INTRODUCTION

Penan Kubaan is one of the groups of native people in Sarawak, Malaysia. They live next to the river bank along the Kubaan River. There are four villages in this area. The villages are Kampung Pak Tik A, Kampung Pak Tik B, Kampung Long Lobang and Kampung Long Medamut. The villages are inhabited by the Penan ethnic group. The houses in Kampung Long Medamut was redesigned and reconstructed by the Malaysian government. Meanwhile, Kampung Long Lobang displays the style of a long house. The residents in Kampung Long Lobang are restricted by the long house rule. One of the rules requires the residents to obey the design stated by the headman during the process of the building.

The houses in Kampung Pak Tik A and Kampung Pak Tik B used the bungalow concept. This is due to the freedom given to the residents to set up the house design during building of the house.

Kampung Pak Tik A and Kampung Pak Tik B are located near the Kubaan River in Baram District, Sarawak, Malaysia. The distance of the two villages from the nearest town which could be accessed by land vehicles also takes two days of walking in the rainforest jungle. Visitors or villagers must go over the hill, cross the river and stay overnight in the middle of the forest to get to the villages. There are no population existed along the way.

The duration of the journey from Kampong Pak Tik A to Kampong Pak Tik B takes one hour. There were seven houses in Kampung Pak Tik A and seven houses in Kampung Pak Tik B. However, there were only nine houses occupied out of the 14 houses. The villagers built their house by cutting the tree in the jungle and sewing them into planks. The owners of the houses designed their own house.

However, there are few ethnic groups who live in certain areas which are inaccessible by land vehicles. The Penan Kubaanis included in these groups.

The Penan Kubaan ethnic group is considered as new in the building of modern housing. Previously, the Penan ethnic group built the house by using unsawed wood as pillars and palm leaves as roof while practicing nomadic lifestyle (Rain & Rain, 1992). Nowadays, the Penan ethnic group in the research area built the house by using sewed planks and the roofs constructed by corrugated steel sheet along with sewed wooden walls, doors and window leaves. This research aims to find out the status of headmen of the villagers in term of the house size compared to the villagers’ house.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Previously, the Penans were well-known as an ethnic group who practices nomadic lifestyle. In 1990s, there were 12,000 Penans who were still practicing nomadic lifestyle (Victor T King, 1993). In the year of 2000, the population of the Penan ethnic group in Malaysia was 12,227, representing 0.05% of Sarawak state’s population (Jayl Langub, 1975).

Ritchie J. (1994) in his book was quoting Brooks during his ruling of Sarawak on the Penan ethnic group. Brooks was saying:

“Little better than monkey, who live in trees, eat without cooking and hunted by another tribes and would see to exist in the lower conceivable grade of humanity”. Nonetheless, Guy Arnold (1958) mentioned in his paper that the Penan ethnic group was building houses and the head of the villagers’ house was bigger than the rest.

Nowadays, the number of the Penan ethnic group who practice nomadic lifestyle was reduced due to the initiative of the Malaysian government who advised them to settle in one area. The purpose of being settled in one area was to enable the government to help the Penan ethnic group in terms of education, medication and consultation in order to increase their living standard (Malaysian Access, 2015).

The head of villages has his own hierarchy in the village. The headmen are fully respected by the community. In 1832 British Colonial was ruling Naning. Naning was located at Negeri Sembilan, one of the states in Malaysia. During that time, the British Colonial was appointing headmen whom were called as the Penghulu to rule the district. The Penghulu were responsible in certain areas of administration. Traditionally, the floor area of the Penghulu houses were big in order to have meeting with the community (Siti Maisarah Bakar, n.d).

The status of the headman in villages were highly respectable. In 1894, the headmen at Malacca whom were well-known by the community as the Demang, built much bigger houses for themselves compared to the normal houses. The design showed the headmen’s high level in the hierarchy of the community which differed from the other houses (Ahmad F et. al, 2015).

Another headman named Penghulu Semin built his house between 1920 and 1930. His house was full of wooden crafts which are portrayed from the pillars up to the roofs. The wooden craft can be seen at the fascia board, staircase, doors, windows, ventilation system and the position of the roofs. The design showed that Penghulu Semin placed at a higher rank of the community. Nowadays Penghulu Semin’s house can be visited at Badan Warisan Malaysia 2, Jalan Stonor 2, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia (Construction Industrial Development Board, 2016).

Before the Malaysian Independence Day in 1957, the headman or Penghulu in Perlis possess the higher rank amongst their community. The Penghulu was appointed by the King of Perlis and the rank was only one step under the King’s rank. Furthermore, the Penghulu’s house were provided with a lock-up to arrest criminals (Mokhtar A.K. 1995).

In Brunei, the heads of villagers who are known as the ketua kampung or Penghulu has a special rank among the others. They are given monthly salary and allowances, such as the education allowance, travelling allowance, guest allowance, special housing loan and yearly bonus by the government of Brunei (Kementerian Hal Ehwal Dalam Negeri Brunei Darussalam, n.d).

Penghulu Semin bin Abdul Rahman was appointed by Sultan Ibrahim of Johor as the headman in the 1940s. Penghulu Semin’s house was built in 1936. During that time, nobles with strong financial ability were able to build houses of the similar design. The house was decorated heavily especially on the window leaves, door leaves and the fascia board (Aisyamudin Abdul Latif, 2015).

From the review, it can be concluded that the Penan ethnic group was transforming its lifestyle from being nomadic to being settled in one place for the last 30 years. The headmen of the villagers have a special rank within the community and their houses are different than the villagers. This study aims to obtain the status of the headman’s house of the Penan Kubaan ethnic group in terms of the house size which is also practiced by other headmen in Malaysia.

METHODODOLOGY

This research has been done at two villages i.e Kampung Pak Tik A and Kampung Pak Tik B. Data has been collected by measuring the floor area of every house in the research area. The area includes the bedroom, the dining room, the family room and the kitchen. The entire house of the two villages were grouped into two.

The data was collected by measuring the length and wide of each area. The length and wide of each room has been multiplied to obtain the area of the room for every house.

The headmen of both Kampung Pak Tik A and Kampung Pak Tik B are grouped as one and the rest of the villagers are rounded as another group. The purpose is to get the difference in terms of the floor area between the two groups.

The floor area of each room is analysed by using the min, max, mode and standard deviation. The sample of villagers’ code started with PA1 for Kampung PakTik A and PB1 for Kampung Pak Tik B. The headman of Kampung Pak Tik A is coded as KA1 and the headman of Kampung Pak Tik B was coded as KB2. The analysed result shows the difference in sizes of the two groups of houses. The floor area of the headmen’s houses and the villagers’ house were analysed to obtain the ratio of the two sample groups. The purpose of dividing the samples into two group was to obtain the different in floor area of the house of headman and other residents.

Findings

There are two groups in the data analysis. The first group consists of the headmen while another group consists of the villagers. The two groups need to be separated due to the huge difference of floor area for the head of villagers’ house and the villagers’ house.

Both villagers’ house consists of family area, two bedrooms and kitchen/dining area. The means and average of floor area for the headmen’s house is 86.29 meter square while the standard deviation was 1.17. It shows that there are similarities
between both houses in term of their floor area. For the family area, the standard deviation was 2.51, which shows the huge difference between the sizes and the total floor area. The family area and the kitchen/dining area of R8 is bigger than R1 but for the bedroom and the kitchen/dining area, KA1 built it bigger than KB2. KA1 possesses extra area for washing and storage purposes.

There were various sizes of floor area for the villagers’ houses. For the family area of villagers’ houses, the maximum floor area was 55.12 m² while the min area was 16.91 m². The average area was 32.42 m² and the median was 27.87 m². The standard deviation of the headmen’s group was 11.19, which shows the huge difference in the total floor area.

For the family area of the villagers, PA3 has the biggest floor area of 44.45 m² while PB12 has the smallest floor area of 9.66m². Nevertheless, it became a conflict for the biggest floor area for PA3 because there were no clear boundaries between its bedroom, kitchen or dining area. The second max was 25.22m². Out of the 12 villagers, there were five houses occupied with bedroom and two of them had double bedrooms. The rest of the residents’ houses had no bedroom. The average floor area for the bedrooms was 10.63 m² and the median was 11.23. The standard deviation for the bedroom of the villagers was 2.84m². For the kitchen/dining area, there were ten out of twenty which had kitchen/dining area. The two of them which had no floor area for kitchen/dining area possessed cooking facilities, but the boundaries for kitchen/dining to another area was not clearly shown. The average floor area for the kitchen/dining area was 10.81 m² and the median was 27.87 m². The standard deviation of 11.19 shows the big difference in floor area for kitchen/dining area. The headmen’s houses were the biggest between both villages.

The ratio of the villagers’ house and the head of the villagers’ house in term of floor area are as followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Villagers’ house</th>
<th>Head of villagers’ house</th>
<th>Villagers’ house: Head of villagers’ house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA1</td>
<td>24.82</td>
<td>KA1</td>
<td>1:3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA2</td>
<td>55.12</td>
<td>KA1</td>
<td>1:1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA3</td>
<td>44.65</td>
<td>KA1</td>
<td>1:1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA4</td>
<td>30.25</td>
<td>KA1</td>
<td>1:2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA5</td>
<td>29.11</td>
<td>KA1</td>
<td>1:3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA6</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>KA1</td>
<td>1:3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB1</td>
<td>42.84</td>
<td>KB2</td>
<td>1:1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB2</td>
<td>20.73</td>
<td>KB2</td>
<td>1:4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB3</td>
<td>26.63</td>
<td>KB2</td>
<td>1:3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB4</td>
<td>16.91</td>
<td>KB2</td>
<td>1:5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB5</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>KB2</td>
<td>1:3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB6</td>
<td>45.46</td>
<td>KB2</td>
<td>1:1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1:2.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

The Penan ethnic is practicing the culture of building houses in term of the floor area of the house which is practiced by the other headman in Malaysia as well.

Guy Arnold (1957) mentioned in his paper, that the head of the villagers’ house was bigger than the rest. This research approved that the culture of building houses in term of floor area is still being in the progress of improving the ethnic. The head of villagers’ house is bigger than the villagers’ house. The average ratio of the villagers’ house and the head of villagers’ house was 1:2.98. In general, it can be declared that the head of villagers’ house of Penan Kubaan was tree times bigger than the villagers’ house. There were two possibilities to explain these situations. Firstly, the headman must ensure that his house is bigger than the villagers. Secondly, the villagers did not want to construct the house bigger than the headman in order to show their respect to the headman.

References


