

Education system quota abused
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Hamisu

'Schoolteacher', let me share with you and your daughter what you should know about the realities of being non-bumis. I hope this will help you explain to your daughter.

The Malaysian education system, especially tertiary education, is riddled with abuse of the quota system. I would have some agreement to the quota if it is executed fairly. The quota system does have its merits. It is supposed to ensure that based on the Malaysian population's racial composition, each ethnic group is entitled to a certain number of seats. It is supposed to address excessive demand for limited seats at public universities by any one group and allow each ethnic group to have a fair chance at obtaining tertiary education.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Let me share with you now why I have been opposing the education quota system. First case and point: have you ever heard of an arts stream student being admitted into a chemical engineering course? And yet the vice-chancellor could only advise 'Where there is a will, there is a way'. I am sure it must have been extremely difficult for her.

Second point: In the course I took, it was about 75% bumi students. After getting to know them, you'd be surprised to know even with a Grade SPM, he could get into this engineering course. Let me me further emphasise that this is not isolated to one or two cases. There was more than I would care to count. This is only the course I took. And sure enough, only about 20 graduated on time and 15 of them were non-bumis. The original class size was 65 students. You can reason why.

Third point: Don't even bother about getting good grades. The good grades you have are artificial at most. The quality of tertiary education is somewhat great only if you were to compare yourself amongst the worst. I won't say this is 100% true, but I can say it does hold some water. Ever wonder why we can get good grades (average grades) so easily? It works on the principal of normal distribution. If the rest of the class is so bad, then you will definitely be the outstanding one. So, are you the best? I would think not. And take a guess. After asking around with our course-mates and also those from other courses, guess who contributed to the overall lower marks?

Fourth point: When looking for scholarships, don't put too much hope on GLC companies and government scholarships. My experience with Renong just served to reaffirm what we, the non-bumis, have known all along. Imagine, me with my good results, can't even get a scholarship from Renong. However, a colleague of mine (we were working part time in a supermarket), with a Grade 3 SPM still gets a scholarship. Yes, he is a bumi. About a year and a half later, I managed to bump into him and he tells me he has already flunked his uni course and cannot continue his scholarship. What a surprise! Well, I hope I sounded surprised.

You should never believe merit actually pays off with this country's public education system. There isn't such a thing at all. Looking at how the education quota system has been abused for so long, it really makes me wonder. Why all the above three points happen is anyone's guess. Here's my take.

The quotas for the non-bumis are usually filled up and you do see there is some merit.

However, looking at the bumi quota, you get the feeling it cannot even be filled by qualified and eligible candidates. However, this unfilled quota is never open to non-bumis, who have usually filled up their own quotas. Now, my question is, why isn't the government actually re-allocating the quotas to qualified and eligible non-bumis?

The answer is quite clear and rings true of the racism which my dad and BN supporters have endured and willingly subjected themselves to. And yet these very non-bumi supporters claim of being discriminated. Isn't it ironic?

Guess why we have STPM and matriculation courses? It's fairly obvious we, as non-bumis, will always be subjected to the road less travelled, the road that is full of hardship and heartache, the road where your chances of obtaining an education which is rightfully yours is less. STPM might not be the answer, but I do agree, STPM is one of the toughest exams you can find in this world. However, Schoolteacher, your daughter has to risk it and might have to choose another career option, if for some reasons, the STPM is too tough for her. I don't believe she's very much motivated now.

I am not questioning bumiputera special rights. I am only questioning the hard fact of why the unmet bumi quota in for education places is not re-allocated to deserving non-bumis.

The only thing I can say is, your daughter's career options would have to be in the private sector, where merit actually carries a lot of weight. Guess why I wasn't encouraged to be a teacher (thanks to my mum)? Guess why I was never encouraged to be in public service (thanks to my dad)? I won't be surprised if your daughter turns out to be Pakatan Rakyat supporter in future. Make sure your daughter is aware of such discrimination. Let her will herself to overcome this unjust, as most of us non-bumis have.

My last words would be 'What does not kill you, makes you stronger'.

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