

CHAPTER NINE

MANAGING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN A GLOBALISED ENVIRONMENT

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Introduction

The world we live in is a small world where events that occur in any part of the globe would be reported immediately to all parts of our planet. Communication satellites that are hovering above our earth are utilized as channels for disseminating information through the various electronics gadgets such as the phones, radio and television sets, computers and other means of high-tech communication. Though these global communication networks began in the 20th century, it is the 21st century where the concept of a globalised communication network becomes more meaningful to the masses. There were discourses on the concepts of the world as a "global village" and the world as a "globalised environment" as well as the "borderless world". After the downfall of the Soviet Union, these concepts became a reality when regional groupings such as the European Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations began to dismantle, the barriers that prevent the free flow of trade between nations. The Internet revolution brought a free flow of information that could be disseminated through the computer.

Discourses on the merits and the demerits of the new phenomena were held through out the world. People were talking about how the richer nations would dominate the poorer ones and a new form of colonialism was born. At the same time, people were also discussing about the opportunities of the poorer and less developed countries to frog-leap into the new era without going through the same process of development as was experienced by the developed countries. The outcomes of the discussions were not very comprehensible to most people. The truths and untruths about the new phenomenon are affecting everybody, in developed as well as developing countries. Change will occur in almost all aspects of our lives. These changes need to be managed well if nations were to survive.

The education system plays a very important role in enabling the facilitation of the change. The old concepts and notions of education have to be changed. This paradigm shift in education begins with the political leadership. There must be a strong political will towards this direction of change to ensure that the change could occur and achieve its objectives successfully.

Definition**Educational Change**

Educational change is a process whereby we make changes in some or all components of the education system, either completely or partially. Change is usually brought about by events that occurred within or outside society. In the case of the United States, it was the success achieved by the Russians in launching its first satellite in October of 1957 (Short & Greer 1997). The United States stated that the Russian success was due to its scientists. The United States did not produce a sufficient number of scientists over the years. To rectify the problem, the entire science and mathematics curricula were reformed. This change has brought about other changes in the approaches in all subjects in the schools of U.S.

Innovation

Innovation as defined by the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (1976) is a renewal, an alteration or a thing introduced as a novelty. In the context of this paper innovation refers to the changes that occur within the education system as the subset of the bigger picture of educational change. Lippitt (1967) states that innovation is an essential element in organisational change. He reports that some common conditions that encourage change include the community and its acceptance of change, district support, and the role of the principal in helping create the organisational climate open to and supportive of change. Where principals show greater support for innovation, teachers tend to be more innovative and creative in their teaching.

Globalised Environment

Globalization has been described as, "the coming together of all the countries of the globe into one entity. It was coined by the rich countries, apparently in response to technological advances and the speed and ease of travel. But the emphasis appears to be on the free flow of capital and trade in goods and services. People and other things may not flow so freely" (Mahathir Mohamad, 2002). Environment here refers to a surrounding or conditions influencing development or growth. Globalised environment in the context of this paper refers to the conditions that are influenced strongly by the global characteristics or nature, which in turn will influence the type of changes that are needed to face the challenges that are confronting Malaysia

Events that Contribute to the Globalised Environment

The process of globalisation began slowly and gradually with the invention of communication tools such as the telephone and the airplane. As the tools became more sophisticated it began to gather momentum especially since a few decades ago, when the Internet and the computer became the common tool of communication, which cut across the masses. As the result of this revolution of information technology, the world seems not to have any frontiers. With this revolution, the process of international communication becomes easy and cheap. Transnational movements of people between nations have

also increased. Globalisation could be seen happening in three areas of human culture: economic, social and political.

a. The Economic Sphere

In the area of economic development, there is an increase in transnational capital flowing mostly from the developed nations of the North to the developing nations of the South. Goods flow freely from the producers to the consumers from both sides of the economic divide. There is also a free flow of human resource from one country to the other. The countries that are moving fast need extra human resource from other countries to help the economic development of those countries.

b. The Social Sphere

With the rapid rise of development and industrialization in many countries, environmental pollution has become a major issue. Global warming has become the main agenda in international meetings, governmental as well as non-governmental. There is also a concern for the spread of communicable diseases such as AIDS and recently SARS. People around the world are also more aware of their basic human rights and the sufferings of the victims of war as was shown recently through the media where demonstrations against the war in Iraq were held around the world. Human society seems to be more integrated and the process of homogenizing the various cultural aspects of human societies seems to be happening. The values of different societies are merging and being accepted by people of various cultures. Education seems to be more homogeneous and more people are becoming bilingual.

c. The Political Sphere

With the decreasing influence of the communist ideology worldwide, and the disappearance of communist ideology in the economic and political development in Europe, the world is becoming closer politically than before. The European Union and NATO are opening their doors to other countries in Europe. Globalisation is seen as uniting these countries. Cooperation between nations is more common than conflicts, but there is always the danger of one super power dominating the other weaker nations with the rise of a unipolar super power.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of a Globalised World

A globalised or a borderless world could be seen as a blessing for it could bring about prosperity and development to all nations but, it could become risky and dangerous. It could bring about a neo-colonialist phenomenon, where the advanced nations dictate what the other nations should and should not do. Human societies evolved and developed throughout the ages through cooperation. Rivalry also brought about paradigm shifts and human inventions. Paradigm shifts and inventions could only occur when the conditions

are right. Societies that were backward and stagnant for centuries suddenly developed and brought about unthinkable changes in their perceptions and values that brought about the best of human capabilities.

The Positive Outcome of Globalisation

From the perspective of macro-economics, many positive outcomes could be gained by all countries. Prosperity would be distributed to the masses that had never been dreamed of before.

- (a) Broadening the market
With globalisation every nation could do business with all nations of the world without any barrier. This change would bring about wealth and prosperity.
- (b) Creating opportunities for new investment
With the opening of the market, investment is open to all. Nations with the financial capital can invest in nations that are rich in human as well as natural resources but lack capital. The development of these resources enables these nations to benefit economically.
- (c) Creating new cooperation between nations.
The forging of friendship and co-operation between nations could be forged. Nations that share similar views could come closer through these co-operations and in the process they could learn from each other in all areas. As an example, the Look East policy of Malaysia enables Malaysians to learn from the Japanese and the Koreans in areas where Malaysia is lacking.
- (d) Sharing knowledge, ideas, information, skills and new technology
Nations could share their knowledge, ideas and information with each other. This process of sharing would enrich these nations. Nations that lack the skills in some areas would learn those skills from nations that could provide them. Any new technology that is developed by a nation could be shared with others.
- (e) Broadening the opportunities for education
Any citizen of a nation could pursue their education anywhere in the world. Although this is being practiced worldwide but the access to education is not universal. With the concept of "E-Learning" students from any part of the world could get access to education of their choice without leaving their homes.
- (f) Broadening job opportunities
Job opportunities would be created as a result of more economic activities worldwide. Nations with a lot of excess human resources would help nations with insufficient human resources by filling in the vacancies in those nations.

- (g) Eradication of poverty and illiteracy
Through the process of globalisation, wealth could be spread out among the citizens of the world and therefore poverty would be eradicated. There would not be any suffering due to malnutrition or famine. Since education is accessible to all illiteracy could be wiped out.
- (h) Co-operation in crime-fighting and fighting terrorism
Since there was close co-operation between nations, crimes could be fought from all fronts. Extradition of criminals would be normal procedure for crime fighting so that no criminals would feel safe anywhere in the world. Since in the globalised world, justice for every nation, big or small, rich or poor is applied without practicing double standards and terrorism would not be able to manifest itself. They have no reason to be terrorists.

The Negative Outcomes of Globalisation

If we were to look into the details of globalisation, we would find that it has many shortcomings as well. These shortcomings need to be studied in detail so that we are able to change them into positive energy for further human development. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (2001) in a speech delivered at the 10th World Economic Development Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on June 27, 2001 stated the following words,

"It is blatantly clear that if globalisation is to proceed apace---without a war in the streets---we need a new globalisation that works less diligently in the service of the very wealthy and much harder in the service of the very poor---between nations and within nations."

This statement clearly describes the negative impact of globalisation on developing nations. This negative impact could be explained through various domains.

- (a) The domination of the developed nations in economic development.
The liberal economic system of the world would make developed countries giant monopolies. Instead of helping the economic institutions in poor developing countries, these giant corporations such as the international banks might choose to buy over the smaller banks of these developing countries. As a result, these developing countries would become the "colonized nation" of the rich.
- (b) The political domination of the World Power
In a globalised world, where there is only one super power, there could be a tendency for either patronizing or terrorizing. If the political power as well as the economic power of this super power is utilized appropriately, the much needed peace, prosperity and justice could be enjoyed by all societies, but if

they were to use those powers to dominate others, then globalization could spell disaster for many nations.

(c) The domination of mass media and ideology

Those countries that dominate the media would be able to control the flow of information. The language that is used as the medium of information would dominate and through that language, the ideology of the nation that dominates the media would disseminate, subtly, its ideology and values through its mass media, or they might impose them through coercion indiscriminately.

(d) Loss of national identity

The various fast food franchises have altered the food taste and food identities of many nations, though they might not be too bad for they give the people plenty of choices. The domination in areas of knowledge, new wave culture, and the medium of instruction in schools might play a negative role in altering the local culture and the extinction of the local languages. As the result of this process of change, the nation might lose its national identity and self-esteem.

(e) Deepening of the economic divide

Nations that are not ready to face a globalised environment would be in a dilemma. If they were to close its society from outside influences, they would not be able to progress and thus left behind. On the other hand, if they were to embrace the globalised environment, they would also be unable to compete with others and as a result, would be dominated by others.

(f) Closing down of local companies

Local companies, which are unable to compete with the multi-national companies, would have to close down their operations. Although the multi-national companies could absorb them, the nation may have lost the assets that belong to the people and the nation. The assets, which replace the assets of the closed down local companies, do not belong to the nation concerned, but to the multi-national companies from the developed countries.

(g) Dumping of goods from the developed nations

Local companies could not compete with the multi-national companies due to unfair competition. Goods, which were produced cheaply in another developing nation, would be dumped into another country, which produced similar types of products but at a higher cost. As a result, the local companies would be replaced by the multi-national companies.

(h) Unemployment

Local workers who can't fit into the vacancies that existed in the new multi-national companies would be unemployed. At the same time foreign nationals were employed to fill the vacancies.

(i) Rise of poverty and illiteracy

Developing nations, which were unable to face the challenges of the globalised environment, would be poorer because of the lack of technology, especially information technology. The inability to adapt to technological development would render them helpless in the employment market. Poverty may increase. With poverty comes illiteracy. Parents cannot afford to send their children for education and this vicious circle continues further.

(j) Financial crises

The globalised environment may lead to the down-fall some of the economies of Asia. This phenomenon could be witnessed in Malaysia in 1997, as a result of the manipulative devaluation of currency and the flow out of capital from the stock market. The raids could be carried out from afar across borders with the help of Information Technology. The free flow of money without any regulations is beneficial for the rich but at the expense of the poor nations.

The Implication of the Globalised Environment on Education

The Malaysian school system had gone through various changes and innovations since the country achieved independence in 1957. Most Malaysians had their primary and secondary education as well as tertiary education locally. They had proven themselves worthy of the educational background that they had gone through. If we are complacent and satisfied with what has been achieved in the past, then educational change may not be needed. However, would such attitude be able to withstand the challenges we are facing now? It has been proven that poor nations which lack natural resources were able to rise above nations that are endowed with abundant natural resources through the utilization of knowledge, skills and the right attitude of their human resources. The rise of these nations is closely linked with the standard of education of their citizens. Recently, the Deputy Prime Minister mentioned that the 1990-1996 statistics showed that there were only 2 scientists for every 10,000 Malaysians in comparison to 71 scientists for every 10,000 Japanese or 29 scientists for every 10,000 South Koreans (2003). These statistics clearly tell us that nations with a bigger ratio of scientists and their population are more developed than nations with a smaller ratio. If Malaysia wants to be a center of academic excellence, there must be changes and innovations in our education system. The changes and innovations should not only cover the physical and infrastructural development. A more important aspect of human development is the change of attitudes and mind sets of the people. Principals and teachers should be at the front line in this change.

(a) Development of K-economy

The Malaysian economy is basically a production-based economy - an economy

that depends on natural and human resources to produce goods and services. The source of capital to produce these products may originate from the developed countries.

These types of production do not require many professional experts and as a result education and training in the sciences and technology lag behind other countries.

The next stage of socio-economic development is knowledge-based. The popular term is "K-Economy". It is a well-known fact that the country, which utilizes knowledge to the fullest, would be able to forge ahead of other nations, even though those nations are not well endowed with natural resources. Finland, a country situated in the far north of the globe, and with the total population of only 5 million, is a major producer of cellular phones. Sweden with only 8.9 million people is the producer of the well-known Volvo and SAAB cars and other high-tech such as planes. Both these countries are highly developed economically and utilized knowledge in producing value-added products. Singapore, with a population of about 4 million people and without any natural resources has achieved the status of a developed economy. What makes Singapore's economy strong is rightly based on knowledge. Recently, the following information regarding the prowess of Singapore's academic standing was reported in the press:

"Israel Joins a Growing List of Countries Using Singapore's Mathematics Books."

US, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Finland, Vietnam, Bangladesh. Now Israel is using Singapore's maths books too."

Source: The Straits Times (Singapore) 23 September 2002

"Maths Contest: 6 Perfect Scores from Singapore"

496,000 participants from 39 countries took part in an international mathematics competition run yearly by the Australian Mathematics Trust in August and only nine students achieved a perfect score. Of these nine perfect-scores students, six were from Singapore."

"The United States is looking to Singapore Lessons in Mathematics"

Singapore and the US will study Singapore's approach in the teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science in schools. They will also assess effectiveness of the use of Singapore's maths books in US schools. Currently, Singapore maths books are used in 140 US schools"

Source: The Straits Times (Singapore) 11 September 2002.

The strength of Singapore in mathematics and science has been acknowledged worldwide. It occupied the first place out of 38 countries that participated in the

annual International Studies of Mathematics and Science Achievement. The studies indicated that students from Singapore scored the highest marks in mathematics while South Korean students scored the highest in science.

The education system of Singapore was able to harness the potential of Singaporean students to achieve excellence in mathematics and the sciences. The expertise in those two academic areas would help Singapore to develop its k-economy and in turn to be ahead of other countries despite of its small size.

(b) Curriculum change and innovation in education

Innovations in curriculum design and implementation in Singapore enabled the country to achieve success in the competition. The United States was able to achieve success in its space technology programme following a reform in its mathematics and science curriculum. A globalised environment requires changes and innovations in, not only the curriculum, but also in other areas such as pedagogy, attitude of students and parents and lastly, but not the least, the educational leadership. Many curriculum changes and innovations failed to achieve their objectives due to failure in one of the components of the agents of change. Teachers and principals failed to realize that they are also required to change their attitudes and teaching approaches. Conservative and pessimistic principals who are not supportive of teachers' effort would fail.

Managing Change

The Ministry of Education of Malaysia had made a decision to change the medium of instruction from Malay to English in the teaching of mathematics and science in all government and government-aided schools, with effect from 2003. This change is a shift in paradigm. The low standard of English among Malaysian students, especially in the rural areas, and low achievement in mathematics and science was a major cause of concern. Millions of ringgit was spent on many innovations but the status quo remained. It actually needs a paradigm shift. With the change of the medium of instruction in the two subject areas, there was a lot of apprehension. As in many cases of change, there is always the feeling of uneasiness. People were afraid that the programme might fail. Of course, there are other alternatives to this change, but the change that was made by the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister was a calculated risk. The action taken was a bold one and boldness is needed when a nation needs to move forward. Peter Drucker (2000) stated, "Innovation – and the measurement thereof – is the one core competence needed by all organisations." Innovations, which are based on knowledge and the success of others, are calculated and therefore most probably would bring success. It is much better than retaining the old paradigm while knowing very well that it had failed.

Malaysia has made a paradigm shift at the right moment when it begins to feel the pressure of a globalised environment in all areas of life. English has become more important as the main language of education and business. The success of change and

innovation depends upon those who help to implement it. At the school level, the principal/headmaster plays a vital role. In this paper, the focus would be on the role of the school principals and headmasters in ensuring the implementation and monitoring of these innovative changes...

1. The principals' role as a leader

The success of a principal does not depend on his or her knowledge about managing the curriculum and teachers as well as students. Success also depends strongly on the cooperation from the teachers who are the actual implementers of change and innovation. A principal should play his role well to achieve the objectives of the new revamped curriculum.

The leadership style that would most probably be useful at most times is the "transformational leadership" style (Hoy and Miskel, 2001). This style is more appropriate in a situation where strong commitment is needed in implementing a change. Transformational leaders build commitment to the organisation's objectives and empower followers to achieve these objectives (Yukl, 1998). For example they are expected to:

- Define the need for change
- Create new visions and muster commitment to the visions
- Concentrate on long-term goals
- Inspire followers to transcend their own interests to pursue higher-order goals.
- Change the organisation to accommodate their vision rather than work within the existing one.
- Mentor followers to take greater responsibility for their own development and that of others. Followers become leaders and leaders become change agents, and ultimately transform the organisation.

With the planned changes in the medium of instruction and the curriculum, the duty of the principal, first of all, is to convince himself that there is an urgent need for change. The failure to convince himself would make it very difficult, if not impossible, to convince the teachers. If the principal were to say just, "I am doing it because it is a directive from the Ministry," he would reduce to at least half of the teachers' willingness to carry out the change and innovations.

The transformational leader would create new visions to achieve the new goals together with his or her teachers. Full commitment by the teachers to fulfill this vision would make it easier for them, as a team, to achieve their goals.

The transformational leader is the mentor who empowers and guides his teachers to take greater responsibility. With the belief that the responsibility for change and the commitment towards achieving the objectives, the teachers become leaders while the principal becomes the change agent who facilitates the smooth transformation from the traditional curriculum into a modern up-to-date curriculum using English as the medium of instruction, which could produce knowledgeable students who could withstand the challenges of the globalised environment.

2. The principal's role as the interpreter of curriculum

A good curriculum would be meaningless, if it is not fully understood. One of the duties of a principal/headmaster is to understand the curriculum being used by the teachers. How can a teacher who does not understand the curriculum in detail be able to teach effectively? The difference between mediocre teaching and excellent teaching depends on the depth of understanding of the teacher regarding the needs and demands of the curriculum. The excellent mathematics and science curriculum of the schools in Singapore would not bring about success if some of the teachers were not involved in designing the curriculum while the others are not exposed to the demands and pedagogy of the curriculum.

The concept of Kaizen or continuous improvement (Cane, 1996) played a very important role in many successes either in education or in the economic spheres. Though the present curriculum serves the purpose of producing good students, there is always room for improvement because technological changes occur everywhere. The status quo that brings bread on the table today, does not guarantee that it would bring the same thing in the future. Kaizen helps Japan to achieve the status of the second largest economic power of the world after the United States. South Korea had also benefited from following the same path as the Japanese.

If we were to look at the academic records of the Korean students, as has been mentioned earlier, and relate it to economic development, it is not surprising that they have achieved tremendous success in many high-tech products. Their Hyundai motorcars are sleek and beautiful and they have become best sellers in many countries around the world. If we were to observe the attitude of the students in South Korea regarding education, we would understand why they have achieved so much within a short time. University students are willing to wait for hours before the library doors are opened so that they could get the books they want to refer. Do we have the same attitude among our university students?

In order to have continuous improvement in schools, teachers should have opportunities to better themselves through workshops, which are held regularly

in schools, district, state or the Ministry of Education. Teachers should be encouraged to have post-graduate degrees, namely masters and doctorates in various disciplines. With this knowledge, the skills would come along and they would shape the change in the attitude of the teachers.

3. The principal's role as the curriculum manager

The core business of the teaching profession is teaching. With a good curriculum combined with effective teaching, students would be able to acquire knowledge and skills, which in turn enables them to achieve academic excellence. With the introduction of English as the language of instruction for mathematics and science, the responsibility of the principal becomes heavier. The principal needs to master the English language. At the beginning, teachers would encounter some difficulties not only delivering the lessons in English, but also in making sure the students understand what the teachers tell them. If these students were already weak in English, they would surely find it very difficult to understand what their teachers were saying. It is the duty of the principals to ensure that teachers and students would master the English language as soon as possible.

The principals need to get the support and help from the English teachers and other teachers who have a good command of the English language. They should draw a blueprint for achieving the objectives and they should plan for workshops, not only for the teachers but also for the students. The earlier they master the English language the better for them and their schools. Time should not be the constraint in achieving the objectives, while maintaining office hours would not help this project.

The success of this mission is not entirely dependent upon the principals, teachers and students; it also depends on the cooperation of all members of society. The principals should, first of all, get the cooperation of society especially parents. Parents may be able to understand the vision of the schools, through parent-teacher gatherings and meetings. Local religious teachers should be brought into the project to explain to parents regarding the importance of mastering the English language. At the same time, in the classrooms, principals and headmasters, with the help of senior mathematics and science teachers, should continuously supervise and help teachers to teach effectively.

4. The principal as a philosopher

A principal should have a philosophy of education as the basis of his leadership. This philosophy should be in line with the types of leadership that the principal practices. Although a principal might say that he/she does not have a philosophy, actually he/she does not know it. He/she has all the time been doing things based on certain philosophies. A principal might be dominant in applying the philosophy of realism and idealism, but the least dominant in existentialism (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). Another principal might be inclined towards pragmatism and experimentalism but the least in idealism. By not knowing our

philosophical inclinations, we might not be able to make full use of them in the management of our schools. By knowing them, we might manipulate our inclinations so as to suit the requirement of certain tasks.

In a globalised environment, a change in our philosophical inclination from the more traditional to the more unconventional might help us to proceed further from the norms. In other words, in order to win a competition in a knowledge-based economy surrounded by a lot of information, the unconventional people would have an edge over others. As a principle, we should be more existentialist to face the challenges of the globalised environment. This philosophy is relatively new as it developed after the First World War. A Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard laid the foundation of this philosophy (Abdul Rahman Aroff and Zakaria Kasa 1995). He wrote about an inner human freedom to lead their lives. At first, it was unpopular, but after the Second World War, it received the attention of the public. According to Van Scottes, Kraft and Haas (1979), this philosophy was too individualistic and dependent too much on subjective factors such as intuition, insight and emotion. These factors were disliked by many because they are not based on the real tangible world. They are based on dreams. Probably they might be so, but these dream personalities were the ones who made paradigm shifts in the past. If we examine closer human history, we would find that inventions were made by these creative people.

People who subscribe to this philosophy give ample freedom to their followers to experiment and to be absurd. This is allowing creativity to play havoc and in the process, solutions to difficult problems are found and new inventions were made. This existentialist stand is useful in producing software engineers, the invention of airplanes, motorcars, and countless number of things. By knowing all forms of general philosophies and the philosophies of education, a principal should be able to understand the characteristics of teachers and students, so that their potentials could be exploited to the maximum.

If everyone is allowed to think from various view-points, we would be more creative. More creativity means more productivity.

5. Knowledge management for principals

In a globalised world, knowledge has become the key to progress. In order to be ahead or at least on par with others we must innovate. Innovations need knowledge. Whenever a change or an innovation is to be made, the old knowledge might come handy and when it is combined with new knowledge, a successful change could be made. At other times old knowledge is discarded and new knowledge is utilized. Before a principal could manage knowledge, first of all, he/she must be knowledgeable. In a globalised environment, principals with knowledge are vital for a healthy development of education. Peter Drucker states that "knowledge has become the key economic resource and perhaps even the

only-source of competitive advantage" (Drucker, 2000). In an organisation, the only irreplaceable capital an organisation possess is the knowledge and ability of its people. The productivity of that capital depends on how effectively people share their competence with those who can use it. Therefore, in the educational environment, this is not only true for the teachers but they are also true for the students. If a principal could use the knowledge and skills of the teachers and the students, he/she can achieve tremendous success in whatever they as a group plan to do. When these characteristics have become part and parcel of individuals in later life after school, the country would be ready to face all the challenges of a globalised world.

6. Training for the principal/headmaster

Teachers who have been selected to head schools without any form of training faced a dilemma. They are being thrown into the deep end of the pool. If they somehow know how to swim, they will survive, but if they don't they will drown. This analogy was quite often used in the past and it has become a cliché. At present, principals/headmasters in Malaysia are provided training by the Institut Aminudin Baki in Genting Highlands. Most principals possess a post graduate qualification.

The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has introduced a programme to train teachers who are potential principals. Candidates have to go through a three-tiered interview where tests related aptitude, knowledge, skills as well as physical tests were administered. Only those candidates who have passed all the tests would be selected to follow the Master of Principalship program at the Principal's Institute in the University of Malaya. This rigorous selection should enable the Ministry to select the best candidates for the program, based on the criteria set up by the Ministry. Questions that arose are:-, will these candidates be able to fulfill the expectations of the program? Are they equipped with the mental set-up that would bring about positive changes in the education system? Are they creative enough in find solutions to the problems of the future, where the environment would be different from what they are used to? Are they open-minded enough to accept new and radical ideas when there is a necessity to do so?

Educationists who have post-graduate degrees need to refresh themselves continuously through either providing their services in workshops or renew their skills by attending workshops. The process of continuous improvement or kaizen would encourage further progress in the career.

Paradigm Shifts and Attitude Change

There has been a paradigm shift in the education system. The switch from Bahasa

Malaysia to English in teaching mathematics and science is a paradigm shift, which surprised many people. In the past, to talk about using English in some subjects was taboo, but now people are talking freely about the need to learn other world languages. The attitude of the people has begun to change. They become more open to change and new ideas but this may not be sufficient. Change in attitude is not easy. It needs continuous effort. A teacher who is embedded in the old ways would feel very uncomfortable to new ways of doing things. There are many teachers in this situation. The principal who is aware of this problem should become the catalyst for change. Training and retraining should be able to help teachers to face change.

Programs to change negative attitudes of students should be designed and implemented with the help of parents. New and better ways of effective learning should be inculcated into our students' learning behaviour. Communication and knowledge seeking skills should be developed. Tolerance towards other point of views but at the same time able to argue out our opinions is necessary to survive and thrive in the new environment. Self-discipline, patience and assertion should be prominent features of our students. The values that are embedded in our school curriculum should be revamped and reanalysed in line with the changes that are happening outside. The curriculum for Islamic religious studies should also be revamped to fulfill the needs of the present and the future.

A lot of changes are happening and more changes will occur in the future before Malaysia could secure a firm place in the globalised world. These changes should be based on principles that Malaysians subscribe to. Our schools, especially primary and secondary, have a vital role to play. The success of a nation depends on the products of our school and society. Therefore great care should be taken to ensure that our teachers are properly trained because they play an important part in molding our future generations.

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