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## THE ROLES OF JAWATANKUASA KESELAMATAN DAN KEMAJUAN KAMPUNG (JKKK) AS CHANGE AGENT: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RURAL AREAS

Sharon Pearl Henry Serub<sup>1\*</sup>, Noni Harianti Junaidi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak, Samarahan 2 Campus, Malaysia

Email: sharonpearl@uitm.edu.my

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak, Samarahan 2 Campus, Malaysia

Email: noniehj@uitm.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

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### Abstract:

In development administration, the public policies are purposely introduced by the government as a change sponsor towards a specific target group in society to encourage positive change. To ensure that these policies are implemented properly, it is the responsibility of policy implementers who take on the roles of change agents to bring changes into society. Generally, these change agents are the civil servants who have been trained specifically for these roles to ensure that the policies planned and introduced will be able to achieve their intended goals. As a developing country, the policies introduced by the government are majority development policies for both the urban and rural areas. For this purpose, the government set up specific ministry for the sole purpose of developing the rural areas in the country to narrow the gap between both areas. As such the change agents responsible for implementing the various programs under the rural development policies need to ensure that the rural population, namely the target groups, are ready and prepared to accept these changes. This is where the important roles of the JKKK comes in as the secondary change agents to provide support for the civil servants in undertaking the tasks of policy implementation. This paper seeks to identify the general issues and challenges faced by the JKKK as secondary changes in assisting the government to ensure that the implementation of public policies can proceed without much hassles as to ensure the policy goals are achieved. The understanding from such endeavours will encourage better preparation and communication between the government (change sponsor), the civil servants (primary change agent) and the target groups in the rural areas.

**Keywords:**

Bureaucracy, Civil Service, Change Agents, Development Administration, Rural Areas, Policy Implementation.

**Introduction**

The success of any policy depends largely on the implementation process itself. And the implementation process in turn depends on the policy implementer namely the bureaucracy as primary change agent. And yet, the bureaucrats themselves depend on another group to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the policy as they themselves are not able to be 'on the ground' all the time to communicate and monitor the various government policies and programs. Thus, they depended on a group of informal policy implementers simply referred to as the secondary change agents. These secondary change agents are the informal 'officials' who may or may not be appointed by the government to carry out these roles. However, they are equally, if not more so, important as they are the group that directly communicates with the target groups on any matters regarding government policies and programs. Secondary change agents are seen as respected community leaders such as village headmen, religious leaders and respected elders in the village.

In developing countries like Malaysia, most of the government policies and programs target the development of the rural areas. Generally, rural areas lack modern infrastructure as well as recording high incidence of poverty. Thus, every year, the government will allocate a certain number of financial resources to develop the rural areas so that the rural communities may enjoy a good quality of life without having to migrate to urban areas to seek basic amenities such as medical care, proper education for their children and job opportunities. It can be seen from the government early effort of introducing the long-term plan such as the New Economic Policy with the objectives of national unity, the effort to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas is crucial as to reduce and eradicate poverty so that every citizen can enjoy a good quality of life regardless of whether they are in the urban or rural areas.

**Development Administration**

In view of this, the government realized the importance of utilizing the specific function of development administration to focus on developing rural areas to introduce positive social change among the target group. Development administration as defined by Fred Riggs (1970) as "*the administration of development programs by means of initiatives and policies adopted by the government to fulfil its development objectives and to upgrade the capacity of its administration*". Meanwhile, Rodman (1968) in highlighting the inadequacies among the bureaucrats in the public administration of the developing countries, emphasizes the important role of the development administration. He stated that the term 'development administration' can be utilized in a broad sense to encompass the various approaches and perspectives that marked the study of public administration of developing countries. In short, development administration refers to the field of study under the general umbrella of public administration, that is useful for developing countries that want to focus on achieving development especially in its rural areas to benefit its citizens.

This field has four inter-related elements, namely (1) substantive elements, (2) managerial elements, (3) social change, and (4) political element (Esman, 1972). The substantive elements refer to the policies planned by the government as change sponsor. While the managerial

elements provide guides to bureaucracy or the civil servants as change agent on how to implement or carry out the various governmental policies and programs. Social change is what the government aimed for by the successful implementation of the policies towards the target groups, particularly in the rural areas. And finally, the political element that represents the selected groups unique needs that should be fulfilled by the governmental policies. These include, for example, the access to proper infrastructures such as clean water, access to public roads, availability of basic healthcare and proper schools for rural children. Furthermore, in this age of worldwide web, availability to uninterrupted internet is a must.

In Malaysia, nearly all the policies and programs planned and introduced by the government are development policies. As such it is imperative that the development administration machinery plays an important role in ensuring the success of rural development policies to narrow the gap between the rural and urban area to achieve the goal of national unity.

### **Policy Implementation**

To successfully implement the policies, the government as change sponsor must ensure they not only have the financial resources but also suitable human resources to carry out the various activities towards the selected target groups in the rural areas. The success and failure of government policies nearly always lie in how efficient and effective are these policies carried out by the civil servants as change agents. A successful policy implementation is when the goals and objectives of the policies are brought into reality. Ikelegbe (2006) defined policy as “...the integrated course and programs of action that government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct action and practices in certain problem area”. Or as stated by Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013), it is “...a course-setting action that provides the direction, the guide and the way to the achievement of certain goals or objectives desired by government”. Basically, it is a plan that includes the objectives of what the government wanted to achieve and an action plan or strategy on how to achieve it. It also entails the various resources available allocated to achieve these goals such as financial and staffing. Public policies are part of the routes that the governments, especially in developing countries, used to attain the many goals which are important for the specific community who are the target group and, in general, the development of the areas and country (Obamwonyi, 2014).

Generally, the public policy cycle includes the policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation and policy analysis. Of these steps in the policy cycle, the policy implementation is the most crucial as no matter how good the policy looks on paper, yet the implementation process is poor, the policy is bound to fail. Policy implementation entails the process of translating the policy into actions through various strategies, projects, and programs (Okoli and Onah, 2003; Ikelegbe, 2006). Not only would the policies need to be implemented but to ensure it achieve its goals, constant monitoring is a must. Thus, the need for the specific role of the development administration and having a capable public administrator as change agent is imperative in policy implementation.

The policy implementation process involves four elements: (1) government agencies or actors, (2) procedures, (3) methods or techniques, and (4) political support. The roles of the government agencies as actors in policy implementation are crucial for the success of the policy. Therefore, it is imperative that the actors or civil servants as change agent must be well prepared and capable to carry out the strategies and programs under the policy towards the target groups to introduce social change. Government agencies civil servants is appointed by

the government and they can be considered as primary change agent. However, to ensure that the programs can proceed smoothly, the civil servants will usually communicate with another group that can be considered as secondary change agent. These groups may or may not be appointed officially by the government but their roles are important to the success of the policy. Examples of secondary change agents are religious leaders, community leaders and respected elders in the community. In Malaysia, the JKKK plays an important role as secondary change agents to support the civil service in policy implementation. For example, the JKKK in Sarawak plays an important role in managing the village community. As stated by the Deputy Minister for Food Industry, Commodity and Regional Development of Sarawak, Mr Martin Ben, who believed that the JKKK is imperative as the middle person between the villagers and the various government agencies and representatives (UKAS, 23 April 2023). However, there are still room for improvements as the JKKK need to go beyond the general functions of managing the village. Pointing out that the main role of the JKKK is to work together with the district office, the Rural Development Ministry and other government agencies as well as the private sectors to ensure that they are able to map out the development programs that can fit into the needs and wants of the community (UKAS, 9 September 2022).

### **Jawatankuasa Keselamatan Dan Kemajuan Kampung (JKKK)**

The *Jawatankuasa Keselamatan dan Kemajuan Kampung* (JKKK) or the Village Development and Security Committee is formed by the government as a group to provide support to the government agencies in carrying out policies and programs in the rural areas. They also serve as the middle-person between the civil servants and the village community, especially in communicating important information from the government as well as voicing out the villagers needs and complaints through the proper channel. In the federal government, the JKKK (known as Village Community Management Council, MPKK) is placed under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKDW). Whereas for Sarawak, at the state level, the JKKK is under the Ministry of Agriculture, Native Land and Regional Development. In 2018, with a monumental change in the government after the General Election, one of the changes made was to rebrand the JKKK to *Majlis Pengurusan Komuniti Kampung*, MPKP (Federal Development and Security Council). However, the federal government agreed that Sarawak can continue to use the term JKKK and continue with its existing framework under the Sarawak state government (Utusan Sarawak, 7 August 2020).. The number of MPKP or JKKK in Malaysia as of 2023 is displayed in Table 1 below. With 5976 established JKKK units, Sarawak leads the field, followed by Sabah (2853). In contrast, Labuan has just 27 MPKP/JKKK units.

**Table 1: The Number of MPKP/JKKK in Malaysia**

No.	State	Number of MPKP/JKKK
1	Melaka	316
2	Kelantan	636
3	Perak	829
4	Labuan	27
5	Johor	670
6	Pahang	542
7	Sarawak	5976
8	Perlis	387
9	Terengganu	1046
10	Kedah	1025
11	Sabah	2853

12	Selangor	373
13	Negeri Sembilan	394
14	Penang	375
	Total	15,449

Source: (Portal of the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, [rurallink.gov.my/jpkk-dan-jpkkp/](http://rurallink.gov.my/jpkk-dan-jpkkp/), October 2023)

### ***JKKK in Sarawak***

The arrangement of the JKKK for Sarawak are where the *Temenggong* who heads the various division, under him is the *Pemanca* who oversees the district within the division and then the *Penghulu* who leads the community within the division. Below the *Penghulu* are the *Ketua Kaum* of the various villages in that area. The *Ketua Kaum* goes by different title depending on the communities in those areas. For example, the Bidayuh, Malay and Melanau communities used the term *Ketua Kampung*, *Tuai Rumah* for the Iban community, *Kapitan* for the Chinese and, *Maren Uma* for the Orang Ulu community.

The eligibility or qualification for the *Ketua Kaum* they must be between 30-65 years of age for the initial appointment, and there is no age limit for extension of service. The candidate must also pass the security screening by PDRM Bukit Aman and must be confirmed to be free of criminal charges. Furthermore, for the extension of terms for those above 70 years of age, they must pass medical checkups at the government clinics or hospitals before their term can be extended. The term of service are 4 years for the first term, 2 years for extension and 1 year for the final extension of term.

The Resident Officers (ROs) of each division and the District Officers (DOs) roles towards the JKKK are to appoint, extend and terminate the terms of the *Ketua Masyarakat* (Community Leader) and *Ketua Kaum*. They also must monitor the performance of the *Ketua Masyarakat* and *Ketua Kaum* as well as to manage and monitor the payment of allowance for them. The RO and DO also have to update the record for the *Ketua Masyarakat* and *Ketua Kaum*.

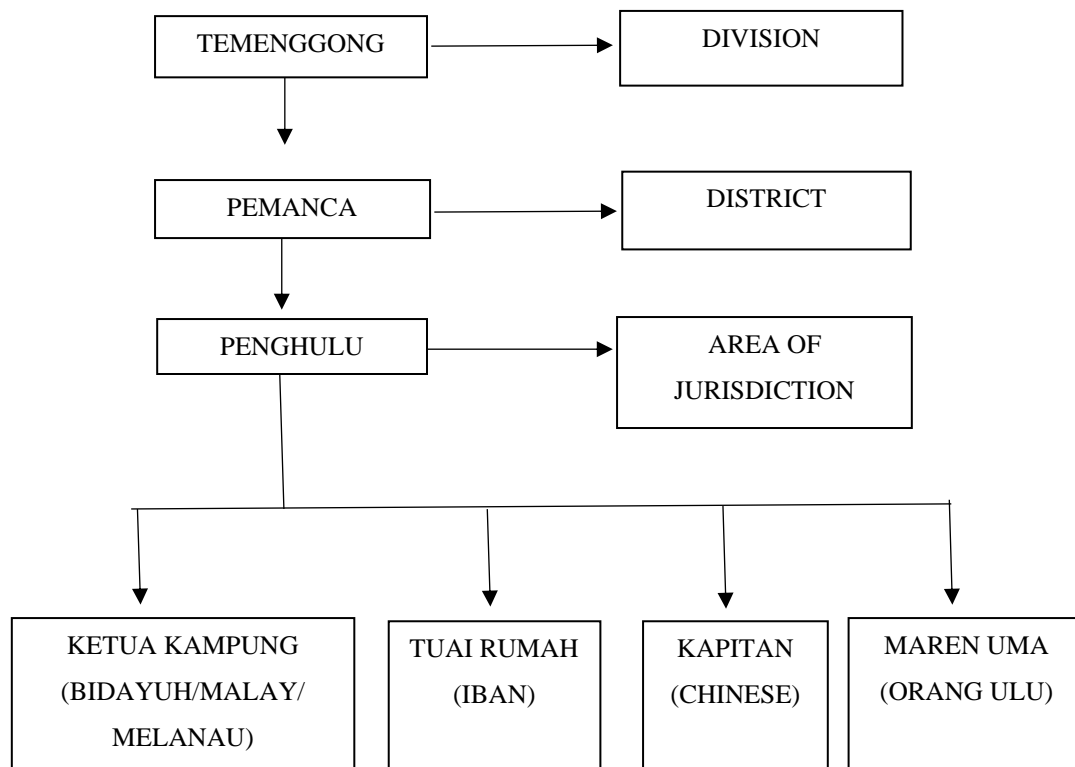
The roles of the *Ketua Kaum* are to lead the JKKK in their respective villages. To assist the *Temenggong*, *Pemanca* and *Penghulu* in the administration of their respective areas. To help the government in caring for the welfare of the villagers, encouraging the villages to participate in government programs, and to support the in carrying out their respective tasks. They are also required to collect data on the number of births and death in their areas to be submitted to the DO. Furthermore, they need to create a close relationship between the people and the government as well as helping to implement the programs and directives from the government from time to time.

To fulfil their roles effectively, the *Ketua Masyarakat* and *Ketua Kaum* need to have to following requirements:

1. Be open minded as to accept and consider new ideas and different opinions before making any decision;
2. Sharing their experience for development purposes as well as knowledge-sharing to benefit all;
3. Forward thinking to enable them to put ideas into action;
4. Always prepared to work as a team and apply a culture of cooperation;

5. Be professional especially in making decision without resorting to emotional sentiments and favoritism; and
6. Honest, sincere, and trustworthy in their action, decision-making, and carrying out their responsibility.

The composition of a JKKK is the *Ketua Kaum* as the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasure, Development Bureau, Security Bureau, Economy Bureau, Social and Cultural Bureau, Education and Human Resource Development Bureau, Youth and Sports Bureau, Religious Bureau, and Women Affairs Bureau. The total number of JKKK members must not be more than 14, not including the Chairperson. The requirements needed to be appointed as members to the JKKK are the candidate must be Malaysian citizen, the Chairperson and Secretary must have at least a *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) qualification or its equivalent, whereas other members must at least know how to read and write. They must also be a resident in the village, or within the scope of the jurisdiction of the area. They must not have any criminal records nor be a bankrupt. In term of age, they must be between 30-65 years old (subject to the term of service and health condition). They also need to be active in activities in organizations, societies or charity work. They should have a satisfactory level of mental and physical health, as well as not a drug addict. And furthermore, they are also expected to have good leadership skills and mindset that can be accepted by the community.



**Figure 1: Composition and Hierarchy of the Ketua Masyarakat & Ketua Kaum in Sarawak**

Source: (Field Work, 2024)

***The Functions Of The JKKK Are As Follows:***

1. To plan and implement development action plan towards a developed village.
2. To assist DO and RO to plan for development in their respective areas of jurisdiction.
3. To create a united community through active participation by the villages in community activities for a progressive society and practicing positive moral values and support the policies and hopes of the government.
4. To come up with a village profile that consists of all the village's development records, data of all residents, economy and so forth.

***The Roles Of The JKKK Are Listed As:***

1. Responsible to the district office, Resident, *Penghulu*, *Pemanca* and *Temenggong*.
2. To form bureaus and allocate the tasks between the various bureaus.
3. Monitor the progress of bureaus and to ensure the complete implementation of its tasks.
4. Attend various relevant meetings at the district and state levels.
5. Advisor to the various charity bodies in the village.
6. Support the wishes and policies of the government and convey them to the population.
7. Provide information as well as communicate and explain the directives from the government.
8. To be the middle person between the villagers and the government and non-government organizations.
9. Assist the villagers in solving problems by reporting and holding discussion with the District and Resident Officers.
10. Accepting and implementing tasks given from time to time.

Therefore, the JKKK play very important role in providing support to the government in implementing policies and programs in the villages. By carrying out their roles and tasks diligently will help to decide the level of success of the development policies in rural areas. Allowances are also provided to the JKKK for carrying out their roles and functions (refer to Table 2).

**Table 2: JKKK Allowances**

<b>Types of Allowance</b>	<b>Allowance Rate (RM)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Chairperson	500	Every month @ 12 times per year
Secretary	300	Every month @ 12 times per year
Organizing Meeting	100	Based on the compulsory requirement of maximum 6 time per year
Attendance at Meeting	50	Based on the compulsory requirement of maximum 6 time per year

Source: (Portal of the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, [rurallink.gov.my/jpkk-dan-jpkkp/](http://rurallink.gov.my/jpkk-dan-jpkkp/), October 2023)

**Issues And Challenges Faced In Policy Implementation**

Government may have drafted and passed a near perfect policy but if the implementation process is not carried out properly, it will be nigh impossible to achieve its objectives. Indeed, Nwankwo and Apeh (2008) noted that the implementation of a policy is the most vital part of policy process as this is where the degree of success or failure of the policy will be decided.

The process of policy implementation may be wrought with challenges but scholars have in generally narrowed it down to several elements. Rodman (1968) categorized it into shortages of skills and tools; difficulties of organization and structure; political difficulties; and cultural and attitude barriers. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) also noted that public administrators face challenges from the level of expectations placed on them, but also the pressure from various interest groups, politicians and other factors from the political environments. In addition, issues such as ‘...*subunit loyalty, cognitive limits on rationality, distorted communication flows, and difficulties in monitoring subordinates’ behavior*’ are quoted as contributing to the challenges of policy implementation (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989). Lin (2023) also highlighted the importance of human resource components of the bureaucracy to improve on the public services. Meanwhile, in a study on the public policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria, Nwafor-Orizu, Chinyere and Tochukwu (2018) came up with seven core challenges namely (1) intolerance and conflict; (2) corruption; (3) strong individual factor; (4) citizenry acceptance and approval of moral laxity and corruption; (5) inadequacy of resources; (6) wide policy scope; and (7) continuity deficiency problem. A similar study by Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013) in Nigeria also presented similar challenges such as the ineffective and corrupt political leadership in the bureaucracy, the over ambitions nature of some of the public policies, as well as the fact that some agencies have burdened the responsibility of implementing policies without being provided with relevant number of staff nor financial resources to carry out the policy effectively. Another factor that contributes to the challenges of policy implementation are the political influence on the public bureaucracy (Amucheazi, 1980). Lastly, the repeal of a policy will also affect their implementation by public service as when a new government took over, current policy will most likely be terminated, wasting the time and financial resources that have already been sunk into the implementation process itself (Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013). Thus, the public administrators as change agent faced issues and challenges both from within the government machinery, for example, lack of financial resources, lack of human resources both in term of numbers and expertise, as well as corruption and political ambitions of bureaucratic leaders within the public administration, and as well as from the external environment such as pressure groups, change in politics and the population at large.

### ***Issues and Challenges Faced by JKKK As Secondary Change Agent***

For this concept paper, we shall look at the specific issues and challenges that are commonly faced by the JKKK as secondary change agents in supporting the government policy implementation processes. Qualitative method was used to complete this concept paper whereby an informal interview was held to gather primary data from four individual who have serves as JKKK committee members for several terms. Questions asked were unstructured to allow the respondents to elaborate freely on the issues and challenges at hand. The location selected is a small village in the Kuching division with a population of roughly 450 villagers. Feedback gathered were then compiled and analysed in a descriptive manner.

Among the issues and challenges mentioned are:

(1) Lack of financial resources. For approved policies, generally there will be a certain allocation in term of financial resources provided for the implementation of the policies by the public administrators. However, this may not be sufficient especially when there are various programs and campaigns launched under such policies to achieve the objectives of said policies. For example, based on an interview with several committee members of the JKKK of

a rural village in Kuching division, their main complaints were the lack of fundings provided by the government to carry out required programs under development policies. They had to resort to applying for financial assistance from the member of Parliament or member of the State Assembly who represent the constituency the village is located in. And if the fund is still insufficient, the JKKK would have to resort to utilizing money from the collective funds contributed by the villagers. Not only that, the committee members also shared that they had to fork out their own personal funds to buy the laptops, printers, ink, papers and so on for the use of the JKKK. Policy implementation in the rural areas is thus hampered by the lack of funding from the relevant authorities. Although allowances are provided to the Chairperson and Secretary of the JKKK, the other members do not receive any allowances besides those for meeting organizations and attendance, which are not sufficient to carry out the many functions and roles required of them.

(2) The expertise and capability of the appointed members of the JKKK itself. For example, the *Ketua Kaum* are appointed and not elected. The committee members are then in turn appointed by the *Ketua Kaum* in his role as the Chairperson. Although the academic requirements of the Chairperson are indeed basic (SPM qualifications), the norms are to appoint a retiree civil servant. In the same interview session held with members of the JKKK, they agreed that although basic SPM qualification is sufficient, but in this age of information technology, additional skill such as computer skill and basic report writing and documentation is also important. Their current grievance is the Chairperson, although a former civil servant, lacks the knowledge on how to use the computer nor the basic letter writing and documentation procedure. Thus, all the required paperwork falls heavily on the shoulders on the Secretary, who have a postgrad qualification. As such, he often delegated those tasks to the other committee members. However, the committee members agreed that although he lacks higher academic qualification, the Chairperson is open to suggestions from other members when it comes to problem-solving and decision-making for the village. This demonstrate that he has the right leadership skill to lead the village towards development. Indeed, the feedback and participation from the committee members and other citizens are essential in making an informed and comprehensive decision (Bottin and Mazeaud, 2023).

(3) Lack of training sessions or workshop from the district and resident officers for the committee members even though training for *Ketua Kaum* is held rather often. For example, when enquired about the eJKKK program introduced by the Sarawak state government, the committee members admitted that they have heard about it but was not aware of any training nor workshop held to train them on how to use the online system. Thus, all data collected had to be done manually using hardcopy forms and any report and request from the villagers still need to be applied in writing through the JKKK. This waste time and resources that caused delays in development projects in the rural areas. For example, limited knowledge on development planning process hinders development projects planning and implementation process in the community (Nurul Shaza, 2024).

(4) Support and cooperation from the target group. On the cooperation and support from the villagers, the committee members acknowledged that they do not have any difficulties from getting the villagers to participate in any of the programs and campaign launched by the government. They also admitted that the villagers are very active in supporting all the government directives, especially if there are clear instructions and guidelines provided. This prove that the committee are capable to communicate efficiently and effectively with the villagers to fulfil the requirements of the governments and needs of public policies. This in turn

will help the development the village with the success of the policies introduced. Indeed, the cooperation from the villagers are essential to ensure any programs to be run successfully. Norliza, Mimi and Zanisah (2023) highlighted this issue in their study on the JPKKOA that found that due to the complaints and discontent of a few numbers of villagers, the execution of some programs to provide assistance to villagers during the COVID19 pandemic were limited (Norliza, Mimi and Zanisah, 2023).

### ***Suggestions and Recommendations to Improve the Roles of JKKK as Secondary Change Agent***

It cannot be denied, the roles of secondary change agents such as the JKKK are very important in achieving goals of development policies in the rural areas. The JKKK are the ones who directly deal and communicate with the community (target group) daily. They understand the problems and issues that arises faced by the rural populations. By utilizing the JKKK, the civil service can be ensured that the goals of the development policies will be achieved. However, they also must acknowledge and pay attention on the issues and challenges faced by the JKKK in carrying out public policies in the rural areas.

One of the suggestions is to resolve the issue of lack of financial resources. The District and Resident officers need to be more proactive in requesting for financial resources from the state government to be allocated for each programs entrusted to be carried out by the JKKK. There need to be a permanent fund for such purposes. The JKKK cannot be expected to request for fundings all the time when the programs that they are instructed to carry out are part of government policies. This will cause delays and impact on the success of the policy implementation.

Secondly, regular training or workshop should be provided to the members of JKKK, not only the *Ketua Kaum*, as the ones who carry out the tasks of policies implementation are the committee members. Trainings such as computer skills, creation of online database, use of cloud storage and so on can greatly benefit the members of the JKKK in fulfilling their duties. With the use of ICT and internet, this will strengthen the JKKK and make them more efficient and effective.

### **Conclusion**

JKKK plays an important role in assisting the government to ensure that the implementation process can reach the community. As development policies for both urban and rural areas are the focus of government initiatives in developing countries, the change agents responsible for implementing the various programs under the rural development policies need to ensure that the rural population, namely the target groups, are ready and prepared to accept these changes. The JKKK should be an eye and ear to the government. Active assistance from various government departments and agencies is necessary to support the roles play by the JKKK. Any implementation of government policies cannot be successfully achieved without the involvement of the JKKK in the rural areas. The government must be accountable and responsible for meeting any demands made by the community to ensure the success of development in the rural areas. Any development programs or projects such as the Minor Rural Projects should be inclusive in nature by bringing in the local community (Nurul Syaza, 2024).

For this study, the main issues and challenges that have been identified for the JK KK in this village is the lack of financial resources, issues on the expertise and capability of the appointed members of the JK KK, and the lack of training for the committee members. The exception is on the issues of support and cooperation from the villagers in which is not an problem for this JK KK. Indeed, any program will not be successful without support from the target group. To overcome the issues and challenges that will hinder the development process in the rural areas, among the recommendations made are to provide more financial resources for the JK KK and also to send the committee members for training to upgrade their skills and knowledge especially in ICT which is imperative in this globalizing world.

For the government, they need to relook at the functions and roles of this group of secondary change agent especially when they expect the JK KK to play more active and direct roles in the implementation of the rural transformation projects (New Sarawak Tribune, 25 February 2020). Equipping the community leaders and JK KK with the required funding and necessary skills can ensure a higher level of success in implementing and administering development programs and projects in the rural areas. By having the JK KK to participate actively in administering development projects, this can narrow the gap between the rural and urban areas and ensure a more equal and fair development process in the country.

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