

## An Overview of The Determinants That Escalates Cottage Industry

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### Abstract

*In Malaysia, Cottage Industry is a major source of revenue for the villagers. It's mostly small-scale operations that rely on local resources and conventional skills, with low upfront costs and quick returns. However, due to a lack of new technologies, infrastructure, and knowledge transfer, the industry might not be thriving right now. The aim of this research is to evaluate the current roles, challenges, and gaps in Perak's CI. This study was carried out via face-to-face interview on 10 stakeholders from different agencies. This study shows a number of factors that affect a community's socio-economic development and CI business. Internal and external factors, such as interest and self-motivation, as well as the positions of various organizations, as well as family and community support, all contribute to this.*

**Keywords:** *Cottage Industry, position, challenges, gaps, socioeconomic*

### 1. Introduction

The Rural and Industrial Growth Authority (RIDA) was established in 1951 with the mission of providing comfort and improving the socio-economic status of rural communities through infrastructure and Cottage Industry (CI) development. In order to stimulate interest in CI, RIDA launched their mobile stores, which were an attempt to sell these products to the rural community (Official portal, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development). In today's Malaysia, the CI is a big source of income for the locals. For rural households, the revenue produced by this industry is their primary source of income. (Mohd Redzuan and Fariborz, 2011).

The goal of this research is to evaluate the CI's current roles, challenges, and gaps in the state of Perak. It is a key component in achieving the Malaysian government's community development goals as part of the country's socioeconomic strategy. We must ensure that no Malaysian is left behind as Malaysia intensifies its efforts to grow economically and become a fully developed country by 2020, as described in the GTP Roadmap (2010). Microfinance programmes, training, financing, and space allocation, among other things, are among the steps proposed by the Malaysian government to meet this target (GTP: The Roadmap, 2010). The aim of this research is to obtain accurate input from the target groups about their experiences receiving government assistance and to identify any discrepancies that may exist.

The final report will concentrate on discussions about the scope of finding demand differences in the CI's socioeconomic background in Perak's local communities. It will look at the issues that the communities in this study are dealing with, as well as the services and business opportunities that are open to them. In a nutshell, the study will outline the multilateral cooperation needed to advance the CI and improve the socioeconomic situation of Perak's rural population.

**The key objectives of the study are primarily:**

- 1) To gain a sufficient understanding of the community's CI and social demography in Perak.
- 2) To determine whether there are any appropriate and viable business and employment opportunities in Perak that are related to the CI.
- 3) To determine the type of intervention and assistance that the CI in Perak requires.
- 4) Propose comprehensive preparation and coaching needs as part of the empowering curriculum for various community target groups.

**Significance of study**

The researcher's goal in this study is to provide an overview of CI's position in Perak. The industry may not be booming at the moment due to a lack of new technology, facilities, and information transfer. As a consequence, these variables are regarded as critical in the development of this industry in this study. With this in mind, it is fair to assume that this study is important since it will aim to establish how technology transfer and information sharing can be incorporated into the community intervention process. This is in line with the idea that information sharing is strategically necessary because it helps them to gain a competitive advantage while still allowing them to perform well (Information Resources Management Association, 2012).

**Cottage Industry in Malaysia**

Cottage industries in Malaysia provide a major source of income for village residents. The majority of a rural household's total income comes from income provided by industries (Mohd Redzuan and Fariboz Aref, 2011). Villagers on Peninsular Malaysia's north-eastern coasts are primarily responsible for handing down centuries-old customs and heritage to future generations. Women in the local communities mainly make batiks, plant-woven handicrafts like baskets and mats, wood carvings, and pottery. Food products such as fish crackers, belachan, and regional pastries are also sold by many. Because of its home-based setting and flexibility in terms of business operating hours, CI has piqued the interest of village women, especially housewives.

Men, on the other hand, are permitted to work in this sector. Men in CI assist with more physically challenging tasks such as constructing sampans (wooden boats), making furniture, searching for forest plants or herbs, and fishing. It's impressive to see men working without any technological plans and relying solely on skills passed down through the generations.

**Cottage Industries in Perak**

Perak, as the second-largest state in Peninsular Malaysia, has a lot to give in terms of CI. Perak is known for its food, but it also has a plethora of natural products, both from the sea and on land, that enable residents to engage in CI businesses. The following are some of the CI contained in Perak:

### *Handicraft*

Perak's traditional handicraft industry has a foothold in Kuala Kangsar. Some of the handicrafts produced include labu sayong (earthenware), tekak benang emas (gold embroidery), bamboo carvings, and seashell designs. Wood or coconut shells are used in other handicrafts produced in the region. CI operators must acquire awareness and skills in order to promote and sell these goods both locally and across Malaysia, despite the fact that they are beautiful and distinctive. They should also be encouraged to make their handicrafts exclusive to Perak in order to attract customers searching for Perak souvenirs or mementos.

### *Kacang Putih of Ipoh*

"Kacang putih" was the locals' favourite snack before potato chips and fries. This food item was brought to Malaysia by Indian migrant families, and it soon became everyone's favourite snack. The "kacang putih" industry started in the late 1940s in the Ipoh foothills of Gunung Cheroh. The term putih (white) was added to the name kacang after the steamed "kacang kuda" turned white, according to the industry's founders. The Gunung Cheroh settlement was renamed Kampung Kacang Putih as a result of the trade.

In addition to chickpeas, tourists to this village can now buy a range of crunchy deep-fried, baked, and steamed Indian snacks such as murukku, pakoda, and omom. This small village now has a thriving family-run CI that manufactures these delectable snacks and is a major supplier to the rest of the world. Later, it was renamed Kampung Kacang Putih and moved to Teluk Kurin B in Buntong, where it became a well-known kacang putih hub and one of the city's most prominent tourist destinations.

According to Kacang Putih Traders Association Chairman A. Gunasegaran, the business now employs about 50 families full-time. It is said that each family has its own collection of hidden ingredients. In summary, the CI, which began as a door-to-door company, has experienced rapid growth and is on the verge of even greater success (NST, 2013).

### *Seafood Items*

Kuala Sepetang, a fishing village in Perak, acts as a CI centre. The catch of the day is either packaged and sold individually or transformed into crackers, salted fish, dried seafood, and other food items. These are sold and made available near this village for tourists who want to go on boat rides to see eagles, see fireflies, or simply tour the place. This is part of Kuala Sepetang's expanded operation. These fishermen pooled their funds to purchase boats and offer such tourism services. The related CI operators see a boost in sales as a result of the existence of such a tourist attraction. A positive effect on one area of the economy would have a positive impact on another. Such links can be seen in Kuala Sepetang, a fishing village in Malaysia.

Kuala Gula is another fishing village tucked away in Perak's northwestern corner. Few people will consider it a food, adventure, or sight-seeing paradise. Tourists flock to this village to sample toddy wine made from coconut trees and traditional roasted coffee, as well as observe birds, as they do in

Kuala Sepetang (The Star Online, 2014). Another example of how the other industries in the region benefit CI is the sale of dried and salted seafood in this village. There is plenty that can be done to assist fishing villages like this in expanding their businesses. Facilities and amenities should be put in place to promote a safer, more friendly atmosphere for potential travellers. The provision of suitable stalls for CI operators can aid in the improvement of these businesses' and the surrounding area's image.

### *Belachan*

Apart from factory-made Belachan (such as in Kuala Gula), many Perak residents make this famous Malaysian condiment at home using simple tools and equipment. The majority of belachan makers are fishermen's family members who purchase fresh fish and prawns from fishing villages. It's made and packed at home, with the aid of friends and family. Most of the machinery, however, has rusted and must be replaced. The monsoon season has an effect on their business because it deteriorates their tools and equipment while also polluting their working environments. As a result, better equipment, as well as specialised information and resources, must be given to these local communities in order for their belachan-making enterprise to develop.

### *Wooden Furniture and Decorative Items*

Because of the abundance of good and quality wood in Perak, the local community, especially the men, is involved in the production of wooden furniture and decorative objects. These artefacts are made at home if and when good wooden materials are available. They're either custom-made or mass-produced to be marketed and sold at trade shows. Some also fly to Kuala Lumpur to promote and sell their work. Knowledge of the latest technology in manufacturing and marketing wooden products should be shared and transferred among CI operators in order for them to achieve greater success.

### *Food Produce*

Foods and beverages made by CI operators in Perak include prawn/onion crackers, local chips, Kuih Bahulu, Kuih Bangkit, and Kuih Peniram, among others. Soy sauce is also made in the region for both local and tourist use. Baking cakes and pastries is something that many people enjoy doing. Apart from food, some people have started making juices from local fruits like kedondong.

## **The Roles of Various Agencies in the Development of CI in Perak**

Various agencies play important roles in the development of CI in Perak. In order to meet the needs of the local community and advance their CI companies to new heights, multilateral collaboration and contributions from various agencies are necessary. Some of the different roles that various agencies play are as follows:

## **Microcredit Schemes**

### *Rural Business Challenge*

The Rural Business Challenge Program (RBC) allows Malaysian youths to show their desire, enthusiasm, and determination to pursue entrepreneurship as a career or source of income. Effective entrepreneurs will receive grants from MRRD to help them carry out their business plans.

### *Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)*

MARA, through the MRRD, provides financial assistance to the rural population, such as the Scheme Pembiayaan Perniagaan, to help them become self-sufficient through industry. Schemes such as "DanaNITA" are available for Bumiputera women seeking loans to start their own businesses. Exemptions refer to women between the ages of 18 and 60.

### *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM)*

In 1985, Universiti Sains Malaysia launched the Ikhtiar Project, which was the forerunner of Malaysian microfinance. With a budget of just RM 2,000, the pilot project in north-west Selangor became the world's first Grameen replication project. Grameen Foundation is a non-profit organisation committed to seeking long-term solutions to poverty and hunger around the world. In 1987, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) was founded as a self-governing trust entity following the success of the pilot project. It was established to promote microcredit all over the world in order to help eradicate extreme poverty. Target had 69 locations by 2007 and served 173,000 "Sahabat" customers (UNDP, 2008).

AIM is granted interest-free loans by the Malaysian government. Many success stories have emerged, especially from women entrepreneurs who have risen out of poverty thanks to their participation in Target. However, there have been concerns that this type of microcredit does not reach the intended demographics. As a result, research like this is essential in highlighting the current (financial and non-financial) assistance given by various agencies for the betterment of the rakyat, especially in rural areas.

Since then, the country has seen a slew of new microcredit schemes spring up to meet the diverse needs of the population. The table below shows some of Malaysia's Microcredit Institutions.

**Table 2.1: List of Microcredit Institutions in Malaysia**

No.	Microcredit Institution(s)	Target Group
1.	Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM)	The poorest in the low-income community
2.	Yayasan Tekun Nasional (TEKUN)	Bumiputera Microentrepreneurs
3.	Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)	Bumiputera Entrepreneurs
4.	Bank Pertanian Malaysia	Agriculture-based entrepreneurs

(Source: Bank Negara)

### **Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA)**

The Rural and Regional Development Agency (RISDA), which is part of the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, is a federal government agency. With powers granted by Parliament, it was created on January 1, 1973. Its mission is to transform smallholder communities into progressive and sustainable communities through plantation activities and entrepreneurship. RISDA Perak has reported some of the CI projects that have been carried out in various parts of Perak. The organisation not only helps rubber smallholders replant high-yielding seeds, but it also helps rural women engage in CI activities like handicraft-making to supplement their household income (Borneo Post Online, 2017). Table 2.2-2.5 shows the programmes that have been completed as of April 2006.

**Table 2.2: Food Projects According to Responsible Centres**

No.	Responsible Centre	Types of Product	No. of Operators
Category: Food			
1.	Kuala Kangsar/Kinta	Bahulu/Dodol/Cili Sauce/Crackers	3
2.	Larut/Matang/Selama/Kerian	Traditional Kuih and Crackers ( <i>Kuih Peniram</i> , Muruku, Bahulu, Onion Crackers)	4
3.	Batang Padang/Hilir Perak	<i>Putu/Dodol</i> /Mini Currypuff	2
4.	Hulu Perak	Frozen Food/Currypuff/Samosa	1
	TOTAL		10

(Source: RISDA Perak)

**Table 2.3: Handicraft Projects According to Responsible Centres**

No.	Responsible Centre	Types of Product	No. of Operators
Category: Handicraft			
1.	Kuala Kangssar/Kinta	Processed rubber leaves/Batik	2
2.	Larut/Matang/Selama/ Kerian	Processed rubber leaves/handicraft and traditional carving	8
3.	Batang Padang/Hilir Perak	Sewing and handicraft workshop	1
4.	Hulu Perak	Processed rubber leaves/rubber leaves flower	1
	TOTAL		12

(Source: RISDA Perak)

**Table 2.4: Plants Projects According to Responsible Centres**

No.	Responsible Centre	Types of Product	No. of Operators
Category: Plants			
1.	Kuala Kangssar/Kinta	Grey Oyster Mushroom	1

(Source: RISDA Perak)

**Table 2.5: Spices Projects According to Responsible Centres**

No.	Responsible Centre	Types of Product	No. of Operators
Category: Spices			
1.	Larut Mtg/Selana/Kerian	Black Spice	1

(Source : RISDA Perak)

### **Yayasan Bina Upaya (YBU) Darul Ridzuan**

The aim of this foundation is to eradicate poverty and increase the capacity and capability of the community's lower-income populations, regardless of cultural, racial, or social backgrounds. This foundation offers a variety of programmes and services.

- (i) Microcredit financing
- (ii) YBU Kiosk Amanjaya
- (iii) 1Amanjaya Mobile Shop
- (iv) Food-box for poor families

The launch of the 1Amanjaya Mobile Shop allows CI operators to purchase basic products such as milk, sugar, and rice at a reduced price. This is particularly important for those who produce food as part of their CI business and need large quantities of all of these items. The fact that such facilities are right outside their door will make food preparation much easier.

### **Entrepreneurial Training Programmes**

A wide range of organisations have entrepreneurship development programmes. The Malaysian Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development's National Entrepreneurship Institute (INSKEN, Institut Keusahawanan Negara), MARA, the Malaysian Franchise Association, and the Malaysian Cooperative College are among them. The following is a list of some of the training programmes that were implemented.

- (i) Introduction to Entrepreneurship
- (ii) Entrepreneur Enhancement Programme
- (iii) Expansion and Networking Programme
- (iv) Entrepreneurship Reference and Advisory Programme

However, training programmes for the state of Perak must be customised to meet local market demand and defined needs in order to promote CI development.

## **2. Study Methodology**

Given that this is an exploratory research looking at the socioeconomic understanding of CI in Perak, a qualitative technique is needed to narrow the scope of the study to specific dimensions. As part of this study's exploratory research phase, the researcher will conduct the interview. The interview's sole purpose is to determine the stakeholders' level of awareness of socioeconomic growth and its dynamics. When there are power gaps between participants and decision makers or professionals, when the daily use of language and culture of particular groups is of concern, and when one wants to investigate the degree of agreement on a given subject (Morgan & Kreuger, 1993), such as the one in this research, an interview is especially useful. The approach that will be used to accomplish the collection of goals and their respective results is outlined in Table 3.1.

### *Population & Sampling Procedure*

The state of Perak was chosen as the focus of this inquiry. For this analysis, the researcher considered several procedures for determining the appropriate sample size. Stakeholders will be interviewed by a total of ten people from different agencies.



### 3. Survey Findings

#### *Outcome of Face-to-Face Interviews with Key Stake Holders*

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with government officials from the District Office and the State Government in order to collect information from the stakeholders of this report. These interviews yielded a broad picture of CI's socioeconomic situation in Perak. There were also gaps and problems addressed. This gives us a better idea of the culture that this project has defined.

The following is a rundown of the outcomes of these interviews:

Topic	Feedback received
Main CI Businesses in Perak	Pottery (labu sayong), Food business, soya sauces, handicrafts and <i>kacang putih</i> were some of the items that were named. The business were also divided into 5 main communities in Perak: Malay: Food products (salted egg, rojak sauce) and <i>Andaman</i> Chinese: Fishing, Farming and Carpentry Indian: Grocery Shops and Poultry Siamese: Carpentry and Manufacturing Orang Asli: Handicraft and Farming
Significant progress in the last 5 years and major differences	(i) The number of repeat loan applicants has increased. This may mean that, although the company is expanding, there is a lack of long-term viability. (ii) A more effective control and assessment process has been implemented. Prior to clearance, applications for the second loans are thoroughly scrutinised.
Facilitating factors in the development of CI in Perak	(i) Aside from Perak's natural resources, many of those interviewed claimed that self-interest and self-motivation are critical to CI's success in Perak.  (ii) Specific programmes on the electronic media, such as “ <i>Klinik Dr. Zambri</i> ” and “ <i>Pak Ngah Soal, Pak Ngah Jawab</i> ,” enable the group to voice their complaints and problems to the leaders.  (iii) Food products are available at a lower cost via the Mobile Shop 1Amanjaya. The implementation of such a programme allows the local rural community to make required purchases at a fair price right at their doorstep. This will allow them to lower the cost of running their CI business (particularly food products) and encourage them to expand their operations during this difficult economic period.

	(iv) In Perak's rural areas, strong community relationships also promote CI business.
Existing gaps in the development of CI in Perak	<p>(i) The physical transformation does not lead to the mental transformation of the local, rural population.</p> <p>(ii) Due to the migration of village residents, especially those from Larut, there is a lack of proper monitoring and administration in the respective villages.</p> <p>(iii) Lack of programmes by the <i>Persatuan Peniaga Kecil</i></p> <p>(iv) There aren't enough powerful leaders at the local level to speak up for CI operators.</p> <p>(v) Lack of self-awareness and related entrepreneurial skills.</p> <p>(vi) Lack of multilateral cooperation amongst various agencies.</p>
Recommendations in addressing these gaps and further developing CI in Perak	<p>(i) External parties introduce Mind Change, self-awareness, and entrepreneurial skills initiatives for CI operators.</p> <p>(ii) Villagers' incoming and outgoing movements should be closely monitored by <i>Ketua Kampung</i>.</p> <p>(iii) <i>Persatuan Peniaga Kecil</i> can provide CI operators with related and appropriate programmes.</p> <p>(iv) CI operators in Perak can create an organisation or community dedicated to resolving CI-related issues.</p> <p>(vi) Multilateral cooperation among various agencies is being enhanced. For example, Majlis Perbandaran may recommend waiving parking rental fees for new CI operators for six months.</p>

#### 4. Discussion

The study demonstrates that a number of factors affect a community's socioeconomic development and CI market. Interest and self-motivation, as well as the positions of various organisations, as well as family and community support, are all contributing factors. To fully comprehend a community's socioeconomic growth, the researcher believes it is important to investigate the basic factors that influence their work and life choices.

##### *Influencing Factors for development of CI in Perak*

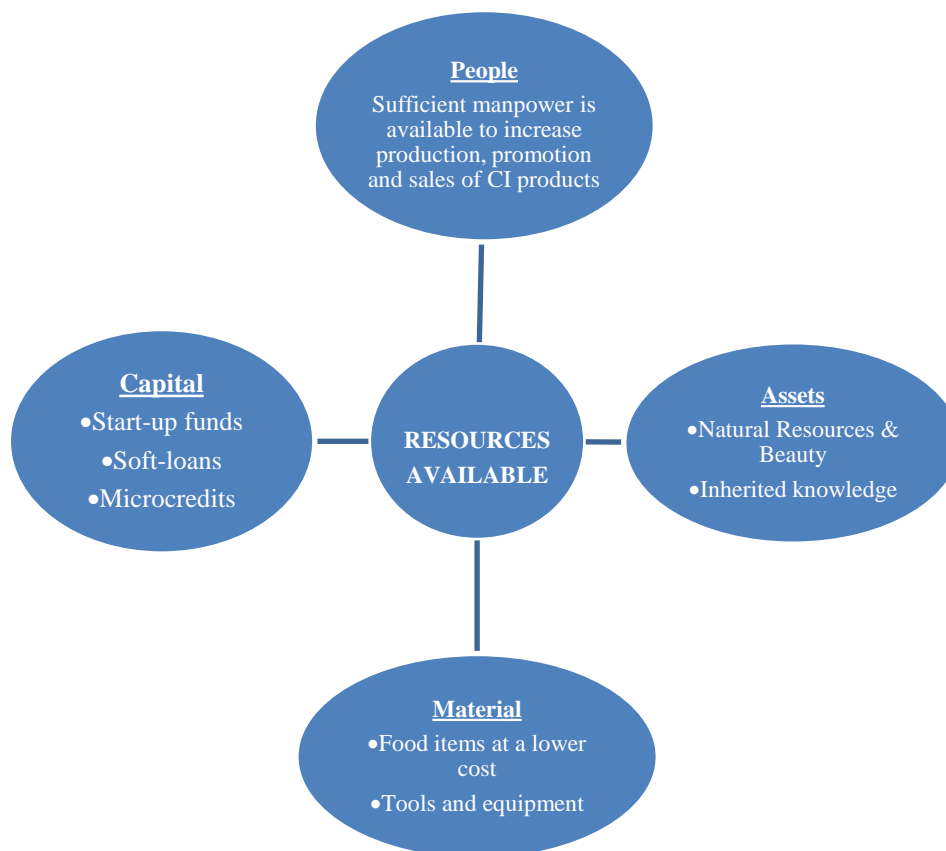
Some of the influencing factors of CI growth as viewed by stakeholders and the established local community in Perak are shown in the table below:

**Table 5.1: Influencing Factors for Development of CI in Perak**

Influencing Factors for CI Growth in Perak		
Demand Factors	External Enablers	Internal Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perak is a famous tourist spot</li> <li>Traditional <i>kuih</i> and snacks like <i>kacang putih</i> are always in demand</li> <li>Handicrafts are always in demand</li> <li>There is always demand for fresh seafood products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political willpower</li> <li>Supported by other industries such as Fishing and Tourism</li> <li>Natural resources</li> <li>Increasing number of Tourists visiting Perak (Visit Perak Year 2017)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-motivation</li> <li>Change in attitude</li> <li>Interest in business</li> </ul>

### Resources

In the context of resources, the assistance given can be divided into 4 components; people, assets, material and capital. For this project, the following requirements have been identified:



**Figure 5: Resources Available for CI Development in Perak**

## 5. Implication Of Study

### *Development of Action Plan*

The findings of this study will provide an overview of CI's progress in Perak. It will also enable the researcher to make appropriate recommendations for the interventions of various agencies. Following the completion of this study, the groundwork for implementing the Plan of Action will be laid.

### *Enrichment Body of Knowledge*

Aside from that, the findings of the study have social and educational consequences, and they can contribute to the body of knowledge about Perak's socioeconomic situation. The findings support the idea that knowledge exchange and change are important aspects of improving labour force skills.

## 6. Limitations & Recommendations For Future Study

There are a few flaws in this report. To begin, the analysis is restricted to a small subset of the local population. As a result, other members of the community's responses are missed. A limited amount of secondary data and literature reviews are also included in the study. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it is also difficult to determine which Ministry or Department is in charge of overseeing the development of CI in the country and in the state of Perak. Despite the fact that a number of organisations and departments are concerned with different aspects of poverty, rural development, and small businesses, there seems to be a lack of coordination by a single accountable agency. There is a general lack of understanding in this field, which is why Perak needs to establish an integrated system for the development of CI. It is also suggested that the country's success in this growing industry be tracked by a special unit, department, or organisation.

It is also hoped that more studies will be done at the state level in the coming years in order to provide a more clear image of existing local scenarios. This research discovered that very few studies are currently being performed, suggesting that this is a small area of study. In conclusion, this study was able to obtain relevant information about CI in Perak despite its limitations. However, much work remains in this field, particularly in determining and recommending CI's next steps in Perak.

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