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JAMIL FAROOQUI

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MALAYSIAN WOMEN IN EDUCATION, MARRIAGE AND THE WORKFORCE (1957-2008)

Rohaiza Rokis

Introduction
Traditionally, Malaysian women have been involved in public activities. However, wars and upheavals, particularly in the early twentieth century, retarded their active participation in the country. After gaining independence in 1957, women's status and position started to improve. The 1970s were the point when many women got involved in employment. The establishment of many factories by international companies together with the New Economic Policy (NEP) by the Malaysian Government further encouraged women into the workforce.

In this paper, I focus on the life of women in Malaysia under the forces of colonialism and industrialism. The focal discussion here is to disclose the historical development of Malaysian women in education and employment, as well as marriage. How has education changed the position of Malaysian women? How has the workforce transformation affected women? What were women's issues in dealing with employment and the household?

Women and Education in Malaysia
Before the coming of the British in the eighteenth century, education was taught by religious teachers. These religious schools or sekolah pondok taught pupils to recite the Qur'an in Arabic and to read and write in Jawi, the Malay script. These schools were very popular among the majority of the general Malay population due to their close attachment to the Islamic teachings. More male students were sent to...