

Malaysia's success in achieving national unity

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MALAYSIA has done remarkably well in achieving national unity in the past 50 years given its complex multi-ethnic society, the *Tamil Nesan* reported.

President of International Movement for Just World Dr Chandra Muzaffar said that compared with other multi-ethnic societies, Malaysia had attained a certain degree of inter-ethnic harmony measured by the rather few cases of inter-ethnic violence.

And that was due, he said, to the understanding and tolerance practised by the major races.

He said that despite the diversity of race, language and religion, Malaysia had achieved both economic growth and equity, with only 5.8% of its population living below the poverty line.

He pointed out that there was also a certain degree of freedom in Malaysia where differences of opinion were allowed.

It was from these perspectives that Malaysians needed to see to realise that the country had come a long way, achieving much success in managing the complex combination of multi-ethnic communities.

The daily also reported that Malaysia Dental Council member Mej-Jen (Rtd) Datuk Dr Mohd Termidzi Junaidi said Malaysia needed at least another 10 years to achieve its target of achieving the ratio of one dentist for every 4,000 people.

He said the present ratio was 1:9,000, and the country could now only produce between 400 and 500 dentists a year who are either trained

locally or abroad.

Dr Mohd Termidzi, who is also the dean of International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) Dentistry Faculty, said that institutions of higher learning were currently facing a shortage of dental specialists as lecturers, which resulted in low enrolment of students.

The recently set up IIUM Dentistry Faculty is only able to enlist seven lecturers and 50 students for their first intake.

He said that IIUM had received an allocation under the Ninth Malaysia Plan to renovate a building into specialist and outpatient clinics and hoped that these facilities would attract local and foreign lecturers to serve at IIUM so that the student intake could be increased.