

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

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INTRODUCTION

- Peace-Building as synonymous to Reconciliation (Harper and Kelly (2004))
- Ropers (1995) refers peace-building as peace-making:
- *“Peacemaking is understood to mean the attempt to tackle some concrete problem in a society that generally begins with a difference of interest, proceeds in the form of negotiation, and in the end – if successfully dealt with- leads to an agreement concerning the conduct of both sides....Its aim is a change in the social structures underlying the conflict, and a change in the attitudes of the parties to the conflict”*
- Reconciliation is a process of addressing conflictual fractured relationship (Lederach, 1997).
- Reconciliation is a voluntary act that cannot be imposed (IDEA, 2003)

WORKING DEFINITION OF RECONCILIATION

- Developing a Shared Vision of an Interdependent and Fair Society – Each individual may have diverse ideas, goals, and aspirations BUT in the realization of the vision and goal of a nation one should be willingly subjected to the collective of majority or entire society.
- Acknowledging and Dealing With The Past – The past is an important factor in forging ahead. The truth, pain as well as suffering of the past must be accepted and acknowledged and necessary restitution must be put in place in order to correct the error of the past.
- Building Positive Relationships – The restitution of mutual aggression, conflict addressing issues of trust, intolerance prejudices as a process that could lead to accepting differences and commonalities, embracing as well as engaging with people who are different to us.

WORKING DEFINITIONS OF RECONCILIATION

- Significant Cultural and Attitudinal Change – Every citizen should be ready to change in the way they relate with other group, accept to change their attitudes toward one another. A culture of mutual respect for human differences and human rights should be an affair for all.
- Substantial Social, Economics and Political Change – The social, economics and political structures which could rise to the estrangement and conflict are identified, modified or addressed as well as transformed.

ASPECTS OF RECONCILIATION

- Psychological Perspectives – The traumatic experiences during maltreatment of victim of oppression. Reconciliation through process of healing, counseling, acceptance of error and forgiveness of the past. (Lone & Montgomery; Hamber 1998)
- Social Perspectives – Stereotyping and labelling that justify atrocities. Reconciliation through conflict resolution and cross cultural understanding between ethnic groups. (Starcken, 1999, Kaufman and Stuart, 2001; and Brouneus, 2003).
- Political Perspectives – Reconciliation is responsibility of the state. Recognition of attributes of political parties, political cultures and political attitudes. (Brouneus, 2003).
- Economic Perspectives – Economic imbalances, corruptions and mishandling of economic management. Reconciliation through efficient and transparent mechanism and economic system.
- Juridical Perspectives – Acts, clauses within the constitution. Juridical efficacy for thorough and transparent process should be in place for reconciliation.
- Religious Perspective – Reconciliation between men and God. Reconciliations focus on compassion, mercy and forgiveness. (Bigger, Harakas, 2001; Lambourne, 2002)

INSTRUMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- Truth Telling
- The Role of Forgiveness
- Economic Compensation
- Symbiotic Action and Commemoration
- Repairing Injustice and Restoring Moral Order

INDICATORS FOR RECONCILIATION

- UN Commission Report for Rwanda (2010)
- Political Culture
- Human Security
- Citizenship and Identity
- Understanding The Past
- Traditional Justice
- Social Cohesion

RESEARCH

- QUALITATIVE
- PURPOSEIVE SAMPLING
- MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS USING HANDPHONE

“In your opinion what is national reconciliation? Please give your honest answer!”

- RATE OF RETURN 52 OUT OF 55 PARTICIPANTS (95% RATE OF RETURN)
- ANALYSIS MANUAL CATEGORIZATION AND CLASSIFICATION
- CREDIBILITY: ? (NEED FOR INTER-RATER, TIME IS THE LIMITATION)

RESEARCH: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

GENDER	Male	34 (65%)
	Female	18 (35%)
ETHNIC GROUP	Malay	39 (75%)
	Chinese	4 (8%)
	Indian	5 (9%)
	Others	4 (8%)
	AGE	20
30	7 (13%)	
40	18 (35%)	
50	19 (37%)	
60	7 (13%)	
OCCUPATION	Public Sector	31 (60%)
	Private Sector	18 (35%)
	Student	3 (5%)

RESEARCH MAJOR THEMES

- TABLE 2
- Examples of Responses for Major Themes
- Race Relations

“It means people of different race groups coming together without any prejudices and ill feelings toward one another in the spirit of being Malaysians. In short putting the country’s well being before the race.” (DU2)

“Is about political parties, NGOs, influential groups, govt bodies removing their differences and come together toward a common agenda for the betterment of the people and the country.” (DU36)

- Politics

“Related to the racial problems that arose as a result of the campaigning during PRU13. It is about all Malaysians coming back together in harmony, minimizing racial differences.” (DU15)

EXAMPLE FROM RESPONSES

- Politics

“Persolannya sekarang, kenapa perlu timbul national reconciliation selepas PRU13. Apakah sebelum ini tidak ada usaha untuk tindakan penyatuan? Apakah sebab PRU13 berlaku kemerosotan undi cina dan orang cina hendak jatuhkan UMNO dan tukar kerajaan takut mungkin PRU14 yang akan datang kerajaan akan tumbang jadi pemimpin cadangkan national reconciliation. Kenapa NR dipentingkan dari sebenarnya mengambil langkah Muslim or Malay reconciliation? Apakah pemimpin zaman Tunku Rahman dan Mahathir tidak ada usaha untuk penyatuan? Apakah usaha pemimpin mewujudkan DEB, lagu kebangsaan, dan rancangan lain termasuklah satu Malaysia sudah memampakkan kegagalan. Apakah kita nampak rakyat Cina bangkit dan rasa tamak dan tidak mengengang budi dan lupa sejarah? Apakah bangsa Melayu takut dan akan sentiasa bargain dan memberi/mengalah? Tengok tengoklah lah isu isu ini.” (DU44)

- Economics

“If I were to see from east and west Malaysia as in cost of doing business... there should not be any differences and additional cost for Sabah and Sarawak...if I were to see from an individual's opportunity economically and non-economically... meritocracy should take place both for bumi and non-bumi... and also quota according to Federal Constitution.” (DU35)

EXAMPLE FROM RESPONSES

- Legal/Juridical

“A mutual respect and understanding to uphold rukun Negara, recognition of the rights of bumiputra, Islam as the official religion of the Federation (there should not be any interference in any manners by the non-muslim). All these elements are prerequisites/fundamental ….”(DU32)

- Equality

“Considering tolerance for equality based on the status quo.”(DU8)

- Nation Building

“Is to get back together. Berbaik-baik. In a couple relationship when you reconcile you get together. So the people get together putting aside all the political differences and animosity towards a better understanding of each other and working towards nation building.”(DU10)

- Education

“Uniting the nation as a whole. Ironing out issues that divide us especially racial ones. But doing away with vernacular school is not one of them.”(DU40)

- Others

“National reconciliation is bullshit. Loads of crap. That is my answer.”(DU14)

CONCLUSION

- In Malaysia context it is more on strengthening the unity.
- *“One can only reconcile when there is a separation /break. So is there a break?” (DU41)*
- Ideas and inputs on reconciliation can be used to understand on national issues but not perceived as we are at the verge of breaking up as a society.
- *“One reconcile if there is a high degree of conflict i.e in political ideologies, If there is nothing being done i.e apartheid in South Africa. In Malaysia nothing of that sort. Merely emotional politics! So actually to discuss further and government is willing to amend constitution and for the benefit of all races.” (DU52)*
- Peace-building among races should be an agenda for unity.

“Is about promoting national solidarity after a divisive election campaign and process. It is a challenge for people at all levels of the society to do something positive towards national unity. There are good people in every society, community, or race, give due recognition is a start.” (DU34)