

The Impacts of Seri Tanjung Pinang Coastal Reclamation on the Quality of Life of the Tanjung Tokong Community, Penang, Malaysia

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In all coastal nation countries around the world, coastal area supports a large percentage of the population and becomes a center for economic activities such as housing, commerce, industries, agriculture, oil and gas exploitation, transportation, communication and recreation. Coastal reclamation is a common phenomenon that takes place due to the increased population, the need for infrastructure and economic expansion. Penang Island, Malaysia ranks among the fastest economically growing areas in Malaysia. The state becomes a main growth center in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia but with a limited available land. Thus, to meet the demand, coastal reclamation happens to be one of the solutions. However, the impacts of coastal reclamation to the coastal community have usually been unnoticed. Coastal area found to provide services to the community not only through the economic revenue, but also the safety measure it provides. The alteration of coastal would change the environment, thus severely affect local community's quality of life. This paper presents the impacts of coastal reclamation on the quality of life of the local community in the study area. Apart from literature review, data are collected through questionnaire survey and interview of the affected coastal community. From the triangulation survey analysis, the results show that three main variables - flash flood, traffic congestion and health, influenced the quality of life of the community in the affected area. Flash flood and traffic congestion negatively correlated with quality of life while health positively correlated with quality of life. It is thus recommended that the coastal reclamation process on the approval part should consider any temporary and permanent negative impact to the local community. Besides, the community should be consulted by the parties involved and given an opportunity to voice out their opinions before starting the reclamation project.

Keywords: coastal areas; coastal reclamation; quality of life; socio-economic impacts; social impact assessment.

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