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Accept Islamic teachings to solve social problems

Dr Syed Azman Syed Ahmad; Abdul Latiff Mohd Ibrahim

IT is now becoming very topical to talk about social ills. Both Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, have given their comments on the seriousness of the problem. Dr Mahathir himself revealed that Malays constituted about 67 per cent of those involved.

Many have come up with theories as to what has caused these social ills to spread like wildfire among the Malay youth. It has been suggested that lack of parental care, control and supervision including inadequate parenting skills are the main causes of these problems.

Others seem to think that the educational process is inadequate in producing youths of high moral qualities.

It seems that religious education has also failed.

To overcome social ills in Malaysia, many suggestions have also been put forward. They include making national service compulsory for youths, introducing courses on parenting skills, a total revamp of the religious curriculum in the education system and slowing down the pace of physical development of the country.

The problem of social ills has been with us for quite some time and some programmes have been introduced by the Government to check specific problems like dadah abuse, lepak, bohsia and bohjan.

In the early 1980s, the Government embarked on a programme of infusion of Islamic values in administration and society. What has happened to this programme? Similarly programmes like Rakan Muda, Rakan Masjid and Jayawaris using huge public allocations have also been implemented. And what has happened to all these grandiose programmes?

While talking about the causes of social decay among youths, we cannot discard the larger issue of moral disintegration in society. It is very convenient to blame and bash certain levels of society like parents and educators while avoiding the root of the whole problem.

It is obvious that the public looks up to people holding public office as their role models given the fact that they are constantly being portrayed in the media as "exemplary" individuals. Therefore, these public figures should exhibit positive character traits for youths to emulate. Evidently, such role models are lacking among those holding such important positions.

We have been constantly reminded by Dr Mahathir of the prevalence of money politics, corruption and misuse of power among top-level politicians and administrators. Under such circumstances, how is the youth going to heed the advice of these public figures?

There seems to be a desire to create a "civil society" as the fundamental basis of a Malaysian society prior to 2020. This civil society, it seems, must be free from social evils, one which hates corruption, abuse of power and other forms of cruelty. Yet, how are we going to achieve this ideal when the prevalence of social ills is on the rise and compounded by acts of people of influence, mainly politicians and top-level administrators?

We strongly believe that the Malay youth must be brought back to basic Islamic fundamentals and practices - not just harping on "Islamic values" alone. In order for this to succeed, the Malay leaders must first set the example by changing their ways of thinking and behaviour according to Islamic norms and regulations.

Unless and until there is a sincere commitment to uproot this problem by accepting the core teachings of Islam as the moral code and regulations as the way of life, we will not be able to solve this problem even if we introduce more programmes and spend more millions of ringgit.

Dr Syed Azman Syed Ahmad
Universiti Malaya and
Abdul Latiff Mohd Ibrahim
Universiti Teknologi
Malaysia

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