

The Role of The National Language and the Historical Legacy in Nurturing National Integration Among Malaysians

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Abstract

The questions of national integration and unity are critical issues in Malaysia in the effort to promote national development, since Malaysia is a heterogeneous nation in terms of race, culture, creed and language. Without integration and unity national development programmes will face a lot of difficulties, and in fact bound to be doomed. In this article discussions will focus on the concepts of Malaysian nation state, national integration and unity, and will propose three strategies to develop national integration and patriotism, namely 1) empowering Malay language as the language of education, higher learning and integration, 2) instilling deep understanding of the historical legacy in the formation of Malaysian nation state, 3) instilling strong spirit of patriotism that is love towards Malaysia and cultivate a sense of pride, belonging and commitment amongst citizens towards Malaysia as their country of birth and their homeland.

Keywords: Heterogeneous, National Integration, Cultural Solidarity, Nation State, National Identity, Patriotism, Esprit De Corps, Jus Soli, Jus Sanguinis

Introduction: Malaysia As An Heterogeneous Nation with Issues of National Integratio

Malaysia is a nation state with a plural society in terms of race, culture, creed and language. Hence the questions of national integration, unity and patriotism are critical issues in the effort towards promoting national development in order to bring the nation into an advanced status. This article will purpose three strategies towards developing national integration and patriotism, namely 1) empowering Malay language as the national and official language, language of education, higher learning and integration, 2) instilling deep understanding of the historical legacy in the formation of Malaysian nation state, and 3) instilling love towards Malaysia and a sense of pride, belonging and commitment amongst citizens towards Malaysia as their country where they are born and bred and as their homeland.

Statement of The Problem and Objectives of The Study

Malaysia is a country with a population composed of different races, ethnicities, cultures, mother tongues and religions. Department of Statistics of Malaysia cites statistics on demography as in the Table 1 below:

Bil.	Malaysia's Total population:	28,552,700	
	Malaysian Citizens:	25,870,000	100%
Race/Ethnic among citizens			
1.	Native/Indigenous Malays = 50.4%, Iban, Kadazan, Dusun, Bajau, Murut, Orang Asli, etc. =14.6%	17,312,100	65
2.	Chinese	6,505,700	24.6
3.	Indians	1,943,500	7.3
4.	Others (minorities)	368,500	0.7
5.	Non-citizens	2,422,000	8.4
Religion among citizens			
1.	Islam		61.3
2.	Buddhism		19.8
3.	Christianity		9.2
4.	Hinduism		6.3
5.	Confucianism/Tao/Chinese traditional religion		1.3
6.	Animist/religion unknown		1.0

Table 1: Malaysia is a country with a population of different races, ethnicity, culture, mother tongue and religion

(<http://www.statistics.gov.my>, assessed on September 20, 2023)

It is clear from the above statistics; Malaysia is not an integrated country in terms of demographic composition, but a heterogenic one with diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. Although most of the population are the natives/indigenous (*Bumiputera's*) and Islam is the dominant religion, however the situation is not an absolute majority as in the case with all the advance nations of the world where more than 75% of the population are made up of one dominant group, placing the group in a position of power and dominance, as shown in Table 2 below:

U.S of America	80% white race
United Kingdom	92% white race
France	92.5% white race
Germany	81% white race
Italy	95% white race
Spain	89% white race
Switzerland	90% white race
Russia	80% white race
Australia	78% white race
Japan	99% Japanese
South Korea	98% Koreans
Taiwan	98% Chinese
People Republic of China	92% Chinese
Singapore	75% Chinese

Table 2: The countries of the world where more than 75% of the population are made up by one dominant group, placing the group in a position of power and dominance

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_countries_by_population, accessed on September 20, 2023)

Paul Kennedy in his celebrated book *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* (1994: 334-335) after extensively analysing the economic condition of the countries of the world, states that countries that are in the best position to move forward achieving high status in the 21st century are:

“[...] the most likely at the moment appear to be Japan, Korea, and certain other East Asia trading states, Germany, Switzerland, some of the Scandinavian states, and perhaps the European Community as a whole... It is obvious that societies (or nations) which possess technical and educational resources, ample funds, and cultural solidarity are better positioned for the next century than those lacking all those strength”.

Paul Kennedy (ibid) described further the conditions for a country to move forward are:

1. Having the technical resources and sound educational system that can transform people into skilled, ethical, and disciplined human capital with the ability to create tools that can develop the country,
2. Having sufficient funds, to provide sufficient capitals to invest in all spheres of development, and
3. Having strong cultural solidarity to ensure the stability, cooperation and peace among the population.

Although “cultural solidarity” is mentioned last by the author, it is actually the most important factor, for without solidarity there would be no unity and cooperation among the population. This condition is prerequisite to develop the quality of cooperativeness and resilience amongst the people so as to exploit beneficially the first two assets namely educational, technological advancement and the nation’s wealth. As shown above, the condition of all the 14 developed countries of the world are integrated in terms of the demographic composition where over 75% of the population comprise one dominant group either by ethnicity or racial descent.

Nonetheless, having one dominant racial group does not guarantee stability, unity and development in a country. Pakistan (almost all are Indo-Aryan descents with 97% Muslims), India (Majority are Indo-Aryans in Northern India and Dravidians in Southern India, with 80% Hindus), Bangladesh (98% Bengalis with 90% Muslims) and Indonesia (majority are of Malayo-Polynesian family group with 86% Muslims) (Cf. websites on demographic structure of these countries), yet these factors failed to lead them towards cultural solidarity, unity and development. Indeed, it is a fact that these countries are mired in conflicts and violence due to differences in religions, sects, ethnic groups and even regional differences.

Malaysia, a case in point, is indeed very heterogeneous in ethnicity, culture, language and creed and has high tendency to spark prejudices and conflicts, as shown in the racial riot on the 13th May, 1969. Thus, specific formulae or strategies, the three mentioned above, must be developed to ensure the establishment of a common national identity, pride and integration among its citizens so that strong spirit of patriotism will be fostered.

The above statement of the problem leads to the following objectives of the study:

1. To make explicit the concept and issues of national integration in Malaysian context,
2. To purpose three strategies towards developing national integration and patriotism in Malaysia, namely 1) empowering Malay language as the national and official language, language of education, higher learning and integration, 2) instilling deep understanding of the historical legacy in the formation of Malaysian nation state, and 3) instilling love and a sense of pride amongst Malaysians towards Malaysia.

The Issue of Cultural Solidarity and The Concept of National Integration in Malaysia

The term culture has many definitions but generally it can be conceptualized as follows:

"It is a set of beliefs, values, norms, customs, traditions, rituals, and a way of life that differentiates one group from another."

(Lee, 2003: 1)

A major factor of cultural solidarity is having common element in values, norms, customs, traditions, rituals and ways of life, including religious belief and language use. However, Malaysia as mentioned above is diverse in those culturally identifying elements, therefore, it lessens the possibilities of creating cultural solidarity basing on those elements. Thus, in order to create a bridge between races of different cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, the government of Malaysia in 1970 developed the concept of national culture or "*kebudayaan kebangsaan*", as an outcome of the government-sponsored National Culture Congress held on 16th to 20th August, 1970, a year after the racial riot significantly termed as the 13th of May Tragedy in May 13, 1969. The Government has come to realize the importance of unity, tolerance and a sense of solidarity among the people with diverse and plural society such as Malaysia.

The concept of national culture as proposed by the resolution of the 1970 Congress contains the following basic principles:

1. That it is based on the cultural elements of indigenous inhabitants of the region i.e. the Malays and the Bumiputera's,
2. That elements from other cultures, which are considered to be good and appropriate, might be incorporated into the national culture, and
3. That those universal Islamic elements would be the crucial component of the national culture.

However, according to Ghulam Sarwar Yousof:

"The National Cultural Policy encountered problems from the very start and after more three decades since its formulation and implementation. Much confusion, to the extent that further elaboration certainly called for was not forthcoming, and suspicions continued to remain regarding its basic intentions."

(Ghulam Sarwar Yousof, <http://www.projectmalaysia.org/articles/the-culture-issue-whither-national-culture.html>, accessed on September 20, 2023)

The late Hassan Ahmad, former Director General of the Malaysian Language and Literary Board (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka) asserted that National Culture Policy has failed to develop an integrated national culture of Malaysia, and the non-Malays have been against it ever since it was first formulated. (Cf. Ahmad, 1999, chapter 10, note 16, see also Kua, 1985). Consequently, according to Hassan Ahmad, the government had set up another body, the National Cultural Advisory Council in 1996 to revisit and reformulate the concept of national culture and to accommodate it into the Vision 2020 proposed by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed as a framework to bring Malaysia to a developed nation status.

According to the Vision 2020, the concept of a one nation means that a sovereign nation whose people are so integrated that they cannot be identified by race, ethnicity or creed. Establishing a unified nation as espoused by the Vision 2020, is a prerequisite for progress, because without people having a sense of unity as a one nation, there will be no peace and stability and the country will not be able to develop and progress. To achieve this goal, attributes such as national unity, loyalty to the country, inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance become the focus of planning and efforts, rather than establishing a common national

culture. Therefore, according to Hassan Ahmad, a new idea has been proposed that is the “concept of the State Culture” (*Kebudayaan Negara*). It replaces the concept of “National Culture” (*Kebudayaan Kebangsaan*). The fundamental characteristic associated with state culture of Malaysia is that it is not related to a race or any ethnic group.

Malaysia as a developed nation according to the Vision 2020, is to have the following features based on nine challenges or goals (Mohamed, 1991: 22):

1. Establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership, made up of one “*Bangsa Malaysia*” with political loyalty and dedication to the nation,
2. Creating a psychologically liberated, secure and developed Malaysian society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it is, of what it has accomplished, robust enough to face all manner of adversity,
3. Fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practicing a form of mature, consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries,
4. Establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards,
5. Establishing a mature, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practice and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation,
6. Establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilization of the future,
7. Establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system,
8. Ensuring an economically just society in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, in which there is a full partnership in economic progress. Such a society cannot be in place so long as there is the identification of economic backwardness with race, and
9. Establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

Two points will be noted on the nine challenges and goals of the Vision 2020 as listed above. First, the focus of the Vision 2020 is on the formation of a progressive Malaysian nation not based on the cultural characteristics of any race but on the universal values of an advanced nation state. This idea is indeed compatible with the heterogeneous country such as Malaysia. The second point to be noted with regard to the Vision 2020, is the question of the language to be used as the medium or channel through which the nine challenges or goals would be achieved. The then Prime Minister, who proposed the Vision 2020, has laid down the following principles to form a united “*Bangsa Malaysia*” or Malaysian Nation (Mohamed, 1991: 22):

1. A perceived common and shared destiny,
2. A peaceful nation which is integrated in terms of regions and races,
3. A nation with people living in harmony as full and equal partners, and
4. A nation of people with undivided loyalty and dedication to the country.

The same question can be raised again. What would be the channel, the medium or the language to be used for a vehicle of expression and discourse to disseminate those principles outlined above? The Vision 2020 did not specify the language to be used as medium of discourse.

In the developed countries of the world whether in the West or in the East, the language as the medium for the communication, adoption, expression, dissemination and strengthening of those basic principles of nationhood would be their own indigenous or national languages. This is the accepted law of nature, as asserted by the Malay maxim: "Wherever the earth is trodden the sky is above your head (*Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung*). For security, prosperity and well-being of a person or a group of people who live in a settlement, a village, a municipality, a state or a region, they must be able to adapt themselves to the environment and culture where they are in i.e. its ecological system. In their natural habitat, human must adapt to the climate, weather, topography, fauna and flora surrounding them, so that they can live in security and prosperity. In cultural aspects, they must be able to adapt to the human ecology of local rules, customs, laws, and local language of for their safety, wellbeing and prosperity.

Therefore, in order to communicate and inculcate the values espoused by the Vision 2020, namely to strengthen the integration and mutual understanding between different regions and among different ethnic and racial groups, to develop science and technology among the population, to foster a progressive society, that serve and promote moral and ethical values, as well as to be able to develop the economy so that people can be progressive and prosperous, the medium of discourse must be presented in the indigenous language or the native language of the nation, which is for Malaysia, none other than the Malay language, the national language. Malaysia has adopted and implemented Malay as the national language, the official language, the language in education and the language for national unity, with great success for almost 50 years, when the National Language Act 1963/67 was passed by Parliament. Hence, in order to foster and develop all the aspects mentioned above, there is no other alternative but to use the Malay language.

However, based on the government actions to encourage the use of English in teaching science and technology in higher education which was endorsed by the Education Act 1996 (replacing the Education Act 1961) and Private Institution of Higher Learning (IPTS) Act 1996, passed by Parliament in 1996, allowing the full use of English language as the medium of instruction in all private institutions of higher learning, and the new policy of teaching mathematics and science in English in school starting in 2003, clearly shows that the then government's vision to bring Malaysia into the developed nation status is through the medium of English language.

The preference in the use of English as the medium of education can be seen as driven by the elitist section of the society, who perceive benefits as well as profits in a short-term period without considering the negative consequences of the long-term damages and divisions that can occur among the people of various races, cultures, religions and languages in the country. The elites believe that in order to develop a society or a nation in a shortest possible time, is by the transferring the knowledge, science and technology that have been developed and made available in all the developed countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Since all those knowledges are written, recorded and distributed in the English language, this situation has led to the assumption and perception that the most rational strategy for our students is to learn, inculcate and develop those knowledges in the English language as well.

This assumption can be equated with the perceived success of the fast food franchises such as McDonald, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut and etc. that were adopted and implemented with great success throughout the world. However, the human factors are unlike the fast food ingredients that can be processed, blended, mixed and produced in mass production. With human beings, factors such as sense of national pride and dignity, social characteristics, heritage and national legacy of the people must be taken into account.

This false perception and assumption of the benefits of the English language among the elites were not really based on concrete findings worldwide, but mostly based on their own personal experiences and their observations on the scenario of progress and development of those Western countries, which has blinded their minds' eyes and falsified their conclusion. In the words of Holborow (1999: 56-57):

“[...] The dominance of English today is the continuation of a process started in the earliest days of capitalism, deepened by the expansion of the British Empire and given further impetus by the commanding position of the American capitalism in this century [...]” (Musa & Saad, 2005)

Listed below are the possible negative effects of using English as the medium of education, science and technology on the issue of national integration in Malaysia:

1. The value of English will increase and its status will be raised thus marginalising the status of the Malay language as the national and official language of Malaysia and as the medium of education,
2. The Malay language which has been declared as the national and official language of Malaysia will slowly lose its status and respect due to its limited usage in higher form of discourses in science, technology and higher learning, and with the passing of time will gradually be reduced and finally will be abandoned completely,
3. The intellectualization process of the Malay language will be gravely affected due to its limited use only in mundane communication such as in the market place and on the streets, and lack of use in official, academic and intellectual discourses to convey higher form of knowledge. Its corpus development in terms of terminology, diction, and expression will not be in tangent with the advancement of knowledge in the world of science and technology. This situation will reduce and dampened the status of Malay as the national and official language and gradually loses its prestige. Its status as the national and official language will only be in name or *de jurer* but not in reality or *de facto*, which will be taken over by English,
4. The Malay language which hitherto has played the role of the common unifying and integrative factor amongst the heterogeneous society of Malaysians, and which also gave a definitive Malaysian colours and identity, will gradually and surely lose this role as its status, value and use will be eroded and degraded,
5. The effective mastery of the English language will be limited to the minority of the population comprising elites and urbanites living in major cities due to their more conducive English learning and communicative environment. As a result, the mastery of knowledge, science and technology taught in English will be limited to those elites and urbanites making them professionals, technocrats, industrialists and bureaucrats forming a minority of middle and upper class sector of the society. Whilst majority of the population who are deficient in English due to their poor learning environment, will not be able to acquire high skill, knowledge and

technology taught in English. They will be underemployed or even unemployed forming the lower-class sector forming the majority of the population, unburdening the country due to their lower productivity. In this manner, the full potential human resource of the whole population will not be utilised, which is needed in order to uplift the country into a developed nation. This condition prevails in all the developed countries of the world whether in the west or in the east, where the full potential human resource of the whole population is utilised, by imparting knowledge, skills, science and technology through the medium of their own national languages. Thus, for Malaysia the national language of Malaysia, the Malay language, is the backbone of the nation's development and progress,

6. The condition of Malaysian society with small minority elites verses large majority of lower class sector does not forbade well to the country, because it can easily create social distance, alienation and tension which can lead to disturbances and conflicts. This condition is happening in most underdoped countries in Asia, Africa and South America, as stated by Indian Education Commission in 1948: “[the] use of English... divides the people into two nations, the few [English-speaking Indians] who govern and the many [non-English-speaking Indians] who are governed.”
Forty years along the road (in the eighties) the condition ignited a condition of “stimulating tensions between the minority at the top who know English, and the hundreds of millions – armed with the vote – who do not” (cf. S. Huntington, 1996:64). The condition also created dualism in education similar to the situation during the colonial period, where those who were educated in English were the elites or the Anglophiles, whilst the mass of the population who lacked English education were the lower class of the society,
7. Tension and conflict based on social class disparity will also ignite other forms of tension and conflicts such as ethnic, communal, religious, sectarian, ideological, and regional, as what is occurring in most underdeveloped countries mentioned above, and
8. The use of the languages of the formal colonial masters of the countries (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, etc.) though those former colonies may have gained independent now, cannot escape from the condition of the “colonised mentality”, where the cultural, educational, literacy, philosophical, economic and political vision, mission and even ideological orientation of their former colonial masters will lay heavy influence on them. This is occurring in most countries that have adopted languages of their formal colonial masters as their official language and language of education, such as Spanish and Portuguese in South America, French in Northern and western Africa, English in Central Africa, South Asia and the Philippines. Their cultural, social, economic, diplomatic and educational orientation and aspiration mostly turning towards either Madrid, Portugal, London, Washington or Paris.

Strategies To Foster National Integration in The Nation State of Malaysia

1. The Concept of Nation State and the Nation State of Malaysia

The concept of a nation in general can be defined as a political community under the sovereignty of a government. However, a nation is also defined as:

“A relatively large group of people who feel they belong together by virtue of sharing one or more of such traits as a common race, a common language, a common culture, a common history, a common set of customs or traditions.” (Christenson, et al, 1981: 20)

In this definition, a nation has no physical borders. However, as mentioned above it can also refer to people who share a common territory and government, as defined by the Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary:

“A nation is a community of people composed of one or more nationalities and possessing a more or less defined territory and government.” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition 1996: 773)

The concept of nation-state of Malaysia as proposed by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, on launching the Vision 2020 in 1991, defined Malaysian nation-to-be, as follows:

“... A united Malaysian nation (*Bangsa Malaysia*) with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony in full and fair partnership, made up of one '*Bangsa Malaysia*' with political loyalty and dedication to the nation ... a matured, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practice and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation.” (Mohammed, 1991: 2-3)

In summary, the Malaysian nation or “*Bangsa Malaysia*” according to the Vision 2020 has the following five characteristics:

1. A nation with a sense of common and shared destiny,
2. A nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated,
3. A nation living in harmony in full and fair partnership,
4. A nation made up of one “*Bangsa Malaysia*” with political loyalty and dedication to the nation, and
5. A nation with a matured, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practice and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation.

2. Fostering National Integration and the Spirit of Patriotism in Malaysia

It is clear that the basic principle in the formation of the would-be Malaysian nation as espoused by the Vision 2020, is the consciousness or the feeling of unity or sense of belonging among its people firstly to the state, as the country where one is born and bred, and secondly the feeling of unity or sense of belonging to all its people as one’s fellow citizens, that is one is fully committed to mutual safety and well-being. This is actually the concept of patriotism that is the love and devotion for the homeland and fellow countrymen.

The English term “patriot” (derives from Latin *patriota* and French *pater* “father”) meaning “one who loves his/her country and support its authority and interests”. (The Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1996:852). Thus, according to the Vision 2020 the effort to instil and nurture unity among Malaysians is not by way of developing a common Malaysian culture, as was tried before, but to forge a common sense of belonging and identity amongst its people, that is to have a deep feeling of belonging, pride, love and commitment to the Malaysian nation.

The big question is what are the methods, formulas and strategies to nurture, develop and build an integrated nation with a common "sense of unity, belonging, pride, love and commitment" to Malaysia?

In this paper, as mentioned above, three strategies will be proposed to instil, nurture and cultivate a common "sense of unity, belonging, pride, love and commitment to Malaysia" that is the spirit of patriotism among Malaysian citizens; they are:

1. Cultivate love and pride towards the national language as the language of integration, the language of all official functions, the language of education, the language of higher knowledge, science, technology, and the language of Malaysian future civilization forged according to our mould and characteristics,
2. Foster deep awareness towards the historical legacy of the formation of Malaysia at the time of its independence when it was freed from the shackle of the colonial rule, so that a strong attachment among the people for this country will emerge, and
3. Instilling love towards Malaysia and a sense of pride, belonging and commitment amongst all citizens towards Malaysia as their country where they are born and bred and as their homeland.

The inculcation of the feeling of common identity and sense of belonging to Malaysia amongst its citizens is essential for the idea of one united Malaysian nation to emerge, and only through the nurturing of those two common features mentioned above will lead towards the fostering of social integration amongst Malaysian citizens. This is because based on the social and cultural characteristics, as detailed above, Malaysians are diversified in term of races, ethnicity, cultures, religions and mother tongues, and these varied elements are big barriers to unity and integration. They are in fact the likely sources of friction, conflict and disintegration as proven by the 13th May 1969 Tragedy. Thus, the issue of national integration is crucial to the development of Malaysian and fostering the spirit of patriotism.

The central idea of national integration, to our mind, is concisely captured by the following definition:

"The need to bind together the various regions and diverse peoples of a country into a functioning and interdependent whole." (Drake, 1989: 1)

Drake also gave a detailed description of national integration as follows:

"...National integration is a multidimensional concept, incorporating five major dimensions. First, the historical dimension i.e. nationalism and shared national experiences ...and acts as cohesive forces. Second, the political dimension, which refers to ...the type of government, the formal distribution of power amongst the different regional units and ethnic groups ... [and] ... the functional outworking of both power allocation and popular participation in the political organisation of the state. Third, the socio-cultural dimension, which refers to... the degree to which national loyalty supersedes local, ethnic, or regional loyalty; the extent to which the state has a 'national culture' or 'national life'... and the degree of mixing of different ethnic or regional groups. Fourth, the interaction dimension, which refers to ... the linkages between different regions in terms of road, rail, shipping and airlines, telecommunication lines, etc. [and] ... the mobility of the population and the resulting heterogeneity of peoples within a region. Fifth, the economic dimension, which refers to the interdependence and complementarities of the factors of production and distribution; and the interdependence of regions economically within the state." (Christine Drake, *Ibid*)

National integration, as mentioned above, is closely related to and in fact prerequisite to the fostering of patriotism, that is the love and devotion towards one's nation state amongst the citizens. To evaluate the degree of patriotism among citizens of the various countries of the world, a survey was done in the year 1995-1997 which was based on one question "How proud are you of your country?" Based on a scale of 1 - 4 (1 = excessively not proud, 2 = not proud, 3 = proud, 4 = very proud), the findings for different countries are as follows:

Questionnaire: 1995-1997	
Country	Score (maximum 4)
USA	3.92
Venezuela	3.73
South Africa	3.72
India	3.70
Peru	3.68
Slovenia	3.64
Poland	3.55
Australia	3.54
Spain	3.38
Argentina	3.29
Sweden	3.13
Moldova	2.98
Japan	2.85
Russia	2.69
Switzerland	2.59
Lithuania	2.47
Latvia	2.10
Germany	1.37
Average	3.12

Table 3: A survey was done in the year 1995-1997 which was based on one question "How proud are you of your country?"

(<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>, accessed on September 20, 2023)

It is clear that the United States of America (USA) has successfully implemented and foster the highest degree of patriotism amongst its citizens, as the result showed that almost 100% of the people surveyed were proud to be Americans as well as proud of their own country, whereas the citizens of Japan, Switzerland, Russia, Lithuania and Latvia were not proud of their countries (score of less than 3.00) and the Germans were least proud of their country (score of less than 2.00). However, on the average people of the world are still proud of their own countries (scores more than 3.00).

How did USA managed to implement and foster such a strong sense of patriotism amongst its citizens?

From the above discussion, it is clear that to instil a strong spirit of patriotism amongst the citizens, meticulous planning and strategies should be devised in order to bring about national integration and unity amongst the people which are prerequisite to the condition of stability, equitable development and prosperity of the country. Only when such a condition prevails in a country, that a sense of pride and attachment in the hearts its citizens and strong patriotic feeling to the country can then be fostered. Without national integration, a country like

Malaysia which is heterogeneous in terms of cultures, races, religions, customs and traditions, achieving sustainable peace and stability is indeed very difficult.

As proposed by Christine Drake, at least five different dimensions should be addressed in order to bring about national integration, namely historical, political, socio-cultural, interaction and economic dimensions.

As proven by the survey above, USA has somehow succeeded in their effort to instil strong patriotism amongst its citizens. Several notable strategies were implemented by them. Firstly, all public educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities) funded by the government either at the federal, states or local authority levels, only use one medium of instruction namely the American English. This is strengthened further by the fact that in late April 2006, the U.S. Senate added two amendments to its immigration bill: firstly, declaring English as the national language, and secondly, recognizing it as the country's "common and unifying tongue." (Quoted in Kent and Lalasz, "In the News: Speaking English in the United States", *Population Reference Bureau* (<http://www.prb.org>) accessed on September 20, 2023).

Moreover, in American educational system, the study of American history and geography are compulsory subjects which strive to instil amongst its citizens strong awareness and deep knowledge of their own country's heritage, demography and territories, and thus fostering strong attachment and commitment to their homeland, attributes that are prerequisites towards fostering American patriotism.

In the current scenario, the Western World headed by the USA as the core of Western civilization, is ahead of other countries in the world in various fields, namely, they:

1. Own and operate the international banking system,
2. Control all hard currencies,
3. The world principal customer,
4. Provide the majority of the world's finished goods,
5. Dominate international capital markets,
6. Exert considerable moral leadership within many societies,
7. Capable of massive military intervention,
8. The control the sea lanes,
9. Conduct most advance technical research and development,
10. Control leading edged technical education,
11. Dominate access to space,
12. Dominate the aerospace industry,
13. Dominate international communications (media and language), and
14. Dominate the high-tech weapon industry.

(Huntington, 1996: 81-82)

The few notable strategies described above and the sheer superior status of the USA dominating the world scenario undoubtedly has instilled a sense of deep pride and attachment among its citizens towards USA, and this has brought about strong patriotic feeling among its citizens.

A small research was done in Malaysia in 2023 by the present writers, among 100 respondents comprising students and staff of the University Putra Malaysia and the general public in Petaling Jaya, on how proud they are towards Malaysia; the following result was obtained:

Very proud	=	48% (45 students, 3 staff)
Proud	=	44% (42 students, 2 staff)
Not proud	=	5% (2 staff, 3 members of the public)

Not at all proud = 3% (all three members of the public)

However, if this research was done among a larger group of people with varied backgrounds, education and social status, certain figures will change, since students were the majority of the respondents who are "very proud" (48%) and "proud" (44%), and those who are in the category of "not proud" (5%) and "not at all proud" (3%) comprise the general public. Nonetheless, these statistics show that the majority of respondents (87%) especially the younger generation are proud of Malaysia and can still identify themselves as Malaysians and thus has great potential to integrate and be unified under the Malaysian's umbrella.

Empowering The Malay Language as The Language of Education, Higher Learning and The Language of Unification in Fostering National Integration

The function of a language is not only as a tool and medium of communication, but it plays a major role in shaping one's identity, fostering a sense of belonging (*esprit de corps*), and pride amongst the community of its speakers.

The use of language also reflects the attribute of refinement, status, and the level of education of the speakers. Language is also a tool to describe, record, accumulate and communicate the treasure of knowledge and wisdom of a nation and pass them down from one generation to another. Hence language and literacy are key elements in the formation and development of a civilization.

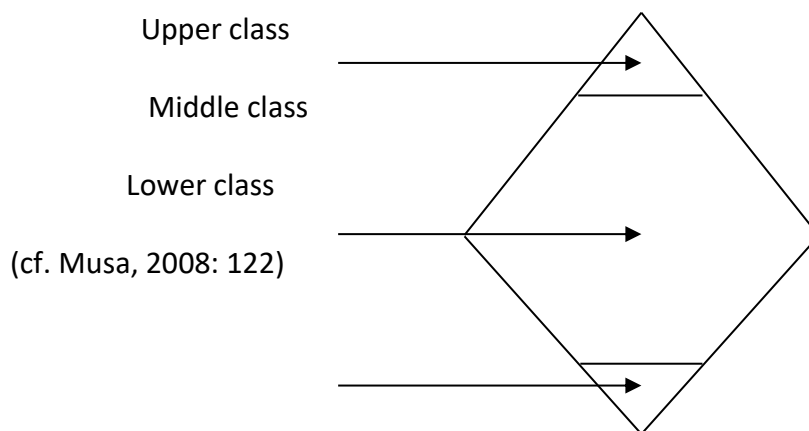
Worldview, thought and knowledge of a society are also closely related to the language used. Hence, the use of Malay language which is the native language and the national language of Malaysia as a language of knowledge, science, technology, education, and the administration of the country, can give shape and colour to the forms of achievement, progress and the advancement of the nation in Malaysian particular mould.

Moreover, the enculturation of knowledge, science and technology in the native language can easily be comprehended, accepted and mastered by all the citizens of the country, and thereby intensify and heighten the use of the potential human resources as widely as possible among the general population. The wider and more extensive use of the potential human capital among the general population will result in the emergence of a large middle class community. A large middle class community is a prerequisite to the building of a wider base for the country's development, and this will trigger a more equitable progress and advancement in the country, as what is happening in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Such equitable development will foster inner strength, confidence and pride amongst the majority of the citizens, and this in turn will be able to cultivate in them a sense of dignity, pride and identity to their nation and country. These are seeds that will germinate a sense of belonging, commitment and spirit of patriotism among the citizens of a nation. On the other hand, if knowledge is imparted in a foreign language, only one small sector of the population become highly educated due to the more conducive environment of English usage in the cities, forming a small middle class elitist community, whilst the majority of the population who are less educated and less skilled due to inability to master the foreign language, become the lower-class citizens who are burden to the country's development and progress.

The demographic structure of an advanced nation is in the form of a diamond (Figure 1); the middle class form the majority of the population and they are the engine of development and progress because of their higher level of education and skills, whilst the upper class and the lower class are the minorities. On the other hand, in the developing and underdeveloped countries the demographic structure is in the form a pyramid, where the lower class is the majority and the middle class and the upper class are the minorities. The lower class are the

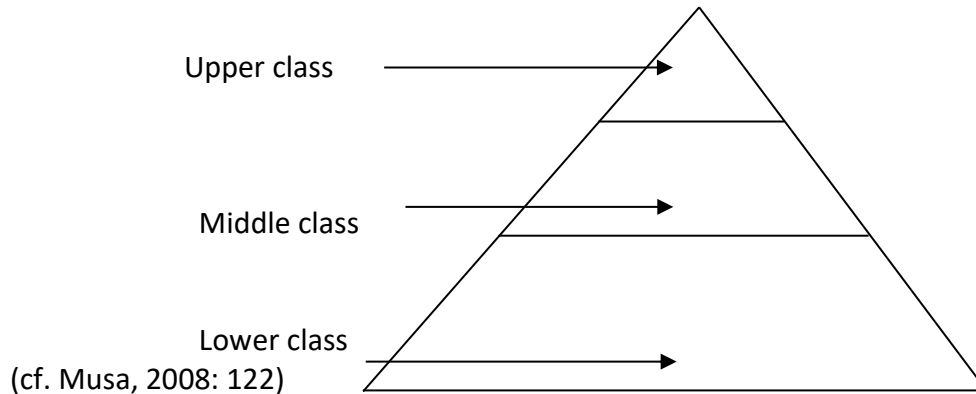
burden to the country's development and progress due to their lower level of education and skills.

Figure 1: Demographic structure of an advanced country



In Figure 2 conditions exist in almost all the countries of the world either in the west or in the east. In the advanced countries located in the core of their engine of development are their own native or local languages that become the medium for the search and acquisition of knowledge and skills, and also for imparting and enculturation of knowledge and skills amongst their citizens. These conditions occur without exception in all developed countries of the world.

Figure 2: Demographic structure of an underdeveloped country



However, one may cite Singapore as a developed country which uses the English language as the medium of education and administration instead of one of its own national languages. Singapore is a small city state with 100% urban population and a standardized educational system which ensure a completely standardized learning and teaching condition. Thus, the mastery of English language and the imparting and acquisition of knowledge and skills are almost equitable amongst its citizens. Hence, one may say that the majority of the population of Singapore is made of a middle-class community which ensure its completely equitable development and progress in spite of using a foreign language as the language of education and administration. This condition is strengthened further by the fact that Singapore is a cosmopolitan nation with a total population of 5.18 million out of which 1.4 million are non-citizens (27%) made up mostly of expatriates communicating in English, (cf. Department of Statistics Singapore (<http://singstat.gov.sg>) accessed on September 20, 2023). It is also an entreport city with large inflow of international visitors communicating mostly in English.

For Malaysia, on the other hand, the role of the medium of acquiring knowledge and skills, and also for imparting and enculturation of knowledge and skills amongst its citizens, must and can be played by the Malay language as the national language, the official language, as well as the language of education, knowledge, science, and technology. Malay as the national language is also the language of unification, in order to foster integration, identity, and the spirit of nationalism among the heterogeneous society of Malaysia.

In short, language does play a big role in colouring the human ecology and activity of a society and a nation. Therefore, Malay language as the national language, official language and language of education must and can play a major role in fulfilling those functions.

Instilling Deep Understanding of The Historical Legacy of The Formation of Malaysian Nation State

The independence of the Federation of Malaya or *Persekutuan Tanah Melayu* on August 31, 1957 was achieved through negotiations between the British government and the representatives from Malaya comprising the three major ethnic groups (Malays, Chinese and Indians) from the Alliance Party formed on August 21, 1953, as well as the representatives of the nine Malay Sultans of the nine Malay states in Federation of Malaya. In the initial stage of negotiation in London in 1956 the Alliance Party was represented by three from UMNO namely Tunku Abdul Rahman, Datuk Abdul Razak Hussein and Dr Ismail and one from MCA namely H. S. Lee with four representatives of the Malay Sultan¹. However, during the final consultation on May 9, 1957 in London all the three components of the Alliance Party were represented namely from UMNO Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dato Abdul Razak, from MCA Ong Yoke Lin and from MIC V.T. Sambathan, with Mustaffa Al-Bakri representing the Sultans. It is imperative for Malaysians to remember this historical fact as an important legacy in the history of the founding of our nation. The first moment of the formation of our nation was symbolically forged and shaped on the basis of a mutual understanding and acceptance amongst these four main components of our national entity namely the three major races and the institution of the Council of the Malay Sultans. These four components form the main pillars of our nation structure. The institution of the Sultans of the Malay states is part and parcel of our political legacy which took its root from the golden age of the Malay Sultanates in the history Malay civilization. This matter could act as a powerful identifying factor among the people of Malaysia in building deep understanding and acceptance of Malaysia's historical legacy towards building strong association and identity with Malaysia, especially the younger generation who were not part of the historical process. Abbas (1985) has outlined four traditional elements that form the core of the Malaysian Constitution, namely:

1. Malaysia's official language which is Bahasa Melayu,
2. Islam as the federal religion,
3. The special position of the Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak, and
4. The Monarchies of the Malay states.

As affirmed by the Reid Commission these traditional elements that have existed for hundreds of years before the formation of Malaya, served to stabilize the country's political system because it takes into account the historical perspective and traditional root of the country, and its acknowledgment and acceptance by all the people of Malaysia is a prerequisite for the conferment of their citizenship status. These traditional elements are considered to be so important that it is protected under the Sedition Act of 1948, Act 15, 3(f) (Revised in

¹ Cf. Adam, *Biografi Politik Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra*, 2005: 254-255.

1969/1970) as sensitive issues that are prohibited from public discussion even in Parliament. It is also placed under Article 38 of the Constitution which empowers the Council of Rulers to prevent the Parliament to make laws that affect among others, these four traditional elements of the constitution.

Regarding the Article 153 of the Constitution affecting the special position of the Malays and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysians should understand the historical fact and background behind the establishment of this Law and why it was incorporated into the Constitution, as mentioned by one writer:

“The most crucial point to be noted and acknowledged (by all Malaysians) is that during the drafting of the Constitution, the spirit of mutual understanding, accommodation and sacrifice in the sharing of powers was indeed very high amongst the Malays and the non-Malays. As citizens, we need to appreciate this fact because the Constitution is the supreme law of our country and became the point of reference to everyone. In the process of the drafting of the Constitution, several matters were considered to be agreed upon between the Malays and non-Malays in the spirit of high accommodation with regards to their respective interests. This spirit of high accommodation was known as the social contract. As an example, the Malays agreed to the relaxation of the condition of the citizenship status to the non-Malays, whilst the non-Malays accepted among other things the special status of the Malays. At that time the Malays accepted the principle of *jus soli* that is citizenships were given to the non-Malays on the basis of being born in Malaya [onor] before the Independence Day. The implementation of this principle granted citizenships to more than 800,000 non-Malays.”²

(Baharuddin, 2007: 109-110)

Hashim also remarked that:

“What eventually appeared in the Constitution was the result of their bargaining and discussion during which they had to give and take and compromise, in the interest of national unity.”

In particular, the representatives of the non-Malay communities further pressed for relaxation of conditions for granting to non-Malays of citizenship. Among others they pressed for *jus soli*, meaning the automatic conferment of citizenship on all persons born in the Federation.

² Perkara utama yang perlu diambil perhatian dan dihayati ialah semasa proses penggubalan Perlembagaan terdapat semangat persefahaman, akomodasi, berkongsi kuasa dan sedia berkorban yang begitu tinggi dalam kalangan orang Melayu dan bukan Melayu. Sebagai rakyat kita perlu menghayati perkara ini kerana Perlembagaan merupakan undang-undang tertinggi Negara dan menjadi rujukan kepada sesiapa sahaja. Semasa proses penggubalan Perlembagaan dilakukan, beberapa cadangan diberi pertimbangan untuk disepakati. Dalam proses ini semangat akomodasi yang tinggi berlaku antara orang Melayu dan bukan Melayu berkaitan dengan kepentingan masing-masing atau dikenali sebagai kontrak sosial. Sebagai contoh kaum Melayu melonggarkan syarat kerakyatan bagi bukan Melayu sementara kaum bukan Melayu menerima kedudukan istimewa kaum Melayu. Pada ketika itu, kaum Melayu menerima prinsip *jus soli* iaitu dengan mengurniakan kerakyatan... yang lebih longgar bagi etnik bukan Melayu yang dilahirkan sebelum merdeka. Pelaksanaan prinsip ini telah memberi hak kerakyatan lebih 800,000 orang bukan Melayu.”

In the first year (1958) after independence of 1957, because of the relaxed conditions, 822,567 persons became citizens by registration, over 63 times the number of persons who became citizens by registration the previous year and over 12 times the number of persons who became citizens by registration the following year.

In return for the concession by Malay leaders, the representatives of the non-Malay communities agreed to other provisions of the Constitution, notably provisions for making Islam the religion of the Federation, provisions making Malay the national language, provisions preserving Malay reservations, provisions preserving the sovereignty, prerogatives and powers of the Rulers, and several other provisions, including the provisions of the much-quoted Article 153³.

The bargain that was arrived at as a result of the give and take and compromises of the representatives of the major communities during the talks leading to independence, was a solemn pact constituting the very foundation of the nation and any attempt to ridicule, or deride or whittle away the decisions that have been entrenched into the constitution will bring nothing but trouble, and certainly the events of 13th May, 1969 which were in great part caused by misinterpretations of provisions of the constitution about which many people were sensitive, have shown the nature and scale of disaster that could strike the country should present and future generations forget the background to the labours of our multi-racial Constitution makers, and any attempt to disturb the delicate balance written into the various articles.” (Hashim, 1978: 285-288)

Moreover, Malaysians must also foster deep understanding and acknowledgment of the fact that in terms of government, Malaysia is practicing a federal system of government with constitutional monarchy inherited from the formation of the Federation of Malaya on February 1, 1948, and subsequently the formation of the Federation of Malaysia on September 16, 1963. Currently the Federation of Malaysia comprised nine former Malay states, two former Straits Settlements namely Penang and Malacca, and two former British Colonies namely Sabah and Sarawak. Each of the nine Malay states has a hereditary Ruler who reigns for life known as the Sultan, except in Perlis who is known as the Raja and in Negeri Sembilan who is known as the Yang Dipertuan Besar. In the four other states the Governors are appointed by the Yang Dipertuan Agong for four years, after consultation with the Chief Minister of the states concerned, as the head of the government. In this respect, Tun Mohamed Sufian Hashim a former Chief Justice of Malaysia, remarked:

“The Sultans and Governors take precedence over all other persons in their states... and though they are sovereign, has no autocratic powers and they must act in accordance with the advice of their state Executive Councils or a member

³ The responsibility of the Yang Dipertuan Agong to safeguard the special provision of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and to ensure the reservation for Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak of such proportion as he may deem reasonable of positions in the public service (other than the public service of a State) and of scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges or special facilities given or accorded by the Federal Government and, when any permit or license for the operation of any trade or business is required by federal law, then, subject to the provisions of that law and this Article, of such permits and licenses.

of the Councils (usually the Chief Minister) acting under the general authority of the Councils.” (Hashim, 1976: 37)

However, the Ruler may act in his discretion in the performance of the following functions:

1. The appointment of the Chief Minister,
2. The withholding of consent to a request for the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly,
3. The making of a request for the meeting of the Conference of Rulers, concerned solely with the privileges, positions, honours and dignities of their Royal Highnesses or religious acts, observances or ceremonies,
4. Any function as the head of the Muslim religion or relating to the customs of the Malays,
5. The appointment of an heir or heirs or consort, Regent or Council of Regency,
6. The appointment of persons to Malays customary ranks, titles, honours and dignities and the designations or the functions appertaining thereto, and
7. The regulation of royal courts and palaces.

(Hashim, 1976: 38)

Hence, as provided by the Constitution of Malaysia, the Yang Dipertuan Agong or King and the Ruler of each state as symbols of sovereignty and loyalty for all Malaysians, must be understood and acknowledged by all Malaysians. However, loyalty and respect to the King and Rulers from the people must be nurtured and upheld in a voluntary and consensual manner. In other words, the people respect the King or Rulers because of their honourable and admirable characters as sovereigns and protectors of the people. Thus, the institutions of the King and Rulers should be adapted to the current condition and need of the people who are better educated and well-informed, and therefore they would also want their King and Rulers to be well-educated, well-informed and above all imbued with high ethical and moral values, so that loyalty and respect can be nurtured and fostered without any force. Gone were the days when the Rulers as absolute Monarchies were able to act and wield their powers as they pleased. (For the roles, duties and powers of the Rulers please refer to Hashim, 1976: 35-43).

Such deep understanding of the historical legacy of the founding and establishment of our nation should be nurtured, cultivated and flourished among Malaysians especially among the younger generation in all learning institutions in Malaysia, in order to inculcate strong spirit of patriotism, attachment and respect to the country and the nation.

Instilling The Sense of Pride, Belonging and Commitment Among The Citizens Towards Malaysia as Their Country of Birth and Their Homeland

The core characteristics of patriotism are loyalty, devotion and love to the nation which parallel or even supersedes loyalty and love to one's own racial or regional groupings; that is putting national interest ahead of factional causes or personal interests. Though this idealism is indeed very noble and lofty to be achieved by citizens of any country, it is needed as a definite goal or vision to spur and motivate the citizens to strive for it. In the very effort of striving and working for the goal, a gradual process of patriotic feeling could be fostered and cultivated amongst the citizens. However, common denominators with which all citizens can identify and associate themselves are needed to be the starting points of the efforts and strivings.

From the above discussion, there are two core elements that are currently common among Malaysians that can become the starting point of striving towards fostering patriotism:

1. Firstly, the national language, Malay, as the official language and the language of the medium of education at all levels, imparting and developing knowledge, science and technology in an equitable manner to every stratum of the society and every region of Malaysia, acting as the language of unity and identity for all Malaysians. If English is used for the purpose, as what is gradually happening now, only the urban population will be able to master English efficiently due to their more conducive English learning environment, and thus able to acquire knowledge, science and technology fully, making them a minority of professionals and elites alienated from the majority of the population and thus breaking up common national identity among all Malaysians; the minority English-educated professionals and elites and the majority non-English educated, lower income masses of workers and villagers. This situation prevailed in practically all the underdeveloped countries of the world such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, etc. In order to overcome this disparity and inequitable development, a local common language as a medium of education is needed to educate and inculcate knowledge, skills and technology equitably to every citizen of the country in order to tap and utilize the full potential of the human resources and transform the country into a developed nation. This state of situation occurs in every developed country of the world whether in the west or in the east.
2. Secondly, a common legacy of the founding of the nation starting from the time of the negotiation for independence in 1956 and leading to our independence in 1957, when, as mentioned above, all the four components of the nation which make up its basic structure were represented, namely the three-major ethnic group (Malays (representing the *Bumiputra*), Chinese and Indians) and the representative of the Malay Sultans. In the formulation and drafting of the Constitution, the spirit of mutual understanding, accommodation and sacrifice in the sharing of powers was indeed very high amongst the Malays and the non-Malays. As an example, the Malays agreed to the relaxation of the condition of the citizenship status to the non-Malays, whilst the non-Malays accepted among other things the special status of the Malays. At that time the Malays accepted the principle of *jus soli* that is citizenships were given to the non-Malays on the basis of being born in Malaya [on or] before the Independence Day. The implementation of this principle granted citizenships to more than 800,000 non-Malays. A deeper awareness and understanding among all Malaysians, especially the younger generation, of this legacy of the principle of accommodation and sacrifice among the three races, which is the root of the founding of the nation, is very crucial indeed to foster strong mutual respect and appreciation among the various races. This historical legacy need to be instilled and fostered continuously into the minds and hearts of all Malaysians so that it will become an endearing common bond and identification among all citizens to the nation.

For the purpose of instilling and fostering national integration and unity towards developing national identity and patriotism, both the government and the people should and could play their respective roles.

The effort of the government in fulfilling those purposes was to form a department namely the Department of National Unity on July 1, 1969 immediately after the 13th May 1969 racial riots. After several processes of reorganization to suit the conditions and requirement of the time, the department's current name and set up, Department of National Unity and

Integration directly under the Prime Minister's Department (Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi), seems to be well-positioned to face the present challenges of national unity and integration that are becoming more acute with the younger generation becoming less conscious of those four core traditions of the Constitution mentioned above. The Department of National Unity and Integration's motto, vision and mission aptly underline its objectives and line of action:

Motto: United we progress

Vision: To be a leading government agency in producing a united, far-sighted and progressive Malaysian race

Mission: To instil tolerance and racial harmony through social interaction and networking towards a united Malaysian race with a national identity

(<http://www.jpnin.gov.my>, accessed on September 20, 2023)

The Department through its five year (2005-2010) Action Plan on National Unity and Integration has formulated 19 strategies to achieve the mission and vision, namely: the strategies on politic, economy, education, the use of national language, religion, culture, territorial integration, security, local development, human resource, the mass media, sports, enculturation of solidarity, voluntary organizations, research and publication of reading materials, monitoring of current issues and conflicts, the establishment of the National Unity Advisory Panel (PANEL) and State Level Unity Advisory Committee (JKPPN), and solidarity programs and activities. Other allied programs on solidarity included training on cross-cultural communication, auditing of government policy, formulating ethics on human rights and responsibilities specifically for the Malaysian situation, and publishing and distributing as wide as possible reading materials on various races in Malaysia in order to foster deeper awareness and acceptance of racial differences and peculiarities.

Conclusion and Implication

From the above discussion, it is clear that to achieve national unity and integration in Malaysia, planning and implementation must take into account all aspects, which covers the socio-cultural-political-educational-religious aspects. Without national integration, a heterogeneous country like Malaysia with highly sensitive and volatile issues on racial, cultural, religious, economic and political relations, it is very difficult to achieve sustainable peace and stability.

This paper has proposed three strategies to foster and strengthen unity and patriotism among the people of Malaysia. Firstly, empowering Malay as the national language and language of education and integration, secondly, inculcating deeper awareness and understanding among all Malaysians, especially the younger generation, of the legacy of the principle of accommodation and sacrifice among the three races, as the basis of the founding of the nation, and thirdly, instilling the spirit of love towards Malaysia among the citizens and cultivate a sense of pride, belonging and commitment amongst all citizens towards Malaysia as their country of birth and their homeland.

The future of Malaysia is in the hand of all its citizens, whether they want development and advancement by fostering and cultivating unity and national integration among themselves through the strategies and measures outlined above, or they want to continue quarrelling and accentuating their differences and their individual rights without compromise, tolerance, acceptance and respect for each other. Such negative attitudes are the seeds of extremism, fanaticism and chauvinism that are opposed by the teaching of all religions and high ethical

values, especially Islam which emphasizes the good and friendly relations among people regardless of race and ethnicity, as stated in the Qur'an:

“O mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might get to know (and be kind to) one another. The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one most conscious of Him among you (taqwa). Verily Allah is Most Knowing and Aware.” (al-Hujurat (49:13)

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