

The Creation of Bangsa Malaysia: Towards Vision 2020 Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Currently, solidarity became an important agenda in realizing Malaysia to become a developed nation by 2020. This is due to the multi-ethnic society in Malaysia. The country with strong national unity are important to ensure the stability of political and economy of the country. Hence, the government has determined that one of the major challenges that must be faced in order to achieve Vision 2020 is to create a united Malaysian nation, have the same goal and an unwavering loyalty to the nation. To ensure that Vision 2020 is achieved, Malaysia has made the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to guide the development of goals and targets to be achieved for certain indicators in 2015. Specified goals are more focused on economic development and social progress of the society but the goal of establishing a united Malaysia and caring society not emphasized. In line with the country's intention to form a united Malaysian nation, this article aims to discuss the concept of Malaysian nation building and caring society as stated in Vision 2020 and also to identify the challenges that must be faced in implementing these objectives either by society and the government. The results from this discussion would be able to realize the formation of the Malaysian society united Malaysian nation, mature, mutual tolerance and have a strong loyalty to the nation to ensure national goal to become a developed nation by the year 2020 a success.

Keywords: challenges, nationalism, moral and ethical.

ABSTRAK

Dewasa ini, perpaduan kaum menjadi agenda yang penting dalam merealisasikan matlamat Malaysia untuk menjadi negara maju pada tahun 2020. Ini kerana Malaysia merupakan negara yang terdiri daripada masyarakat berbilang kaum. Perpaduan negara yang kukuh menjamin kepada kestabilan politik dan ekonomi negara. Justeru itu, kerajaan telah menetapkan bahawa salah satu cabaran utama yang perlu dihadapi untuk mencapai Wawasan 2020 adalah dengan mewujudkan bangsa Malaysia yang bersatu padu, mempunyai matlamat yang sama dan kesetiaan yang tidak berbelah bahagi kepada negara. Bagi memastikan Wawasan 2020 tercapai, Malaysia telah menjadikan Matlamat Pembangunan Milenium (MDG) sebagai panduan untuk pembangunan matlamat utama dan sasaran yang perlu dicapai bagi indikator-indikator tertentu pada tahun 2015. Matlamat-matlamat yang ditetapkan adalah lebih tertumpu pada pembangunan kemajuan ekonomi dan juga sosial bagi masyarakat tetapi matlamat untuk mewujudkan bangsa Malaysia dan masyarakat penyayang tidak dititikberatkan. Sejajar dengan hasrat negara untuk membentuk bangsa Malaysia yang bersatu padu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk membincangkan mengenai konsep pembentukan bangsa Malaysia dan masyarakat penyayang seperti yang dinyatakan dalam Wawasan 2020 serta mengenal pasti cabaran-cabaran yang harus ditempuhi dalam melaksanakan matlamat tersebut sama ada oleh masyarakat dan juga kerajaan. Hasil daripada perbincangan ini diharap masyarakat Malaysia dapat merealisasikan pembentukan bangsa Malaysia yang bersatu padu, matang, saling toleransi dan mempunyai kesetiaan yang teguh kepada negara bagi memastikan matlamat negara untuk menjadi negara maju menjelang tahun 2020 tercapai dengan jayanya.

Kata kunci: cabaran, nasionalisme, moral dan etika.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia will be achieved Vision 2020 within six years away. Vision 2020 was introduced by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad on 28th February 1991, when he attended conference at the Malaysian Business Council where he presented a paper entitled 'Malaysia-The Way Forward'. In his speech about Vision 2020, Tun Dr. Mahathir explain that the government's goal was to turn Malaysia into an industrialized country so that can compete with other developed countries by the year 2020. However, Vision 2020 is not a special policy but was a response to economic growth, social and political, both nationally and internationally for their challenge to the country. This vision has been championed as a guideline and framework of the approach to be taken in initiating measures for the long journey that will be pursued by the country. The desired ultimate goal is the formation of a Malaysian nation that truly developed nation by 2020. The progress not limited to the economic field alone but will include all aspects of life: economic, political, social, spiritual, psychological and cultural.

By 2020, Malaysia as an independent nation country will be truly developed, united, self-reliant, progressive and prosperous. People will enjoy a perfect life in a society that is democratic, tolerant, moral, fair, competitive, dynamic and have high durability and high nasionalisme spirit. This means that Vision 2020 aims to create Malaysia to become a developed nation in its own way without the footsteps of the method and pattern of developed countries at present. In this regard the construction sector can play a significant and effective role because of its dynamic nature and extends backward and forward links with other sectors of economy (Raza, Mohd Shahir and Zulkipli, 2014).

However, this vision can only be achieved if Malaysia can overcome the first challenge which is establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. According to Tun Dr. Mahathir, "We 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" (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991). Therefore, this article aims to discuss the concept of Malaysian nation building and caring society as stated in Vision 2020 and also to identify the challenges that must be faced in implementing these objectives either by society and the government.

TOWARDS ACHIEVING VISION 2020

There are some measurement or qualitative and quantitative indicators, as well as on economic, development, social, psychological, and so on are used to categorize whether a country is developed or otherwise. According to Organization and Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which consist of 29 developed countries, income per capita is the most popular indicators that been used to measure whether the country is developed or not. The World Bank defined that high income nations are those with a gross national income per capita of US\$12,480 or more (World Bank, 2011). Now, Malaysia's per capita income are close to US\$10,000 and the aim is to increase it to US\$15,000 by 2020 (Najib Razak, 2013). The former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir believed that Malaysia can become a developed nation by 2020 if the country can sustain their economic growth at least 7 percent per year from the time Vision 2020 was introduced until year 2020 (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991).

Therefore, Malaysia has used the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to trace in detail the country's achievements and challenges for each MDG. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the Millennium Declaration which grew out of agreements and resolutions of world conferences organized by the United Nations (UN) that has been signed by 189 countries, including 147 Head of States in September 2000 at the Millennium Summit in New York. This Declaration focuses on issues of peace, security and development, environment, protection of vulnerable groups, human rights and governance (Economic Planning Unit, 2011).

There are eight major development goals that been targeted in MDGs to be achieved by 2015. However not all the MDGs that government outlines are focus to the creation of 'Bangsa Malaysia'. Most of the development goals that been focused by the MDGs are more focus to measure the economic and social stability for the development of nation, examples to reduce the poverty among the community, improve the quality of life, educational attainment and health outcomes.

Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad had set out nine strategic challenges that must be accomplished to achieve Vision 2020. First challenge is establishing a united Malaysian nation (Bangsa Malaysia) with similar goals and shared destiny. It must be peaceful, integrated territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony, fully cooperate, fairly and supported by the Malaysian nation with political loyalty and dedication to the country. Second, establishing a psychologically liberated, secure and developed the confidence in itself, proud of what be accomplished and brave to face problems. This Malaysian society must be distinguished by the pursuit of excellence, fully aware of all its potentials, psychologically subservient to none, and respected by people of other countries. Third, establishing and developing a mature democratic society, practicing a form of mature understanding, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries. Fourth, establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual and driven by the highest ethical standards. Five, establishing a liberal and tolerant society, people are free to practice various ethnic customs, cultures and their religious beliefs and at the same time, putting their loyalties to a nation. Six, establishing a scientific and progressive society, innovative and forward-looking, which is not only a consumer of technology but also contribute to the scientific and technological civilization of the future. Seven, creating a caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self and welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong family system. Eight, ensure a fair society in economics. That is a society in which the distribution of national wealth equitably for which there is full partnership in economic progress. Such a society would not exist if it is based on the identification of race with economic function, and all economic backwardness with race. Lastly, to create a prosperous society with an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991).

From the development goals that been decided, we can see that government only focus on the visible characteristics like development for economics and social, example to reduce the number or poverty between the community and to increase the GDP per capita of the citizen. However, for the creation of Malaysian nation and caring society, government not included the characteristics that should be taken to accomplish the united nation. This is because the creation of Malaysian nation and caring society is the implicit concept. We cannot know what is the best way to form the united Malaysia nation due to the every ethnicities have their own cultural and ideologies. Therefore, efforts by the government with the cooperation of Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) from UKM to develop a system that can measure the level of peace and communal harmony in order for addressing various issues of unity in the country is carried out with more effectively is a good decision. The system will be known as Racial Harmony Index (IKK) (Mohd Anwar, 2011).

THE CONCEPT OF MALAYSIAN NATION BUILDING

Economic stability, political stability and racial harmony is an important aspect to ensure the country can continue to drive economic development for the well-being of the people. The economic stability can be seen from the economic growth of the country every year and Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP per capita) of the citizen for the country. Meanwhile, social stability can be seen from the aspect of health, safety, housing, education, environment, culture, transportation and communication, social participation, family living and job environment. Racial harmony covered by the social threats, religious affiliation, social coordination and political influence. From the 2013 Malaysian People's Welfare Report shows that Malaysian People's Welfare Index (IKRM) increase by 25.4 points in 2000 to 2012. Economic welfare aspect increase 33.3 points meanwhile social welfare aspect is 21.0 points (Malaysian People's Welfare Report, 2013). This shows that quality of live for Malaysia citizens are more better and increase. It is because social development and economic development are inter-related.

Today, Malaysia is consists of 62.4 percent Malay or Bumiputera, 22.1 percent Chinese, 6.7 percent Indians, 0.9 percent others ethnic and 8.0 percent non-citizens (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012). The process of nation building is very important to be implemented by the country that consists of many ethnics. One of the example is Malaysia that consists of Malay, Chinese, Indians and others ethnics whose live in the one country and shared everything from the country's wealth. The process of nation building is an effort to develop the spirit of patriotism and solidarity to create a country whose people share a common identity. The major aim is to foster national unity by developing a new nation and an integrated race (Hippler, 2002).

Nation building is not relevant solely in Europe, but also the powerful forces of the 21st century including Malaysia. Pronunciation "nation building" in the post-independence era is one

concept to explain the reciprocal relationship between the "national" (ruling) clan "citizen", particularly in Malaysia, that comprising from diverse ethnics (Chew Fong Peng, 2006). In the dialog of Council Malaysian Students United Kingdom in Kuala Lumpur on the 10th September, 1995, the former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir once said, "Bangsa Malaysia means people who are able to identify themselves with the country, speak Malaysia language (*Bahasa Melayu*) and accept the Constitution". The concept of nation building was formulated in his last official speech which, "Malaysia must be a country that is ethnically integrated, living in harmony with full and fair partnership, made up of one 'Bangsa Malaysia', with political loyalty and dedication to the nation." (Lee Kam Hing, 2005: 184)

For Malaysia, nation building is the most important agenda that still not been achieved yet although this agenda had been accomplished since Malaysia become an independence country in 1957. Nation-building does not only aims to establish solidarity among its people, but it also labels the citizens with a new identity (Wan Norhasniah, 2011). Nation in the Malaysia context is a nation that formed from the historical factor, politic, economy and social interaction which at the end been united with the phrase of 'Bangsa Malaysia'. This is due to 'Bangsa Malaysia' are the citizens that live in Malaysia, shared the regions, economy wealth, culture and also the future. Wan Norhasniah (2011) also stated that the development of an integrated nation is difficult to achieve due to the three aspects, which is because of the deep-rooted racial sentiment, the bid to preserve their cultural and the elements that been employed to develop a national identity to unite the different ethnics under the 1Malaysia concept. However, 1Malaysia concept can be implemented if the traditional elements of each ethnics community are not threatened.

Nation-building concept must include the combination of three major components, that is individual, nation and country. Individual is the basic of the formation of nation and country because the interactions among them can influence others individual and shaped the groups that have the same characteristics and same interest. Meanwhile, nation are the unit of people who live in a country. They have bigger group which their members have the same religious, history cultural and generation. Country is one unit politic that have a power, sovereignty, responsibility, region and valid government (Aizat, 2011).

The characteristics of the nation-building are consist of pluralism community, but can form a solid unity, sharing the political ideology and have confident and believe to the country administration system, constitution and country laws. The factors that contribute to the formation of successful nation-building are democracy, nasionalisme, patriotisme and integration (Aizat, 2011). According to Suhana (2002) the implementation of nation building project surely play a major role in uniting the different cultures of ethnics. One Malaysia project is to refresh the concept of nation building from the previous policy and national agenda. Therefore, every individual will have a feeling of similarity or equality as a nation state and not to individually accustom by ethnic. Besides that, values play an important role in the creation of national unity between the ethnicity. Aizat (2011) states that Malaysian citizen must have two major aspect that been implemented so that the creation of unity Malaysian nation can be accomplished. First aspect is unity core and second aspect is by application of aspiration values. Unity cores must be based on values as a driving mechanism so that unity process between ethnicities can be done in harmony. These two aspects are important in creates progressive and dynamic community that will drive the nation to achieve developed nation.

Most of the people have realized and understand the significance of nation building in socio-economic and sustainable development of a country to become developed nation by year 2020. This has been discussed by many researchers. Mohamed Mustafa (2002) highlights the underlying socio-political parameters that shaped and influenced the politics of nation-building in the country. He also explore the viability of the project of 'Bangsa Malaysia' in the context of the daunting challenges involved in the process of the nation-building as it is envisages by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Since there exist a potent interplay between the forces of ethnicity and nasionalisme that has resulted in the creation of competing nationalism among the various ethnic groups in Malaysia, the idea of 'Bangsa Malaysia', therefore could be seen as an attempt to mediate this contestation.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF MALAYSIAN NATION BUILDING

In 2020, Malaysia's dreams to become a developed and united nation. The objective can only be achieved if Malaysians can face and overcome various obstacles or barriers seen as a challenge. This is because in order to form a cohesive society and have high values that are not easy. This is because people are who have common sense and a different opinion. In addition the split of ethnic can cause the huge problem in achieving Vision 2020. There are a few challenges that need to be resolved wisely. One of these challenges is the issue of polarization. The issue of racial polarization based on biased

perception of their own race who view it negatively often concludes with a polemic and debate which is not small in nature (Shaharuddin, 2007). For example, negative attitudes towards the Malay language shown by other races. They only use the Malay language just for the sake of daily business without appreciating the Malay language as an economic value and the consolidation. Meanwhile, there is also the Malays who refuse to accept the diversity of languages, cultures and religions that exist as a valuable asset that can help in building a united Malaysia (Chandra Muzafar, 1996).

According to Abdul Rahman Embong (2000), when the government announced the formation of 'Bangsa Malaysia', Chinese and Indians welcomed the formation. Even so, they still have doubts about the question of their language and culture in addition to other rights. In formulating the Malaysian nationalism, the question of culture and language must be emphasized. This is because both of these factors is the main symbol representing an ethnicity. The Chinese and Indian worries that they will lose their motherhood identity.

Education is one important channel in Malaysia to implement effective nation building. This is because education serves as the main tool for establishing and strengthening social cohesion. However, because of our education system is often changed direction and various range of flow further complicate efforts to form a unity. This is because from the low level up to tertiary institutions, the element of unity is not the main agenda behind the syllabus that taught to the students. Government need to establish a national system of education based. When students from different races were exposed to ethnic and religious diversity in the lower level, efforts to form a united multi-racial society can be made more efficient (Muhammad Hisyam, 2014).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Malaysia now are more than two thirds of the development goals that been achieved by 2015 (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). This shows that economic stability is increasing. Therefore, Malaysia must keep this economy stability until 2020 if desired Vision 2020 reached. Meanwhile, we hope that the race riots in 1969 that had threatened the stability of Malaysia and the economic progress not happen again. There are several aspects that must be noteworthy such as social threats, religious affiliation, social and political coordination. So, government should find the system to measure the relationship level and problems between the ethnicities in Malaysia. In order to realize the goal of nation building, a mechanism alone is not able to stand on its own. All the elements of good linguistic, cultural, ideological, political, social, historical, educational and so on should be mixed and consolidated in order to facilitate the achievement of the goal.

At first glance it seems 2020 is purely economic vision as it is concerned with the question of the economic development of Malaysia into an industrialized nation, but if we look clearly, it also addresses matters related to social and lifestyle aspects such as formation and individuality of race, morality and ethics, national culture, human resource development and others.

Vision 2020 is not a slogan proclaimed, but it is more a framework of action for every citizen to take certain steps to ensure that Malaysia is a truly prosperous. In the context of this vision requires some important software, among them the quality of the work produced by the education system, changes in attitudes and values, the emphasis on science and technology, planning, and the role of the private sector is more dynamic. This is not easy task to educate people towards unity. This is due to the human society have a different mind and. However, for the country that has pluralism ethnicities, race unity is important to ensure country peaceful and stability.

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