

*"Problems of Racial Integration in Malaysia:  
The Case of Kuala Lumpur Riots of 1969"*

*A Thesis Submitted to the University of Dhaka for the Degree of  
M. Phil in the Faculty of Social Sciences*

401830



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**Problems**

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**in**

ঢাকা  
বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
কনকনায়

**Malaysia-**

**The Case of Kuala Lumpur Riots of 1969.**

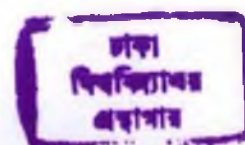
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study concentrates upon the political developments in one of the emerging states where the problems of racial integration are particularly acute. The cultural and ethnic variety found in modern Malaysia makes it a country of exquisite charm. Yet such a diverse mixture of cultures, languages and races has also created the political and social tensions which hinder the development of national loyalties and a sense of national identity. The race rioting and most violence which broke out in Malaysia, was May 1969, perhaps marked the end of democracy in that country. In Kuala Lumpur, the capital, city of Malaysia, for twenty four hours the whole machinery of government was halted and for several days afterwards, it functioned only ineffectively. Thus, before Malaya had integrated its own population, it assumed a major responsibility for establishing political stability in a for wider union, and for creating a nation out of states with even greater contrasts of cultures, languages, religions and stages of economic development.

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These riots brought to an end the multi-racial cohesiveness of Malaysia which for forty eight years of independence, had shown signs of being successful. But the cause of the riots provide an object lesson for multi-racial countries in other parts of the world. The riots were the inevitable result of decades of racial friction and the failure of the Malaysians themselves to create available communal society.

In the spring of 1969, Malaysia held its third federal election since independence. The problems which the Malaysia government has had to





face, before and after the riots, are not problems peculiar to Malaysia alone. They are to be found in any country where people of different races or different religious beliefs have to live and work together.

The May riots were, in the main, confined to the capital. The interaction between the different racial groups demonstrates a degree of prejudice, ineptness and failure which disturb anyone who, regards Malaysia with great personal affection. The most usual racial problems having bearings, on nation-building relate to the problems of racial integration in Malaysia.

In the course of preparing this study I have received invaluable help, assistance, and guidance from my supervisor Dr. M. Nazral Islam, Professor and Ex-Chairman of Political Science, University of Dhaka. Without the generous help of my supervisor I could not complete thesis work. I am indebted to him. I also wish to record my sincere thanks to Professor Dr. M. Asaduzzaman, Chairman, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh.

It must, however, be made clear that opinions expressed in this thesis are entirely mine. I hope that this thesis work will be of some interest and value to the researcher, academics. I am solely responsible for the views and comments made within this thesis work in Political Science.

Dhaka

May 2005

Showkat Ali Khan

## **Abstract**

The race rioting and mob violence which broke out in Malaysia, in May 1969, perhaps marked the end of democracy in that country. In Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia for twenty four hours, the whole machinery of government was halted and for several days afterwards it functioned only ineffectively. Many hundreds were killed; many thousands were maimed or injured. A curfew was declared but not impartially enforced; house were systematically looted and burned. Refugee centers in different parts of the city hurriedly filled with families who has lost everything owned.

These riots brought to an end the multi-racial cohesiveness in Malaysia which for twelve years of independence, had shown signs of being successful. On the third day of the rioting, in a radio broadcast, a Government Minister said: "Democracy in Malaysia is dead". Anyone attempting to evaluate the effects of the disturbance's both on Malaysia and in the long term on South East Asia will probably agree with the Minister. But the causes of the riots provide an object lesson for multi-racial countries in other parts of the world. These recent events in Malaysia are all too relevant to happenings in other countries a long way from Asia. It is not difficult to draw a number of parallels.

The problems which the Malaysian Government has had to face, before and after the May riots are not problems peculiar to Malaysia alone. They are to be found in any country where people of different races or different religious beliefs have to live and work together. The riots were the inevitable result of decades of racial friction and the failure of the Malaysians themselves to create a viable communal society. This failure serves as a sad example for multi-racial communities everywhere.

**“Dedicated to the memory of my parents who always inspired me and kindle the light of knowledge in my mind.”**

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Dated 23-5-2005

Certified that the thesis entitle "Problems of Racial Integration in Malaysia: The Case of Kuala Lumpur Riots of 1969" has been written by Showkat Ali Khan under my supervision.

I further certify that this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except by way of quotation and duly acknowledged.

The thesis is the best on Showkat Ali Khan's own research work and has not previously submitted for a degree or a Diploma in any other institution of the world.

The work is completed and I approve of its submission for conferring the degree of Masters of Philosophy (M.Phil).

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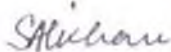
&

Supervisor of the Research.



## **DECLARATION:**

I confirm that this thesis contain no material previously published or written by another person except by way of quotation and of duly acknowledgement. It is based on my own research work and has not been previously submitted for degree or Diploma in any other institutions of the world.

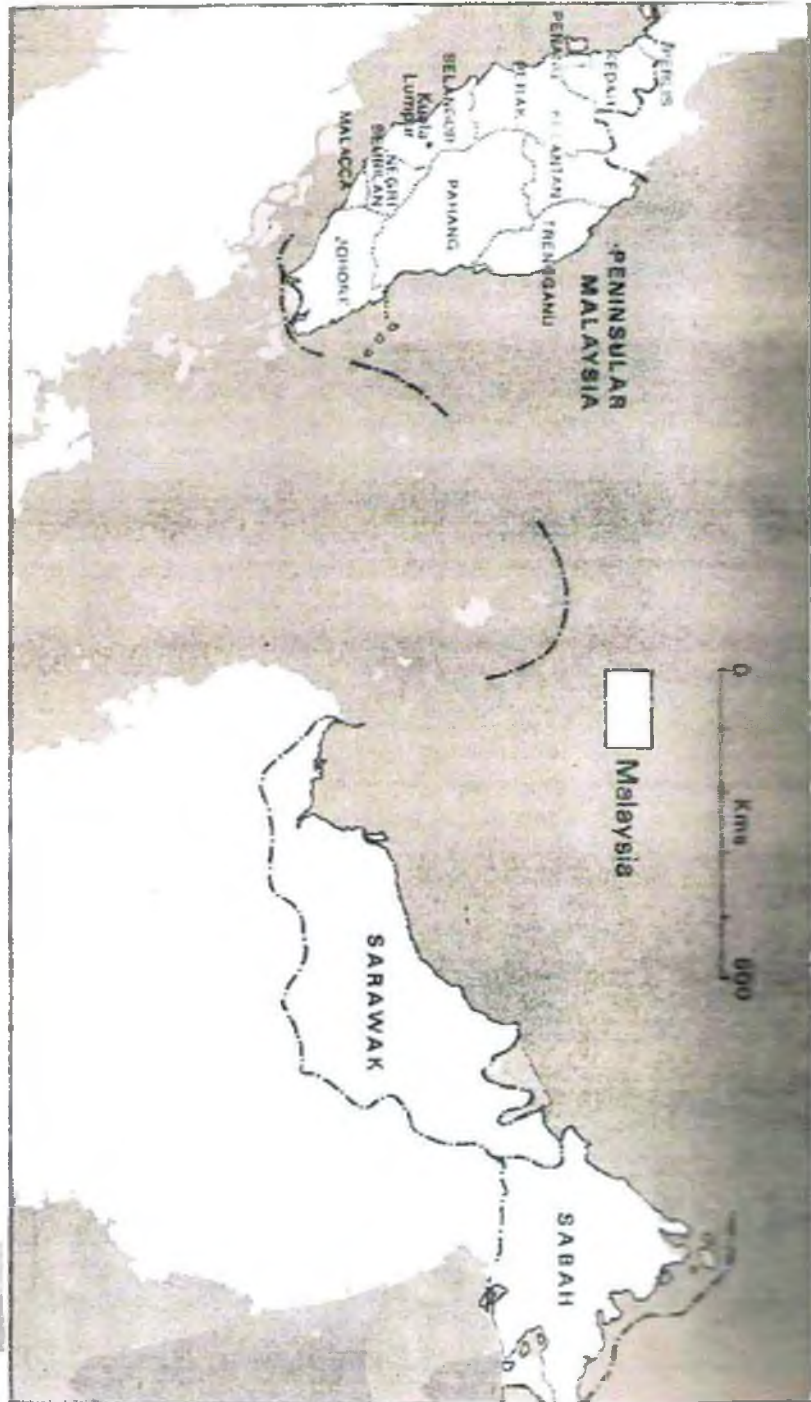


Showkat Ali Khan

M. Phil. Researcher

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AMCJA	-	All-Malayan Council of Joint Action
APAC	-	All Party Action Committee
DAP	-	Democratic Action Party
FMS	-	Federated Malay States
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	-	Gross National Product
GRM	-	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
IMP	-	Independence of Malaya Party
MCL	-	Malayan Chinese League
MCP	-	Malayan Communist Party
MCS	-	Malayan Civil Service
MDU	-	Malayan Democratic Union
MIA	-	Malayan Indian Association
MIC	-	Malayan Indian Congress
MNA	-	Member of the National Assembly
MPAJA	-	Malay People's Anti Japanese Army
MS	-	Malaysian Dollar
NCC	-	National Consultative Council
NIP	-	New Industrial Policy
NOC	-	National Operations Council
PMIP	-	Pan Malayan Islamic Party
UMNO	-	United Malays National Organization
MCP	-	Malay Communist Party
MCA	-	Malayan Chinese Association
NEP	-	New Economic Policy
LPM	-	Labour Party of Malaya
PPP	-	People's Progress Party
ICC	-	Information Coordination Center
CDS	-	Civil Defence Services



Malaysia

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## **Chapter-One**

### ***1.1 . Introduction:***

The phrase racial integration is cumbersome and, as we go on, will be increasingly replaced with the single word minorities. Whenever, a genetic term is intended the term “racial integration” in this same sense, though it may also be used more inclusively it refers to any group facing discrimination. Racial and ethnic relations are a special type of inter group relations. The process of racial integration is not slower and occupies a long time frame. The racial integration is not always present in both new and old states in both developing and developed parts of the world. The Malaysia is basically a multi racial plural society, multi-cultural because there exists differences in ethnicity, languages, race, religion, caste, assumed blood ties customs or territory. The terms ‘nation building’ and national integration are used interchangeably in the current literature of the political development and disintegration in the newly independent states of Asia and Africa is a common interesting anything directly apprehended by the senses in the world. “The process of integration or disintegration is always present in both new and old states, in both developing and developed parts of the world”<sup>1</sup>. The new states in Asia are of a greater variety in terms of cultures resources, size institutional pattern and development and political orientation than the Atlantic-European Commonwealth examples, which provide the greater majority of cases for comparative analysis. Moreover, “basically a

society is plural when there exist differences in ethnicity, language, race, caste assumed blood ties, customs or territory”<sup>2</sup>. In Malaysia communal, ethnic and class politics have overshadowed the institutional structure and functional aspects of politics. Malaysia gets invariably quoted in writings on ethnically divided societies, equated at times with Furnivall’s “plural society” where ethnically and economically separated peoples precariously coexisted, meeting only in the market place, lacking in non-commercial contacts shared values or common will, held together by force and subordination and “pregnant with conflict”. Though such an equation is an exaggeration it remained true that “it would be difficult to imagine a more deeply divided society than that of Malaysia. The ethnic group conflicts of many of the new states, as evidence by disputes over territorial boundaries that often cut across tribal and national groups and which produced recurrent problems of communalism and regionalism, were basically the product of colonial rule. In Kenya and Uganda for example, the immigrants served as petty officials of the British administration, and in South Africa as sugarcane workers, like Kanakas in Australia. “The problems of nation-building or national integration, however, are not without precedent nor only related to the new states of Asia and Africa; European states have and now facing analogous problems of integration. For example Belgium, Canada and Czelchoslovakia are plagued by the political implications of cultural pluralism which is too intense to be accommodated within their unitary constitutions”<sup>3</sup>. The term integration thus covers a vast range of physical, economic, political and social phenomena extending from physiological integration in a human body, social integration in the fields of education, language legal systems or literature to economic integration of the advanced



and backward sectors of a society and integration of the primordial groups in a country into national community. The problems of integration are particularly complex for the developing states of Asia and Africa; and therefore there are basic differences between the developed and developing countries. "Racial integration sets forth the bringing together of the discrete elements of a society into a more integrated whole or to make out of many small and diverse societies a closer approximation of one nation"<sup>4</sup>. But in order to understand the integration problem of Malaysia societies confronting social, economic and political change certain general features can be identified which are common to most of the societies. Integration as a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center.

They have tended either to ignore the question of ethnic diversity or to treat the matter of ethnicity identity superficially as merely one of a number of minor impediments to effective state integration. They were of different religions, customs, traditions, languages and social organizations. The impact of ethno-political conflict or racial in global security.

## 1.2. *Theoretical Framework:*

The concept of racial integration is “multi faceted... any simple definition can only convey one aspect of it”<sup>1</sup>. Ernst B. Haas defines integration as a

“process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states”<sup>2</sup>.

Lucian W. Pye conceives integration as

“the extent to which the entire polity is organized as a system of interacting relationships, first among the offices and agencies of government, and then among the various groups and interests seeking to make demands upon the system, and finally in the relationships between officials and articulating citizens”<sup>3</sup>.

“Thus, the term ‘nation building’ or ‘integration’ contains a vast extent of human relationships and attitudes ranging from the integration of diverse and discrete cultural loyalties, the development of a sense of nationality, the integration of political units into a common territorial framework with a government to exercise power, the integration of the rulers and ruled, and the integration of the citizenry into a common political process to the integration of individuals into an organization for purposive activities”<sup>4</sup>.

*Rukunegara*, “the task of national consolidation is the responsibility of everyone. It will demand the formulation and implementation of sound, dynamic, coherent and coordinated policies and programmes. Activities in political, economic, educational, social and cultural fields must be geared towards the objective of national unity”<sup>5</sup>. Samuel P. Huntington suggests that “national integration is a phenomenon as much as national disintegration”<sup>6</sup>.

Malaysia’s multi ethnicity is a colonial creation. By late 19<sup>th</sup> century the British had established ‘indirect rule’ throughout the Malay Peninsula. This was done through agreements with the Malay Sultans whereby they maintained powers over “Islam and Malay customs” but were obliged to heed the advice of the British on all other matters. This aspect of colonial history where the Malay rulers remained sovereign even of without substantive powers, is significant indirect rule, meant that the ‘Malay’ nature of the land and its symbolic ‘Malay ownership was kept intact. This proved to be a critical in later ethnic politics in the country. The British left the Malays alone in their subsistence agriculture and village life. Labour for the new tin industry and plantation economy came from Chinese and Indian immigrants respectively. By the end of 1930s the immigrant population was as large as the indigenous Malays. Some among the Chinese set up successful commercial and industrial enterprises. Soon enough foreigners had gained control of the modern sectors of the economy. The Chinese had a virtual monopoly over domestic retail trading an activity for the common man, most symbolic of control over the economy. The Malays remained largely in the neglected villages, with some from the aristocratic classes in

the colonial bureaucracy and their Sultans on symbolic thrones still. A distinctive feature of the Malaysian society was the immigrant Chinese identified with modern economics, the Malays with agriculture and politics and government and the British pursued the policy of divide and rule which kept Malay and Chinese separate and thus the British maintained the pace for colonial development.

The non Malays i.e., the immigrant Chinese and Indians, at the time looked at themselves as transient immigrants; they related themselves strongly to their motherlands and identified with developments in China and India. This is another significant factor so self defined, it meant that historically the non-Malays took it as legitimate the Malay claim to indigenous. Ethnic relations during colonial times were relatively peaceful. But the seeds of division had been planted. The first signs of conflicts violent conflicts emerged during the Japanese occupation and immediately thereafter. The Japanese treated the Chinese harshly, both in absolute terms and relative to the Malays. A section of the Chinese went underground to fight the Japanese and to an extent "Malay collaborators". After the war these guerrillas of the Malay Communist Party (MCP) emerged from the jungles to claim control over the country which led to armed clashes between the overwhelmingly Chinese guerrillas and Malay groups in various parts of the country. This was the first serious case of violent hostilities with a clear ethnic character. It was also indicative of "how the perception of a sudden shift in political power can induce an increase in ethnic tensions" This has been the key source of all subsequent cases of violent ethnic conflicts in Malaysia; in this particular episode the "alien" Chinese to usurp



political power which they saw as legitimately theirs. The Malays sent a clear message that they would not tolerate a radical shift of the power balance. History then has had a helping hand particularly in the senses that legitimacy of Malay political and cultural supremacy had been largely established. Although this is not necessarily desirable in the eyes of the non-Malays, it seems by and large not in acceptable and not unbearable either especially when on independence, balanced by the right to citizenship, freedom to practise their respective religions, customs, and languages and channels for their political participation, including, through the multi ethnic ruling alliance arrangement, at the highest policy making level. The British on their part, insisted that independence would be considered only if there was a multi ethnic compromise. This was based on the MCP threat and emergence of communal groups pursuing exclusive, and radical, communal interests.

### ***1.3. Statement of the study and a Brief Account of the Chapters.***

The Malaysian Constitution can be described as one of ethnic accommodation, a product of consultations, compromises and exchanges between elites. Race and ethnicity divide the Malaysian society into groups of peoples exhibiting certain characteristics in common such as the brown skinned Malay, yellow skinned Chinese and the black skinned Indian who can be easily identified in group conflicts and political upheavals. In time of suspicion, dispute and civil war, their groups solidify individually, and never together in order to counter act one another. Usually, the minor groups such as the Chinese and Indians, in view of their limited population, practice inter

ethnic cooperation to balance their outnumbered Malay's counterpart. Racial and ethnic group affairs often create political crises such as the 1957's and 1969's racial riots. Whether the origin of the dispute is racial, communal, or class in nature. Emergency rule and curfew as the consequential actions were taken and when the racial sentiments subsided, programmes of racial harmony and national unity usually were followed. Recently the practice of *bumiputraisim* or special rights and privileges to the Malays has intensified racial resentment, fear and jealousy on the part of the richer minorities. "No political process in Malaysia can avail racial elements, and the best way to govern them is to provide racial consensus in the ethnic group affairs"<sup>7</sup>.

Expressing in a formula a fitting composition for the thesis the researcher has pursued, as far as possible, rules and regulations, conventions given by the University. Moreover, the researcher followed several internationally much have a high opinion of Universities.

Chapter one is the introductory chapter. In a statement of the significance of the thesis. It also provides the theoretical framework, statement of the study, justification of the study, limitations of the study, review of the literature and methodology of the thesis.

Chapter two prepares a demographic dimensions of racial integration for the thesis. This chapter provides some connotation, such as geographical location, demographic and racial composition, settlement situation of the immigrants, ethnic and cultural differences in Malaysia and so on.

Chapter three points out some economic dimensions of racial integration, like; economic developments, income disparity, poverty,

unemployment and under employment and economic policies pursued by the government for the entire -these.

Chapter four analyses the political dimensions of racial integration and constitutional development, Federation of Malaysia in 1960 and disintegration of Malaysia and expulsion of Singapore in 1965.

Chapter five presents the background of racial unrest such as, the Malay political pre-dominance, the Royal Malay Army, the 1969 Elections, Elections results, the opposition victory celebration and aftermath, the Kuala Lumpur riots of 1969, the political strategy, the National Operations Council, the National Consultative Council and *Rukunegara* toward the racial integration in Malaysia.

Chapter six looks forward a conclusion with a tentative evaluation, recommendations for future directions.

#### **1.4. Objective of the Research :**

The task of nation-building or racial integration always appears to be a complex and arduous process. The difficulties of this process are more conspicuous in the context of the new states of Asia, Africa and Latin America where very few nations have achieved the status of nation-states in the modern sense of the term. The present study is an attempt at examining the nation building experiences of one such state - Malaysia- during the period of 1957 – 1969. Malaysia has attained considerable success in this regard is still struggling with difficulties.

In this context, instead of constructing a systematic general theory, a number of the components of racial integration identified by theorists are selected as the basis of analysis and have been applied to the situation of Malaysia. Malaysia's problems are stated as a diversity of cultures, religions, economic interests, races, communities and languages. The function of three potentially integrative institutions of Malaysia – the ruling coalition type party UMNO, the civil service and the federal systems have also been examined. Malaysia's success or failure in achieving racial integration is also directly dependent on her adherence to democratic principles.

#### ***1.5. Limitations of the Research:***

“It may indeed prove to be far the most difficult and not the last important task for human reason rationally to comprehend its own limitations”<sup>8</sup>. There were several constraints on the way to carry out the study.

The subject matter has taken up by the thesis tastes a very wide range, both in terms of periods of time and its adjoining areas. In addition, the topic is selected to address to the overcome and constraint of the problems of Racial Integration in Malaysia to identify the future prospects for harmony the ethnic conflict in 1969 of Malaysia. It has been identified as transitional period of institutionalization of racial integration during 1957-1969. In this situation, one must need to set down a methodological guideline, recommending a list of important and relevant issue expected to be covered with the thesis. Keeping this mind the researcher has inadequate



performance. Notwithstanding, maximum endeavor has been deployed to support the requirement of the topic but some more investigations were necessary to reconcile the point. The purpose has been to generate a few conceptual and methodological ideas and to produce some substantive findings and tentative conclusions of relevance to the specific racial problems of Malaysia and other new states to general understanding of the problems of racial integration. Since the topic is a vast one, it is possible to make in-depth study of various individual aspect of the topic. This research has a preference to identify achievements and constraints of subject matter process and tentative recommendations for future development. The researcher has attempted to build up a theoretical framework that has some limitations and inappropriateness. However, the researcher has gone through exhaustive and intensive study the problems of racial integration in Malaysia and made a way to form common position in various racial conflict and ethnic conflict issues in Malaysian perspective.

#### ***1.6. Methodology of the Research:-***

The resources for the present study have to largely be acquired through and extensive perusal of documents, Papers Journals and books in several libraries in Bangladesh, Australia and Malaysia. The sources of materials include primary and secondary sources. Although the research period is the general elections of Malaysia that led to the racial riots in Kuala Lumpur in 1969. The present Methodology of the literature “Problems of Racial Integration in Malaysia: The Case of Kuala Lumpur Riots of 1969”, the historical, analytical and observational, methodology, Primary and



Secondary data and online resources have been applied. Primary data were assembled from end to end analytical, empirical and observational methods. The Primary data were also collected from policy statements, official documents and various reports. Surely this method provides the researcher a chance to have straight dealings with the documents. At the onset of the study, a rigorous desk research was carried out. Appropriate literature, many research works and other secondary data were gathered intensively and it became helpful of the present researcher to build up the scheme, structure, act of constructing of the theoretical framework and select of the topic. In this perspective the researcher visited several libraries of Bangladesh. The visited libraries are: Dhaka University central library, The Public library, Shahbagh, Dhaka, Secondary sources were books Journals, Dailies and other published materials.

### ***1.7. Review of the Literature:***

This study of Malaysian politics considers this latter obstacle to racial integration: the division between ethnic groups. Racial integration in a multi-ethnic society is particularly difficult for the very reason that ethnic divisions usually overlap with and compound the more common lines of political and social separation. Racial integration must occur at several levels if the polity is to achieve minimal stability and autonomy: among the governing institutions, among the various social sectors, among the officials of government and the articulates of those groupings. There is no single blue print for racial integration. The Oxford Dictionary States that “to integrate is to put or bring together so as to form one whole, to combine in a whole”.<sup>9</sup>

The term racial integration may have both a mechanistic as well as a voluntaristic facet. According to K.W. Deutsch refers to it as

“...an architectural or mechanical model. As a house can be built from timber, bricks and mortar in different patterns, quickly or slowly, through different sequences of assembly, in partial independence from its setting, and according to the choice, will and power of its builders, so a nation can be built according to different plans, from various materials rapidly or gradually, by different sequences of steps, and in partial independence from its environment.”<sup>10</sup>

The term “integration, thus covers a vast range of physical, social, economic, and political phenomena extending from physiological integration in a human body, social integration in the fields of education, language, legal systems or literature.”<sup>11</sup>

## Foot Notes

1. Leonard Binder, "*National Integration and Political Development*" *American Political Science Review*, vol-LV111 No 3, P-622, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, *Problems of Nation-Building in Developing Countries: The Case of Malaysia*, University of Dhaka, 1988, p-20.
2. Ernst B. Hass, *The Uniting of Europe: Political Social and Economic Forces*, 1950-57, California: Stanford University Press, 1958, P-16. See, Boston: little, Brown and company, 1966 p-65, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, op,cit,p-21.
3. L.W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development.....*, p-65. also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-21.
4. Myron Weiner "*Political Integration and political Development*" *the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol 358, (March 1965) P-54, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-21.
5. See, *Rukunegara*, (official document identifying Malaysian National ideology) English Translation, Published by *the Federal Department of Information, Ministry of Information and Culture, Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, (n.d) P, 7, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-33.
6. See Samuel. P. Huntington, *Political Development and Political Decay*, *World Politics*, vol-17, No 3, P-392, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-16.
7. The 1974 Noble Prize Winner Friedrich A. Hayek in his famous book "*Price and Production*" Commented, Mentioned by Edwin J. Feulner Jr. *Freedom is Prophet*" in the Daily Star 18 May, 1999, P-5.

8. Dr. M. Nazrul Islam, *Consolidating Asian Democracy*, Printed in Bangladesh, First Published in October 2003, P-21.
9. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol, v. H-K London: Oxford University Press, 1933, p-367, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-16.
10. Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds), *Nation-Building*, New York: Atherton Press, 1963, p-3. also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-17.
11. Niek Aaron Ford, "Cultural Integration Through Literature", *Teachers College Record*, Vol, 66, no.4, pp.332-337, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, p-17.

## Chapter-Two

### Demographic Dimension of Racial Integration:

#### *2.1 Geographical Location:*

The Federation of Malaysia situated in South-East Asia, consists of 13 states. Eleven of these are Peninsular Malaysia in the southern part of the Kra Peninsula (with Thailand to the north and the island of Singapore to the south), and two, Sabah and Sarawak are on the north coast of the island of Borneo, two thirds of which comprises the Indonesian territory of Kalimantan. Sarawak also borders Brunei, a coastal enclave in the north east of the state. The climate is tropical, there is rain in all seasons and temperatures are generally between 22<sup>o</sup>C (72<sup>o</sup>F) and 33<sup>o</sup>C (92<sup>o</sup>F) with little variation throughout the year. The official language is Bahasa Malaysia, based on Malay, but English is also widely used. Chinese, Tamil and Iban are spoken by minorities. Islam is the established religion practiced by about 53% of the population (including virtually all Malays), while about 19% including most of the Chinese community, follow Buddhism. The Indians are predominantly Hindus. There is a minority of Christians among all races and traditional beliefs are practised, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak. Malaysia's national flag (proportions 2 by 1) has 14 horizontal stripes, alternating red and white, with blue rectangular canton, containing a yellow crescent and a 14-pointed yellow star, in the upper hoist. The capital is Kuala Lumpur. A new administrative capital, Putrajaya, is being developed south of Kuala Lumpur.



## ***2.2. Demographic & Racial Composition:***

In 1957, the year of Malaysian Independence, it had a population only 6,279,000 of which the immigrants slightly outnumbered the indigenous Malays ( See table : I).

Malaysia contains the states of Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Pinang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Terengganu. Malaysia claims the uncommon separation among multi-racial countries of the world in the sense that she has to comprise the main racial groups of whom about half are immigrant and recent settlers, namely, Chinese and Indians. In 1998, Malaysia had a population only 22,180,000.

TABLE : I

Racial composition- 1921 to 1957

Race	Population in thousands				Percentages			
	1921	1931	1947	1957	1921	1931	1947	1957
Total	2,907	3788	4,908	6,279	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Malays*	1,569	1,864	2,428	3,125	54.0	49.2	49.5	49.8
Chinese	856	1,285	1,885	2,324	29.4	33.9	38.4	37.2
Indians**	439	571	531	707	15.1	15.1	10.8	11.3
Others	43	68	65	112	1.5	1.8	1.3	1.8

(All figures are founded)

**Notes :** \* Includes nomadic aborigines,\*\* Includes Pakistanis

**Source :** *Federation of Malaya Official Year Book*, 1962, Vol.2, Kuala Lumpur: Government press, 1962 p.40, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, *Pakistan and Malaysia: A Comparative Study in National Integration*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi -11001, p-20.

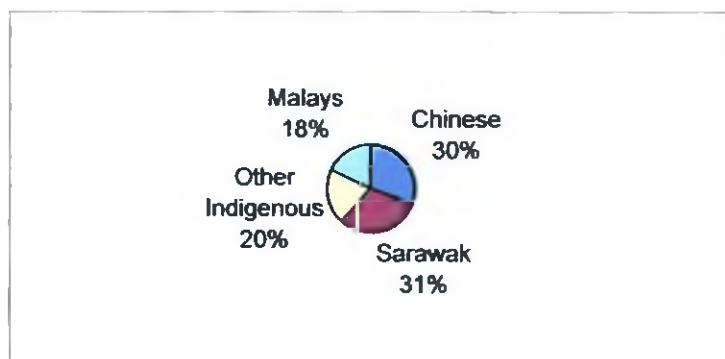
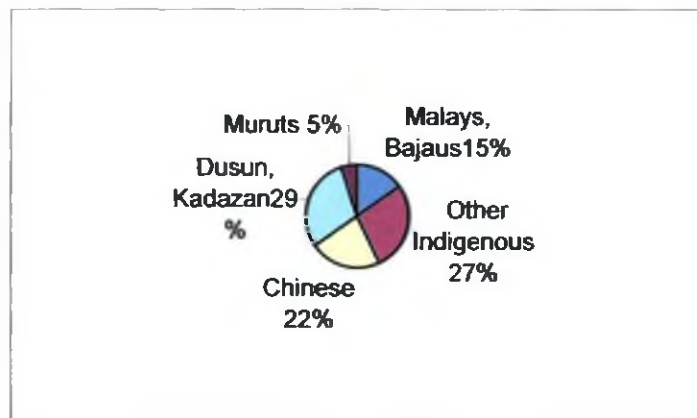
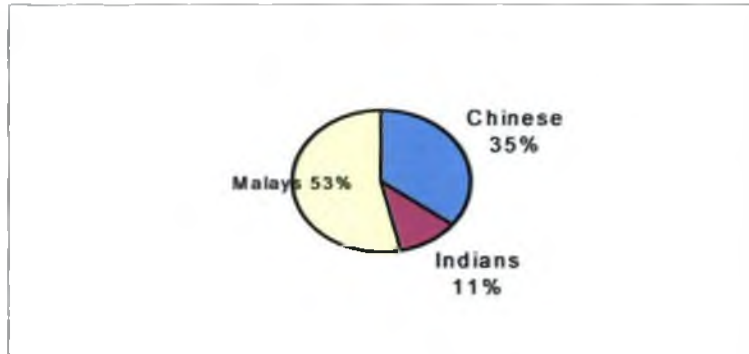
In 1921 indigenous Malays formed more than fifty percent and their proportion dropped dramatically over a gap of ten years because of the immigration of other races into the peninsula between 1921 and 1931. Though the immigrants, especially the Chinese and Indians, started contact with the peninsula as early as the fifth and sixth centuries respectively, a substantial number of them were recent settlers. Consequently, they affected

the population pattern significantly and created a serious ethnic imbalance in the peninsula. More than any other factor, this had prompted fundamental social, religious, political and economic cleavages between the Malays and the immigrants, commonly as non-Malays. (See table-2)

Table -2 Racial Composition of Malay's Population from 1921 to 1970 by percentages

Racial group	N=2,907,000	N=3,788,000	N=4,908,000	N=6,279,000	N=8,039,000	N=8,810,348
Year	1921	1931	1947	1957	1965	1970
Malays	54.0	49.2	49.5	49.8	50.1	53.2
Chinese	29.4	33.9	38.9	37.4	37.2	36.8
Indian	15.1	15.1	10.8	11.3	11.1	10.6
Others	1.5	1.8	1.3	1.8	2.0	0.8

**Sources:-** 1957 *Population Census Report* No. 14, adapted from 1.3.p.3: estimates from Monthly statistical Bulletin of the states of Malay, September 1966 and 1970 population and Housing of Malaysia, Community Groups. Table VI, P-27, also quoted in Alvin Rabushka, *Race and Politics in Urban Malaya*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1973, p-21.

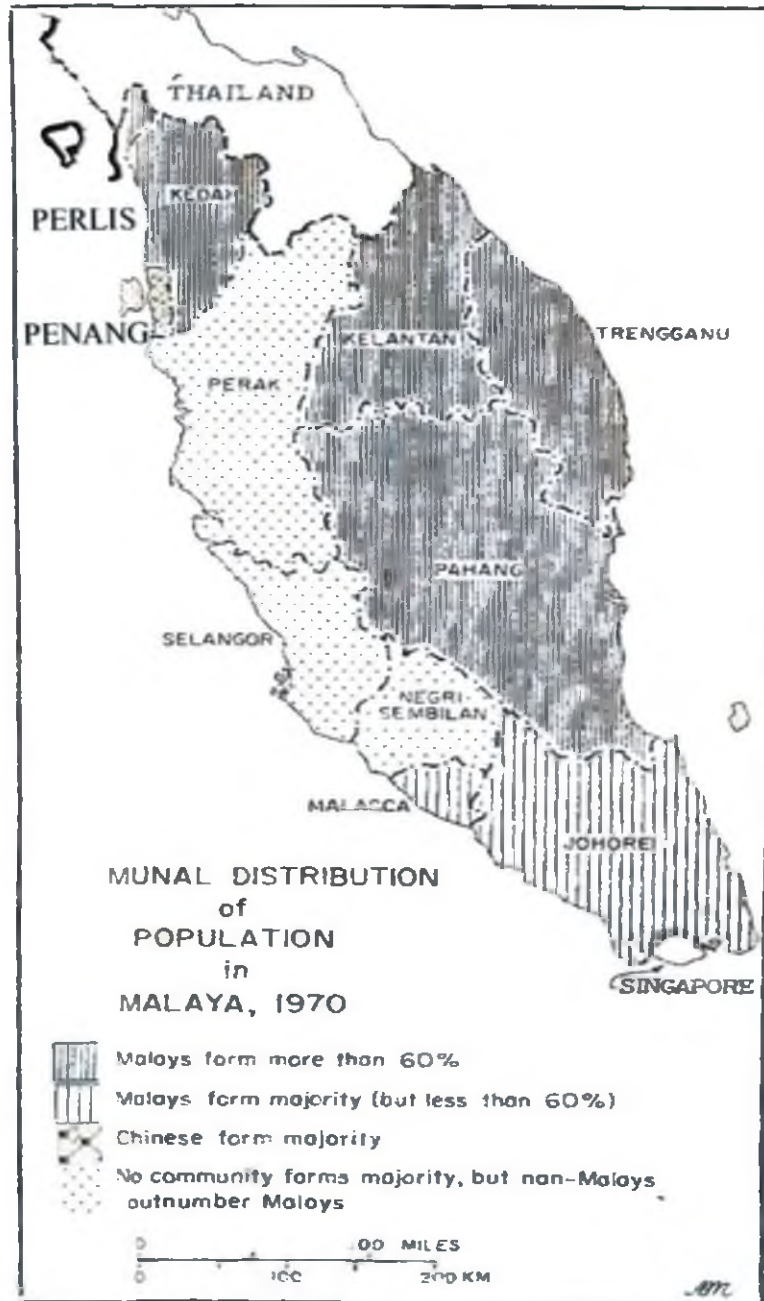


**Table: 3 Racial Composition by State by Percentages 1970**

State	Malays	Chinese	Indians
Trengganu	93.9	5.4	0.6
Kelantan	92.8	5.3	0.8
Perlis	79.4	16.2	2.0
Kedah	70.7	19.3	8.4
Pahang	61.2	31.2	7.3
Malacca	51.8	39.6	7.8
Johor	53.4	39.4	6.7
Negri Sembilan	45.4	38.1	16.1
Perak	43.1	42.5	14.2
Penang	30.7	56.1	11.5
Selangor	34.6	46.3	18.3

Source: *1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, Community Groups*, Table X IV. P-32 and table 1, P-45. Ibid, p-22.





**Table 4: Racial Composition of urban and rural population by percentages**

Type of Area	Malays	Chinese	Indians
Urban	27.6	58.5	12.8
Rural	63.5	26.2	9.7

**Source:-** 1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, Community Groups, adapted from Table X 1, P-30, Ibid, p-24.

**1. Demography:**

- A. The numerical and relative size of each resident ethnic community.
- B. The geographic distribution of each ethnic group within the national boundaries.
- C. The place of origin of each community.

**2. Race:**

- A. Physical distinctions between the groups, if any,

**3. Culture:**

- A. Distinction and/or Coincidences of religion, language, customs, values among the various communities.
- B. The availability of a culture not intimately associated with any of the resident ethnic groups.

**4. Social structure:**

- A. Patterns of inter marriage.
- B. The relative tendencies to form communal organization.
- C. Urban-rural concentration.
- D. The availability of authoritative institutions within any community.

**5. Political experience:**

- A. Differential colonial experience.
- B. Identification with a foreign government; the proximity of that government; the degree of mutual trust between it and the home government.

An ethnic group, for example, may be termed such due to its distinctive language, distinctive physical appearance or its separate religion. Each of the variables listed has some bearing on Malaysia, but six in particular shed light on the sort of impact ethnic diversity has had on the course of its political integration:

1. relative numerical strength;
2. economic occupational stratification;
3. geographic distribution of each of the ethnic groups within Malaya;
4. Linguistic and religious differentiation's;
5. Social organization;
6. Ethnic politics and the place of origin;

Many countries can count more than two culturally or socially separate ethnic groups but few have, as does Malaysia, more than two claim in excess of ten percent of the society.

**Table-5**

**Percentage of the Total Population Represented by the Major Ethnic groups in Malaysia.**

**A. Malaysia in Total-1960 (including Singapore) %**

Malays and other Indigenous*	46.8
Chinese	41.4
Others (Indian, Eurasians, etc)	11.8

\* 80 percent of all indigenous are Malays.

**Source:** T.G. McGee, "Population: A Preliminary Analysis" in Wang Gung-wu, ed, Malaysia, New York, Praeger, 1964, pp, 67-81, also quoted in Cynthia H. Enloe, *Multi – Ethnic Politics: Case of Malaysia*, California , 19720, August 1970, p-11.

<b>B. Malaya-1957</b>	<b>%</b>
Malaysia **	49.8
Chinese	37.1
Indians	11.1

\*\* Includes nomadic indigenous peoples.

**Source:** *Federation of Malaya. Department of Statistics, 1957 Population Census of the Federation of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Government Printing Office, p-3, Ibid, p-22.*

<b>C. Sarawk-1960</b>	<b>%</b>
Sea-Dyak (Iban)	31.9
Chinese	30.8
Malay	17.4
Land Dyak	7.7
Melanan	6.0
Other indigenous	5.1
Others	1.1

**Source:** Joan Rawlins, *Sarawak: 1839-1963*, London Macmillan and co, Ltd., 1965 p. 189, Ibid, p-22,

<b>D. Sobah-1960</b>	<b>%</b>
Kadazan (Dusun)	32.0
Murut	4.9
Bajace	13.1
Other indigenous	17.5
Chinese	23.0
European	0.4
Others	9.1

**Source:** *Sabah, Annual Report*, 1963, Jesselton, Government Printing Office, 1964, P.7, Ibid, p-22.



<b>E. Singapore – 1957</b>	<b>%</b>
Chinese	75.4
Malays	13.6
Indian and Pakistanis	8.6
Others	2.4

**Source:**

*State of Singapore, Annual Report 1963.*

*Singapore Government Printing Office 1965-P, 80, Ibid, p-22.*

In addition, whereas this numerical equilibrium between two large ethnic groups might itself produce a radical two-side confrontation in Malaysia the probability of this lessened by

- 1) the existence of non-Malay, non-Chinese groups in considerable number and;
- 2) the uneven geographic distribution of the Malays, leaving them relatively weak outside Malaya proper.

***2.3. Settlement Pattern of the Immigrants:***

It is evident that the indigenous Malays, engaged in subsistence economy, remained the poorest of the three ethnic communities of the Peninsula. Since the urbanization pattern reflected a sharp economic imbalance between the indigenous Malays and the non Malays. The Chinese immigrants mostly settle in the urban areas whereas Malays are in the rural

areas should be elaborated. Chinese emigrants to Malay come, with few exceptions. From the south eastern provinces of Kwantung, Fukein and Kwangri in particular from the first two. We have concentrated on the Tamil Indian labourer, but Indians were to be found in other walks of life. The Indian population was not a united one. It was divided by language, religion and caste as well as social and economic barriers. The majority were south Indian Tamils, but even they had little to do with Ceylon Tamils, who were literate and were in the professions or held white collar jobs in the government service. Indian, tended to monopolize certain departments, such as Railways. Despite differences within the Indian community, we can speak of it as a community different from the communities of Malays and Chinese and have a component of Malaysia's plural society. This was to change in the nineteenth century and conditions were created that were to bring and influx of population Malays, Chinese and Indians. The Malay immigrants from Indonesia could be assimilated into the existing political and social structure of the Malay states: but the new waves of Chinese and Indian immigration were too large to be absorbed or conveniently disposed of in port ghettos. Instead the foundations of a plural society were laid. Troubled conditions continued in China till the second world war, and emigration continued, but again its character changed. Changes were occurring in the Malayan Peninsula too. Laborers on mines and estates were often paid with goods which the employer over valued or had their money fleeced from them in the drinking and gambling halls the employers erected and managed. A Labor Code in 1895 made it possible for a laborer to buy his way-out of an unfinished contract and even to leave an employer after 30 days if no contract had been signed. Most immigrants were now assisted by relatives

and friends in the Settlements and Malay states. Further regulation occurred in 1901 when the Straits Settlement decreed that Chinese immigrants could enter the colony only from ships flying the British. “The assistance given by the governments concerned meant that Indian immigration supplied labor for the estates and for government works in Malaya. Like the Chinese, the Indians were an unstable population. India was closer than China and most laborers returned at the end of their contracts to their home villages. Some 3 million Indians immigrated to Malaya between 1901 and 1940, and 2¼ million returned to India over the same period.”<sup>1</sup>

The demand for immigrant labor declined in times of economic depression. In the 1930s restrictions were imposed on the entry of Chinese males, and thousands were repatriated. The immigration of women and children, however, continued.

“Diversification in employment occurred as small scale industries, making soap, matches, and other products and processing rubber and foodstuffs appeared. These provided employment for women as well as men. Women were employed cooking, washing, marketing, and on lighter jobs of estates and mines. Chinese employment was taking on more of a family structure. The result is seen in the changing structure of the Chinese population. By 1921, 22 percent of the Chinese were Malayan-born; by 1931, 31 percent. The proportion increased during the depression and Japanese Occupation. By 1947 the proportion of Malayan-born Chinese was 62 percent.”<sup>2</sup>

These at least would think of Malay as their home. “Until 1867 the Straits Settlements were governed as part of India and there was no difficulty about recruiting Indian labor for work on the sugar estates of

Province Wellesley. An Indian government Act of 1864 forbade the employment of Indians outside India so that recruitment after 1867, when the Settlements were a separate Crown Colony, was illegal. Discussion between the Indian and Straits Settlements government got around this, but the recruitment of Indian labor into the Malay States was not fully legalized until 1884.”<sup>3</sup> “Nevertheless, in 1921 only twelve percent of the Indian population was Malayan born. It had risen to 21 percent by 1931. The reduction in immigration in the 1930s and the tendency for single men to be repatriated rather than families caused an increase in the locally born to 50 percent by 1947. In 1941 Indians were 14 percent of the total population.”<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that a plural society developed in the Straits Settlements under British rule. It happened quite naturally. The Malays who were already established in their villages, working their land within a settled community of family groups saw no reason to change their ways. Though, there were differences, which extended also to dress and customs, which separated the immigrant Malay from the locally born, all Malays had much in common. Their general cultural and racial background was singular and they shared a common religion and language, although there were regional variations in the latter. Immigrant Malays could become assimilated; if not the immigrate themselves, at least their children. We must see this from three points of view: that of the immigrant, that of the local Malay community and that of the British rulers of Malaya. The British readily regarded all Malays as much the same and tended to regard them as a single racial entity when contrasted with the Chinese and Indians. They were, immigrant and local, collectively regarded as ‘Malays’. The local Malays would gradually accept neighbouring immigrants as at least ‘Malays’ especially if non-Malays were

in the vicinity. Religion and intermarriage encouraged this acceptance. In the twentieth century, a Malay sense of identity vis-à-vis the other race began to appear and lessened the feeling of difference between, say, local Malay and Bugis or Minangkabau. Finally, the test of assimilation was the sense of identity of the individual himself. This occurred with the children of immigrants who accepted Malaya as this homeland and identified with it and with local Malays. After all, a Malay born of immigrant parents in Malaya was himself locally born.

#### ***2.4. Ethnic and Cultural Differences :***

There were ten dialect form into a group among the Chinese immigrant as well as of them had different customs, occupations, cultures, attitudes and traditions that were thoroughly different and distinct from the native Malays. (See table –6)



**The Chinese Community by Dialect Groups, 1957.**

	In thousands	Percentage
Hokkien	740.6	31.7
Hakka	508.6	21.8
Cantonese	505.2	21.7
Tiechieu	283.1	12.1
Hainanese	123.0	5.3
Kwongsai	69.1	3.0
Hockchiu	46.1	2.0
Hengkwa	11.9	0.5
Hokchia	9.8	0.4
Others	34.3	1.5

Source: *1957 Population Census, Report No. 14* op. cit, Table – 3,3, p-14, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, op, cit, p-29.

Notwithstanding that after the Japanese possession of Malaya, the Chinese designed to form into one their different dialect groups by introducing Kuo Yu, the Chinese national language both as spoken as well as a common medium of drilling for all Chinese schools in the Peninsula they were still divided into groups of Malaya born and China born Chinese and the English speaking and the non English speaking Chinese . Again from the religious point of view the Chinese unlike the native Malays, were further ascertained how many times one by many beliefs. Since no attempt has been made to collect data on the Chinese religious a connection of this kind since the 1931 census, it has been observed that most of the Chinese

acknowledge to one or more of the three great religions of mainland China Buddhism, Taoism or Confucianism. The Indians were divided by linguistic discrepancy which were insistent mainly by their places of origin in India (see table-7).

Table -7

**The Indian Community by Dialect Groups 1947-1957.**

	In thousands	1947 Percentage	Thousands	1957 Percentage
Indian Tamil	418.7	78.9	556.5	78.7
Malayali	34.6	6.5	51.2	7.2
Telegu	23.7	4.5	27.1	3.8
Others	53.5	10.1	72.4	10.2
Total	53.6	100.0	707.1	99.9

Source: *1957 Population Census of the Federation of Malaya, Report No-op.cit. Table-7 p.16, Ibid, p-30.*

The above Table indicates that the Tamils were the largest element of the Indian community on the Peninsula. Again, the 1947 population census that the Punijabis and Sikhs were the next largest elements of the Indian sub-communities. They spoke in their respective regional dialects, but since the Indian Tamils formed the largest number of the economically active population of the Indian immigrants, only the Tamil-medium Primary and Secondary Schools, both private and fully assisted by the government, have been functioning in the Peninsula. Like the Chinese, the Indians were also divided into Tamil-educated Indians and English-educated Indies. Thus a

socio-economic division within the Indian community, primarily between the rural labouring and lower caste business, professional and white-collar workers who received an English medium education, was inevitable. Again, since the Indian immigrants, especially those who were rubber planters and railway workers, lived in an isolated area of “labour lines” under the supervision of an Indian foreman, they had little contact with other racial groups.

In fact, both the Chinese and India immigrants to the Peninsula were deliberately imported by the British as a necessary means to the economic development of Malaya, but the only motive for this development was the profit of the investors. It was a result of this Imperial policy that the Chinese and Indian immigrants were distinct from each other, and thereby they continued to remain distinct from the indigenous Malays, the *bhumiputras* of the post-Independence times.

Table-8

**PRINCIPAL ETHNIC GROUPS (At Census of August 1991)**

	Peninsular Malaysia	Sabah *	Sarawak	Total
Malays and other indigenous groups	8,433,826	1,003,540	1,209,118	10,646,484
Chinese	4,250,969	218,233	475,752	4,944,954
Indians	1,380,048	9,310	4,608	1,393,966
Others	410,544	167,790	10,541	588,875
Non- Malaysians	322,229	464,786	18,361	805,376
Total	14,797,616	1,863,659	1,718,380	18,379,655

\* Including the Federal Territory of Labuan.

Source : *The Europa World Year Book 2000*, Volume-11, 41<sup>st</sup> Edition, p-2389.

The Second World War marked the beginning of a period of political upheaval and revolutionary change in vast areas of Asia and Africa where major European powers had previously established their colonial domains. When the British resumed rule, the Chinese dominated Malaysian communist party (MCP) went back into the jungles to fight colonialism and its armed forces made up largely of Malays. This was, thus, also has a communal angle to it. The image in the Malay mind of continued Chinese attempt to wrest political power was duly enhanced. Consequently, as the colonial powers departed and political attention shifted from the “anti colonial struggle” to internal problems, domestic tensions and centrifugal

forces became so intensified that the every existence of many of the new states war and still is being threatened.

***Cultural Differences:-***

The constitution is clear on several cultural issues. Although they are constitutional monarchies they provide the symbolic, the images and the grandeur that are unmistakably Malay. Malay is the national language which means its exclusive use in official matters and as the medium of instruction in the official education system. The Education act provides for Chinese and Indian medium primary schools and for non Malay language classes in government schools. Islam is the official religion. In real terms, the official status of Islam translates in the main into the use of public funds to support government controlled Islamic institutions and its salaried staff.

(See table: -9)



<b>Cultural Factors</b>	<b>Political Processes</b>	<b>Cultural demands</b>
1. Race and Ethnicity	Political Crises, Emergency and stability	Racial Harmony, national unity and “bumiputraism”
2. Communalism and interest groups	Political organization, Parties and Election	Communal and inter community unity and interest
3. Class, power and the Economy	Political Elite, Mass and exploitation	class distortion and Income Redistribution
4. Language, Religion and Ideology Emergency and stability.	Political sentiment and constitution making	Religious Freedom and Malay linguistic Nationalism

Source:- M. Nazrul Islam. *Consolidating Asian Democracy*, Printed in Bangladesh, Dhaka-1000, First Published in October 2003, p-22.

They were mainly labourers ‘imported’ by the British for the extraction of raw materials particularly tin and rubber for use in industries based in Britain. Initially, the British industrial development had been supported by the resources of her European neighbors. Europe also in her economic infancy provided an excellent market for British produce. However, by the second half of the nineteenth century European industrialization had created a protected economy, capable of consuming her raw materials and feeding her markets. Ultimately Britain was forced to

consider finding her markets and essential raw materials outside of the European continent in Malaya; and with their founding of Penang in 1786, the Malays saw an influx of immigrants mainly from China and India into their little known country inhabited by a few hundred thousand Malays and some aborigines. A number of other factors might have stimulated the immigrants coming to Malaya: most of the Chinese immigrants came from south Eastern China the provinces of Fukien Kwangtung and Kwangsi and also from the island of Hainan. The Indians came mostly from South India. The natural resources of these regions of China and India were extremely limited. There was widespread unemployment and underemployment due to the heavy pressure of population on the very limited cultivable land of these regions. Paucity of resources even to provide for everyday needs with adverse conditions in their country of origin eventually forced them to seek a better livelihood overseas. On the other hand, the rapidly growing number of rubber estates and tin mines in Malaya created an unprecedented demand for workers relative to the supply from the indigenous Malaya population. The latter were not only few in number but also were too attached to their own self subsistence economy. Even wage employment was not attractive for them. Hence, alternative Chinese and Indians.

Religion in multiracial Malaysia, like language, has become a highly emotional issue among politicians and the people. Nearly half of the populations are non- Muslims (Table-10.). But Malaysian authorities' failure to adopt uniform treatment toward all racial or religions groups or to appreciate the relative importance or other religions doctrines or beliefs may further divide the nation which is already divided ethnically as Malays and non-Malays. (See table –10)

Table-10

**Racial Ethnic Composition of Malaysia (West Malaysia) Population in thousands and percentages**

year	Race									
	Malays		Chinese		Indian		Others		Total	
1964	3963	50.1	2918	38.8	884	11.2	153	1.9	7919	100
1984	4686	53.2	3123	35.4	933	10.6	70	0.8		100

Source : *The Development of a Plural Society in Malaya*.Viii P-3, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, op, cit, p-53.

## **Foot Notes**

1. Graham Saunders "*The Development of a Plural Society in Malaya*"  
Longman Malaysia Sdn. Berhad, 1977, P-25.
2. Ibid, P-23.
3. Ibid, P-23.
4. Ibid, P-26.

## Chapter-Three

### **Economic Dimensions of Racial Integration:**

#### ***3.1. Economic Developments Since 1957:***

“For about two centuries Malaysia was a small part of the British Empire. Under the British the development of Malaysia’s economy based on agriculture mining and trade was a *laissez faire*”<sup>1</sup>. On economics, the constitutional negotiators agreed on two key points the-security of Chinese economic dominance and affirmative approach to redress Malay backwardness. The former is reflected in the guarantees of right to wealth and property the latter in the provision for special privileges for the Malays. The Provision allows for selective preferential treatment in education and in trade and commercial licensing. The provisions, and the economic question in general, had been one of the most critical on going issues in Malaysian ethnic relations. Chinese extremists denounced preferential treatment as discriminatory and as denying their legitimate opportunities. Their Malay counterpart points to Chinese economic dominance and Malay backwardness as an unacceptable degradation of the indigenous Malays; the special privileges package itself is but “symbolic cosmetics” that would perpetuate Malay concentration in the rural areas, entrenching them as the wretched, “Red Indians on their own soil”. “In this way the British paved the way for the introduction of immigrant Chinese Indians and Europeans into Malaysia without considering the demographic social political and



economic effects in the Malaysia and other components of the indigenous population”<sup>2</sup>.

This economic dimension is worth further mention. Kuala Lumpur experienced an ethnic riot in May 1969. The UMNO dominated government traced the root cause to Malay economic frustration. Whether or not this reasoning is plausible, the statistics at the time were too glaring to ignore more than 85% of the Malays lived in the rural agricultural areas where the value added per worker was the lowest among all economic sectors. Among households categorized “poor” 74% were Malays the share ownership of the Malays, including trust agencies, in Malaysian and foreign companies was less than 5% and the number and percentage of Malay students in tertiary education, particularly in the scientific and technical fields, were far below its share of the population. The special Malay privileges article had land schemes, elementary rural schools, fertilizer subsidies, and agricultural marketing institutions.

In terms of non monetary indicator of the standard of living Malaysia occupied a relatively better position.

TABLE :11

Various Monetary Indicators of The Standard of Living for Selected Asian  
Countries, 1967

	Per capita GDP at factor cost (US \$) (1)	Per capita private consumption (US \$) (2)	Beckerman and Bacon Index of real consumption for 1960 (UK=100) (3)	Per capita fixed capital formation (US \$) (4)
West Malaysia	370	229	18	67
Burma	63	42	2	10
Cambodia	130	na	6	na
Ceylon	141	104	9	22
India	77	na	5	na
Indonesia	98	92	4	6
Pakistan	123	105	4	18
Philippines	259	149	na	41
Singapore	584	na	24	na
South Korea	146	114	6	31
Taiwan	238	143	12	50
Thailand	140	109	6	36

**Source:** W Beckerman and R. Bacon, "International Comparisons of Income Levels: A Suggested New Measure" *Economic Journal*, Vol.76 (September 1966). pp. 519-536 and David Lim, *Economic Growth and Development in West Malaysia: 1947-1970*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973, Table 1.1. P—2, and also quoted in Islam. M. Nazrul, *Pakistan and Malaysia: A Comparative in National Integration*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi 1989, P.77.

### ***3.2. Income Disparity:***

In most of the new states of Asia and Africa the problem of high income disparity between the various sectors of the population is “primarily a problem of seeking national integration in its necessary combination with economic progress the one being both the result of and the condition for the other”<sup>3</sup>. The question for solution of income disparity in Malaysia can be viewed from the interpersonal and interracial contents as well as from the view point of poverty stricken and out of work. “It is generally measured by taking the lowest 40% of the population that receives less than 12% of the total national income. While the top 20% of its population received 55% of the income, ( See table-12). The Household Budget Survey of 1957-58 (See table-13) shows that in Malaysia the inequality between the urban and rural areas was expressive.

Table: 12  
 Household Income Distribution, Peninsular Malaysia  
 1957-58, 1967-68, and 1970

Percentage of income accruing to	HIBS 1957/58	SES 1967/68	PES 1970
Top 5% of households	23.2	26.1	27.7
Top 10% of households	34.1	38.7	39.7
Top 20% of households	49.3	56.1	55.0
Top 40% of households	69.8	76.2	75.7
Top 60% of households	84.1	90.7	88.1
Top 80% of households	94.2	98.1	96.0
Mean income (\$ month)	217	199	271
Gini Concentration Ratio	0.427	0.513	0.516

Notes: HBS= Household Budget Survey  
 SES= Socio-Economic Sample Survey of  
 Households  
 PES= Post Enumeration Survey

Source: Department of Statistics, *Economic Report 1973-74*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1975, p.63, and also quoted in Islam. M. Nazrul, *Ibid*, p.73.

Table : 13  
Urban-Rural Differences In Income Distribution

	HBS 1957/58*	SES 1967/68**	PES 1970*
	mean income (in M\$/month)	mean income (in M\$/month)	mean income (in M\$/month)
All Peninsular Malaysia	199	217	264
Rural Malaysia	170	114	200
Urban Malaysia	216	283	428

Notes:\* There are 28 size intervals in HBS, with no open-ended income classes. The topmost income band is M\$900-1,000. There is also no separate zero income class, zero incomes being lumped in the range M\$0-25 per month.

\*\* The income rate for SES are presented in 7 income classes with the top open-ended class beginning at M\$750 per month.

Source: S. Anand, *The Size Distribution of Income in Malaysia*, Part I (Draft), United Nations: World Bank, 1973. p.14, and also quoted in Islam. M. Nazrul, *Ibid*, p.73.

### 3.2a. Poverty: -

“Poverty is a situation that is said to prevail when people are in want of the means to meet their basic needs. This proposition leads us to two fundamental questions Firstly how to identify poor people and secondly what items constitute the basic needs which are lacking for poor people”<sup>4</sup>.



Table: 14  
Households in Poverty by Race  
in Peninsular Malaysia, 1970  
(in thousands)

	All households (000)	Poor households (000)	Poverty incidence (\$)	Percentage of total poor households
Malay	901.5	584.2	64.8	73.8
Chinese	525.2	136.3	26.0	17.2
Indian	160.5	62.9	39.2	7.9
Others	18.8	8.4	44.8	1.1
Total	1,606.0	791.8	49.3	100.0
All rural	1,166.7	683.7	58.6	86.3
All urban	439.3	108.1	24.6	13.7

Source: *Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980, op. cit, p. 180, and also quoted in Islam. M. Nazrul, Ibid, p.76.*

“In this context an increase of the Gross National Product does not necessarily lead to an improved standard of living for the population as a whole for two main reasons”<sup>5</sup>. Firstly the rate at which a country food production increases is exceeded by a higher rate of increase of the population Secondly, despite market increases in the Gross National Products of most of the new states of Asia and Africa a large proportion of the populations are engaged in the highly unrewarding sectors of the economy. “It is remarkable, therefore, to find Malaysia giving such important consideration towards the problems of poverty”<sup>6</sup>. As already

indicated in table 14 the Malaya household means income per month was M\$ 172 in 1970. For the Chinese and Indians it was M\$ 394 and M\$ 304 respectively. This indicates that the means income of the Chinese alone was more than double that of the Malaya. These figures however do not clearly explain the relative condition of each ethnic group in Malaysia .The occurrence of poverty in Malaysia can be measured if it is viewed as percentages of each ethnic group of the population falling below the poverty line which is by Malaysian standards M\$ 33 per month of the household income per member.

### ***3.2b. Unemployment and Underemployment :***

Impending related to the complication of poverty in Malaysia is the problem of unemployment and underemployment. “At the time of Independence in 1957, the total population of Peninsular Malaysia was 6.3 million. Of this figure Malays made up just under 50 percent. In 1970 the population increased to 9.3 million and the Malays proportion increased to more than 52 per cent”<sup>7</sup>.

“In this context some of the outlines of unemployment and underemployment of the Socio-Economic Sample Survey of households (1967-1968) are worth mentioning.

**a) Outline of Unemployment 1967-1968**

- i) active unemployment<sup>8</sup> rates among youths between the ages of 15 to 19 years in urban areas remained high; 76 per cent of the unemployed were below the age of 25; 65 per cent had no working experience; and 60 per cent were both 16 to 24 years old and first-time job seekers;
- ii) active unemployment rates were lower in the rural areas than in the urban areas;
- iii) Indians ranked the highest in the active unemployment rates (10.3 per cent), followed by Chinese (6.9 per cent) and Malays (5.8 per cent);
- iv) the majority of the active unemployed were single (marital status);
- v) 57.7 per cent of the active unemployed had no formal education beyond primary level; 40.5 per cent had a lower or upper secondary education.

**b) Underemployment 1967-68**

- i) underemployment<sup>9</sup> continued to be a serious problem;
- ii) the extent of under-utilization of the labour force was particularly marked in the rural areas; the incidence of underemployment in the agricultural sector was high;
- iii) the incidence of underemployment was highest amongst the Malays, followed by the Chinese and Indians;

- iv) the incidence of underemployment was slightly higher for the younger age group (15-64) than the 25 to 34 age group;
- v) by employment status, own account workers ranked high in underemployment, and were slightly worse off than the unpaid helpers/unpaid family workers.”<sup>10</sup>

TABILE 15

Labor Force and Unemployment

	1957	1962	1967
Total Population (in '000)	6,279	7,494	8,655
Total Labor Force (in '000)	2,165	2,453	2,676
Total Employment (in '000)	2,126	2,305	2,440
Unemployment ( in '000)	39	148	236(181)
Unemployment Rate ( per cent)	1.8	6.0	8.8(6.8)
Labor force as per cent of total population	34.5	32.7	30.9

Source: Lo Sum Yee, *The Development of West Malaysia: 1955-67*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972, Table 9,p.2, and also quoted in Islam. M. Nazrul, *Ibid*, p.77.

Table: 16  
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION\*

(Sample Surveys, ISIC Major Divisions, '000 Persons Aged 15 to 64 Years)

	1996	1997	1998
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing	1,505	1,495	1,434
Mining and quarrying	39	39	39
Manufacturing	2,221	2,390	2,305
Electricity, gas and water	70	76	77
Construction	802	874	727
Trade, Restaurants and hotels	1,382	1,447	1,439
Transport, storage and communications	419	436	438
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	391	406	416
Government services	471	873	875
Other services	717	769	788
<b>Total employed</b>	<b>8,417</b>	<b>8,805</b>	<b>8,538</b>
Unemployed	224	233	343
<b>Total labour force</b>	<b>8,641</b>	<b>9,038</b>	<b>8,881</b>

\* Excluding members of the armed forces.

Source: IMF, *Malaysia: Recent Economic Developments (August 1999)*.

### ***3.3 Economic Policies Pursued by the Government:***

In his “Foreword” to the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975, the Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak declared:

We are entering a new era of development, fully committed to meeting the challenges of our time and forging a strong, united Malaysian nation with continued progress and prosperity. A new approach to development, which reflects these commitments, and policies and programmes associated with it, are embodied in the Second Malaysia Plan. The government’s development strategy adopted following the racial riots of May 1969 was in many respects an improvement on its earlier ones.

For the first time since Independence the Government of Malaysia placed considerable emphasis on greater Malay participation in the manufacturing and commercial sectors. Thus, the Second Malaysian Plan provided a blueprint for the New Economic Policy (NEP), incorporating two basic objectives for development. The first related to the eradication of poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race. The second objective was the acceleration of the process of restructuring the society to correct the economic imbalances, thus reducing and eventually eliminating the identification of race with economic function. The aim of the New Economic Policy was to create a socio-economic environment that the New Economic Policy was a shift in focus away from the traditional rural



economy towards a modern commercial and industrial one without undermining the importance of agricultural development.

The result was the New Economic Policy (NEP) which, although stated within the special privileges provisions, calls for the restructuring of society also that the present identification of race with economic function is reduced modernization of rural life creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community restructuring the racial composition of employment to reduce differentials in average wages and salaries balanced pattern in the ownership of assets between the races. "(Malaysia 1971, pp.1-9; 1973, pp. 6-10). The policy envisages Malays should own and manage at least 30% of the total commercial and industrial activities in 20 years, this in the assumed context of an expanding free-market economy and done without jeopardizing the economic interests of the other communities. The strategy to uplift Malay economy is now seen more coherently and given a firmer foundation. The NEP also calls for stricter regulation of the private sector as well as direct economic participation of the state.

The 1970s and 1980s saw dramatic changes. In the first decade following NEP the gross domestic product recorded an average annual growth rate of almost 8% per capita income increased by almost 12% as did public and private investment. For the Malays too, although below their expectations, growth was impressive-in mean monthly income, employment in all sectors, in education, in share ownership and ownership in the corporate sector, in individual and trust holding of corporate stock, in

number of businesses and in urbanization. It was equally impressive for the non Malays (Malaysia 1981, pp.53-70).

By and large there has again been general acceptance of the NEP as a policy. There have been expressions of dissatisfaction-Malays questioning the 30% share given their 58% share of the population and with the slow pace of implementation. Chinese complaining of “reverse discrimination” and demanding reciprocity in the Malay-dominated civil service. There have also been complaints-at times multi-ethnic in nature-of the resultant deep and increasing inequalities within the Malay community: the self-aggrandizement, corruption and misuse of influence among the privileged, the selection of beneficiaries chosen by political criterion, the rise of “bureaucratic capitalists” who built sizeable wealth through public enterprises, the small class of Malay nouveaux riche who have made fortunes from the policy and who were characterized by conspicuous consumption, decadent life styles and by a frequent ability to have rules bent in their favour.

## **Foot Notes**

1. Islam M. Nazrul, *Pakistan and Malaysia: A Comparative Study in National Integration*, Sterling Publishes Private limited 'New Delhi, 110016, 1989, P-66.
2. Ibid., P-67.
3. Ibid., P-73.
4. Ibid., p-75.
5. Ibid., P-75.
6. Ibid., P-76.
7. Ibid, P-77.
8. “*Active unemployment*” is defined as those actively looking for jobs, and “*Passive Unemployment*” those who are unemployment, and passively awaiting jobs and who will accept a job if offered. See Tan Ting Yean. bid. F.N.5. also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, Ibid, P-81.
9. “*Underemployment*” is defined here as those working voluntarily as part-time workers for less than the normal work hours per week, also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, Ibid, P-81.
10. *Department of Statistics, Socio-Economic Sample Survey of Households- Malaysia 1967-1968*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1970, pp-146-151, and also see Tan Ting Yean, op. cit, pp-13-15, also M. Nazrul Islam, Ibid, P-81.

## Chapter-Four

### Political Dimensions of Racial Integration

#### *4.1. Constitutional Development (1957-1970):*

After Independence in 1957, “Malaysia’s political integration problems became greater not only through the religious, political, racial and cultural factors but also as a result of human race based on economic disparity”<sup>1</sup>. The constitutional development of Malaysia’s political institutions over a little more than two a period of ten years can be divided into three periods: the first roughly covers fifteen years and includes the constitutional development of Malaysia after the second World War. The second period saw the formation and the conception of the greater Federation of Malaysia, surrounding Singapore and the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak. The third period of the political conflicts between the Malays and the non- Malays from 1965 to 1969 which led to the outbreak of the communal riots of May 13, 1969. Before the Second World War, “Malaya was politically divided into the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States (FMS), and the Unfederated Malay States (UFMS), each under a different form British rule. These administrative divisions allowed little scope for the development of a sense of unity or national consciousness among the Malaysans”<sup>2</sup>. The confused patchwork of four Federated and five Unfederated Malay States plus three Settlements had hindered the development of a uniform system of law and administration. The legal

fiction of the sovereignty of the Malay Sultans in each state was considered to be an anachronism. The constitutional position of the Rulers hindered democratic reforms and made it virtually impossible for non-Malays to secure rights and privileges of citizenship.

To this end, the colonial office began examining proposals for constitutional and legal reforms. The opinions of prominent Malaysians who had fled to exile during the war were solicited, although no attempt was made to draft formal proposals for a new constitution. The period immediately following the liberation of Malaya was considered to be the most appropriate time to initiate the needed reforms.

“In 1945, British troops under Admiral Mountbatten landed at Singapore to accept the surrender of the Japanese forces in Malaya”<sup>3</sup>. Under his authority, the British Military Administration ruled the country until a new civil government was inaugurated almost seven months later. During this period the colonial Office took the necessary steps to insure that a new constitution would contain those reforms considered to be essential for Malay’s future. The treaties provided that Sultans were to accept “such future constitutional arrangements for Malays as may be approved by His Majesty” and “full power and jurisdiction” was transferred to Britain”<sup>4</sup>.

By January of 1946 MacMichael returned to London with the treaties. The British Government almost immediately issued a White Paper on the proposed arrangements for a Malayan Union and for Singapore. This document stated the case for more equal treatment of the immigrant populations and proposed a more unified and centralized government in a union to include all the Malay States Plus the former Settlements of Penang



and Malacca, The decision to retain Singapore as a Crown Colony is explained as follows:

“At least for the time being Singapore requires separate treatment. It is the centre of entrepot trade on a very large scale and has economic and social interests distinct from those of the mainland. It is recognized however, that there were and will be close ties between Singapore and the mainland, and it is no part of the policy of His majesty’s Government to preclude or Prejudice in any way the fusion of Singapore and the Malayan Union in a wider union at a later date should it be considered that such a course was desirable”<sup>5</sup>.

With Singapore separated from the Malayan Union, the Malays outnumbered the Chinese, but still did not comprise a majority of the population. If Singapore had been included, however, the Chinese would have become the largest community.

#### ***4.2. The Federation of Malaysia in 1960:***

“For over a month extensive discussions were held between the Colonial Office, the governor-general Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, Governor Sir Edward Gent, the Malay Rulers and representatives of the United Malays National organization. Finally, on July 3, 1946, the Colonial Office agreed to the substitution of a federal form of government for the Malayan Union, and the substitution of a High Commissioner for the Governor as symbolic evidence that governmental authority was derived from the Malay Rulers rather than the British Crown”<sup>6</sup>. The Colonial Office also indicated a willingness to abrogate the MacMichael Treaties if some agreements were



reached along the lines of the proposals discussed during the Rulers Conference.

“To facilitate a review of the constitution, Governor Gent announced the formation of a committee of twelve to seek an agreement on tentative proposals with a view to recommendations being submitted to His Majesty’s Government which will be acceptable to all concerned in Malaya”<sup>7</sup>. Known as the Working Committee, it consisted of six Government members, four Malay Rulers and two representatives of the United Malays National Organization.

“After two and a half months of consultations the working Committee presented its recommendations and proposed draft treaties to supplant the MacMichael Treaties and provide the basis for the new constitution”<sup>8</sup>. Following the publication of this report a “Consultative Committee of the Constitutional Proposals” was formed to hear representations of all persons or organizations wishing to present their views on the proposed constitutions. The all-Malaya Council of Joint Action decided to boycott the Consultative Committee because the AMCJA did not wish to take the “pro-Malay” Working Committee Report as the basis for discussions on constitutional revision. Instead, it tried to discredit the procedures of constitution making and attempted to mobilized public opining against the proposed federation. Nevertheless, the Consultative Committee completed its report on March 21, 1947, and recommended a number of substantial changes in the draft proposed by the Working Committee. Recommendations of the Consultative Committee were then transmitted to the Colonial Secretary, and the original Working Committee was re-convened to consider modifications to their earlier draft constitution. Finally,

a Plenary conference of the Government, the Malay Rulers and UMNO was held on April 24, 1947, at which time some of the recommendations of the Consultative Committee were accepted. The final constitutional draft which emerged was ratified by His Majesty's Government on July 24, 1947, signed by the Malay Rulers in January 1948, and the Federation of Malaya came into being on February 1, 1948.

#### ***4.3 Disintegration of Malaysia and Expulsion of Singapore, 1965:***

Singapore ceased to be a part of Malaysia in 1965- for reasons which will be mentioned later and became a separate nation in its own right. Singapore's withdrawal had repercussions in Sarawak and Sabah which have continued to affect the thinking and the decisions of Government leaders in Kuala Lumpur, both before and after the May rioting in 1969.

The reasons for the May riots in Kuala Lumpur are to be found in several decades of communal suspicion and mistrust. Racial friction and conflict are not new to Malaya and have been evidenced for generations, ever since the Chinese and the Indians first came to the peninsula.

After the separation of Singapore from the mainland of Malay, the Colony is having its own politics and political parties. The introduction of the elective system to a limited extent in the Legislative Council and the Municipality of Singapore has helped the formation of new political parties. The Progressive Party of Singapore was organized at the time of the first general election to the new Legislative Council early in 1948. This is

perhaps the only political party in the Colony which is organized on a non-communal basis. It is a party of the upper middle class deriving its support from the local-born employees in the government and semi-Government departments and of the clerical class. The membership is open to all classes and to all races without any distinction-Chinese, Indians, Malays, Ceylonese, Eurasians and Singalese. It stands for the abolition of the colour bar and for the employment of more and more local born people in the Government services of the Colony. The party is led by Mr. C.C. Tan, a Chinese lawyer, who is its president and Mr. John Laycock, a European lawyer who has a long record of faithful service to Singapore and its people. The party has no mass following. All the same, it is the best organized political party in the Colony of Singapore.

In the late spring of 1963 Singapore's demands for the creation of a common market its financial contribution to the Federal Government a loan for the development of the Borneo territories and other issues brought the negotiations of Malays to a deadlock. The dispute between the leaders of Malaya and Singapore reached such proportions that the Tunku has to ask his lieutenant Tum Abdul Razak to "break of the talks and return home" if their final offers" were not accepted. Although Singapore official agreed upon the terms for becoming a part of the Federation signing the Agreement in London July 9, 1963 the economic issue being one Singapore's major reasons for the merger set the framework for her political conflict with the Federation.

## **Foot Notes**

1. M. Nazrul Islam, *Pakistan and Malaysia : A Comparative Study in National Integration*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 110016, P-169.
2. Ibid., P-169.
3. N.I. Low and H.M. Cheng, *This Singapore*, PP. 161-173.
4. Sir Harold MacMichael, *Report on a Mission to Malaya Colonial No. 194*. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office 1946).
5. Malayan Union and Singapore Cmd. 6724, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office 1946).
6. *Straits Times*, July 5, 1946, p. 1.
7. *Straits Times*, July 26, 1946 p. 5.
8. The Consultative Committee was formed in January 1947 and consisted of four members chosen by the governor from the Malayan Union Advisory Council, Two from the government and four prominent Malay nominated by each of the four chosen from the advisory council. No Malays were among the Members of the consultative committee. This must have been a deliberate attempt to balance the predominantly Malay working committee with a –no-Malay consultative committee.

## Chapter- Five

### Background of Racial Unrest (1965-1970):

#### 5.1 The Malay Political Predominance:

*Eight parties including participated in the 1955 elections and 129 candidates contested the 52 seats.*

TABLE :14

The 1955 General Elections: Party Performances

Party	Not of candidates	Seats won	Votes polled	% of total votes (invalid votes excluded)
Alliance		51	818,013	79.6
Negara		-	78,909	7.6
Pan Malayan Islamic Party		1	40,667	3.9
National Assoc, of Peark		-	20,996	2.0
Peark Malay League		-	5,433	0.5
Labour Party		-	4,786	0.4
Peark Progressive Party		-	1,081	0.1
Independents		-	31,642	3.0
Total	129	52	1,001,527	97.1

*Source: K.J Ratnam, Communalism and the Political... op cit. Table 10,p.196.*



The outcome of the country's first common to the whole nation elections shows clearly that the electorate gave priority to relating to a nation issues over communal ones. When the ballot count was proclaimed in July 1955, the Alliance gained a total of 818,013 votes or about 80 per cent of the total votes cast. The alliance thus polled 4 times more votes than the amalgamated opposition candidates. Among the non elected members of the Legislative Council, the Alliance safely counted 19 seats which gave them a majority of 71 in the Council of 98. Thus under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Alliance formed the first elected Government of Malaya and began working for the country's the state of being independence. The 1955 federal elections although only partial distinctioned the beginning of the end of pertaing to a colony stage set down and laid the groundwork of a recent era of Malayan politics.

## **5.2 *The Royal Malay Army***

The Royal Malay Army Regiment was strictly limited to Malays. "From its beginning in the 1930s and onwards, the Malay Regiment was exclusively a Malay unit. This Regiment remained the essence of the local military force until the early 1950s. However, the Emergency of 1948-1960 prompted the authorities to reverse their recruitment policy and a Federal Regiment which embraced other races was formed. By recruiting non-Malays into the Federal Regiment, the British strategists' objective was to counter the Chinese communist insurgency in Malaya"<sup>1</sup>. Although on paper the Malaysian Armed Forces had become a multi-ethnic institution, the authorities were reluctant to recruit Chinese armed guards for the tin mines



and the villages. Moreover, the authorities found it difficult to recruit non-Malay elements, especially Chinese, for the Federal Regiment. As a result, the infantry regiments, regardless of their formal titles, had been mainly manned by Malays whilst the Army's technical corps were filled mainly by Chinese and Indians. The field command posts however remained open exclusively to Malay careerists. The establishment of the Navy and Air Force, although much smaller man power than the Army (See table : 14) and second in order of the internal bureaucratic influence, provided the non-Malays better opportunity for recruitment. But in the internal bureaucratic influence, the Malaysian Army stood first where non-Malay representation was minimal. "Thus, in the Malaysian Armed Forces, Malay domination was complete. After Merdeka the military, like the civil service, made no effort to counter the imbalance between the Malays and the non-Malays"<sup>2</sup>.

TABLE : 15  
 Branches of the Malaysian Armed Forces Manpower;  
 1973-74\*

Service	Number of men
Army	56,000
Air force	5,300
Navy	4,8000
Total	66,100

\* No official breakdown of the Malaysian Armed Forces by communities has been made available.

*Sources* : Cynthia H. Enloc, "Malaysia's Military in the Interplay of Economic and Ethnic Change", in John A. Lent (ed.) *Cultural Pluralism in Malaysia: Polity, Military, Mass Media. Education. Religion and Social Class*, Northern Illinois: Northern Illinois University, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1977, Table 5. p. 25. also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, *Ibid*, P-205.

Moreover, the Malaysian Armed Forces existed the Malaysian police units, which were largely modernized in organization, role and equipment. The British, during their rule in the Peninsula, created a Police Field Force, militarily equipped in order to counteract mainly rebels. Today, the Police Force's responsibility is to lead anti-guerrilla operations along the Malaysia-Thailand border.

“The Federal Reserve Unit (FRU), locally dubbed "For Rough Use" was and still is another special riot squad recruited separately by the Police Force. Here again, as are result of the British recruitment policies and the policies *adopted during the post-Merdeka* period, this Force was made up largely of Malays”<sup>3</sup> (See table -16).

TABLE : 16 Ethnic Composition of Division 1 of the Police  
Service in West Malaysia (in Percentage)

Year	Malay	Chinese	India	Expatriate
195	26.7	9.0	6.7	67.6
196	51.1	29.0	16.7	12.2
196	45.1	32.0	22.9	0

Source : D.S. Gibbons and Haji Zakaria Ahmad, "*Politics and Selection for the Higher Civil Service in the New States: The Malaysian Example*", *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol. 3, no. 3 (1971), p. 341.

### 5.3 The 1969 Elections:

The general elections were the results of the race rioting in Kuala Lumpur, which had been contended on a battle, racial issues, quite blatantly, on emotional. The elections of 1969 was the country's third since independence. In the first election in 1959, the Alliance system gained of two-thirds majority. This resulted in the break down of racial integration in Malaysia. In the second election in 1964, the Alliance system were again

returned in even stronger strength. In 1969, in the last elections, more Chinese than ever before were eligible to vote.

“The earlier analyses show that in all the preceding general elections, communal and racial issues were at the core of Malaysian politics. Particularly during the 1960s, the intense communal polarization arising out of the PAP's participation in the Malayan politics; the expulsion of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965; controversy over the National Language issue; and racial discrimination in all the important civil and military bureaucracies—each provided for a sharp rise in communal and racial conflicts during and immediately after the election campaign of 1969”<sup>4</sup>.

One of the requirements for citizenship is ten years residence in Malaysia. Many Chinese were ‘new Citizens’ who had not voted in the earlier elections. The Alliance System was opposed, in the main, by the left wing, Democratic Action party (DAP) the moderate Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia and the right-wing Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP). In addition, there was the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and other opposition parties which, though significant in some areas, did not command overall numerical support. The communist-infiltrated labour party of Malaya (LPM) decided to boycott the elections altogether. The alliance slogan, ‘vote Alliance for Racial Harmony’, appeared on posters and stickers throughout the country and yet, collectively, Politicians of all parties created a situation which called for more racial voting than ever before.

The opposition leaders bitterly criticized the Alliance for its pro-Malaya policies and its over emphasis on the special position of the Malays.

The use of Malay as the sole official language of Malaysia was ceaselessly attacked by the opposition parties as an attempt to wipe out Chinese and other languages and cultures. The opposition parties particularly the Chinese controlled DAP the successor of PAP, challenged MCA the Chinese partner of the Alliance. It maintained that the MCA has been selling out Chinese rights to UMNO. The DAP's the prime object was to project itself as the sole champion of the rights and interests of the non Malay communities. In his preface to the election manifesto Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Alliance leader and Prime Minister of the country, wrote:

“I have always described myself as the happiest Prime Minister in the world. This is because I enjoy the support of the people, and with it this country has progressed so well and so fast since *Merdeka* that it has become a "shining star" in the Asian horizon.”<sup>5</sup>

In the manifesto it also included various programs and pledges for the future.

“Vote Alliance for racial harmony” was the main slogan. Although the Alliance had designed and applied their policies on the basis of a multi-racial nation. when they realized that the Chinese-dominated opposition parties and PMIP were gaining support among the electorate through racialist appeal, their leaders also resorted to racial politics towards the end of the election campaign”<sup>6</sup>.

**TABLE:17**  
Federal Parliamentary and State Elections in Malaysia,  
1959,1964 and 1969.

Seats	1959		1964			1969			
	Federal P/C	Sets	State Seats	Federal P/C	Seats	State Seats	Federal P/C	Seats	State
Alliance	51.8	74	206	58.4	89	241	48.4	66	162
PMIP	21.3	13	43	14.4	9	25	23.7	12	40
DAP	-	-	-	2.1	1	0	13.7	13	31
Gerakan	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.6	8	26
Socialist Front	12.9	8	16	16.2	2	7	-	-	-
Party Rakyat*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.2	0	3
PPP	6.3	4	8	3.6	2	5	3.9	4	12
UDP	-	-	-	4.3	1	4	-	-	-
Party Negara	2.1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malayan Party	0.9	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independents	4.8	3	5	0.7	0	0	0.3	0	3

Source: R.K. Vasil, *The Malaysian General Election of 1969*, op. cit, Appendix 11, pp.77-96.



#### ***5.4. Elections Campaign and its Results:***

May 10, 1969, the general elections in the federal and states were held on Saturday for a long time, the election results approached as a surprise and a shock. The Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia and the Democratic Action Party accomplished what is desired in capturing very support. The Malayan Chinese Association accepted a massive vote of no confidence from the Chinese community:, they have got only 13 of their 27 Seats. Malayan Chinese Association Parliamentary candidates were 33, 20 were overcome. The right wing Pan Malayan Islamic Party made marked signs at the expense of United Malay National Organization, especially in the north and north-west. The election results were declared on May 11 it was apparent that the Alliance Government had won 66 seats and that the opposition has increased its strength from 14, in the old house, to at least 37 in the new.

At the termination of the count, on May 11, the results were:

Party	Parliament	State
Alliance	76	167
PMIP	12	40
DAP	13	31
Gerakan	8	26
PPP	4	12

The Malay Pan Malayan Islamic Party was the opposition Party which was exclusive to one racial group. The 25 seats won by the other three opposition parties went to 15 Chinese, 8 Indians and 2 Malays. The Democratic Action Party had four non-Chinese among its 13 successful candidates.

As one observer has been much quoted as saying: The Malaysia was closer than it had ever been to having an effective, democratic government during the two days which followed the election. Opposition Parties were equally surprised at their success, which were beyond their expectation. They had shown their dissatisfaction with the MCA which, they felt, had never adequately represented Chinese interests; at last, they believed they could make themselves heard. "A police officer's comment, said: It is essential that communal feelings generated during the campaign should be damped down because this is the one thing the nation cannot afford. The success of parties which played on communalism during the campaign may be significant but we hope that these tactics will be discontinued now that the election is over."<sup>7</sup>

Alliance politicians won the election but lost their heads. Tun Razak said, on Tuesday afternoon: "This means that there will be no Chinese representation within the government but the government itself will go on. We told the electorate that if they did not vote MCA there will be no Chinese representatives in the government. Now there will be none at all."<sup>8</sup>

In all other States the Alliance retained its clear majority, but its MCA partner suffered losses to the opposition parties. The result of the 1969 elections created a situation which was seen by the Malays as the beginning of the end of the Alliance formula. The Alliance was founded on the *quid*

*pro quo* arrangement between the UMNO and the MCA, but the election results signaled the end of the MCA as the sole representative of the Chinese community. The supremacy of the Malays in the country's politics, administration and government which they had enjoyed *since Merdeka in 1957* was retained. The MCA's poor performance and the resultant loss of the Alliance majority in predominantly non-Malay States in the 1969 State and Parliamentary elections, caused serious concern to the Malays and their leadership.

#### ***5.5. The Opposition Victory Celebration:***

The opposition's victory was significant and was a crucial factor in the afterwards action in returns of both the opposition and Alliance supporters which led to the racial riots of may 13, 1969. The election results suprised all the political parties opposed to the alliance formula. Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahaman Stated : "No one was more surprised, I am sure than the DAP and the newly formed Gerakan with their unexpected success." <sup>9</sup>

An articulate opposition had emerged through a totally democratic process but the results shocked the Malays who felt that their own position was in danger. Opposition Parties were equally surprised at their successes, which were beyond their expectation. The Chinese Population of Malaysia is almost 40% of the whole; for the first time since Independence it appeared to them that they were going to have a significant voice in national politics. They believed that they could make themselves heard. Overjoyed at their

success, they staged full of life and vigor, noisy victory parades in celebration. The opposition parties “victory parades and subsequent dissociation decisions of the Non-Malay leaders were an additional factor contributing to racial tensions and anxieties.”<sup>10</sup>

These Parades and demonstration must be regarded as a contributing factor when considering the immediate causes of the rioting and bloodshed which were to follow but it would be wrong to suppose that they were the main cause of the disturbances. The day following the election, DAP and Gerakan supporters staged several victory processions in Kuala Lumpur on May 12. Gerakan’s parade, with posters and slogans, was held, with police permission, on Monday evening. Malay feeling, already much rouse, was inflamed still further as a result but there is considerable evidence to show that dissidents. From Selangor’s UMNO party were planning demonstration of their own more than twenty four hours before the Gerakan victory parade took place. The chief Minister of Selangor organized a massive counter demonstration and led the Malays in the procession on Tuesday evening, May, 13. “Many of the Malays who paraded the city streets were armed with deadly weapons. Since main thrust of the Malay actions was directed against the Chinese, the latter naturally reacted violently, resulting in full scale racial riots through out the city”.<sup>11</sup>

The government Malaysia declared a state of Emergency on May 15, the racial riots that resulted from the General elections of 1969, generally referred to as the May 13 incidents, plunged Malaysia in to a state of Emergency for the second time since the second world war”.<sup>12</sup>

### ***5.6. The Kuala Lumpur Riots of 1969:***

The immediate causes of the race rioting in Kuala Lumpur were the results of the general election, climaxing a campaign which had been fought, quite bluntly, on emotional, racial issues. The third Federal and state elections of Malaysia held on May 10, 1969, indicate that Alliance, a composed of the United Malays National Organization, a dominant majority partner of the Alliance, Malayan Chinese Association and Malayan Indian Congress won only 66 of a total of 104 Federal seats, securing over 48 percent of the vote and in the state elections the Alliance won only 162 of 282 seats, securing 47.95 percent of the vote." The Alliance slogan, 'Vote Alliance for Racial Harmony' appeared on posters and stickers throughout the country and yet, collectively, politicians of all parties created a situation which called for more racial voting than ever before. Although the Alliance had retained a comfortable majority in the parliament and managed to form governments in all but two states in peninsular Malaysia, the final election results came as a shock to the supporters of the government because for the first time in the history of Malaysian politics a non communal political party had won political power in one of the states of the federation. A further blow to the Alliance was its failure to secure a two thirds majority in the parliament because of poor performance of its MCA and MIC partners in the 1969 elections.



### 5.7. The National Operations Council :

“For the period of the Emergency Malaysia’s administration was devolved to a special body, the National Operations Council. This consisted of 7 Malays and only 2 non-Malays. Tun Abdul Razak being the Director with almost absolute powers.”<sup>13</sup>

Tun Razak was named as Director of operations and the head of a National operations council on Thursday, May 15, but it was not until the evening of Saturday, May 17 that he announced the members of the council who would work with a list of the member of the National operations council is contained in Appendix B. The main function of the NOC was to coordinate the work of the Government, the police and the military. He explained on the radio that full powers have been given to me under the proclamation of a state of Emergency by the *Yang Di-Pertuan Agong*. During this period of hysteria and panic government spokesmen were quick to blame the disturbances on communist terrorists. Nobody at all made mention of the fact that these were racial clashes. The Tunku, Tun Razak and Dr. Ismail all said that the troubles were communist inspired we will fight them hard, hit them really hard to break their backbone and their spirit. He said that many opposition workers had gone to Sabah and Sarawak to create disorder during the elections. It is necessary to postpone the elections in those states in order to save the process of democracy.

Thus after the proclamation of a State of Emergency by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, the King of the Federation of Malaysia, the NOC became an authorization Government charged with restoring law and order in the



county. The NOC, under Tun Razak, administered the country by executive decree, and under its instruction thousands of the “trouble makers” and government opponents were detained without trial. The press and opposition were prevented from “any public discussion of the Government’s role in the crisis and its reliance upon authoritarian measures.”<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Ismail, in his radio broad cast, said: “Democracy in Malaysia is dead.”<sup>13</sup> Without any doubt many observers would agree with him, but at the same time question his rider, It died at the hands of the opposition parties. Tun Razak Stated that Malaysia’s image has suffered a serious set back as a result of the disturbances in Selangor and other parts of the country. The real strategy of the communists had been to intimidate People into voting for opposition.

The victims were mainly Indians, of whom 15 were killed and several others injured. Many Chinese and Indian houses were burnt down. Over 70 Indians and Chinese residents of Sentul were removed to a refugee camp. During the attack the Malay extremists shouted: “we’ve finished with the pigs! Now for the goats!”<sup>15</sup>

Rather the NOC’s 21-month authoritarian rule gave the national leadership the opportunity to consider a new political strategy, which would satisfy the Malay militancy and allow the country to return to a degree of normality. According to the Government:

“there are three alternatives facing the country:

- i) remain passive and allow racial animosity to deteriorate and finally destroy the nation;
- ii) return to the pre-1948 Constitutional position; or

- iii) formulate a solution to work out a positive formula whereby the aspirations of the people can best be achieved with racial harmony and good will”<sup>16</sup>.

Tun Dr. Ismail was the first to comment on democracy:

“Democracy must suit the conditions of the country. So long as the fundamentals of democracy are there it is democracy. It is wrong to say that there is only Western style democracy, since it is a Western innovation. It is not necessary that we should adopt wholesale western style democracy”<sup>17</sup>.

Tun Ismail’s contention was further elaborated and explained later by the director of the NOC, Tun Razak. He said.

“Democracy is practised in many countries in the world today. But each country must assess its own political and social environment realistically and evolve its own Constitution, rules, conventions and practices. Malaysia possesses her own distinct characteristics based on her history and present racial composition. She must now find a solution to her problems a solution that will provide a guarantee that in future racial sensitivities will never again be provoked *by the operations of normal democratic processes*. e.g., election campaigns.”<sup>18</sup>

### **5.8. The National Consultative Council:**

“To help avoid alienating non-Malay, the Government announced the formation of the National Consultative Council in January 1970, asking all major parties and certain religious, professional and minority groups to send representatives. The National Consultative Council consisted of 65 members and was purely an advisory body. It was given the responsibility of “finding permanent solutions to.....racial problems to ensure that the May 13 tragedy does not recur”<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding that the members of the Council were inquired to represent their opinions freely and honestly, the meetings of the National Consultative Council were held in *camera*. The final authority for implementation of their recommendations rested with the National Operations Council. The National Consultative Council considered Malaysia's racial problems, and proposals which were submitted to the National Operations Council for deliberation.

“The government soon realized that the communal issues-like Malay special privileges, language, education and culture of the non-Malays could not be resolved by public debates or even free exercise of the existing form of parliamentary democracy. Such public discussion might polarize racial feelings, creating a situation which would make racial integration extremely difficult, or possibly even creating conditions for more racial violence on an even greater scale. What options then were open to the government in constructing a political strategy to promote a degree of consensus between the Malay and non-Malay communities?”<sup>20</sup>

“Despite the veneer of confidence displayed by the establishment of the NCC, it was obvious that lasting racial harmony could not be achieved by mere legal and administrative directives of the NOC. The government debarred certain communal issues from public discussion, yet simultaneously solicited public support for its policies to demonstrate a degree of legitimacy. This led to the government’s of the national ideology the *Rukunegara*.”<sup>21</sup>

### **5.9 : *Rukunegara***

“By launching *Rukunegara* (literally, the fundamental principles of the State)”<sup>22</sup> on August 31, 1970, the government aimed to legalize its existing communal policies by making Rukunegara a basis for them. In short, it contained “Five Beliefs” and Five principles” accompanied by five commentaries explaining the meaning of these Principles.

The Rukunegara which was formally promulgated by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong on August 31, 1970 reads as follows:

Our Nation, MALAYSIA, being dedicated-

- to achieving a greater unity of all her peoples;
- to maintaining a democratic way of life;
- to creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably shared;
- to ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions;
- to building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology;

We, her peoples, pledge our united efforts to attain these ends guided by these principles-

Belief in God

Loyalty to King and Country

Upholding the Constitution

Rule of Law

Good behavior and Morality.

The five commentaries explaining the meaning of the above principles were as follows:

1. Islam is the official religion of the Federation. Other religions and beliefs may be practised in peace and harmony and there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the ground of religion.
2. The loyalty that is expected of every citizen is that he must be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong....
3. It is the duty of a citizen to respect and appreciate the letter, the spirit and the historical background of the Constitution. This historical background led to such provisions as those regarding the position of .... the Rulers, the position of the Islam as the official religion, the position of Malays and other Natives, the legitimate interests of the other communities, and the conferment of citizenship. It is the sacred duty of a citizen to defend and uphold the Constitution.
4. Justice is founded upon the rule of law. Every citizen is equal before the law. Fundamental liberties are guaranteed to all citizens. These



include liberty of the person, equal protection of the law, freedom of religion, rights of property and protection against banishment. The Constitution confers on a citizen the right of free speech, assembly and association and this right may be enjoyed freely subject only to limitations imposed by law.

5. Individuals and groups shall conduct their affairs in such a manner as to not violate any of the accepted canons of behaviour which is arrogant or offensive to the sensitivities of any group. No citizen should question the loyalty of another citizen on the ground that he belongs to a particular community.<sup>23</sup>

Tan 'Sri Md. Ghazali bin Shafie, Minister of Information and the architect of Rukunegara declared:

"The Malaysian nation is indeed unique in having rich and diverse cultural traditions and practices. We aspire to a society in which this diversity can be an asset and a source of strength"<sup>24</sup>

Ghazali further clarified that Rukunegara's commitment to a national culture meant a Malay-based culture, and he qualified "Malay" by describing "the definite people of the country"<sup>25</sup>

"Answers to these questions are not difficult to find. The government's main purpose in drawing up the Rukunegara, a new ideology, was to obtain a multi-racial seal of approval to further its political strategies. In addition to cultural issues, by the time Rukunegara was promulgated to the Malay ruling clique, it was made clear that political power must rest in the future predominantly with Malays."<sup>26</sup>



The Malay political strategy towards this end became more evident when at the end of Emergency Rule, the government issued a "White Paper" which suggested certain changes in the Constitution. These changes were primarily to prevent non-Malays from threatening the Malay position ever again.<sup>26</sup>

The "White Paper", designed to reassure Malay primacy, contained two basic objectives: "firstly,.. to remove sensitive issues from the realm of public discussions so as to allow the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy;" and secondly, "to redress the racial imbalance in certain sectors of the nation's life and thereby promote national unity". As a precondition to realizing the first objective, the government asked all the political parties concerned to restrain themselves from public debate or criticism of those parts of the Constitution, which were specified in the Rukunegara as "Sensitive Issues,"

"To question any matter, right, status, position, privilege, sovereignty or prerogative established or protected by the provisions of part III of the Federal Constitution or Article 152,153 or 181 of the Federal Constitution," were considered to be seditious. These issues were said to be so "sensitive" that the restrictions were imposed even on members of Parliament, who were prohibited from questioning them in parliamentary debates."<sup>27</sup>

To accomplish the second objective the authorities suggested the extension of the Malay "special position" principle to certain sectors such as Science, Engineering and Medicine, where Malay participation was minimal. For this, the "White Paper" proposed an amendment to the Constitution empowering the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong to reserve seats for Malays at post-secondary institutions "in those selected courses of study where the numbers of Malays are disproportionately small"

Tan Siew Sin, leader of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), endorsed the government measures but maintained that the Bill did not demonstrate an ideal model of democracy under parliamentary rule. He observed: "it is better to have something less than 100 per cent democracy than no democracy at all"<sup>28</sup> The opposition parties, mostly Chinese, who were held responsible for the May 13, incidents and who, therefore, suffered the army atrocities, were mostly disorganized. Among them only the Democratic Action party and the People's Progressive Party opposed the constitutional amendments on the grounds that they severely curtailed the practices of parliamentary democracy. While opposing the prohibition of public discussion on "sensitive issues", the opposition leaders maintained that such "issues" would then only create "underground problems" for Malaysia. "After several days of debate; the government managed to pass the proposed amendments to the constitution with a Vote of 125 to 17 in the Dewan Ra'ayat on March 3, 1971."<sup>28</sup>

"Malaysia was now purely a "controlled" or "limited" democracy; which, according to the new Prime Minister Tun Razak, was especially designed to "suit... present conditions".<sup>29</sup>

The Prime Minister claimed that:

"These amendments are considered very necessary to avoid the recurrence of another May 13 incident... It is only in this way we can guarantee the future of our democratic system of Government and the unity of our nation."<sup>30</sup>

## Foot Notes

1. M. Nazrul Islam, *Pakistan and Malaysia : A Comparative Study in National Integration*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 110016, p-205.
2. *Ibid*, p-205.
3. *Ibid*, p-207.
4. *Alliance Manifesto 1969; An Even Better Deal for all*, Kuala Lumpur: April 1969, p-1.
5. *Op. cit*, p-209.
6. *Straits Times* : 13 May, 1969.
7. *Straits Times*: 14 May, 1969.
8. Tunkue Abdul Rahman, Putra Al-Haj, *May. Before and After*, *Straits Times*: p-75.
9. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodd and Stoughton, 1976, p- 397.
10. *Op. cit*, p-214.
11. The Previous State of Emergency declared in 1948 when Malaysia was still under colonial rule lasted until after Independence, and was lifted only in 1960.
12. John Slimming, *Malaysia: Death of a Democracy*, London: John Murray, 1969.
13. *Op. cit*, p - 398.

14. Gordon P. Means, "Malaysia" in Robert N. Kearney (ed) *Politics and Modernization in South and South East Asia*, New York: Schenkman Publishing Co. 1975, p-188.
15. *Radio broad Cast*, May 17, 1969.
16. The total figures of deaths in these incidents were disputed. The official figure was 5, See Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, p-113.
17. See the *National operations Council Report*, *op. cit*, p-81.
18. *The Straits Times*, June, 21, 1969.
19. See the *National operations Council Report*, *op. cit*, p-80.
20. *The Straits Times*, 13 January 1970, and also quoted in M. Nazrul Islam, *Consolidating Asian Democracy*, Nipun Printing Industries Ltd. Dhaka-1000, p-60.
21. *Ibid*, p-60.
22. *Ibid*, p-60.
23. *Op. cit*, p-220.
24. *Ibid*, p-221.
25. *Ibid*, p-222.
26. *Ibid*, p-221.
27. *Ibid*, p-221.
28. *Ibid*, p-222.
29. *Ibid*, p-222.
30. *Ibid*, p-222.

## Chapter- Six

### ***Conclusion:***

It is evident from the discussion that in Malaysia the democratic principles were abrogated in favour of the interests of the Malays, the politically entrenched and dominant section of the population. It is futile to suggest that authoritarian measures can, in any way, solve the problems confronting the people of a country. Moreover, there was no evidence to support the contention of the Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, that "*Future racial sensitivities*" would be provoked "*by the operation of normal democratic process.*" We have seen that parliamentary democracy did not get its fair trial in Malaysia. Thus the question of its suitability in Malaysian "conditions" does not arise. After the traumatic events of May 13 the ruling elite, instead of surrendering to the wishes of the electorate, devised all possible tactics to avoid communal issues by curtailing parliamentary democracy and imposing a ruthless autocracy in the country on the plea of "Sensitive Issues".

The eventual breakdown of racial or national integration in Malaysia in May 1969 should be viewed as a result of the national leadership's continual refusal to reconcile itself to accept non-Malays into the body politics of the country. In this study an attempt has been made to review the problems of nation building in the new states during the post colonial period. Most of the new- states were characterized by demographic features which emphasize multi-ethnic and multi-cultural interaction rather than homogeneous social



systems. The political institutions which often were borrowed wholesale from the West which in turn has developed them gradually over several centuries tended to heighten the cleavages in the social systems of the new states rather than integrate their plural societies.

Malaysia was and still is divided not only by racial ethnic cultural and religious differences but also by economic disparity between indigenous and immigrant groups as well as the political dominance and entrenched position of the indigenous Malaya population . Malaysia is united only by virtue of its geographical contiguity and national boundaries.

Malaysia's disunity does not involve convergent issues, political economic and military power are not the exclusive property of one population group but are distributed amongst constituent communities. Broadly indigenous Malays hold political and military power whilst the immigrants have the economic power. It is clear that democratic principles were abrogated in favour of the interests of the Malays, the politically entrenched and dominant sector of the population. Under colonial domination Malaysia suffered the typical British strategy of divide and rule which established racialism as foundation of the political structure. A framework favoring political suppression and an inclination towards the principles of limited, rather than genuine representative democracy, was introduced. The rejection of the Malayan Union Plan by the Malays heralded the adoption of the system allowing special rights and privileges to the Malay section of the population. The immigrant Chinese and Indian groups were discriminated against by citizenship laws and the Malays sole preserve on political power was tightened and institutionalized. The emergency period polarized the situation further: the police and army largely comprised



Malays with the immigrant Chinese classed as guerrillas and suspected terrorists. The Emergency widened the existing divisions and further complicated political life. After the events of 1969 the government forbade debate on inter racial grievances the powers and position of the Malay Rulers, citizenship, Malay special rights, the use of Malay as the sole national language, the preponderance of Malays in the Civil Service and Military, and a whole range of preferences given to Malayan as solutions were applied to national problems.

It may be noted that an attempt was being made to remove the economic disparities between the communities by 1990. Uptill now, the present New Economic Policy (NEP) programme has met with limited success. It is suggested that should the Malays as prime movers of the NEP directly use their political dominance to gain economic parity grave tensions could result leading to a disturbance of the fragile balance of complementary interests upon which the nation rests. In Malaysia, an inclination towards authoritarianism works against bridging the difference between the communities thus precluding reciprocal participation and interaction which is an essential function of national integration.

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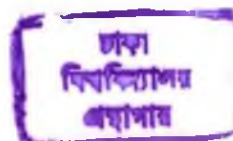
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