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# **Women Empowerment in Rural Areas through Village Relocation Programme: A Case Study in Perumahan Nelayan Muafakat Kedah**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Women are the asset of a country because they play indispensable role in the economic development. Verily, empowerment of women will be able to uplift their livelihood by accelerating their living standards, income, and well-being, particularly in rural areas. The involvement and engagement of rural women in economic and political aspects are vital to go hand in hand with men in decision making, delivering critical idea, and linking in multi-dimensional sectors. By participating in all spheres of life, it could facilitate them to escape from the rural poverty that they are facing now.

## **PURPOSE/AIM & BACKGROUND**

Despite the importance of the empowerment of women as human resources are obvious, the participation of women in Malaysia's labour force was 53.5% as oppose to 77.7% for men in 2017. About 60% of women who were not in the labour force proclaimed that the tight family commitment impeded them from working. Thus, this study aims to promote and encourage the participation of rural women in the labour force by empowering their capabilities, skills, talents in various fields in order to stay out from poverty and embrace sustainable livelihood and well-being.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study applies a qualitative analysis by conducting interviews with several housewives who live in fishermen's residential area located in Perumahan Nelayan Muafakat, Kedah. An open-ended interview was conducted with 10 housewives gathered by the community leader. A structured-interview question was designed to investigate and examine how the relocation programme could gear up the role of

women in order to strengthen their living standards by generating their own income. ATLAS software was used to generate the outcome of the interview.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

The results propound that the village relocation programme have benefited the residents in improving their life because they have received convenient houses and enjoyed better and sufficient infrastructure and facilities in the area. Nevertheless, women's involvement in activities in generating income is being marginalized. Although all of them agreed that they are happy and satisfied with the facilities and infrastructure provided, they have not received the access to involve/step in small-medium businesses to boost their household income. They are prohibited by relevant authority to sell any commodities in front of their houses because it will disturb the view along the fishermen's residential area. Consequently, their skills and talents will remain idle and if this persists it could cause the human resources to be wasteful. The other repercussion is that, it will hinder their innovative and creative thinking and skills because they received less power and almost zero access to the small-medium business opportunity.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Therefore, this study could significantly contribute towards empowering women among housewives in the fishermen's residents by providing necessary solutions and developing several income generation programme. It is believed that, providing necessary assistance for women in rural area could uphold their important role to contribute for their family' well-being as well as the country's output. The government (such as Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry) and non-government agencies should implement necessary approach and mechanism to facilitate women in rural area generally and assist women in the fishermen's resident particularly in order to achieve their goal to encourage women's participation in the labour force by 2019.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, income generation, rural women, income generation