

Introduction by the Minister of Education at the briefing given to the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers on 26th May, 1971.

Y.A.B. Tun Perdana Menteri, Y.A.B. Tun Timbalan Perdana Menteri, Y.B. Menteri2, Naib2 Chanselor, Ketua2 Setia Usaha Kementerian, dan tuan2 sekalian.

Y.A.B. Tun. Tujuan briefing ini ia-lah menerangkan dengan ringkas-nya perkembangan dan kemajuan pelajaran di-negara kita ini semenjak tahun 1957. Briefing ini juga akan mengemukakan kesulitan2 yang telah, sedang dan akan di-hadapi oleh Kementerian Pelajaran dan langkah2 yang telah, sedang dan akan di-ambil bagi mengatasi-nya.

Perkara2 dan masaalah2 yang bersangkutan paut dengan pelajaran amat-lah banyak. Dalam briefing ini, saya hanya memilih dan mengemukakan perkara2 dan masaalah2 yang penting yang patut di-ketahui oleh Tun dan Menteri2 yang lain.

Briefing ini akan di-mulakan oleh saya dengan memberi, dengan ringkas-nya, penerangan dan hujah2 atas sesuatu perkara; dan selepas itu akan di-sambong oleh Inche Murad, Pengarah Bahagian Peranchangan dan Penyelidikan Pelajaran, yang akan menerangkan dengan lanjut lagi perkara2 yang telah di-kemukakan oleh saya itu.

Dalam briefing ini, terpaksa saya dan Inche Murad menggunakan istilah2 dan perkataan2 technical dan professional, oleh yang demikian benarkan-lah saya dan Inche Murad bertutur kata dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Part I

1. Educational System

In general the system of education in West Malaysia is divided into four stages: primary, the lower secondary or the comprehensive level, the upper secondary and the post secondary levels.

2. The Primary Stage

Age of entry is 6+. The pupils are given 6 years of free primary education in one of the 3 language media Malay, Chinese and Tamil. English stream is gradually being replaced by Malay medium in stages, starting from 1970. English is a compulsory second language in all schools. On completion of primary education, pupils are allowed automatic promotion for a period of 3 years through lower secondary in Malay or until 1975 in English medium. At the lower secondary level, the comprehensive type of education is provided to all pupils. Under this system of education, it is mandatory for all pupils to study at least one practical elective in addition to the general subjects. The practical electives are Industrial Arts, Commercial Studies, Home Science and Agricultural Science. These electives are not trade-oriented, but are considered as part of the child's general education, exposing him to various practical fields in order to find out their aptitude and interest.

3. Upper Secondary Stage

On completion of the lower secondary level the pupils sit for L.C.E. or S.R.P. examination, and on the basis of the results of this examination, pupils are offered places in upper secondary in either the academic group or the vocational group. The academic group is further divided into Arts, Science and technical streams. The pupils in the vocational group pursue one of several trade or

vocational specialities, designed to permit them to learn specific occupational skills rapidly and well in either further training courses or on the job. The vocational level is a terminal course, although a very limited number of top graduates may proceed to the Ungku Omar Polytechnic.

4. Post Secondary Stage (Sixth Form Classes)

The selection for post secondary or Sixth Form education is made on the basis of the results of the M.C.E./S.P.M. examination. Form VI extends over a period of 2 years and prepares the students for the Higher School Certificate Examination. Admission to the universities depends on the results of this examination and also on the availability of places in the universities.

5. Enrolment ratios.

Approximately 95% of the 6+ age group enter primary schools and approximately 90% complete it. In spite of the introduction of the automatic promotion system from primary to lower secondary, participation at this level is only 52.4%, due largely to the heavy dropout rate in the transition from primary to lower secondary that occurs for non-academic reasons.

With regard to upper secondary level, the enrolment ratio for the year 1970 was 20% of the age group, or 90,000 pupils. This exceeds by one third the minimum recommendation of the H.E.P.C. Report. Sixth Form level enrolment in the schools in 1970 was approximately 11,000. This means 3% of the age group at this level are in schools.

6. Significance of dropouts

The above participation ratios indicate the number of dropouts at the various levels. These include those who are forced to leave school because they failed their examinations and those who voluntarily leave school owing to various factors. We are at present largely concerned with this category. It would be noted that the dropout rate is the least in the English medium schools which are largely

situated in the urban areas, and highest in the Malay and other vernacular schools which are largely in the rural areas. We are also concerned over the large number of children, approximately 30% of them, who complete the primary cycle but do not continue their education at the secondary level.

Part II

1. School Leavers and Employment

The output from our schools at various levels who will be eligible to enter the labour market is well over 200,000 each year, and by 1975 the number is expected to exceed 300,000. These dropouts and school leavers have attained various educational standards ranging from only a few years of primary education to a completed secondary education.

Our interest, therefore, is in what the education system can do to alleviate the unemployment problem. It has been pointed out that unemployment among the educated is as high as among those with less education. The significant point here is that more general education is not the answer to the unemployment plan, has taken this into consideration; and it has planned a number of programmes in the school system to meet the situation, among them is the expansion in the field of technical and vocational education.

2. World Bank - Technical and Vocational Education

A review of the First Malaysia Plan indicates that the development of Technical and Vocational education at the upper secondary level is substantially in arrears. At the outset of the First Malaysia Plan, it was decided that a balance between general secondary school on the one hand and technical and vocational schools on the other should be achieved in that the student ratio between the three streams should be in the ratio of 4 general, 3 technical and 2 vocational. The present position is that only 2% and 3% of the upper secondary enrolment are in the technical and vocational schools respectively; that means 95% of the upper secondary enrolment is in the general academic stream.

The main reason for the slow progress is largely due to the delay in obtaining the World Bank loan which was not signed until May 23rd, 1969.

So far, only one out of six vocational schools is under construction. The remaining schools are expected to be completed by 1972.

3. Ungku Omar Polytechnic

The Ungku Omar Polytechnic, established in 1969, had its first intake of 290 students. It was scheduled for completion in 1972, but owing to site, design and staff problems, the project is now behind schedule, and is expected to be ready only in 1974.

4. Technical College

The Technical College has expanded under the First Malaysia Plan. Teaching facilities and scope of courses offered were improved. Under the Second Malaysia Plan the Technical College will be expanded further.

These two colleges are the only main source of supply of technical personnel. The main problem facing the development and expansion of these two colleges is the acute shortage of qualified teaching staff. As a result of this, student intake to all courses has to be curtailed.

As regards technical education, there is at the moment some confusion regarding the concept and function of vocational schools run by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education is not providing vocational training as required by the industries as it is impossible to train various specific skills required by different industries. What we are doing is to give our children a general vocational-orientated education for two years after the L.C.E./S.R.P.

These pupils on passing their Malaysian Vocational Certificate of Education Examination have the necessary basic knowledge to enable them to be employed. They must, of course, be further trained to suit the particular skill required by a particular industry but this training need not take a long time. In other words, our graduates of vocational schools will be trainable within a short period for any kind of specific skill. For example, in the field of agriculture, if our graduates from vocational schools in the agricultural stream

wish to qualify as Junior Agricultural Assistants they need only one year of specialised training in the schools of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture. I suggest that this be looked into by the Ministry of Agriculture which at present is running a three year course in its schools.

Vocational training must follow vocational education. To achieve this it is necessary for the Education and other training agencies of other Ministries to co-ordinate their efforts to bring about greater efficiency at reduced costs.

It is hoped that the National Advisory Council on Vocational Training, which has just been established by the Prime Minister's Department, will co-ordinate the vocational education programmes of the Ministry of Education with the vocational training course of specialised agencies.

Part III

1. Cost of Education

The Government expenditure in education increased in absolute terms almost 4 times in a little more than a decade. The proportion of G.N.P. spent on education has almost doubled, which is about 5% of the G.N.P. It is estimated that approximately \$700 million will be spent on education. As the amount involved is big, it is, therefore, necessary to take measures not only to effect economies but also to improve the quality of education so as to get the maximum benefit.

2. Development Programme

The overall and long-term objectives of the education programme set out in the First Malaysia Plan will continue to guide development under the Second Malaysia Plan. Programme improvements in the Second Malaysia Plan will, however, concentrate on four major areas:-

- (1) Consolidation of the education system to promote national integration and unity;
- (2) Orientation and expansion of education programmes towards meeting the manpower needs;
- (3) Improvement of the quality of education;
- (4) Improvement in research, planning and implementation capabilities to achieve the above objectives.

The total development allocation for education for West and East Malaysia under the Second Malaysia Plan is \$448.48 million. (W.M. \$370.11 - Sabah \$36.00, Sarawak \$42.37).

3. Quality of Education

One of our principal objectives is to improve the quality of the education system. Particularly important under this category of activities will be programmes aimed at redressing imbalances between rural and urban areas. Wherever there are problems of quality, these are most severe in the rural areas.

Various programmes included under the Second Malaysia Plan aim at solving the problems of quality and equal opportunity. A new project in which the Ministry has a particular interest will be the ten pilot residential secondary science schools, at a cost of approximately \$12 million. These schools, which will be described in greater detail later, will be specially oriented toward science and technical education. Other projects that will affect rural education will be the construction of new schools and for more adequate provision of hostels, laboratories and workshops where these facilities are still lacking.

4. Teacher Training

Another important programme affecting the quality of education concerns the upgrading of teachers' qualifications.

There are approximately 45,000 primary school teachers. Of these teachers 16,355 of them are underqualified, which means that they do not have L.C.E. or S.R.P. qualification. Of the underqualified teachers, 9,766 or over half are in the Sekolah2 Kebangsaan. We are planning an intensive re-training programme for teachers so as to improve their educational levels and their abilities to teach the new curricula.

At the Secondary level, the situation regarding teachers is more complex. The main problem here is the current shortage of 2,000 science and 1,670 arts graduate teachers. The shortage of science teachers is, at the moment, partially met by volunteers and contract teachers from overseas, such as the American Peace Corps, Indonesian teachers etc.

The science and maths curricula will also be modified with the introduction of Integrated and Nuffield Science at the lower secondary and upper secondary levels respectively. To improve the teaching of science in the rural primary schools, 54 Demonstration Centres have been established to serve as nuclei for implementing the new curricula. The Second Malaysia Plan also provides a sum of \$1.29 million for the

establishment of a Science Education Centre in Kuala Lumpur, which will serve as the focal point for activities in curriculum development and science and maths teaching methods.

Other programmes include the launching of an Educational Television Service to provide programmes for primary and secondary schools particularly in civics, science and maths. E.T.V. will be designed to enrich the education offered by traditional means. It will particularly be beneficial to rural pupils.

In conjunction with the Ministry of Health, this Ministry has launched an Applied Nutrition Programme to improve health and nutrition education in schools.

One of the keys to improving the quality of education lies in research. The Planning and Research Division will closely study the following:

- (1) Pupil-teacher ratio;
- (2) Methods of evaluation of performance of the progress of pupils;
- (3) Cost of education;
- (4) Guidance and labour market requirements.

5. Universities

By the end of the Second Malaysia Plan, four institutions of higher education are expected to function fully. They are the University of Malaya, the University of Penang, Universiti Kebangsaan and the Agricultural University. An allocation of \$87 million has been made for the development of these universities under the Second Malaysia Plan. The Recurrent expenditure during the period is expected to increase from \$41.1 million to \$67.2 million.

The enrolment in these universities this year is 10,311 and by the end of 1975 it is expected to increase to 13,924, an increase of 40%. The H.E.P.C. Report recommends that the expansion of education at the University level should be balanced between Arts and Science including science based education in the ratio of 2 Arts to 3 science and science based education.

In view of the rapid expansion of higher education, and if the universities are to play a proper and fuller role in nation building and development, a centralised system of control and administration is essential to help identify priorities and preserve standards.

As far as our universities are concerned, the main problem is the racial imbalances in faculties. Although the Malay student population has increased in number, but their percentage in the faculties of science, engineering, agriculture and medicine is still very low. For example, 85.2% of Malay undergraduates are in the faculties of Arts, Economics and Public Administration and Education but only 14.8% of them are in the Sciences. Further in the Faculty of Arts, 86% of the Malay undergraduates numbering 1378, are doing Malay and Islamic Studies. On 14% of them are doing other subjects, such as geography, history, English etc.

We need, therefore, to review the methods of awarding scholarships, especially by the State authorities, to ensure a well-balanced distribution of Malay undergraduates in all fields of studies, especially in the sciences.

The Universities absorb a large proportion of the total development budget of the Ministry of Education. Further, costs per student are extremely high at this level. While there are some encouraging signs that costs per student at the University of Malaya have been decreasing, we must further consider carefully ways to lower still further the heavy cost of tertiary education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would say that the main problem facing the Ministry of Education is the sheer increase in number of pupils seeking education at various levels. This is further aggravated by the fact that we have to seek a proper balance between general and vocational/technical education. And even within the general education itself, we must have the right balance between Arts and Science. We are also facing a big percentage of dropouts from our education system and much of the wastage occurs in the rural areas. While we seek to reduce this wastage and to provide equal opportunity for all, we must consider carefully how large we want our educational pyramid to grow. We must particularly guard against overproduction of school leavers with purely academic backgrounds.

We also face the problem of improving educational quality, particularly upgrading the underqualified teachers who are teaching in Sekolah2 Kebangsaan. To re-train such a large number of them will require a major effort and a large sum of money. We must also remember that even if money is available, we need to have qualified lecturers to train them. We cannot expect to solve this problem during the Second Malaysia Plan, but we can begin to take action toward its solution.

With regard to manpower requirements, we have further diversified our education system to produce more job-oriented school leavers. We need to create proper channels of co-ordination with other Ministries which are also involved in manpower development and training. A concerted effort towards a clear set of objectives in the manpower field must be made.

There is a growing need to review and co-ordinate our higher education system, so that the universities will produce the proper distribution of graduates, not only to staff our schools, but also for the high-level manpower requirements of the public service and the private sector.

At all levels, in all ways, we need to intensify our efforts in narrowing the gap between the rural and urban schools. This requires not merely putting up buildings and providing facilities, but also improvement in quality. This will be a costly undertaking but I am convinced that the benefits - in terms of national development and unity - will far outweigh the costs.

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