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CONFIRMATION AMENDMENT OF DISSERTATION

This is notified that this student has amended his dissertation as ordered and therefore is given permission to bind his dissertation

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PREFACE

Soon after independence, Malaysia launched an aggressive programme to develop its agricultural sector as part of the overall efforts to develop the nation. The decision to develop its agricultural sector was perhaps the most logical course of action to be undertaken as land was the most important resource of the country; it was abundant and readily available. The main thrust of the development was directed at the conversion of large tracts of forestland into agricultural land for the cultivation of important economic crops.

Vast areas of virgin rain forests in Peninsular Malaysia have and still are being cleared rapidly to cope with the immense demand for land in all sectors of development, especially for property market and highway construction. Although land development schemes for agricultural purposes form an integral part of the whole spectrum of socio-economic advancement in the rural sector, its success will indeed be limited, if insufficient attention is paid to the adverse effects of land development, such as, soil erosion. If appropriate soil conservation measures are not taken simultaneously with development, it will lead to increased soil erosion and therefore, siltation of streams and rivers.

The natural outcome from such a situation would be frequent flooding and loss of good arable agricultural land. Under natural forest condition there is little surface runoff and most of the rain water is retained in the soil, which gradually seeps through the soil to feed springs, permanent waterways and underground water supplies. However, once the forest is cleared, the land is exposed to the abrasive action of weather.

In the nineteen sixties and seventies, the development of land was concentrated mainly on land with favorable topography, However, in recent years, much of such land has been utilized and the encroachment into the steep areas has become inevitable. In fact, in many places in the peninsula, steep areas have been opened up to meet ever increasing demand for land, although under present circumstances, such areas are not recommended for agricultural development.

With topographically suitable land being used up rapidly in all the states of the peninsula, the infringement of the steep areas is expected to escalate, which if left unchecked, can cause alarmingly adverse effects to the environment. This has created the necessity to examine steep areas in greater detail and to scrutinize to what extent such land can be utilized effectively and profitably for food production without causing undesirable damage to the environment.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Statement of Problems

Our country, Malaysia is undergoing a very tremendous land development action especially in the development of infrastructures. This development is inevitable, as it is a prime activity in the progress of the nation towards vision 2020. Vast areas of virgin rain-forest, especially in Peninsular Malaysia are being cleared rapidly to cope with the immense for land in all sector of development especially in the construction of highways, opening up of new industrial and residential areas as well as for the agricultural activities.

Although land development schemes for both infrastructure and agricultural purposes form an integral parts of the whole spectrum of sosio-economic advancement in this country, its success is indeed be limited, if insufficient attention is paid to the adverse effects of land development, particularly on soil erosion issues. If appropriate soil conservation measures are not taken simultaneously with development, it will leads to an increase in soil erosion and therefore, siltation of streams and rivers will occurs. This will be the beginning of others related problem such as flooding and landslide.