

The Practices of Citizen Participation and Political Accountability in Malaysia Local Government

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Abstract : Strengthening accountability among civil servants has been at the centre of government transformation ever since the country is striving to become a developed nation by the year 2020. One critical area that has become the loci of attention is increasing the accountability of local government by delivering services that are preferred by the communities. This article explores the practices of citizen participation and political accountability in local government in Malaysia. The existing literature has identified a mismatch between the demands of the community and the actual services delivered by the local government. Based upon this framework, this research attempts to examine the linkages between citizen participation and political accountability in selected local governments in Malaysia. This study employs quantitative method involving 1155 respondents who were randomly selected from local government personnel as well as local citizens. The instruments in the questionnaires were adopted from Wang and Wart (2007) who have also studied local government accountability. The findings reveal that respondents are satisfied with the services provided to the community. However, three areas of concerned are the inadequacy of citizens' participation in programs, immediate actions on complaints as well as the slow response to repair dilapidated basic infrastructures such as roads, park, and recreations. It is recommended that local governments in Malaysia continue to engage the citizens in the decision making process so that the needs and demands of the citizens can be adequately fulfilled.

Keywords : citizen participation, political accountability, local government, Malaysia

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