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The **Epitome** */I'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

Unleash the epitome of creative writers

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SYNOPSIS

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah branch is proud to present the first issue of its e-magazine, The Epitome, as our focus to highlight our commitment to contribute to the areas of creative writing.

THE EPITOME aims to provide a platform for writers, educators, academicians, poet, and researchers to share their ideas, findings, knowledge, and experience, particularly on various creative writing genres - personal essays, poetry, short stories, songs, movie scripts, plays, and innovative projects in four different languages (English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that we, the Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah branch, extend our warmest welcome to all writers and readers to honor all 127 artistic masterpieces. This is indeed a tremendous achievement to commemorate our debut.

We are privileged to offer the platform for the writers to show their talents in creative writing in this magazine, which serves as a testament to our commitment to the area of personal essays, poetry, short stories, songs, movie scripts, plays, and innovative projects. Their invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to academic excellence have played a vital role in shaping this magazine.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Editorial Board




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THE NEW IDEA OF COMMERCIAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF GULA APONG LANGKAU OUTLET

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Sarawak's famous gula apong or nipa palm sugar comes from the nipa palm tree, which grows abundantly in the coastal areas of Sarawak. Gula apong was traditionally produced and utilized in the coastal villages where sugar was not available and was expensive to come by due to limited road accessibility. It was used in drinks and foods as a sweetener. Unlike refined sugar, gula apong is more natural because it involves minimum processing and no chemicals are added during the process. It contains high amounts of vitamins and minerals hence its popularity increased as a replacement of white and brown sugar.

The production of gula apong requires passion and craftsmanship skill, as the process is very time consuming and labor intensive. Despite the high demand of gula apong, the production area is still in a small cottage called 'langkau'. Langkau or some pronounce it as langko is a processing hut of gula apong where local villagers still practice the traditional processing methods. The business allows rural populations which did not live in or near towns and cities to participate without requiring them to travel to central factories every day. It is considered as a

cottage industry business that is home-based rather than being manufactured in a factory. Therefore, the production process seems to be less efficient and even with a massive number of raw materials, it is impossible for small entrepreneurs to sell their products in a large quantity within a short period of time.

From the observation and survey to two sites of making gula apong (Figure 1 and Figure 2), most of the langkau were in a poor condition in terms of its access road, building structure, building layout, facilities, and even the cleanliness. The langkau which is normally located inside the nipah forest requires sinking deep into the mud journey for those who wanted to reach there. The structure is made of wood and pieces of used board while the roof uses zinc sheets that look leaky and worn. The gula apong making process is conducted in an open space under one roof. With no electricity and gas supply, the producer relies on a simple firewood to cook the gula apong. The tools and equipment used in the trade utilizes traditional techniques and are made of local materials from surrounding areas such as bamboo, firewood, clay stove and coconut shell.



*Figure 1:
Langkau condition at
Kg. Pinggan Jaya,
Kuching Sarawak*



Figure 2 Langkau condition at Kg. Sri Tajo, Asajaya, Samarahan

There is an area provided to park gula among cooking equipment called 'para' but the condition is also poor and doubtful cleanliness. These problems occur due to the lack of investment and serious assistance from the government for the development of the gula among industry. Small entrepreneurs cannot afford to finance the cost of building a better and perfect langkau. As such poor condition of the workplace, it is not impossible that the younger people are less interested in continuing the industry. There is a possibility that it will diminish over time as other forms of sugar, honey and treacle are available and cheaper in the market.

Thus, the innovative idea is to upgrade the production area of gula among namely langkau, in order to commercialize and upgrade the gula

among industry. The objectives of the project are to identify the sustainable elements to be implemented to langkau construction and to design the new langkau based on the sustainable features identified. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11, to invest in renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, rainwater and sustainable local materials such as bamboo, bakau and nipah leaves in building design for sustainable and economical business purposes. The new proposed langkau with sustainable and affordable characteristics is hoped to be used as an example or pilot projects for gula among entrepreneurs to improve the existing langkau. The goal is created with business in mind, providing a pathway for community businesses to lead the charge toward a more sustainable future.



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