

At 82, owning a home is still a dream

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By **DAWN CHAN** - September 9, 2017 @ 7:49pm

KLANG: At the age of 82, former plantation worker A. Subramaniam harbours hope of owning a home and wants the federal and state governments to assist in making his dream come true.

The former Ladang Bukit Raja plantation worker is among 15 families who have been facing difficulties in securing bank loans to acquire the properties that were offered to them at RM77,000, following the closure of the estate in 1997.

After the estate closed, the plantation owner had given a Power of Attorney (POA) to a developer which had agreed to build homes for its former workers and a RM7,000 compensation was to be paid and held as deposits.

However, the former plantation workers were hit with bank loan problems and were unable to move into an already completed housing area located at Jalan Astaka 2A along with 70 other former plantation workers and their families in 2015.

Subramaniam, a father of 10 and grandfather of 22, said he has been having sleepless nights thinking of his family's future.

"I tried to get assistance from many parties but I was pushed around. I feel like my dream to have my own house has been dashed. At my age, I should be enjoying the comfort of my own house with my wife.

"Now I have no choice but to live with my son and his family in Kapar. It is a little inconvenient, but I am glad that my son does not complain. I hope I do not have to wait too long," said Subramaniam when met at Jalan Astaka 2A today.

Subramaniam expressed regret with the action of the developer who had rented out the 15 houses after learning that the former plantation workers had failed to secure bank loans to buy the houses.

"I have worked at the plantation for 49 years since I was 11. I followed the footsteps of my grandparents who came to Malaysia from India in 1857. I have poured my blood, sweat and tears to work on the plantation. A house will be the reward for me. I hope it will come soon.

"It is my wish to be move into the house in time for Deepavali. I hope the federal and state governments will be able to help me," he said.

Subramaniam and the 14 families have sought the assistance of Shah Alam Umno division chief Datuk Azhari Shaari.

Azhari said he would discuss the matter with the relevant parties, including Selangor Umno liaison committee chief Tan Sri Noh Omar, and hoped the Selangor state government would intervene.

"These families have toiled on the land for generations and it is unfortunate this has happened to them. There could be bank loan problems but we could possibility explore the rent-to-own concept for them here.

"If they are unable to get housing here, we will source it elsewhere for them. I will try to resolve this as soon as possible," he said.