

IMPOSE COMMUNITY SERVICE, HARSHER PENALTIES ON HABITUAL OFFENDERS

IRESIDE in the locality of Taman Maluri in Cheras. For quite some time, residents have fallen prey to serious acts of vandalism occurring within the mini recreational park situated in the residential precinct along Jalan Pria 4.

There are 41 lamp posts in the open park, and all the electric posts within that enclave have been subjected to acts of vandalism, giving rise to safety issues for the park users.

Several lamp posts have been forcibly displaced from their original vertical positions, with a prevailing assumption that these vandals are likely searching for copper wires for monetary gain.

The fencing behind the futsal court has also been dismantled by vandals, presumably seeking to trade the metal scrap, again, for financial gain.

Numerous complaints regarding these acts of vandalism have been lodged with the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL). Regrettably, the authorities have yet to take action to address the issues, resulting in inconvenience for the residents who use the park.

To help overcome the vandalism menace there is a need for all local authorities to enforce community service and publicise it to instil fear

of public embarrassment among the perpetrators.

It is a more effective way of fighting vandalism as compared with other punishments especially issuing compounds or fines.

The concept underlying community service is twofold: it seeks to mete out punishment and facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders by compelling them to contribute to the community.

This approach aims to instil a sense of civic duty, fostering the hope of discouraging subsequent transgressions.

Moreover, community service holds the potential to yield broader societal advantages, including the provision of manpower for charitable organisations or public services and alleviating some of the fiscal strain on the prison system.

Vandalism by-laws enforced by the various local authorities are just inadequate to rid the nation of this problem.

There is a need for a new federal legislation to deal with this problem through compulsory community service to shame the culprits, as well as harsher regulations for habitual offenders.

Those found guilty of committing any act of vandalism should perform



The fencing adjacent to the futsal court has been removed in an act of vandalism, presumably with the intention to sell as scrap metal. PIC COURTESY OF WRITER

community service in accordance with the number of hours to be determined by the relevant authorities, commonly, not exceeding 240 hours under the supervision of a probation officer.

Community service, alternatively referred to as community restitution, constitutes a punitive measure designed to redress the harm inflicted upon a community by an offender's transgression.

have become the targets of these vandals.

Acts of vandalism, is abound in every nook and corner of the country as what can be seen on fire hydrants, garbage bins, lifts in low-cost housing and public toilets.

Though vandalism in Malaysia is not as severe as in many countries in the West, the quantum of damage renders it a serious problem that must be tackled effectively.

Such a negative behaviour shown by some Malaysians prove that there is an urgent need to introduce community service to help tackle vandalism.

To ensure the effectiveness of the existing and proposed laws, enforcement personnel must carry out their tasks more responsibly while the public must act as the eyes and ears of the authorities.

Although vandalism in our cities and towns is not very alarming, it is nevertheless serious and warrants stringent laws and enforcement to deal with the problem in addition to educational and awareness campaigns to prevent them.

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