Editorial Note

Special Issue ‘Social and Spatial Challenges of Malaysian Development’

A tribute to Associate Professor Dr. Rokiah Hj Ismail

This volume is dedicated to Rokiah Ismail (photo above), who contributed significantly to the development of sociological knowledge about deviance and social control in Malaysia. Rokiah was among the very few Malaysian social scientists devoting their researches in the field of sociology of deviance, social control/justice and criminology. Her meticulous writings/articles appeared in various local and international journals such as Akademika, Geografi-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space, The New Journal, Jurnal e-Bangii and World Applied Sciences Journal covering issues on social problems, delinquency, social deviance, Mat Rempit, prostitutions, substance abuse, social control and criminology.

She was part of a team who was deeply involved in a policy research on corruption in Malaysia. The study then inspired the Malaysian government to form the Malaysian Institute of Integrity in April, 2004. Subsequently, Rokiah with another team from UKM embarked on researching the prostitution issues in Malaysia. While conducting interviews with the prostitutes she discovered the need to organise some form of assistance to the children of the prostitutes, a project she intended to pursue when she retired from the academia.

Rokiah was also a dedicated teacher and supervisor. She supervised local and international Masters and PhD candidates with commitment and diligence. She drew a pool of postgraduate candidates from the Malaysian Arm Forces personnel especially the Royal Malaysian Police Force and personnel from the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in Malaysia. Her network with Indonesian Universities, especially with her Alma mater, Universitas Padjadjaran, brought in a significant number of postgraduate candidates from Indonesia. She was also instrumental in the formation of the Social Work Programme in the School of Psychology and Human Development Studies and The Social Sciences Postgraduate Programme (Corruption Studies) in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in UKM.

Her contribution to the society included delivering various lectures and talks to local prisons’ personnel and postgraduate students in the Medical Faculty of UKM. Rokiah was a member of the Association of the Protection of Malaysian Children, a life member of the Malaysian Social Sciences Association and a life member of the Southeast Asian Association for Gender Studies (SAMA), Malaysian Branch.

Rokiah was born in 1948 and studied for her first degree in Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand (1970-74). She then joined Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia as a tutor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and under the UKM study leave plan, did her Masters at the University of Sheffield, England (1975-77) and PhD at the Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia (1989-1993). She held the post of the head of Anthropology and Sociology Programme (2007-2010) in the School of Social, Development and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Sadly, she succumbed to cancer and passed away on 19th July 2011. We were lucky to have known her, a mentor and a great friend. May God bless her soul.

Zaidah Mustapha
Head, Anthropology & Sociology Programme, School of Social, Development and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia