

EDUCATION AS A CATALYST TOWARDS REALISING THE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF MALAYSIA: CASE STUDY OF THE EAST COAST ECONOMIC REGION

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Abstract

As contained in her national development mission, Malaysia is expected to become a developed and high income economy by 2020. A mission favourably referred to as the *Vision 2020*. The realisation of such a noble goal will not come on a silver platter. Perhaps this awareness underscores the identification of certain sectors of the economy by the Malaysian government as key to achieve this development target. And education, to generate innovative knowledge for sustained economic growth, is one of the sectors. To achieve the status of a developed economy can be hard, especially in the midst of deep-seated development disparities among regions in the economy. Removing development imbalances among regions is believed to have positive impact on long-term economic growth. It also reduces income inequalities among citizens and increases their livelihood chances, thereby leading to higher living standards. For this reason, the Malaysian government has adopted a regional development approach, which seeks to correct regional development imbalances for accelerated and sustained development. This paper examines one such region—the east coast economic region (ECER)—where education has been seen as one of the important sectors to bridge the development gap between this underdeveloped region and the other relatively developed regions in Malaysia.

Keywords: Education, Innovation, knowledge, National development, Vision 2020, Regional development approach, ECER.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the east coast economic region (ECER)—where education has been seen as one of the important sectors to bridge the development gap between this underdeveloped region and the other relatively developed regions in Malaysia. Education has been identified by the Malaysian government as one of the key sectors to propel the economy up the development ladder. Perhaps the need to generate innovative knowledge for sustained economic growth makes education indispensable sector of the economy. As contained in her national development mission, Malaysia is expected to become a developed and high income economy by 2020. A mission favourably referred to as the *Vision 2020*. The realisation of such a noble goal will not come on a silver platter. To achieve the status of a developed economy can be hard, especially in the midst of deep-seated development disparities among regions in the economy.

Removing development imbalances among regions is believed to have positive impact on long-term economic growth. It also reduces income inequalities among citizens and increases their livelihood chances, thereby leading to higher living standards. For this reason, the Malaysian government has adopted a regional development approach, which seeks to correct regional development imbalances for accelerated and sustained development. In what ways can education help the development agenda of Malaysia as a whole? And in what ways can education be used to close the development gap between the ECER and other relatively developed regions in Malaysia? The aim of paper is to address these questions.

2 IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Education is an essential ingredient in the development process. In other words, education plays a crucial role in producing the requisite manpower to support the development agendas of nations. In recognition of its vital role, governments, the world over, are continuously enhancing formal, non-

formal and informal education in their countries. And the sole aim is to arrive at a comprehensive, effective and relevant educational system that will meet their current development needs. This is because education, with reference to UN Agenda 21, is an important tool to address important development issues such as rural development, health care, community participation, HIV/AIDS, the environment and wider ethical/or legal issues such as human values and human rights (Zadorsky, 2006, p. 64).

To give much more relevance to the conventional belief in the development prowess of education, United Nations Organisation (UN) has on many occasions (examples include the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 & World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002) highlighted the need for governments and policymakers to give education the attention and support it deserves so as to harness its positive impacts on development targets. At the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, issues concerning the sustainability of the planet were discussed. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002, it was agreed that through education sustainability concerns can be placed at the centre of the learning context. As a result, the participating “governments agreed to reorient national education systems to a vision of sustainability that links economic well-being with respect for cultural diversity, the Earth and its resources” (UNESCO, 2007, p. 6).

The Earth Summit culminated in the publication of the Agenda 21. And chapter 36 of the Agenda 21 document on “education, training and public awareness” specifically sought to address issues about education and sustainability by:

1. *Promot[ing] and improve[ing] the quality of education:* i.e., to refocus lifelong education on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values needed by citizens to improve their quality of life;
2. *Reorient[ing] the curricula:* i.e., [starting] from pre-school to university, education must be rethought and reformed to be a vehicle of knowledge, thought patterns and values needed to build a sustainable world;
3. *Rais[ing] public awareness of the concept of sustainable development:* This will make it possible to develop enlightened, active and responsible citizenship locally, nationally and internationally; and
4. *Train[ing] the workforce:* Continuing technical and vocational education of directors and workers, particularly those in trade and industry, will be enriched to enable them to adopt sustainable modes (UNESCO, 2009, p.7).

These clarion calls by UN have culminated in the General Assembly adopting, at its 57th session in December 2002, Resolution 57/254 that declared the period 2005–2014 as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). This initiative has emphasized the vital role of education in achieving sustainable development for the world’s economies. And no other agency than United Nations Education, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was mandated to over and lead the Decade. This declaration has been premised on the firm conviction that the DESD will present the platform to promote the notion that a more sustainable and just global community can be created “through different forms of education, public awareness and training activities”. Also, the framework for the Decade underscores the crucial role of education and life skills programmes to enable “communities to devise sustainable local solutions to problems related to poverty and vulnerability” (UNESCO, 2007, p. 5).

The main of the DESD, however, is stated in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 59/237, which urges “Governments to consider the inclusion... of measures to implement the Decade in their respective education systems and strategies and, where appropriate, national development plans’. In that regard, the DESD seeks “to integrate values, activities and principles that are inherently linked to sustainable development into all forms of education and learning and help usher in a change in attitudes, behaviours and values to ensure a more sustainable future in social, environmental and economic terms”(ibid). The DESD initiative seems to postulate, based on its essential features, that Governments and policymakers should model their national education systems on (1) The principles and values that underlie sustainable development; (2) The well-being of all three realms of sustainability i.e., environment, society and economy; (3) Lifelong learning; (4) Local and cultural

relevance; and (5) Local needs, perceptions and conditions, with the belief that “fulfilling local needs often has international effects and consequences”(ibid, p. 6).

3 EDUCATION AND MALAYSIA’S DEVELOPMENT GOALS

3.1 Malaysia’s Development Goals

Malaysia is believed to have made giant strides in nation-building. That is, in developing its economy and improving the quality of life of its people. Malaysia’s real gross domestic product (GDP) growth, according to Economic Planning Unit (EPU), has been steady for over 4 decades. That is, GDP has grown by an average of 6.5 per cent per annum from 1957 to 2005(EPU, 2006, p. 3). And it has been argued that this GDP growth rate happens to be among the highest growth rates among Malaysia’s peers. Similarly, GDP per capita in current prices has grown by 7.0 per cent per annum with the same period, which saw enormous improvements in the people’s quality of life. Also, substantial gains have been realised in the fields of education, health, infrastructure and industry. By such gains, “a poor, mainly agrarian country has been transformed into a diversified and relatively prosperous nation” (EPU, 2006, p. 3).

These development achievements so far realised in Malaysia have been attributed to the foresight of the country’s leaders. In other words, good governance has created the enabling environment for the economy to take shape. Specifically, three key national policy frameworks, i.e., the New Economic Policy (NEP), 1971-1990, the National Development Policy (NDP), 1991-2000 and the National Vision Policy (NVP), 2001-2010 have been formulated “based on a profound understanding of the needs and challenges of the time, as well as the responses required for the nation...[which]...culminated in the launch of Vision 2020 in 1991, outlining the aim of attaining developed nation status by the year 2020” (ibid). In the Vision 2020, the core objectives of national unity, growth and social equity underlying the three earlier development frameworks (i.e., NEP, NDP and NVP) are much more re-emphasised, as the country is at the mid-way in its journey towards 2020.

3.2 The Main Challenges to Attain these Development Goals

Although much success has been attained in the preceding years, there are some development challenges that must be tackled to pave the way for the fullest realisation of the Vision 2020. The first challenge is to ensure that the country experiences sustained economic growth and to constantly improve on growth performance in the coming years. This is essential especially in this era of a competitive and knowledge-based global economy. The second challenge concerns producing and maintaining the requisite manpower to support the anticipated kind of economic growth rate. And the third challenge has to do with income and wealth inequalities, which are quite considerable and have been blamed on the “persistent disparities in inter- and intra-ethnic distribution as well as differences between rural and urban incomes and between less developed and more developed regions” (EPU, 2006, p. 4). Still on inequalities, EPU (2006) has perhaps realised the potential threat inherent in widespread inequalities (in livelihood chances and incomes) among the citizens to achieving the national development objectives when it stressed that:

The creation of a truly developed Malaysian society must be premised not only on a resilient and competitive economy, but also on the basis of equity and inclusion for all groups. While economic growth and dynamism must be vigorously pursued, gross disparities in economic opportunities and livelihoods must not be allowed to persist and to jeopardise the very foundations of national development (p. 4).

Again, the Malaysian Government has seen the need to help the citizens cultivate a first-class mindset, and to fine-tune the existing cultural norms, values and social institutions to the country’s economic development aspirations. It is believed that this will help avoid the “danger of the country possessing first-class infrastructure but third-class mentality”. This goal, we believe, can be attained by using the country’s educational system (and at all levels i.e., formal, informal & non-formal) as medium to transmit the kind of mindset required of the citizens. In spite of such challenges, as outline above, the country is committed to the National Mission, i.e., becoming a strong, developed and united nation by 2020. And with such commitments, the Government knows that it has to pursue policies and programmes that will enhance the country’s capacity to compete globally, improve national integration,

and reduce widespread income and wealth inequalities among its citizens and development disparities among the regions—an environment, we posit, will support the course of a productive and competitive economy.

3.3 Education is Critical to Tackle these Development Challenges

Malaysia's economy has maintained a steady growth rate, as its real gross domestic product (GDP) has grown at an average of 5.8 per cent per annum from 1991 to 2010 (EPU, 2010, p. 34). The education system is believed to have contributed partly to this strong economic growth, especially in manpower development, which is required to support economic development activities. This has long been recognised by the Malaysian Government that is why human resources development had formed the main thrust of the first Malaysian Plan (1966-70). And it was agreed that education would be key to doing just so. In recognition of its importance to national development, the Education Committee Report of 1957 recommended, among others, the expansion of secondary and technical education to meet the human resources needs of the country (EPU 1965, pp-142-43). Since independence therefore, much attention has been given to improve the educational system to meet the development needs of the country. In support of the key role education (particularly higher education) in social and economic development process, some studies have argued that not only can the educational establishment produce positive economic impact, but also national integration and unity (Akpan, p. 293). Also, it is believed that the need for regional alliances in an era of increasingly emerging 'new regionalism' paradigm¹ has made higher education an essential part of such new system of governance (Yepes, p. 84).

In order to achieve the national development vision, the Malaysian Government has sought to maintain strong annual economic growth rate, which is balanced with equitable distribution of the benefits accruing from such sustained growth. To realise this goal, there is the need to produce the right calibre of human resources to meet the requirements for sustained social and economic growth. Through the education system, the Government has committed to the following strategies:

1. To continually upgrade the skills of workers through refresher courses and programmes;
2. To provide more educational infrastructure to increase school enrolments, basic & higher levels;
3. To revise, from time to time, the curriculum to meet the development needs of the country; and
4. To raise literacy rate among the citizens to increase their chances of employability for improved livelihoods. This will particularly help reduce income inequalities among the ethnic groups and regions.

With reference to upgrading skills of workers, it has been indicated in the 9th Malaysian Plan progress document that the quality of the labour force has increased appreciably, as the portion of the labour force having attained tertiary education has increased from 13.9 per cent in 2000 to 20 per cent in 2005 (EPU, 2006, pp. 239-40). To do implement this strategy, the Government has introduced what has been termed *the double-shift training programme* in 2005, which seeks to achieve two goals, that is, to increase school leavers' access to further training and to increase the supply of skilled human resource. Public training institutions and state skills development centres (SDCs) have been entrusted with the responsibility to carry out this programme, and in effect about 49 training institutions are involved in conducting this programme. In addition, the Government, under Skills Development Fund, has thus-far disbursed a total sum of RM 644.6 million to 135,496 trainees, as way of financial assistance. Under the *Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad* (PSMB) Apprenticeship Scheme i.e., Human Resources Development Apprenticeship Scheme, 286,669 skilled workers were produced (EPU, 2006, p. 248). Also, courses for the trainers have been undertaken to improve quality of instructions under the programme. This strategy is referred to as the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) and Skills Development Programme for Instructors and Vocational Training Officers. Finally, more employers have been encouraged, under the banner of the PSMB, to retrain and upgrade the skills of their employees.

¹New regionalism' paradigm is explained as a multidimensional form of integration, which includes economic, political, social, and cultural aspects and thus goes far beyond the goal of creating region-based free trade regimes or security alliances of earlier regionalisms.

Much more efforts have been made to increase the intake of students at all levels of the educational system, that is, formal, informal and non-formal level. This is to ensure that much more skilled labour is produced, as many people get enrolled. For instance, at the skills training level, 20 public training institutions for pre-employment skills training has been establishment and 10 have been upgraded. This effort has led to an output of 38,765 in 2005 from the public training institutions. Furthermore, intake into courses at *Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia* (Malaysian Skills Certificate) Level 4 and diploma in advanced public training institutions increased from 7,110 in 2005 to 29,840 in 2009 (EPU, 2010, p. 47). In addition, state skills development centres (SDCs) also expanded their capacity to train more skilled workers with intake for pre-employment courses of 11,060 in 2005.

Enrolment at the pre-school and primary education level, that is, children aged four to six years, has increased to 702,897 in 2005, of which 51.3 per cent emanates from the public sector. Meanwhile, general enrolment in primary schools has increased to 3.0 million in 2005. Such increment could be attributed chiefly to the construction of 9,930 new classrooms, which has improved the class-classroom ratio from 1:0.90 in 2000 to 1:0.92 in 2005 (EPU, 2006, pp. 240-41). Similarly, enrolment in Government and Government-assisted secondary schools stood at 2.1 million in 2005, and 72,827 in the vocational and technical schools. Class-classroom ratio improved from 1:0.83 in 2000 to 1:0.85 in 2005, due to the construction of 9,936 classrooms. Under the Special Education Integration Programme children with special needs have been integrated into the normal school system, that is, the visually and hearing impaired children.

At the tertiary level, efforts have been made to increase access to higher education. To do this, Government has increased the enrolment capacity of the existing universities. Again, new universities, university colleges, branch campuses, polytechnics and community colleges have been established. Consequently, enrolment in tertiary institutions (both public and private) stood at 731,698 in 2005. Not only did the Government embark on expanding capacity of educational institutions to enrol more students locally, but also more students are sponsored to study abroad. For example, about 11,900 students were sponsored by Government in 2005 to study in institutions of higher education abroad (EPU, 2006, pp. 243-44). As per quality enhancement, the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF) has been developed with the sole purpose to ensure that standards of qualifications and quality of delivery in the educational sector are met. In pursuit of this objective, new programmes are designed from time to time in close consultation with industry while institutions of higher education are required to review their curricula every three to five years.

4 THE CASE OF THE EAST COAST ECONOMIC REGION (ECER)

Poverty poses a great challenge to sustainable development, as the ability of the poor population to participate effectively in the economy is weak. With this knowledge and as results of intensified efforts by the Malaysian Government to scale back poverty incidence, much progress has been attained in the fight against absolute poverty. Thus, hardcore poverty has gone down considerably to 0.7% in 2009 from 1.2% in 2004. Also, the incidence of overall poverty stood at 3.8% in 2009 down from 5.7% in 2004. These reductions, the EPU argued, are due largely to the implementation of targeted poverty eradication programmes in both rural and urban areas (EPU, 2010, p. 48). Conducting skills training, raising literacy rate through formal, informal and non-formal educational levels may have contributed significantly to the poverty reduction success story in Malaysia. Nevertheless, poverty gap among the ethnic groups is wide and development disparity among the various regions is high (See tables 1 & 2). It is against this backdrop that the Malaysian Government has embarked upon the ambitious integrated regional development programme seeking to bridge the development gap existing between the ECER among the various regions to enhance efforts toward attaining the national development vision 2020.

Table 1: Incidence of Poverty And Hardcore Poverty
By Ethnic Group, Rural & Urban Areas 1999 And 2004
(%)

	1999			2004		
	Bumiputera	Chinese	Indian	Bumiputera	Chinese	Indian
Hardcore Poverty	2.9	0.2	0.3	1.9	0.1	0.3
Urban	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.7	neg ¹	0.2
Rural	4.4	0.4	0.5	3.3	0.3	0.5
Overall Poverty	12.4	1.2	3.5	8.3	0.6	2.9
Urban	5.1	0.8	2.4	4.1	0.4	2.4
Rural	17.5	2.7	5.8	13.4	2.3	5.4
Poverty Gap	3.3	0.2	0.7	2.1	0.1	0.6

Source: Adapted from Economic Planning Unit and Department of Statistics – Household Income Surveys, 1999 and 2004.

Notes: neg¹ Less than 0.05 per cent. Table has been modified.

As shown in table 2, the states that constitute the ECER (i.e., Kelantan, Pahang & Terengganu, which are shown in bold with two stars) are among the states posting the highest poverty rates in the country. In fact, Terengganu and Kelantan have the first and second highest rates of poverty in Peninsular Malaysia. Similarly, the state with the highest hardcore poverty rate is Terengganu.

Table 2: Trajectory of Poverty Incidence among the States in Malaysia, 2004

State	House- hold Size	Overall Poverty			Hardcore Poverty		
		Gross PLI (RM)	Per Capita PLI (RM)	Poverty Rate(%)	Gross food PLI(RM)	Per capita PLI(RM)	Hardcore Poverty %
Johor	4.3	634	151	2.0	384	91	0.3
Kedah	4.6	654	143	7.0	402	88	1.3
Kelantan♦♦	5.2	675	130	10.6	438	84	1.3
Melaka	4.4	650	151	1.8	650	151	1.8
Negeri Sembilan	4.2	598	146	1.4	371	90	0.2
Pahang♦♦	4.2	609	147	4.0	392	94	1.0
Pulau Pinang	4.1	615	152	0.3	373	91	neg ²
Perak	4.1	589	144	4.9	371	90	1.1
Perlis	4.2	587	140	6.3	367	87	1.7
Selangor	4.6	726	159	1.0	420	92	neg ²
Terengganu♦♦	5.0	734	148	15.4	469	94	4.4
W. P. K. Lumpur	3.9	713	89	1.5	373	98	0.2
Peninsular Malaysia	4.4	661	152	3.6	398	91	0.7
Sabah ¹	5.2	888	173	23.0	503	97	6.5
Sarawak	4.6	765	167	7.5	482	105	1.1
Malaysia Total	4.5	691	155	5.7	415	93	1.2

Notes:

¹ Includes Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan

neg² Less than 0.05 %

♦♦ Constitute the ECER

Source: Ninth Malaysian Plan, 2006-2010 (table modified)

Using indicators such as social and economic progress to measure development in the various states in Malaysia, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang, which form the Eastern Region, have been ranked the lowest in terms of development (See table 3).

Table 3: Development Composite Index¹ by State, 2005

<i>State</i>	<i>Economic Index</i>	<i>Social Index</i>	<i>Development Composite Index</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Northern Region				
Kedah	95.5	100.2	97.8	9
Perak	99.7	101.2	100.4	7
Perlis	95.0	104.9	99.9	8
Pulau Pinang	109.0	102.4	105.7	2
Central Region				
Melaka	106.4	102.1	104.2	3
Negeri Sembilan	101.8	102.9	102.3	5
Selangor ²	108.4	98.0	103.2	4
Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur	114.4	104.8	109.6	1
Southern Region				
Johor	102.9	98.1	100.5	6
Eastern Region				
Kelantan	91.9	94.4	93.1	13
Pahang	96.3	99.0	97.6	10
Terengganu	91.5	100.8	96.2	12
Sabah ³	82.8	97.2	90.0	14
Sarawak	94.8	98.4	96.6	11
Malaysia	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Source: Economic Planning Unit

Notes: 1 The DCI 2005 is based on 16 indicators.

2 Includes Wilayah Persekutuan Putrajaya.

3 Includes Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan

4.1 Major Factors Underlying Underdevelopment of the ECER

Inadequate human capital is one of the prime culprits for the weak development performance of the ECER. As result, some of the main hurdles identified by the east coast economic regional development council (ECERDC, 2007, Chapter 9) as responsible for the low human capital development underlying low development of the region include the following:

1. Shortage of skilled labour in economic sectors such as agric, fisheries, manufacturing and tourism;
2. Skills mismatches hampering the easing of employment and labour mobility;
3. Extremely weak or nonexistent links among institutions of higher learning, alumni and industry, which results in reduced opportunities for R &D, training and career development;
4. Low capacity of existing educational system in the region to nurture innovativeness and creativity;
5. Low labour productivity, particularly in economic sectors such as agriculture;
6. Low management skills, entrepreneurs etc, and finally
7. Low female labour participation rate in all the three states.

4.2 The Remedies

Delivery of quality education is seen as critical among other remedies to the above-listed development obstacles. For that reason, the educational system has been revamped to be able to produce the requisite manpower needed to support development agenda of the ECER. Through coordinated and vibrant education, ECERDC (2007) believes that the hurdles to sound human capital development can be surmounted, particularly by:

1. Enhancing easy access to quality education at the primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels;
2. Ascertaining the level of supply of professional and skilled workers;
3. Improving skills training to create competitive local entrepreneurs... and a skilled workforce to meet local, regional and national needs;
4. Enhancing tertiary education through qualified local and foreign lecturers, and improved R & D facilities;
5. Encouraging the involvement of women in skills training to ensure improvement in their participation levels in local industries; and
6. Matching educational programmes with industrial needs and requirements (Chapter 9, p. 32).

It is believed that a successful implementation of these strategies will harness (a) Capacity building, (b) Employability, and (c) Production of adequate and appropriate labour force to meet the increasing demands. For that matter, a good number of educational programmes have been designed to facilitate implementing the above-listed remedies. Some examples include the following:

1. *Applied tourism education* seeks to salvage the shortage of professional manpower. Diploma in hotel management, food services and culinary arts is offered by University Technology Mara and certificate courses offered by the 5 skills training centres established in ECER. The aim of this strategy is to produce qualified and enough personnel in the tourism industry;
2. *Applied agriculture education* is designed to produce qualified and adequate personnel in areas of horticulture management, aquaculture, marine fisheries and animal husbandry, biotechnology, forest and herbal production management, and food processing and hygiene;
3. *Applied technical education* designed to produce qualified and adequate manpower in the petrochemical, *halal* products development and management, art and craft design, entrepreneurial skills etc; and
4. *General and academic education and R & D* ensures that there are synergies among basic, college, university, technical and vocational education providers to produce manpower with the requisite skills and in adequate numbers (ibid. p. 34).

Increasing school in-take right from the primary to tertiary levels has been seen as one way of improving human capital in the region. As shown in table 4, enrolment rates at the primary, secondary and pre-university levels, including total school enrolment rate in ECER (relative to its estimated population) are slightly higher than enrolment rates of the nation. This is a deliberate attempt to scale up skilled and adequate manpower to support development of ECER, and to help bring this region at par with the other developed regions in Malaysia.

Table 4: Student Enrolment in Educational Institutions in the ECER, 2005

Education Level	Student enrolment rate in Malaysia %	Student Enrolment (Number of students)				Estimated Population	Student enrolment rate in the ECER %
		Kelantan	Pahang	Terengganu	ECER Total		
Primary	91.7	201,250	52,719	201,458	556,427	570,173	97.6
Lower Sec	84.9	94,227	70,655	95,202	260,084	268,912	96.7
Upper Sec	72.8	64,485	47,103	64,800	176,388	200,500	88.0
Pre-univ	--	11,497	9,425	11,345	32,267	--	--
Polytech/Col	34.9	10,929	11,530	10,562	33,021	172,109	37.9
University/University Colleges	10.8	11,425	10,130	12,456	34,011	487,357	7.0
Total	58.8	393,813	301,562	396,823	1,092,198	1,678,580	64.3

Source: Adapted from ECER's Master Plan (2007; Chapter 9, p. 21)

5 CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the use of education to facilitate development process in Malaysia. The role of education in the attempt to raise ECER to a developed region by 2020, seeking to narrow development disparity between the ECER and the remaining region in Malaysia has also been examined. The paper posits that education is central to the development goals of Malaysia, as producing adequate and requisite human capital is essential in the development process. Nevertheless, there needs to be constant monitoring and evaluation to improve on the quality of education and other training centres so as to ensure quality delivery to meet the increasing need for manpower in the years ahead. R & D will have to be intensified to satisfy the need for innovativeness in increasingly knowledge-based world's economies.

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