaches not only within the context of individualistic income but within the holistic sphere of the economy.

Keywords : Economy, Rural Community, Prosperity, Wealth

Introduction

Disparity between physical areas and locations occur frequently and usually it was due to contrasting volumes of trade and commerce between the locations. One prime example would be the incomes of individuals residing in Cuping, which is located in the state of Perlis in Malaysia, where their incomes, on average, are far less than those residing in Kuala Lumpur. Disparity exists not only within this realm, but other significant matters such as physical connectivity, digital services, education, healthcare, and others had also shown disparity if comparisons were made between rural and urban setting.

Governments throughout the world had responded to this intricate issue by developing economic strategies and approaches that deflate the value of the economic disparity. According to Tony, inequality had posed a tremendous threat to a nation as several communities would not be able to access basic needs such as education, healthcare, and

others [1]. Within this context, it is vital for authorities to develop policies that would be beneficial for all citizens, regardless of their locations.

Governments throughout the world had implemented numerous schemes to alleviate the economic stature of rural areas. These measures had improved the lifestyles and basic necessities of the rural populations but there are rural areas that had not gained the substantial benefits. Cowie and et. al. indicated that not all rural areas had benefitted from the growth of the nation where there were several rural locations that were left behind in the digital race [2]. This situation is plausibly due to the lopsided policies of the authorities and efforts should be taken to defuse the situation.

Several solutions had been posed by authorities to lessen the gap between rural and urban areas. One solution is to introduce a specific industry at a particular rural area in order to alleviate the economic stature of that area. Harridon stated that a designated industry, with sufficient productivity, could increase the economic vibrancy of a location provided the workers could sustain a prolonged productivity value [3]. Thus, it is vital for local authorities to identify the suitable industries to be integrated at the rural locations, and due diligence should be actuated so that the industries could be supplemented with the available resources at those particular rural locations.

Rural Community

Rural communities are usually lacking in contrast to their counterparts in the urban settings. Migration of rural folks to urban areas such as towns and cities had depleted the human capacities at the rural locations. Zhang and et. al. pointed out that rural communities are usually stricken with poverty at certain countries and several initiatives such as rural tourism had given a boost to the local communities in terms of income increment and economic vitality [4]. The alleviation of income upon rural folks would spread the economic incentives as these folks would then spend their incomes at local shops and eateries and hence the economic spillover is felt.

There are various predicaments and challenges that authorities have to encounter in order to lessen the burden of rural communities. One of them is the resistance from the local populations that are suspicious of any alterations to their lifestyles, and they are contentious that their work functionalities would be changed. Contextually, the local municipalities should be vigilant of this issue and negotiate tactfully to acquire the desired results without provoking any physical friction.

According to Pahnke and et. al., there are instances of resistance from rural populations due to the sense of autonomy where these populations felt that their autonomies were

constricted and their freedom were depleted [5]. This is an indication that communities at the rural setting have different ideologies than their counterparts at the urban setting. However, there are instances where rural folks welcomed changes to their lifestyles. This is perhaps due to their exposure to evidences that showed alteration of lifestyle would lead to economic and financial growth.

Current and Historical Initiatives

There are several initiatives by the government to upgrade the economic value of rural communities. The Malaysian Government had introduced the land transformation program where hectares of land were transformed into palm oil fields which had benefitted the rural folks that enrolled in the program. Several generations later, designated landowners were elevated into millionaires and their offsprings were able to gain economic benefits such as tertiary education and upscale health benefits due to the influx of financial capital.

China had established a structured revitalization program for rural areas where rural areas were developed in order to alleviate the economic stature of the rural population. This measure, which was introduced in the year 2017, was named “Rural Revitalization”. According to Yan and et. al., several sectors were concentrated upon, and these sectors were the agriculture sector, business sector, tourism sector, and others [6].

Other initiatives by authorities and corporations were apparently indirect where corporations were focusing upon efficiency of operations which would deflate operational costs and subsequently the extra financial capital could be utilized to expand the corporations at selected rural areas. Harridon mentioned that operations which are efficient and optimized would allow corporations to retain their financial statures and this would aid the nation in terms of economic prosperity [7].

Various Solutions

There were numerous solutions that were optimized in accordance with the availability of resources of the municipalities or state governments. For example, the availability of oil and gas at South China Sea had given the state of Terengganu the opportunity to utilize the financial windfall and capital to develop several rural areas in the state. Several areas surrounding Kerteh and Paka had been developed where educational and healthcare infrastructures were built to serve the masses. The state of Terengganu in Malaysia is blessed with oil and gas reserve where this reserve is situated offshore at the South China Sea and

throughout the 50 years of oil and gas production at this offshore area had given the state an optimum avenue to spread the wealth to its population.

Sambodo and et. al. stated that effective management process would aid in the development of rural areas and Sambodo and et. al. had mentioned that Fisheries Management was utilized by the Indonesian Government to improve the economic standing of rural communities [8]. There were also several approaches by several municipalities that provided free or subsidized transportations to rural communities in an effort to increase the value of connectivity in the rural areas. For example, Hine and et. al. stated that in Sri Lanka the government had subsidized the buses in certain villages and this had provided an affordable mean for the rural population to be connected with other parts of the region [9]. Although this had degraded the coffers of the government, the benefits were substantial as trade and commerce had flourish in tranches.

Another imminent approach was the implementation and installation of solar lightings at streets at rural areas. This provided a safe and coherent solution for those that travel during the night at rural areas. Although the impact is not significant, the initiative aided and altered the lifestyles of rural folks as rural folks have the option to converge at certain locations to socialize and actuate discourses.

Stipulations from Kuala Kangsar and Sabak

We had actuated two brief surveys, one at Kuala Kangsar and another at Sabak. Kuala Kangsar and Sabak are towns in Malaysia and there are several rural areas surrounding Kuala Kangsar and Sabak. We had obtained 143 respondents from Kuala Kangsar while in Sabak, we had obtained 214 respondents. We had posed 2 statements to all of the respondents at Kuala Kangsar and Sabak. Options were given to the respondents, whether they Strongly Agree, Agree, Remain Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the statements that were posed. The results are shown from Figure 1 till 4.

Kuala Kangsar :

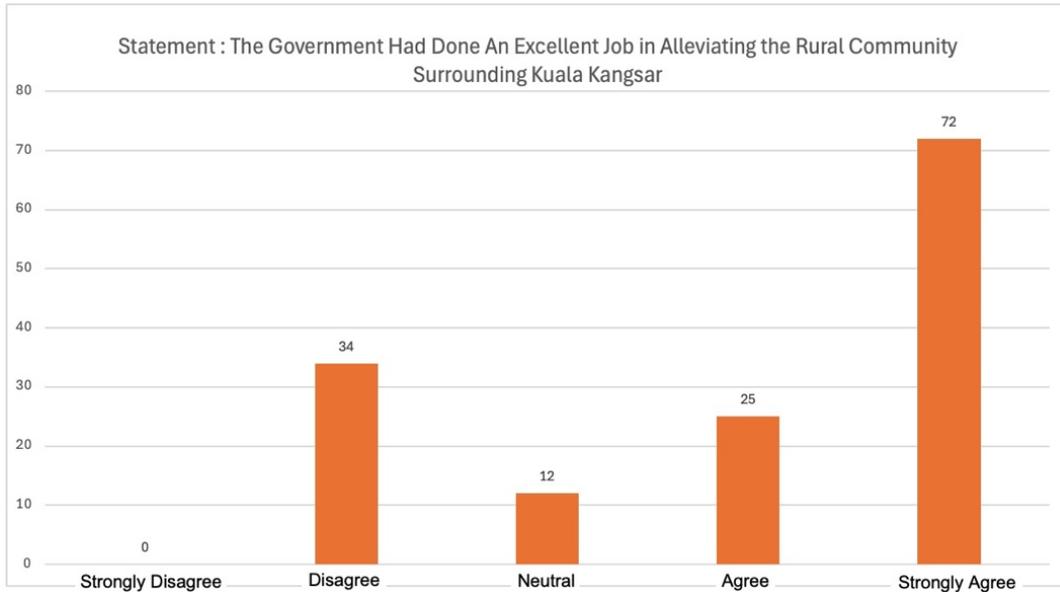


Figure 1 : The First Statement that was Posed to the Respondents

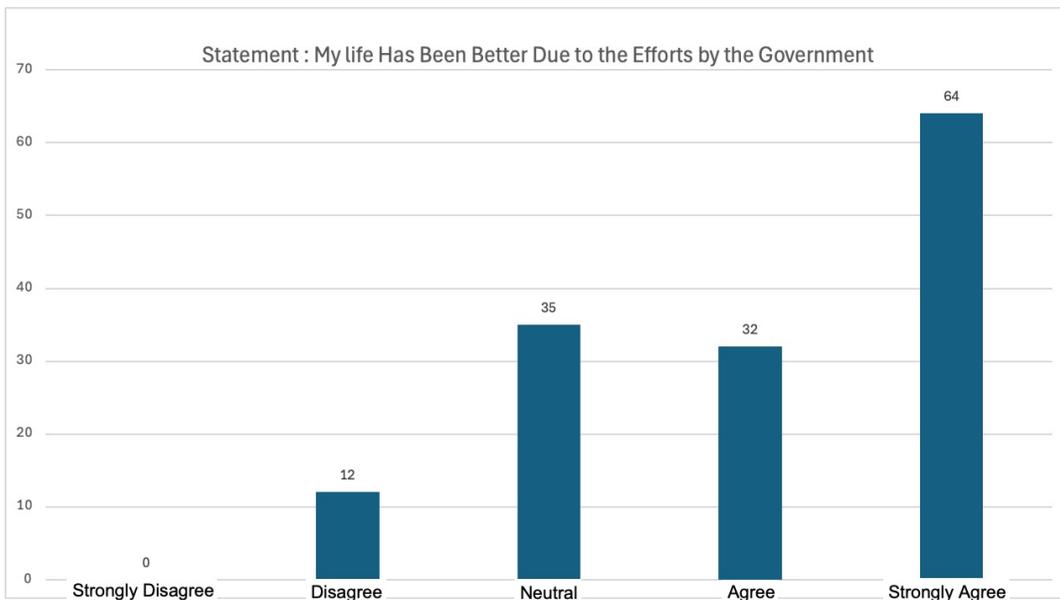


Figure 2 : The Second Statement that was Posed to the Respondents

Sabak :

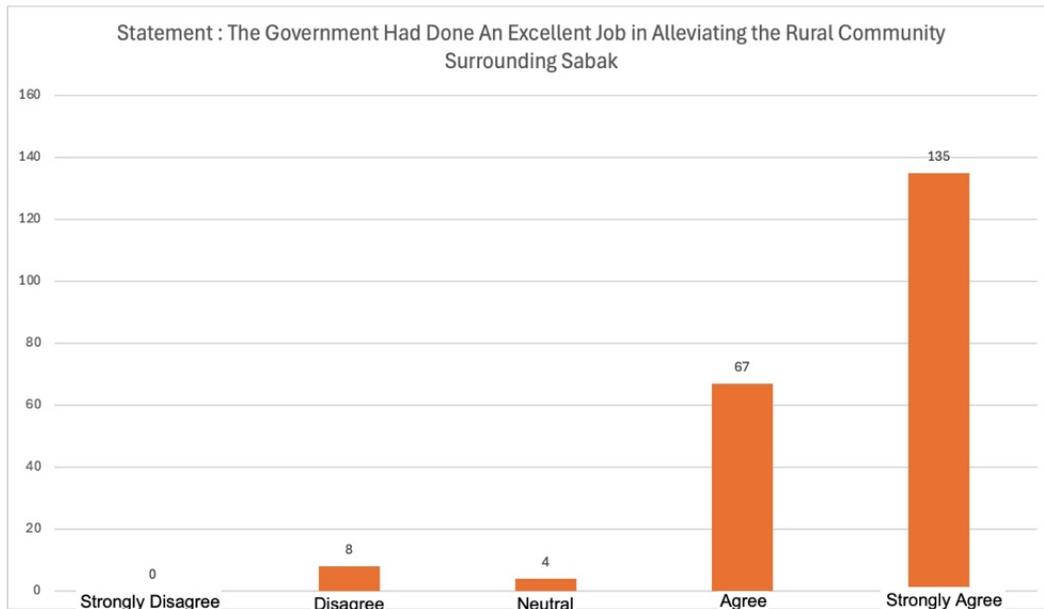


Figure 3 : The First Statement that was Posed to the Respondents

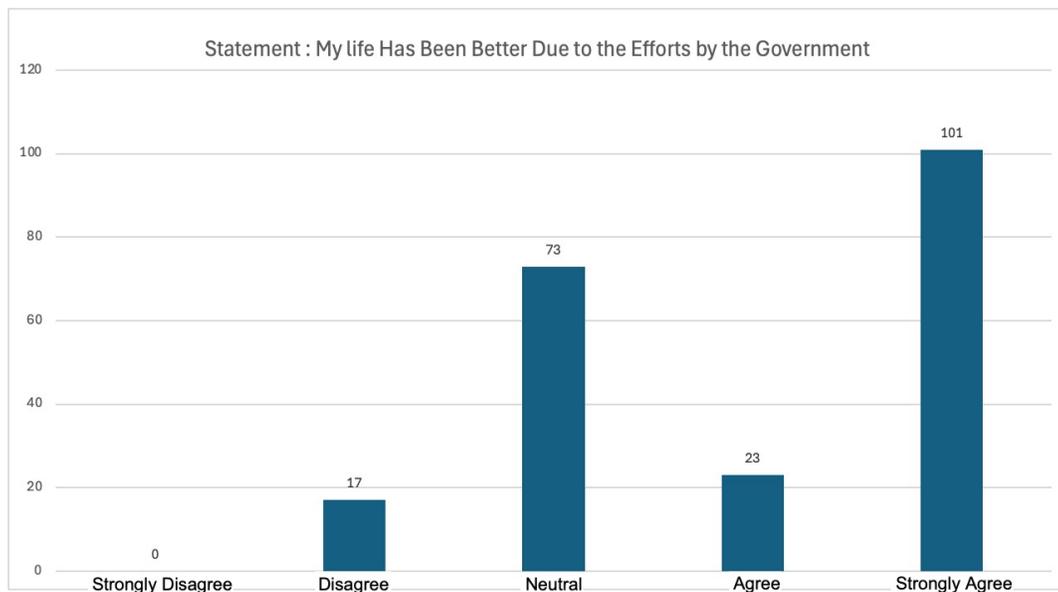


Figure 4 : The Second Statement that was Posed to the Respondents

Figure 1 indicates that 50.35% of the respondents strongly agreed that the government had done an excellent job in alleviating the rural community in the vicinity of Kuala Kangsar. This 50.35%, which represents 72 respondents, had perhaps seen and observed first-hand the

initiatives of the government as all of the respondents originated from Kuala Kangsar and its surrounding areas. Kuala Kangsar is a small town north of Malaysia and within its radius are villages which were denoted as rural locations.

Interestingly, 34 respondents from Figure 1 were not content with the government and disagreed with the statement that the government had done a great job. This is understandable as individuals have different perceptions and yardsticks to measure and gauge the success of initiatives. 12 respondents remained neutral plausibly due to their inability to comprehensively judge the nature of success of the initiatives of the government.

Peering upon Figure 2, one can observe that 64 respondents or 44.76% of the total respondents had strongly agreed with the statement that their lives were better due to the initiatives of the government. Within this context, 12 respondents disagreed with this statement while 35 respondents remained neutral. There are perhaps instances where the wealth or the benefits of the initiatives were not trickled down effectively to the masses. This is of grave concern and efforts should be made to ensure the population is fairly treated.

Figure 3 offered us a view of the perceptions of the respondents from Sabak. Sabak is a town in the state of Selangor Malaysia and there are various rural areas within its vicinity. 135 respondents strongly agreed that the government had done an excellent job in alleviating the rural community surrounding Sabak. These 135 respondents represent 63.08% of the total respondents. We had seen various development in Sabak where physical connectivity and basic amenities were in existence and thus this contributed to the favorable responses of the respondents.

But Figure 3 also revealed that discords also existed where 8 respondents disagreed with the notion that the government had done a great job in Sabak. 4 respondents remained neutral with regards to this issue. This shows us that there are still rooms for improvement and the municipalities and the government should work in tandem to mitigate any compounding issues.

In Figure 4, 101 respondents from Sabak had indicated that they strongly agreed that their lives were better due to the initiatives from the government. But this numerical figure only represented 47.20% of the total respondents. This is concerning as this figure does not represent the majority of the respondents, and in parallel 73 respondents or 34.11% of the total respondents remained neutral. Another interesting note is that 17 respondents disagree with the notion that their lives are better due to the efforts by the government.

There were various responses from the respondents and we had also recorded quotations from the respondents and we had selected six quotations to be stated in this paper.

“Initiatives from the government had improved our lives and we hope the government would continue their initiatives” – Respondent A from Kuala Kangsar

“There is always room for improvement and the government is not proactive in their efforts” – Respondent B from Kuala Kangsar

“I hope the government is consistent in their efforts and several issues should be handled tactfully” – Respondent C from Kuala Kangsar

“This area needs more development and the government is not doing enough” – Respondent D from Sabak

“We would like to thank the government for all the efforts that were actuated. We hope the government is consistent in their plan” – Respondent E from Sabak

“I had seen and experienced various plans initiated by the government and some were successful and some were not” – Respondent F from Sabak

The quotations from the respondents were mixed where there were statements which praised the government and there were also statements that were critical of the government. Thus, it is imperative for the authorities to be congruent in their efforts and financial capital should be set for frequent rural development.

Conclusions

There were numerous economic solutions that were actuated by authorities throughout the world in order to mitigate the predicaments of the rural community. Some were successful in their implementations but there were cases where the results were not substantial. We had observed that the population in Kuala Kangsar and Sabak were grateful to the government pursuant to the development of rural areas. However, contentions existed and there were hints of discords among the populations of Kuala Kangsar and Sabak. We applauded the efforts of the government to alleviate the economic stature of rural areas, and it is vital that these developments be consistent and produce the desired results.

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