

Quality Education of Orang Asli in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian government expects all levels of society should be taken care of and can improve the quality of life impacted from an increase in knowledge towards the achievement of a first-class mindset. By 2020, this expectation is envisioned to include the Orang Asli community in Malaysia. The provided quality of education will determine the future continuity of the quality life. Therefore, this concept paper is produced with the objective to discuss the issues involving the challenges and some indicators on quality of life, especially for the acquisition of the Orang Asli community in Malaysia. At the end of the discussion, a proposal was put forward based on the results of the literature review of which the possibility to establish an non-formal education program through Community Learning Center program that is based on the identity of the indigenous peoples and their participation in the activities of basic life skills education. The result is expected to give some views in order to provide an opportunity and education to indigenous peoples and to achieve better of life quality in the future.

Keywords: Quality of education, non-formal education, Community Learning Centre, Basic life skills education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of life for all individuals covered various aspect including the quality of education. Many local and foreign researchers have proven the quality of life of indigenous peoples is still at a low level (Harun, & Idris, 2012). Various aspects of quality of life in the limelight past studies including aspects of basic amenities such as electricity and water (Mohamad Tap, 2005), housing (Martin, 2008), and education (Mohamad Johdi, & Abdul Razak, 2009).

A study of Quality of Life Index Orang Asli (IKHOAW) that have been carried out by local researchers showed that the index of the quality of life of indigenous peoples is unsatisfactory at 42.6% at the level of quality of life is very high, 16.8% high quality of life, 25.2% of quality of life moderate and 13.9% low quality of life. The remaining 0.5% is identified in the very low quality of life. The percentage is assessed from the aspect of quality of life derived by a good health, a good level of public relations and the ability to live in a society. However, the acceptance of piped water supply, electricity, transport and housing physical factors as well as education, are dissatisfactory and still affect the quality of life of Aboriginal (Harun, & Idris, 2012).

The government, through the Ministry of Education (MOE), is always enthusiastic in order to reduce the education gap Aboriginal students (Jamiran, & Wee, 2013). Accordingly, the Aboriginal Education Transformation Plan (PTPOA) has been introduced for a period of five years beginning in 2013 until 2017.

2. EDUCATION LEVEL OF ORANG ASLI

In general, it can be considered that the attitude of the minorities (Aboriginal) who refuse to make the development led to the Aboriginal's education continues to be ignored and not given enough attention. However, awareness of education among Orang Asli has long existed, but the cultural influence of past lives of their ancestors narrow their mentality to get out of their comfort cocoon (Mohamad Johdi, and Abdul Razak, 2009). This is consistent with recent studies; the country has already achieved the status of improvement. To improve the performance of Aboriginal education, restructuring of educational programs that are culturally appropriate and thought they should be shouldered by all those responsible (Afizi Wan et al., 2014). In this study, there are some indicators of improvement in education, especially improving the quality of education.

2.1 Educational dropout issue

Malaysia has registered 93, 743 children out of school, representing 18 million of statistical data. UNICEF (2007) reported that in 2007 the number of Aboriginal enrollment is still low as compared with normal enrollment. Only 20-40% of the Aboriginal community who complete primary school has signed up to the lower secondary school level. While 40-60% of those entering middle schools is dropping. For 2008, UNICEF Malaysia (2008) and Thanabalan et al. (2014) also showed that the level of literacy and educational attainment of Orang Asli community in Malaysia is low for the year 2008. In addition, the greater concern is the issues of the Aboriginal communities who still do not attend school (MOE, 2010; Johdi & Mohamad Abdul Razak, 2009; JHEOA, 2004). The latest report of the Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) said a total of 2746 people indigenous communities who did not attend school in 2010 (SUHAKAM, 2010). It was found that the dropout rate in secondary schools is high at over 35% per year. Earlier this fact has also been stated by Zainal Abidin (2008) of Aboriginal dropout rate of high school is higher than the dropout rate in primary schools.

Results interview was done by Mohamad Johdi and Abdul Razak (2009) on Hamid a / I Sepeh (Tok Batin) in Sawah Baru, Pekan which also supports the fact that not many Orang Asli students studying in high school, almost 65 percent up 70 percent were not enrolled in Form One. In addition, student attendance is very low and inconsistent that eventually led to dropout and illiteracy rates are high among the Orang Asli.

2.2 The number of students who pursue higher education

The awareness of Orang Asli towards education is seen rising although it is still at a low level. This is proved by an increasing number of school constructions in the indigenous village as an example in Pahang who has registered 430 Aboriginal schools and national schools have been

built (Wan Afizi et al., 2014). In addition, statistics of Orang Asli Development Department (JAKOA) whereby for a period of eight years starting from year 2000, the number of Aboriginal children who have been offered to the Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA) was 98 people. An increasing in numbers seen in 2010 and 2011 as many as 370 people and 408 people respectively (Berita Harian, July 26, 2012). Earlier, Mohamad Johdi and Abdul Razak (2009) stated that only 2.2% of the indigenous peoples who graduate studies at institutions of higher learning in 2009.

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ORANG ASLI

The Malaysian Government and non-governmental organizations have introduced various programs for marginal communities including the Orang Asli, such as;

- i. Program Pembangunan Masyarakat oleh Kementerian Kemajuan Luar Bandar dan Wilayah (KKLW).
- ii. Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA)
- iii. Skim Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Rakyat (SPKR)
- iv. Program Peningkatan Pendapatan (PPP)
- v. Program Pembangunan Masyarakat Setempat
- vi. Program Bantuan Rumah
- vii. Projek Perumahan Rakyat Miskin Tegar (PPRT)

Among the programs listed above, JAKOA was established specifically to implement various programs involving indigenous peoples in line with Vision 2020 and the New Economic Policy (DBE). Every year, policies and guidelines for Aboriginal communities have been reviewed in order to propel a paradigm shift for their socio-economic and taking into consideration of their cultural values are not set aside Aboriginal ancestors. Therefore, the main goal of the program is the development of indigenous peoples to ensure harmony, comfort and introduce them to other communities in Malaysia. Based on the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Development (PSKOA) 2011-2015, there are two (2) main sections highlighted, Education Section and Mind Development Section. However, in this concept paper, the researchers only discuss the education section that serves as a pacesetter or opportunities to improve the educational level of Aboriginal children. Through this section, the awareness of the importance of education can be nurtured through non-formal education. However, no doubt there is continuity between the two main sections in this PSKOA. Both are intertwined in exposing education starts at pre-school up to the tertiary level (local or foreign) and thus, career demands to support their lives. In addition, renowned companies such as Horlicks has demonstrated its commitment to close the gap in education for all children around the world, particularly Aboriginal children residing in rural areas. They took the initiative to offer facilities or solutions based on the degree of difficulty faced by the community, especially in terms of education. The fruitful collaboration shows by the Malaysian Association of Social Workers (ASW) and residents were encouraging with the built of the two learning centers.

The efforts show by the UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund) for the collaborations with other countries around the world also has an impact to on the Aboriginal education. For

example in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education is working closely with UNICEF to address the issue of education among the minority. Nearly a decade ago, the quest for quality education not only involves Aboriginal students but also a variety of training given to administrators and teachers involved in Aboriginal education. The educators are exposed to specific approaches that can be used to teach Aboriginal. They are encouraged to create a learning environment that is attractive to attract and motivate Aboriginal children to continue their learning. Other than that, the remedial classes deal with 3M issues; to read, write and calculate has been intensified to address the illiteracy problem among Aboriginal children.

3. CHALLENGES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

3.1 MARGINALIZATION

Since the 90's, scholars often debated the phenomenon of marginalization. These phenomenal are seen as a state that is not balanced in opportunity and benefit from economic, social and education (Alcock, 1993). This follows from the impact of various factors that should eventually lead to relate that these people are in poverty and environmental well naive. The limitation of opportunity has given a bad impression to the improvement of a country's income. Although Aborigines are a minority, but poverty Aboriginal communities also contributed to the country's poverty statistics.

Marginalization in Malaysia is quite serious happened among Orang Asli (Endicott & Dent, 2004; Nicholas, 1999; Hassan Ishak, 1998). Marginal condition applies in terms of basic facilities and employment opportunities. For example, Aboriginal settlements still lack of water supply, electricity and roads. Most of the settlements in the rural area are still consumed natural water sources, use of sunlight and still use the river and dirt roads as a source of communication. A study conducted by Nurihah, Rohana and Aede (2012) and Wakidah (2011) also pointed out that indigenous peoples should be given serious consideration in any program of national transformation. This means that the government's main challenge for the country to overcome poverty is to ensure that indigenous peoples are able to build their own economic reins. They must be given help and support to improve the economy so that the country's economic paradigm not only result in the rural indigenous communities but also includes the original communities that live in their own group.

The fact is that there are significant differences between the marginalization of developing countries and developed countries. Determination of marginalization in developing countries involving caste, women, children and the type of work performed and marginalization in many developed countries is determined by the policies of the government. As a basic example of racism practiced by the United States during the black and white as well as the policy of discrimination against minority groups by country Canada. However, developing countries such as Malaysia and Africa seem start to ending up on the basis of the developed countries in the event of marginalization of minority communities. Therefore, the Government at their level best to avoid it going to happen and introducing variety of policies and programs to ensure that minority communities have equal rights in all aspects including economic, educational and

social. All parties should support the government's efforts to help indigenous peoples from continue to be marginalized by giving full supports in terms of idea and financial contribution.

3.2 CULTURE

The original culture of indigenous peoples is a major challenge to overcome. Although the family culture is a positive thing but culture too according to the customs of the ancestors resulted the government's efforts are often underestimated by the Orang Asli. For example, a study conducted by Aminudin Mohamed around the attitude of participants of educational programs Aborigines showed that one of the factors that led the decline of the quality of life of indigenous peoples is the result of the attitude of indifference in education caused by environmental factors their placement (Wan Afizi et al., 2013). The attitude of parents who are not concerned with the education of children still persists seen since then. Parents who do not have the educational experience expecting the same for their children coupled with other geographical factors such as the distances of the location of the school and the placement were strengthen their reasons for not sending their children to school (Wahab, Mustapha & Talib, 2016; Abdul Razaq & Zalizan, 2009; Mohamad Johdi, and Abdul Razak, 2009).

3.3 INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITATIONS

Perfect quality of life requires a complete infrastructure facility. The lack of infrastructure such as electricity and water facilities causing many schools are not able to function to the maximum (Ishak Hassan, 1998). Recently, the government began to build and provide infrastructure and public facilities such as community halls, but indigenous peoples did not use it. This is caused by the position of their housing is relatively isolated from other Malay occupation placement give the impression that they are not eligible to use the facilities (Abdul Razaq, & Zalizan, 2009). The situation worsened when the community boycotted the views stereotype of Aboriginal communities has resulted Aboriginal Malays feel entitled to enjoy the common facilities.

Teachers spend a lot of time to manage the technical matters in schools, such as solar energy and manage power plants, wading through rivers and rickshaws to get to the school. As a result the quality of education is given less attention due to time constraints to manage these things. Educational resources such as books or questions's paper are also quite difficult to be on time because of the limited routes that can be reached. Due to the distances, the monitoring also cannot be done causes the education in the Aboriginal community be conducted based on their own activities and in a manner based on whatever their existing facilities.

3.4 LOCATION / GEOGRAPHY

The general location of the Orang Asli settlements are scattered in remote areas (Mazdi, Jabil & Rosmiza, 2014; Mohd Nur Syufaat, Wee and Maryati, 2012; July 2006). Orang Asli Development Department report showed 31.7% of indigenous villages located in remote areas, 61.45% in the suburbs and in the city of 1.38% (Norwaliza, 2015; Ramlee, 2015). This illustrates why the life they left behind and left out of the process of modernization. The attrition factor in education is very significant with environmental factors as proved by Nor Azizah, et al,. (2001) and Mohamad Johdi and Abdul Razak (2009). This is in line with the earlier studies by Hassan

(1998), which explains that capital expenditure by the government is still unable to meet the needs of indigenous peoples that are further inland. The geographical position they are located far inland as the main factors they believe that their children have no interest in joining the formal education system in schools that eventually led Aboriginal children behind in their studies.

4. SUGGESTION

Measuring the quality of life for Aboriginal people is very minimalist. Based on studies by local researchers found the value of the lives of indigenous peoples was measured based on the values that preserve the customs of their ancestors (Nazri, 2014). After many trauma dropout societies in education in particular are haunting the world, UNESCO has introduced Community Learning Center program (CLC) as an alternative to provide an education opportunities to marginalized groups. The establishment of the CLC approach is based on the needs and environment of indigenous peoples. CLC is expected to attract interest and attention of Orang Asli's children to study without feeling alienated by infrastructure provided as they still can be in their home surroundings.. However, with the constraints in infrastructure and geographical factors of Orang Asli's settlements, the situation is still difficult to overcome. Based on the proposal by UNESCO (2012) that in order to ensure the preservation or survival of the CLC program, these should be supported by the availability of sources and technical resources, especially in the supply of electricity generated by renewable energy sources.

5. CONCLUSION

Any development program for Aboriginal life should be highlighted aspect of their basic needs such as education quality requirements. This is seen as the best approach as it takes into account the needs of those who want to be woken and not solely on the interest of certain parties with exploiting the rights of indigenous peoples. Whilst the quality of education and other basic needs is completed, the perfect quality life will be achieved accordingly.

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