Malay Kampungs

- There were three main Malay kampongs in the city area - Kampong Glam, Telok Blangah and Kampong Melaka.
- Traditionally, Malay kampongs were found in rural areas around the eastern and interior parts of Singapore such as Kampong Siglap, Kampong Bedok, and Kampong Darat Nanas.

Chinese Kampongs

- Some of the earliest Chinese villages in the northern and western parts of Singapore may have been brought about by agriculture or gambier plantations.
- It was common for families of the same dialect groups to live in the same kampong region. For instance, Nee Soon mostly consisted of Hokkiens, while Choa Chu Kang was largely Teochew.

Kampong: Serani (Eurasians) and Chuliah

- The Eurasians kampong (also known as Serani) comprised 25 rented houses located in the Haigh Road area.
- Chuliah Kampong in Cross Street in Chinatown was home for the Indian traders.

Issues and problems

Due to the growing population, housing became one of the key issues faced by the government during Singapore’s pre-independence years. In addition to managing outbreaks caused by poor sanitation, kampong houses were also susceptible to destruction by fires.

Managing the problem

1927: The Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT) was formed to improve on housing conditions, but saw little success due to lack of funding.

1960: The Housing and Development Board (HDB) was set up to replace SIT, as public housing became one of the top priorities for national development. The first five-year building programme was initiated in 1961, which resulted in the construction of 120,669 flats by 1970. Under the new home-ownership scheme, families were given compensation to help them relocate to their new homes.
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