
Ulasan Buku Teks Sejarah Malaysia - Perspektif Sabah dan Sarawak

Lampiran 5

KemSMS Sabah & Sarawak

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Kesimpulan

Liputan sejarah Persekutuan Tanah Melayu, Sabah dan Sarawak tidak disampaikan dengan saksama dalam kandungan buku teks Sejarah Malaysia terkini. Fakta-fakta tidak memadai, tidak lengkap dan terdapat juga beberapa maklumat yang tidak tepat.

Dalam menjalankan kajian ini, cabaran utama ialah bagaimana mengulas kandungan buku teks tersebut dengan mengambil kira perspektif Sabah dan Sarawak sedangkan sebahagian besar perspektif Sabah dan Sarawak berasaskan pengaruh budaya yang wujud sebelum 'sejarah moden'; berbeza dengan format pembelajaran sejarah yang sedia ada masa kini.

Buku teks Sejarah terkini menitikberatkan sejarah politik Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, dalam konteks Malaysia, dengan masyarakat pelbagai budaya dan pelbagai kaum, tumpuan adalah kepada sejarah politik sahaja tanpa perhatian yang sama bagi sejarah sosial. Hal ini menyebabkan pelajar dan pembaca gagal untuk memahami wacana sebenar masa lampau Malaysia. Kajian sejarah yang lebih seimbang dapat dicapai dengan memberi perhatian kepada kajian etnologi selain sejarah politik. Satu contoh yang baik sebagai topik di bawah pembelajaran etnologi adalah dengan memperkenalkan sejarah padi dalam buku teks. Melalui sejarah padi dan beras, wacana tentang sejarah Malaysia dapat dikaji bermula dari pra-sejarah dan merangkumi budaya, tradisi, seni, kraf, muzik, kepercayaan, sejarah lisan, seni bina, pertanian, struktur sosial dalam negara, Asia dan seluruh dunia.

Tumpuan terhadap Kesultanan Melayu Melaka sebagai titik rujukan untuk akar tamadun Malaysia gagal untuk mengambil kira sumbangan masyarakat Bumiputra Sabah dan Sarawak, serta peranan penting Orang Asli, orang Cina, orang India, orang kacukan Asia dan Eropah (Eurasian) dan kaum-kaum lain dalam sejarah Malaysia. Oleh itu, buku teks sejarah Malaysia terkini tidak memaparkan sejarah sebenar negara Malaysia yang terdiri daripada pelbagai kaum, budaya dan sejarah sosial. Buku teks Sejarah terkini tidak memberi pembaca pemahaman tentang cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi dalam pembangunan negara, kepentingan menanyakan soalan yang betul dan juga tidak menimbulkan perasaan ingin tahu pembaca. Cara sejarah disampaikan tidak mencerminkan latar belakang sosial Malaysia yang kompleks. Kegagalan untuk mengambil kira konteks dan latar belakang sejarah sosial yang sebenar menimbulkan kekeliruan dan merumitkan penyediaan dasar-dasar kerajaan dimana pengetahuan Sejarah memainkan peranan yang penting dalam penyediaan dasar-dasar tersebut.

Topik penubuhan Persekutuan Malaysia juga didapati berat sebelah terhadap Semenanjung Malaysia. Sumbangan oleh pemimpin Sabah dan Sarawak tidak diiktiraf. Proses rundingan antara pemimpin-pemimpin Persekutuan Tanah Melayu, Sabah dan Sarawak yang amat penting dan

mencabarkan tidak diteliti dan dibincang dengan secukupnya. Hal ini memberi gambaran palsu kepada pembaca sehinggakan pembentukan sebuah negara-bangsa baru dianggap sesuatu yang mudah dan rundingan untuk membentuk Malaysia adalah senang. Memahami serta memberi gambaran sebenar mengenai proses rundingan ini adalah amat penting kerana proses rundingan ini berlarutan hingga kini. Implikasi rundingan juga masih dirasakan sehingga sekarang di mana pihak-pihak yang terlibat ingin memastikan pengiktirafan, keseimbangan dan keharmonian negara terpelihara dan tidak terjejas. Kebanyakan isu yang lalu dan kini di Malaysia dan di tempat lain merupakan permintaan atau kaedah untuk mendapatkan pengiktirafan dan sebahagian besar isu politik didorong oleh keperluan untuk membela maruah dan untuk pengiktirafan.

Tambahan pula, buku teks sejarah gagal menjadi pemangkin untuk pelajar dan pembaca lain membentuk soalan kritikal agar memahami kerumitan evolusi institusi sebuah negara. Sejarah berperanan sebagai petunjuk penting untuk memahami arah pembangunan sesebuah negara. Kajian terperinci dan bermakna tentang tamadun-tamadun lain yang lalu dan majunya sesuatu negara tidak dimasukkan dalam kandungan buku teks. Kini, dunia sedang menuju ke arah dunia multipolar. Kuasa dikongsi dengan negara lain dan kumpulan-kumpulan tertentu. Hal ini menunjukkan bahawa pemahaman terhadap globalisasi adalah penting kerana peranan syarikat-syarikat besar dan kerajaan semakin bertindih. Manakala fokus utama buku teks sejarah terkini adalah tamadun Islam. Ini adalah penting tetapi ia perlu diimbangi dengan pengetahuan mengenai tamadun sejarah dunia yang lain untuk memberi konteks serta menangani isu-isu kontemporari serta cabaran-cabaran yang bakal dihadapi oleh negara. Seperti kata-kata Seymour Martin Lipset, *“Those who only know one country know no country”* yang bermakna “orang-orang yang hanya tahu tentang satu negara tidak tahu apa-apa negara”.

Terdapat kecenderungan untuk menyampaikan sejarah seperti siri-siri cerita moral dalam buku teks sejarah terkini, mungkin untuk meningkatkan perpaduan kumpulan. Cara naratif yang disampaikan dalam buku teks tidak mendalam dan bergerak dalam satu arah. Buku teks tersebut tidak menunjukkan cabaran dalam kehidupan manusia dan tidak menunjukkan terdapatnya tafsiran yang berbeza terhadap sesuatu peristiwa dalam sejarah. Buku teks sejarah tidak mendorong pemikiran kritikal mahupun analisis, dan juga tidak memberi rangsangan untuk pembaca untuk menyoal fakta-fakta yang diberikan. Ini menunjukkan buku teks terkini gagal memenuhi dua tujuan utama dalam pembelajaran dan pengajaran sejarah, iaitu perasaan ingin tahu dan pembentukan soalan yang bermakna.

Format pembelajaran dan pengajaran sejarah dalam buku teks kini banyak mengikuti format atau perspektif Barat iaitu ‘Sistem Kenegaraan’ (Nation-state System). Kebanyakan masalah sama ada politik, kaum, agama, dll yang sedang dihadapi oleh Malaysia telah bertambah teruk akibat pengetahuan sejarah yang terhad dan terkongkong. Pendekatan pengajaran dan pembelajaran sejarah yang berasaskan ‘Sistem Tamadun’ (Civilisation System) turut diabaikan melainkan tumpuan terhadap Tamadun Islam. Sebaliknya, tumpuan yang lebih komprehensif diperlukan. Pendekatan pembelajaran dan pengajaran sejarah terhadap Sistem Tamadun seperti sejarah penduduk pribumi Sabah dan Sarawak serta sejarah Orang Asli adalah penting. Pengiktirafan kewujudan dua sistem yang berbeza ini sebagai sebahagian penting sejarah rasmi Malaysia dapat membantu membentuk “identiti kolektif” Malaysia yang sebenar. Lagipun, “identiti kolektif” Malaysia telah dan terus menjadi satu persoalan yang hangat selama ini. Dalam desakkan untuk mencapai 'kemerdekaan', pemimpin yang lalu telah gagal untuk memberi tumpuan terhadap pembentukan identiti rakyat Malaysia. Justeru itu, rakyat Malaysia masih keliru tentang makna

dan apa atau siapa sebenarnya anak Malaysia, maka timbulnya pertelingkahan mengenai siapa penduduk asal, isu Ketuanan Melayu, isu kaum India dan Cina sebagai pendatang, dan pengabaian hak-hak orang pribumi. Selepas 48 tahun rakyat Malaysia masih bergelut dengan krisis identiti.

Mengapakah ia penting untuk mengesahkan sejarah kita? Ia penting kerana dalam proses mengesahkan sejarah yang dipelajari, pelajar akan mendapati betapa pentingnya sesuatu dakwaan disokong dengan bukti yang kukuh. Adalah penting untuk pelajar mempelajari pembentukan pengetahuan (knowledge formation) serta asas kepada pembelajaran sejarah. Kesemua ini perlu dan amat penting untuk pembentukan minda kritikal dan analitikal.

Mengapakah kita perlu mengetahui sejarah? Kenapa sejarah sering terbabit dalam perbincangan kontemporari? Dalam ceramahnya bertajuk, *“History and the Enterprise of Knowledge”* (Sejarah dan Perusahaan Pengetahuan), Amartya Sen pernah berbincang tentang beberapa motivasi yang berbeza yang mempengaruhi minat orang awam terhadap sejarah. Motivasi tersebut termasuk minat epistemik, sebab-sebab praktikal, dan penelitian identiti. Beliau mendefinisikan minat epistemik sebagai perasaan ingin tahu terhadap masa silam kita, perasaan ingin tahu terhadap sejarah, iaitu cara kita mengesahkan kebenaran terhadap suatu subjek tertentu. Beliau menerangkan sebab-sebab praktikal sebagai hubungan sejarah dalam konteks politik dan pembentukan dasar-dasar. Apabila tindakan dan strategi masa kini dibentuk berdasarkan sejarah yang hanya menjurus kepada kumpulan-kumpulan tertentu, hal ini pasti akan menarik pembalasan hujah-hujah yang juga menggunakan sejarah untuk menyokong kedudukan mereka yang dipinggirkan. Ini secara langsung akan melihatkan mereka yang terjejas oleh pertikaian itu terpaksa memihak kepada sesuatu identiti yang mungkin berasaskan sejarah atau pertingkaian masa lampau yang diwariskan tanpa permintaan mereka. Penelitian identiti pula ialah bagaimana sejarah mempengaruhi persepsi terhadap identiti kita masing-masing; di mana kita mendapat perasaan kekitaan (sense of belonging) serta mengenal diri kita sendiri dengan lebih baik, di mana kesetiaan dengan kumpulan-kumpulan identiti ini diperolehi berasaskan latarbelakang sejarah yang sama dan berkaitan.

Dalam penelitian identiti Malaysia, perasaan kekitaan ini sukar dicapai memandangkan masyarakat kita terdiri daripada pelbagai kaum, agama, budaya-budaya dan tradisi yang berbeza. Latarbelakang sejarah yang berbeza merumitkan proses mencorak identiti dimana semua warganegara Malaysia dapat mencapai perasaan kekitaan ini. Oleh itu, adalah penting agar rakyat Malaysia menerima hakikat bahawa latar belakang sejarah masyarakat Malaysia adalah pelbagai dan berbeza. Namun demikian, semangat kekitaan masih boleh dicapai dan identiti sebenar Malaysia dapat dicorak berdasarkan masa dan konteks apabila Malaysia dibentuk iaitu pada 16 September 1963.

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to review the current KBSM based Malaysian secondary school History textbooks in the perspective of Sabah and Sarawak, and offer suggestions to the proposed KSSM curriculum which will be implemented in 2014 leading to History becoming a compulsory pass subject in SPM. History is important in that it is used to validate our identities and origins; it influences the country's development, and fosters a sense of belonging. This paper looks at the accuracy, balance, fairness of the contents of the textbooks, and also on practical issues in teaching and presentation format in the textbooks, with the hope that the study of history in Malaysian school in the future will be more reflective of Malaysia's multiracial, ethnic and religious background thus providing a more balanced discourse on Malaysia's history. "Biasness" and what this means in the understanding of history and how this foster critical thinking has not been mentioned in the textbooks; and that the opinions and views of individuals are influenced by various factors including political affiliation, religious views, social class and others.

Under Tingkatan 1 textbook, out of 70 sources cited only five sources specifically referred to Sarawak and four sources on Sabah; similar limited sources are reflected in Tingkatan 2, 3, 4 and 5 textbooks. In referring to the Curriculum, it failed to acknowledge that when teaching History the more varied the historical sources the richer the learning experience. The analysis also found errors in referencing of sources thus raising doubts as to the veracity of the contents of the textbooks and efficacy of the research and editing process. This raises the question of how and why the sources were selected and not others, and the efficacy of the whole process of preparation and research for the textbooks contents. The contents and general context of the textbooks skew towards that of Peninsula Malaysia. The number of pages dedicated to Sabah (11.8%) and Sarawak (14.1%) is much lower compared to Peninsula Malaysia (60.7%). Despite Sabah and Sarawak being a treasure trove for ethnology studies, very little coverage (15 pages for Sarawak, 16 pages for Sabah out of 205 pages) has been made in the textbooks on this.

Ethnology explains the relationships between cultures, races, differences in mind, body and mode of living – all of which are important knowledge to leaders as they deal with the affairs of the people and the country, and helps individuals to understand and respect others. Background of other races is hardly mentioned resulting in textbooks that lack depth, cross-cultural empathy and diversity that reflect the real history of Malaysia. The role of Chinese communities in the cultural transformation, social, economic, formalized level of political activities and development, which are historical antecedent to the present day political structure of Sarawak, is given minimal mention. Inaccuracies such as origins of the names Sarawak and Sabah are found in the textbook. Prehistoric influence of Hindu and Buddhist in Borneo from 6th Century onwards, supported by many archaeological discoveries as evidence of their presence have not been dealt with in the textbooks. Study of archaeology is crucial in order to extend the historical narrative before writings on Borneo became available.

The contents on the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, in particular the role and contributions of Sabah and Sarawak are misleading, with no or little mention of the complexities, rushed and difficult negotiation process involving arguments about lengths of transitional periods, finance, taxation, extent of Federal control over Sabah and Sarawak, the 20 points and 18 points agreements which are still being negotiated to this day. Further, the textbooks failed to mention

that Sarawak gained its independence on 22 July 1963, whereas Sabah was on 31 August 1963, after which Sabah, Sarawak, Malaya and Singapore formed the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963. It also failed to take the opportunity to use this part of Malaysia's history to demonstrate to students that so much of History is about interpretation, and to give example of other major historical controversies which will enable students to learn to construct their own opinions and arguments based on evidence thus fostering critical thinking.

There is a lack or minimal coverage on native customary land rights, effect of religion on tribal culture, non-codified law of natives, development of education in Sabah and Sarawak including the role of Christian missionary schools and Shi Shu Chinese education. The same basis i.e. Sultanate history is used in viewing Sabah and Sarawak's history and thus failed to take into consideration that for Sabah and Sarawak the societal structure are predominantly tribal and led by chieftains. Further, the textbooks failed to look into the effect of geography and locations on political and societal development. There is also no mention of the origin of the people of Sabah and Sarawak and their way of life. Many schools in Sabah and Sarawak, particularly in rural areas, are still without electricity. Frequent suggestions to refer to websites for further information in the textbooks fail to take into consideration access to technology in rural schools, thus further increasing the gap of learning potentials between rural and urban, rich and poor areas of Malaysia.

The main focus of Malaysia's historical background presented in the textbooks is that of Peninsula Malaysia starting from the Malay Sultanate era with emphasis on Malacca Sultanate and Islam. Sabah and Sarawak are presented almost as an annex to a 'main' history of Malaysia and treated with perfunctory courtesy. The textbooks fail to raise curiosity. History should encourage us to keep questioning and understand others. Being able to study our history and to question and ask for verification and to be free to write about and discuss our past – good and not so good – is part of what democracy is about, and act as check and balance when History is abused by others. A balance of State/Nation System and Civilization System to approach the study of History will enable the context to be identified so that a true picture of Malaysia's past can be presented. An example of civilization history is the study of rice and its influence on prehistoric background, culture, traditions, arts, crafts, music, beliefs, oral history, architecture, agriculture, social structure, locally and at the wider context of Asia and other parts of the world. By recognizing and acknowledging the many different historical background and peoples of Malaysia, and using these as our official history, this may help to finally form our 'collective identity' which has been elusive even after 48 years since the birth of Malaysia.

TEXTBOOKS REVIEWED

History Textbooks for Malaysian Secondary School

1. Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah Sejarah Tingkatan 1 Buku Teks. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kuala Lumpur, 2002.
Ahmad Fawzi Bin Mohd. Basri, Mohd. Fo'ad Bin Sakdan, Azami Bin Man.
2. Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah Sejarah Tingkatan 2 Buku Teks. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2009.
Masariah Binti Mispari, Johara Binti Abdul Wahab, Ridzuan Bin Hasan.
3. Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah Sejarah Tingkatan 3 Buku Teks. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2010.
Ramlah Binti Adam, Abdul Hakim Bin Samuri, Muslimin Bin Fadzil.
4. Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah Sejarah Tingkatan 4 Buku Teks. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kuala Lumpur. 2009.
Nik Hassan Shuhaimi Bin Nik Abdul Rahman, Muhd. Yusof Bin Ibrahim, Muhammad Bukhari Bin Ahmad, Rosnanaini Binti Sulaiman.
5. Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah Sejarah Tingkatan 5 Buku Teks. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2004
Ramlah Bin Adam, Shakila Parween Binti Yacob, Abdul Hakim Bin Samuri, Muslimin Bin Fadzil.

I. Background

Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had made a unilateral announcement at the 61st UMNO general assembly that by 2013, history will be a compulsory pass subject for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). The current syllabus under Secondary School Integrated Curriculum (KBSM) 1989 was implemented in 2003. The new History syllabus of the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM) will be implemented from 2014, starting with Form One. According to the Education Minister, the new History textbook syllabus will give more emphasis to aspects relating to the Federal Constitution and to inculcate better understanding of the country's formation, as well as to foster patriotism and national unity. A government panel has been appointed to undertake this exercise.

A group of concerned citizens, academics, non-governmental organizations and parents of schoolgoing children have come together to propose an alternative history syllabus, one that will be factual, balanced and relevant. A national campaign called '*Kempen Sejarah Malaysia Sebenar*' (Campaign for a Truly Malaysian History) was launched on 15 May 2011. Their goal is for the government to implement "a new syllabus which provides a liberal and progressive approach to the teaching of world and Malaysian history." The movement is also pressing for an honest and transparent review of the syllabus.

Some of the reports supporting this call for history syllabus reform include the joint report by the Centre of Malaysian Chinese Studies and Nanyang University Alumni Association. The joint report found that the KBSM History syllabus has altogether 465 pages on the Malays (80%), 16 pages on Chinese and eight pages on Indians. There are zero pages on the Orang Asli¹. Similarly, the Sarawak Teachers' Union on 11 September 2011 in a statement² regarding the school history textbooks noted that the formation of Malaysia had not been put into the right perspective. It did not indicate clearly how Malaysia was formed; and that the present history about Malaysia is one-sided with a focus on Tanah Melayu, with little considerations given to Sarawak and Sabah.

Another concern raised by the campaign is that in Malaysian schools, the teaching of History is not geared towards enhancing deep learning but merely a form of rote memorization. The group is concerned that the format of the KBSM History does not foster critical thinking.

The contents of the petition³ by concerned citizens calling for the review of history syllabus and textbooks in Malaysian schools and institutions are as follows:

¹ CPI Writings. *Reclaiming our truly Malaysian history*. 19 May 2011 09:17
http://english.cpiasia.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2179:reclaiming-our-truly-malaysian-history&catid=141:lim-teck-ghees-contribution&Itemid=93

² The Sun Daily. *Revision of M'sian history should not be one-sided*. 11 September 2011
<http://www.thesundaily.my/news/139419>

³ CPI Announcement. *Petition to reform history education: act now*. Sunday, 06 February 2011 09:12
http://english.cpiasia.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2131&catid=117

We, concerned parents and citizens of Malaysia, note with great concern the following weaknesses and problems in the history syllabus and textbooks in our nation.

They:-

- (a) are filled with many historical errors and half truths;*
- (b) fail to reflect fairly on the contribution of all communities in the development of the nation;*
- (c) are written from a narrow world perspective that fails to capture the wealth and diversity of all past and present civilizations and religions in the world and Malaysia.*

In view of the great impact the history textbooks have on the minds of our young children, we call upon our Government and the relevant authorities to undertake an immediate and comprehensive review and rewriting of the history syllabus and textbooks in schools and all other institutions of education in Malaysia.

We propose that this review and rewriting of the syllabus and textbooks be undertaken by a panel of qualified historians . They should be representative of all the major communities in the nation.

The objective of the review should be to introduce a liberal and progressive history syllabus and textbooks. These should:-

- (1) equip our students with a broad and balanced perspective of the major civilizations and events in world history;*
- (2) capture the wealth and diversity of all civilizations and religions;*
- (3) accurately record historical facts from a diverse viewpoint;*
- (4) give due and fair recognition to the contributions of all communities towards the historical development of the nation;*
- (5) focus on historical facts and processes, instead of promoting any political or other agenda.*

II. INTRODUCTION

History is used to understand ourselves and others. We call on it for validation of our identities and origins, we learn from it and it can act as a guidepost or a source of advice. Present day attitudes in politics and society are often strongly influenced by the reading or misreading of history. In Malaysia's contemporary politics, historical connections are often invoked to give context and to support the making of policies. This is also true in other countries. The extent of the influence of history in a country's development and wellbeing is tremendous. For example, the massacres in Rwanda between Hutus and Tutsis, and the massacres in Yugoslavia between Serbs and Bosnians had a direct connection with tensions and grievances linked to past conflicts and/or disputation between one groups against the other.

History also plays a big role in helping us to understand and construct our identities – may it be individual, state or as a nation. Our sense of identity is strongly influenced by our understanding of our past, of shared history with others which we think we belong and identify with; and our allegiances draw on this evocation of histories. History can therefore be a tool that is used to foster a sense of belonging, patriotism and national unity.

Thus, in announcing the proposed revision of Malaysian school history syllabus to the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM) which will be implemented in 2014, and history subject's elevated status to a compulsory pass subject in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination, the Malaysian government recognizes the importance of history in inculcating better understanding of the country's formation, and to foster patriotism and national unity.

The purpose of this paper is to review the current KBSM based Malaysian secondary school history textbooks in the perspective of Sabah and Sarawak.

The paper begins by looking at the contents of the secondary school history textbooks with the following guidelines in mind:

- Accuracy of information
- Balanced, fair and unbiased treatment of various communities, groups, cultures, religions and civilizations
- Geographically balanced information, not focused on particular areas.
- Fairly and comprehensively reflect Sabah and Sarawak's major historical developments, personalities and events in Malaysian history
- Practical issues such as whether the books are written in a clear and comprehensible manner; do the sidebar questions and other end-of-chapter exercises support the material presented in the narrative; and whether the pictorial, sidebar materials and examples are relevant, unbiased, and varied.

This is then followed by findings as to the overall theme of the history textbooks such as what subjects are emphasized and what kinds of history are stressed.

As the particular emphasis of this paper is to include Sabah and Sarawak's perspectives, an attempt to offer a suggestion as to what constitute Sabah and Sarawak perspectives has also been included, as well as suggestions as to what ought to be included in the revised history syllabus with regard to Sabah and Sarawak.

With the above it is hoped that the study of history in Malaysian school in the future will be more reflective of Malaysia's multiracial, ethnic and religious background thus providing a more balanced discourse on Malaysia's history.

Brief comments on the instructional activities that are present in the history textbooks have been done in passing in the section where textbooks contents were being reviewed. These include whether the instructional activities are varied, whether the activities help students to analyze the information and to think critically, and whether the students have opportunity to discuss or debate ideas presented in the textbooks will require a much thorough investigations and research involving students, educators and the creators of the history textbooks.

Brief comments on the presentation format of the history textbooks have also been mentioned in the section where the textbooks contents were being reviewed. The lack of in depth analyses of the textbooks presentation format in this paper is not an indication of insignificance of textbooks presentation but like the instructional activities, it requires input from the history textbooks creators, educators and students. Example of presentation format is where textbook contents are broken down into short and simple sentences this may result in the loss of narrative, which reduce history textbooks to picture books or activity books that lack depth and meaningful contents.

III. REVIEW OF CURRENT HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

a. Review of Textbooks Contents

The Tingkatan 1 textbook begins with an 18-page overview on History which includes topics such as the importance of history and sources of History. It briefly explains what actually historians do and the fundamental principles of understanding History. However, one pertinent item omitted from this introduction is the matter of "biasness" and what this means to understanding history; that in order to understand opinions on a particular event or historical sources the background must be investigated properly. It is important for the students to understand that the opinions and views of individuals are influenced by a number of factors such as political affiliation, religious views, social class, and others, and that the same is true to the creators of the history textbooks. Being aware of this will foster critical thinking on the part of the students. Before students start learning about actual events, they should be equipped with the 'tools of a historian'.

The introduction in the Tingkatan 1 textbook is followed by background history of Tanah Melayu, Sarawak and Sabah including the peoples, cultures and economy. Out of a total of 70 cited sources only five sources specifically referred to Sarawak (chapter 10) and four sources on Sabah (chapter 11). From these, the most recent source for Sarawak is dated 1981, and Sabah 1985.

The same limited sources are reflected in subsequent chapters on Sabah and Sarawak in Tingkatan 2, 3, 4 and 5 textbooks. Good histories take into account conflicting issues of an event, with good sources, and evidence. However, this is not true for the current Malaysian history textbooks with regards to coverage on Sabah and Sarawak due to the inadequate number of sources.

Table 1 below summarizes the number of sources used as reference for Sabah and Sarawak as stated in the source of references listed at the end of each textbook.

Table 1

Number of Sources Specifically on Sabah & Sarawak in Malaysian School History Textbooks

Textbook Title	Sabah	Sarawak	Peninsula Malaysia & General	Total for Textbook	Year published of latest source
Tingkatan 1	4	5	61	70	Sabah:1985 Sarawak: 1981 Others: 2000
Tingkatan 2	1	6	42	49	<i>Note: Referencing of sources incomplete. Dates of publications of a few of the sources not stated.</i>
Tingkatan 3	2	7	65	74	Sabah: 1976 Sarawak: 1997 Others:2003
Tingkatan 4	0	0	90	90	Others: 2001
Tingkatan 5	3	2	88	93	Sabah: 1985 Sarawak: 1976 Others: 2002

The year of publication for seven of the sources of reference for Tingkatan 2 textbook was not stated. For example, Tingkatan 2 textbook page 224 states the reference as ‘Joan Collins, Sarawak 1839-1968, Macmillan’. A quick search on the internet yielded the year of publication as 1969 (2nd edition) and the correct name of the author is ‘Joan Rawlins’ and not ‘Joan Collins’. Again, this raises doubts as to the veracity of the contents of the history textbooks, and efficacy of the research and editing process in the creation of the textbooks in particular the Tingkatan 2 textbook.

In order to find out if there exists a form of Terms of Reference for sources of materials for use in creating the history textbooks, the ‘Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah

Menengah: Sejarah, Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. April 2002’ was referred to as part of the research for this paper. There were no such Terms of Reference found except for a brief comment on the types of sources that may be available and used such as artifact, drawings, writings etc. The KBSM curriculum failed to acknowledge that when teaching History the more varied the historical sources the richer the learning experience; that sources can include eyewitness accounts, personal testimonies, music, diaries, letters not just from people in power but also sources from ordinary people which have particular resonance to the students and other readers. A varied source can show that history affects everybody, not just those in charge. For example, in the United Kingdom the diary of Anne Frank is often used to teach the Holocaust. A more local example would be the heart wrenching final letter written by Rosli Dhoby to his family before his execution. This can be included as an example of a personal letter in the history textbooks and will most likely create resonance to the students since Rosli Dhoby was 17 years old when he was sentenced to death by the British. Also, giving students the opportunity to meet and question people who were actually involved in the events in history is particularly valuable. For example, a veteran who had fought during the Emergency could talk to students about his experience. Such interactions not only make history more meaningful but it helps build bridges between generations and make history real and relevant. For schools in the interior of Sarawak and Sabah where such an activity would be impractical, an activity kit which contains reproductions of diaries, personal stories, old newspapers articles, photographs and suggested classroom activities can be created which acts as an extension to the standard textbooks. This can be especially useful for schools that do not have access to the internet. An example of such educational pack is the ‘Outreach Kit’ used in the UK for teaching History.

Following from the above, this begs the question of how the sources in the present History textbooks were selected, why these sources were used and not others, and raises doubt as to the efficacy of the whole process of preparation and research for the content of Malaysia school history textbooks in particular history pertaining to Sabah and Sarawak. Glaring inaccuracies are found in the Form 3 textbook in particular Chapters 4 and 5 where Chapter 5 is entitled “*Kemerdekaan Negara 31 Ogos 1957*”. Similarly, on page 7 of the Form 1 History textbook it is stated “*31 Ogos 1957...menandakan tamatnya era penjajahan di negara kita*”. The use of the term ‘*negara*’ is inaccurate as our ‘*negara*’ is Malaysia, and Malaysia was only formed on 16 September 1963. This inaccuracy is repeated throughout the textbook.

Another item which can be deemed inaccurate is the use of the term ‘bumiputera’ in page 178 and 182 of Tingkatan 3 textbook. The correct term should be ‘bumiputra’ as per article 153 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. On the other hand, ‘Bumiputera’ refers to Party Bumiputera Sarawak.⁴

Tunku Abdul Rahman in a Parliamentary debate dated 28 April 1962 said:

“...when the Borneo territories become part of Malaysia, they will cease to be a colony of Britain, and they will not be a colony of Malaya ... they will be partners of equal status (note: bold emphasis added to highlight)....”

⁴ Ross-Larson, Bruce. The Politics of Federalism- Syed Kechik in East Malaysia. Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles: Eszee Limited, 2009

However, this ‘equal status’ is not reflected in the teaching of history in Malaysian schools. Generally the contents and general context of all the history textbooks that are being reviewed skew towards that of Peninsula Malaysia.

The number of pages dedicated to Sabah and Sarawak in the history textbooks is much lower compared to that of Peninsula Malaysia at 11.8% and 14.1% respectively, as compared to 60.7% on Peninsula Malaysia.

Table 2

Number of Pages where Sabah & Sarawak & Peninsula Malaysia are mentioned in Malaysian school History Textbooks

Textbook	Number of Pages & Percentage Overall			Total Pages of Textbook
	Sabah	Sarawak	Peninsula Malaysia	
Tingkatan 1	16 (7.8%)	15 (7.3%)	153 (74.6%)	205
Tingkatan 2	33 (14.9%)	39 (17.6%)	157 (71%)	221
Tingkatan 3	37 (15.8%)	51 (21.8%)	192 (82%)	234
Tingkatan 4	10 (3.7%)	13 (4.8%)	87 (31.9%)	273
Tingkatan 5	45 (16.9%)	51 (19.2%)	139 (52.3%)	266
Total	141 (11.8%)	169 (14.1%)	728 (60.7%)	1199

Note:

- 1) Number of pages includes activities at end of chapters
- 2) Where Sabah and/or Sarawak and/or Peninsula appear in the same page, all the places mentioned will be allocated a page in calculating the number of pages.

Tom Harrison (Curator of the Sarawak Museum 1947-1966), in his documentary series ‘*The Borneo Story*’ broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1957 quoted “*The trouble with anything in Borneo is knowing where to begin*”. Sabah and Sarawak is a treasure throve for ethnology study. Ethnology is defined as a branch of anthropology that analyzes cultures, especially in regard to their historical development and the similarities and dissimilarities

between them⁵. Ethnology helps to explain relationships between cultures, races including differences of mind, body and mode of living of which different people exhibit. All these knowledge is of great importance to leaders as they deal with affairs of the people of the country and elsewhere. It also helps individuals to understand one another, to treat each other with due respect, kindness, empathy and sympathy.

It is therefore surprising that in Malaysia's Tingkatan 1 history textbook, a mere 15 pages and 16 pages were used to present the ethnology, socio and economic history of Sarawak and Sabah respectively out of the total 205 pages of the textbook.

These relatively few pages are mainly on the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak. The background of people of other races such as the Chinese was hardly mentioned in the textbooks. Thus resulting in history textbooks that lack depth, cross-cultural empathy and diversity that reflect the real history of the people of Malaysia.

For example, the Tingkatan 1 textbook pages 183 to 188 refer to the ethnic people of Sarawak. Only one page, page 189, mentions the Chinese community in particular those who were involved in gold mining in Bau, Paku and Bidi areas.

However, the Chinese communities have and continue to play a very important and significant role in the development of Sarawak. A study on the Chinese communities can help to create awareness on the Chinese-indigenous people relations, the relationship of the Chinese with the colonial regimes, and in particular provide a wider background to understanding the social changes affecting Sarawak during the earlier half of the twentieth century and beyond. For example, the Chinese from South East coast of China arrived in Bau district prior to the arrival of James Brooke in early nineteenth century⁶. These Hakka miners brought with them a different form of social structure as compared to the tribal system of the natives of Sarawak. This structure known as *kongsi*⁷ was an instrument of self-government where it had its own leadership structure, clearly defined territorial jurisdiction, its own judicial system, armaments, and currency. This social structure evolved as intermarriage between the Chinese and natives occurred, thus transforming the cultural orientation, social, economic and political development of Sarawak.

As more Chinese arrived in Sarawak, it necessitated an increased interaction between the Chinese and indigenous peoples. The different cultural attitudes, particularly in terms of rights to land ownership, brought with it tensions. During the Brooke regime, new rules were introduced to deal with these conflicts such as imposing immigration cuts, restriction on rubber production, and the introduction of legislation on land-ownership. Over time, formalized level of political activities were formed as competition over resources and the need to protect the different

⁵ Definition of 'Ethnology': Oxford Dictionary: "the study of the characteristics of different peoples and the difference and relationships between them"; Merriam-Webster Dictionary: "a science that deals with the division of human beings into races and their origin, distribution, relations, and characteristic"; or "anthropology dealing chiefly with the comparative and analytical study of cultures: Cultural anthropology"; and Cultural Anthropology is defined as "anthropology that deals with human culture especially with respect to social structure, language, law, politics, religion, magic, art and technology".

⁶ Chew, Daniel. 'Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier 1841-1941'. 2nd edition., *South-East Asian Historical Monographs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

⁷ Chew, Daniel. 'Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier 1841-1941'. 2nd edition., *South-East Asian Historical Monographs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) p.219

communities wider interests began to appear amongst the people. These formalized levels of political activities are historical antecedent to the present day political structure of Sarawak. The importance of the influence of the Chinese in Sarawak as catalyst for political change, moving the communities beyond tribal ties to a more neutral system need to be highlighted. According to Francis Fukuyama, author of “The End of History and the Last Man”, this ability to create a more neutral system is one of the characteristic of state and nation building. It is a progress towards fulfilling the three institutional domains of political development – that of State building, Rule of Law, and Accountability.⁸

The Tingkatan 1 textbook page 180 also state that the origin of the name Sarawak is Batang Sarawak or Sungai Sarawak. However, this is disputed as there is no solid evidence as to the real origin of the name Sarawak. Similarly, on page 193 of Tingkatan 1 textbook it is mentioned that the name ‘Sabah’ originated from the word ‘Saba’. However, this is a disputed fact as other sources have also referred to other origins of the name ‘Sabah’.

Further, the background history of Sarawak presented in the textbook do not mention the presence of Hindu and Buddhist influence from the 6th century onwards prior to the rule of Brunei Sultanate. For example, there is evidence of certain linguistic parallels between Iban and pre-Islam Sumatran Malay; as well as contacts with Hindu Java’s ancient Kaling kingdom.⁹

In regards to learning about Sabah and Sarawak’s history, archaeology is crucial in order to extend the historical narrative before writings on Borneo became available. Gua Niah of Sarawak, Tingkayu and Bukit Tengkorak of Sabah are merely listed as locations with Paleolithic and Neolithic discoveries under Chapter 2 of Tingkatan 1 History textbook. A more detailed write-up is not included. More photographs of significant archaeological finds could be included in textbooks with accompanying activities which encourage students to critically examine them. Some examples include:

- The statue of the elephant-headed God, the *Ganesha* found during the construction of the Residency at the foot of Bukit Mas (Gold Hill) in the Limbang Division, Sarawak.
- The stone monument of a Buddhist shrine found at the foot of Santubong Mountain. In the sanctuary of the shrine there was a silver deposit box containing gold ornaments shaped like a sitting Buddha, a crescent moon, an elephant, a turtle and a snake. These items have been dated to about the 12th century.
- The archaeological evidence which suggests that Borneo was part of the barter trade system from around the 6th century onwards. Traders from China, India and neighbouring countries exchanged ceramics, beads, metal objects and ornaments with the indigenous peoples for a range of jungle produce.

⁸ Francis Fukuyama, Thomas Carothers . A Conversation with Francis Fukuyama on the Origins of Political Order (*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*) Washington, D.C. (6/6/2011)
Source: www.carnegie.ru/events/?fa=3294

⁹ Source: <http://gnmawar.wordpress.com/jerita-lama/iban-migration-peturun-iban/iban-agressive-expansion-stephanie-morgan/>

- Hindu related artefacts found in the Samarahan Division which suggests that the area had contact with the pre-colonial maritime trade network that was dominated by the Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms. In 1948 a statue of the elephant-headed God, the *Ganesha* was found at Bukit Berhala which could have been part of a temple dedicated to Siva. Found at the same site was a *Batu Lesong* which is a symbolic phallus of veneration of the Hindu Pallavas in south India. Follow-up investigations discovered numerous pottery pieces at Gedong and Bukit Sadong which is evidence of trade dating from the 14th to 17th centuries. In 2005, a pottery mound was found at Benat and in 2008, local residents in Gumpey uncovered pieces of gold.
- The Tingkayu archaeological discoveries in 1975 which show evidence of existence of very old settlement which dates back to at least 20,000 and possibly 28,000 years at the now extinct Tingkayu Lake which has been abandoned about 7000 years ago. At about 1000 BC to 500 AD a totally different wave of people came and from their potteries, copper and iron tools they are most economically associated as the Austronesian speakers from whom the present day natives descended.

The pictures of buildings showing architecture of the various different tribes in Sarawak are shown without explanation. It leaves the students with the impression that the people of Sarawak still live in such buildings even at the present day.

The formation of the Federation of Malaysia was presented in the Tingkatan 3 history textbook under chapter 7 from pages 199 to 219 (21 pages). Out of these 21 pages, one page was dedicated to Sabah (page 208) and another page to Sarawak (page 209). It is also covered under Chapter 6 of Tingkatan 5 textbook where 5 pages were dedicated specifically on Sabah and Sarawak out of 24 pages.

According to the textbook, apart from being instrumental to the independence of the Federation of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman was also credited for the idea and subsequent independence of Sabah and Sarawak (as well as Singapore). This idea, the book suggested, were welcomed by the leaders of Sabah and Sarawak. By agreeing to the federation, it allowed Sabah and Sarawak to gain independence quicker, help to create racial balance between bumiputra and non-bumiputra community in the federation, better socio economic development as well as for security and stability of the states. Also, the impending prospect of being part of the Federation of Malaysia acted as a catalyst for formation of new political parties in Sabah and Sarawak.

However, based on the book written by Stephen Holley (former State Secretary to Donald Stephens during Stephens' term as the first Chief Minister of Sabah) North Borneo did not demand for independence though there was an aspiration for it for the future once the people are ready¹⁰. To claim that Tunku Abdul Rahman is to be credited for the independence of Sabah is therefore misleading.

A brief remark in page 211 of the Tingkatan 3 textbook regarding some objections on formation of the Federation of Malaysia from certain quarters in Sabah and Sarawak is mentioned in the

¹⁰ Holley, Stephen. 'A White Headhunter in Borneo'. (Kota Kinabalu: Natural History Publications (Borneo) Sdn. Bhd., 2004) p.113

textbook. These objections allude to the peoples' lack of awareness and understanding on the intentions of the federation.

However, it is common knowledge in Sabah that amongst the older generations in Sabah many said that they held the opposite view with regard to the peoples' sentiments when the announcement was made by Tunku Abdul Rahman of the idea of the Federation of Malaysia. Stephen Holley described this sentiment of the people in the same book mentioned above:¹¹

“The first reaction of the people of North Borneo was one of suspicion and anxiety. North Borneo was developing rapidly. Trade and services were improving and people were free to pursue their own way of life and follow their own religions without discrimination. The British forces in South East Asia guaranteed their security. So why change? Many thought that Sarawak and North Borneo were being drawn into Singapore/Malayan problems to provide a balance on non-Chinese in the population equation.”

Page 214 of the Tingkatan 3 textbook shows a diagram of the different stages undertaken leading up to the formation of the federation for the period from 27 May 1961 to 16 September 1963. Each stage, beginning with the United Malaysia Consultative Committee, is explained in two sentences – its' purpose and the results. The stages include announcement by Tunku Abdul Rahman on the idea of the Federation of Malaysia, formation of the United Malaysia Consultative Committee, the Cobbold Commission, Inter-Governmental Committee, Singapore Referendum, United Nation Commission, and the birth of the Federation of Malaysia.

In page 215, a three sentence statement is presented showing a summary of the report of the Cobbold Commission which include findings that one third of the people of Sarawak and Sabah were in favour of the federation without concern about the terms and conditions, another third favoured Malaysia but wanted safeguards, and the rest wanted Sabah and Sarawak to be independent before deciding to be part of the Federation of Malaysia. In the same page, it is stated that the United Nations Commission's found that most of the people of Sabah and Sarawak agree to the federation. Page 216 of the textbook mentions the 20 points agreement proposed by Sabah, and also embraced by Sarawak. The Malaysia Agreement was signed on 9 July 1963 and some of the contents such as religion, language, immigration, civil service, status of Sarawak and Sabah bumiputra from the 20 points were listed in the textbook and, according to the textbook, were incorporated into the Malaysia Agreement.

However, there is no mention in the textbooks about the complexity and rushed paced of the negotiations that took place prior to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. In fact, based on the book¹² by Stephen Holley mentioned earlier, there were much arguments about lengths of transitional periods, finance, taxation, extent of Federal control over Sabah and Sarawak. There was no assembly where all the representatives can come together to negotiate. Malaya and

¹¹ Holley, Stephen. 'A White Headhunter in Borneo'. (Kota Kinabalu: Natural History Publications (Borneo) Sdn. Bhd., 2004) p.99

¹² Holley, Stephen. 'A White Headhunter in Borneo'. (Kota Kinabalu: Natural History Publications (Borneo) Sdn. Bhd., 2004) p.105 -124

Singapore negotiated directly with each other, and with the British Government. Brunei too negotiated separately with the various representatives. Further, the representatives for Sabah and Sarawak did not have the backing of an electorate and therefore had no status to confront, or be intractable, in the way that Singapore could. These representatives were nominees of Colonial Governors. To give some credence to these nominees, basic elections at Local Government levels were introduced through a Local Government Elections Bill in June 1962. Later, delegations representing North Borneo were summoned to London for the signing of Malaysia Agreement only to be informed by embarrassed officials from the Colonial Office that there was a delay. This was due to the continuing wrangling between the British Government, Malaya and Singapore about the details of their relationship in the new federation. Further, on the day of signing of the Malaysia Agreement changes had been made in the Agreement to exclude Brunei. In discovering this, the representatives of North Borneo hastily put together a note stating North Borneo reservations/disclaimer in an attempt to protect North Borneo position from possible implications from the omission of Brunei.

This complex negotiations, and North Borneo and Sarawak concerns were also reported in 'Sarawak By The Week' issued by the Sarawak Information Service for the year 1961, 1962 and 1963.¹³ The textbooks however failed to elaborate on the negotiation process and the rushed pace it was undertaken. Further, the textbooks failed to mention that Sarawak gained its independence on 22 July 1963, whereas Sabah was on 31 August 1963, after which Sabah, Sarawak, Malaya and Singapore formed the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963.

Further, by placing a sample list of the 20 points agreement into a side bar in the textbook leaves the impression that the 20 points are not very important. However, for Sabah and to some extent Sarawak, the relevance of the 20 points is still alive and often cited in present day politics in Malaysia.

This review acknowledge that teaching events leading up to the independence and creation of the Federation of Malaysia is fraught with difficulties and brings historical controversies closer to home. For example, the Deputy President of the Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party Mohamad Sabu in his speech given at Tasik Gelugor on 21 August 2011 courted controversy for questioning the official version of events which is that the coalition government won independence. He claimed that the communists were the real heroes. He has denied the allegation and sued the newspaper that published the report. This incident demonstrates just how sensitive this part of Malaysia's history is and how so much of History is about interpretation. Engaging with debates in the classroom and textbooks is a valid exercise because they are not only relevant to Malaysia but also on an international scale – in particular to the Cold War, a major event in modern world history.

Along with understanding bias and learning investigative skills as mentioned earlier, introducing students to major historical controversies will enable students to learn to construct their own opinions and arguments based on evidence. The controversies do not necessarily have to be related to the subjects they are going to learn. It is more about introducing the students to lively and engaging debates which make learning History enjoyable. Students could be divided into groups and asked to investigate and argue particular viewpoints. Some examples include:

¹³ Ah Chon, Ho (Ed.). 'Sarawak Historical Events: The Formation of the Federation of Malaysia 1961 - 1963'. (Kuching: See Hua Daily News Bhd., 12 December 1995)

- Debates over the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima during the Second World War.
- The racial origin of Prince Tutankhamun and the related debates regarding the race of ancient Egyptians.
- The purpose and construction of the Nazca Lines in southern Peru.
- Theories and debates regarding the construction and purpose of Stonehenge in the United Kingdom.
- Controversies around the assassination of John F. Kennedy

From such exercises, students can learn that Historians are always disagreeing with each other and History is never final and always under constant review; and that Historians themselves have their own biases that determine their opinions; and perhaps with such exercise the students are encouraged to not be afraid to grapple with controversial issues or learning the 'historians' craft' both with the view to foster critical thinking.

Other examples relating to indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak that supports the assertion that the history textbooks lacks depth, cross-cultural empathy and diversity is the lack or minimal coverage in the textbook on important matters such as native customary land rights; the disappearance of tribal culture as a result of introduction of religion; non-codified law of the natives of Sabah and Sarawak; and development of education in both Sabah and Sarawak including the role of Christian missionary schools and Shi Shu (private school) Chinese education in Malaysia.

The difference in societal structure and political development in Sabah and Sarawak to that of Peninsula Malaysia is not evident in the history textbooks. Sabah and Sarawak are predominantly tribal in nature, whereas Peninsula Malaysia had a system of organization based on sultanate and/or kingdoms. The history textbooks attempt to apply for Sabah and Sarawak the same basis, method, reasoning and perspective as that used for Peninsula Malaysia in the coming out with the contents of the textbooks. For example, it assumes that the whole of Malaysia had history of sultanates ruling over large territories like that in Peninsula Malaysia. However, it fails to take into consideration that for Sabah and Sarawak the societal structures are predominantly tribal and led by chieftains. This means it is not possible to write about one particular leader like a sultan or a kingdom when narrating the background history of Sabah and Sarawak as it does not represent all the many tribes of Sabah or Sarawak. Chieftains are selected by consensus unlike by lineage in the case of a Sultanate and are replaced through peaceful or violent means if they don't perform well.

Further, it fails to look into the effect of geography and locations on political and societal development and access to outside world. For example, kingdom such as Majapahit was able to create some sort of military organization as it was able to gather resources from wider areas on the Asian continent and beyond, and expanded due to access to a large land mass. Borneo on the other hand is an island hence more difficult for expansion of a kingdom. The Sulu kingdom was able to dominate Borneo and the surrounding area largely due to the nature of the Sulu people as

being seafarers. They were able to overcome the challenge of crossing seas, sea travel and navigation with the acquisition of ships technology from contacts with China through trading. However, in most areas the Sultans' jurisdictions were nominal, and the local representatives of the Sultans exercised their own rule, or misrule; the inland tribes were in effect largely independent.

Due to the compartmentalized ways that Sabah and Sarawak history are being presented in the current textbook, it is difficult to decipher the flow of history in Sabah and Sarawak. A reader may be persuaded to think that the people of Sabah and Sarawak still live in long houses and wears loin cloths as the pictures shown in the textbooks are undated and generally lack proper reference and context. There is no mention of the origin of the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak; and the indigenous peoples way of life is not discussed in details.

With regards to the format of history teaching in the textbooks, there are frequent suggestions to refer to certain websites as a follow up to the text or as a way of understanding and learning further about a topic. However, not all Malaysian schools have access to technology. In Sabah and Sarawak, many schools are still without electricity or other form of energy supplies, let alone access to the world wide web. The format suggested in the textbooks further increase the gap of learning potentials between rural and urban, rich and poor areas.

b. Theme of Current History Textbooks

The *'Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah: Sejarah, Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. April 2002'* states:

"Sejarah negara bertitik tolak dari Zaman Kesultanan Melayu Melaka kerana ia adalah sebuah kerajaan yang kuat di Gugusan Kepulauan Melayu pada kurun ke 15. Pada zaman kegemilangannya, Kesultanan Melayu Melaka telah membina satu tradisi budaya, politik dan ekonomi yang diwarisi sehingga kini. Walaupun pengkajian sejarah negara dimulakan dengan Kesultanan Melayu Melaka, sejarah petempatan-petempatan dan kerajaan-kerajaan awal di Gugusan Kepulauan Melayu juga dikaji."

Based on the above it is clear that the main focus of Malaysia's historical background presented in the textbooks is that of Peninsula Malaysia starting from the Malay Sultanate era. The resulting textbooks show this emphasis on Malacca Sultanate and Islam. Sabah and Sarawak are presented almost as an annex to a 'main' history of Malaysia and treated with perfunctory courtesy.

The history textbooks look into Malaysia history starting from where written texts or source of information is available. Thus for Sabah and Sarawak history, the historical narrative begins in what is considered as the 'modern history' of Sabah and Sarawak. This is the Dutch arrival in North Borneo and Rajah Brooke era in Sarawak because much of historical writings on Borneo came out or was about events that occurred during and after this period.

History is used to inculcate curiosity and encourages us to ask questions, to be involved in the going-ons in the country, the administration, selecting our community representatives. As Professor Margaret Macmillan stated in her book "Uses and Abuses of History", history is a process – there is not one truth about the past and present, but the important thing is to be aware

that there is other angles, that your view is a limited one, respect the evidence, and deal with the evidence that doesn't fit into a particular picture, and it is always a constant process of revisions as new materials surface and new questions arise. History encourages us to keep questioning and understand others. Being able to study our history and to question and ask for verification and to be free to write about and discuss our past – good and not so good – is part of what democracy is about.

The way history is being portrayed in the history textbooks - that is by date, who conquered Malaya and Sabah and Sarawak, the people involved, causality and sequence such as uprising of the people – are crucial in order to understand the past. However, the lessons such history tells us are too simple and straight forward. It does not help us to consider the past in all its richness and complexities. History then can be subject to abuse, allowing our leaders and policy makers to use history out of context, to revise history according to their agenda, and to bolster or justify false or foolish policies. For example by glorifying a certain group at the expense of others, or trivializing the contribution of others in the development of the nation.

Hence, to balance the above with studies on ethnology, economic and social history is important in that it enables, amongst others, the context to be identified so that a true picture of Malaysia's past can be presented. Cultural and social studies such as traditional art and crafts act to support such studies through, for example, preservation of artifacts of the past in order to be used as evidence of Malaysia's past inhabitants and connection with others from outside of Malaysia. The Tingkatan 1 textbook pictures and names of traditional musical instruments, traditional costumes, crafts and traditional architecture are shown, they are not accompanied with meaningful and in depth explanation as to their significance.

Students respond very well to carefully considered activities outside the classroom. Whenever possible, visits to museums and heritage sites inside and outside the country could be encouraged. But with the financial and practical limitations of such activities, the creators of school History textbooks have a very important role to play – that is to be rigorous in their research of historical sources. Museums and archives are full of materials that can be digitally reproduced for the inclusion in textbooks. For example, the Sarawak Museum has an enormous collection of ethnographic artefacts, and the Chinese Museum in Kuching, Sarawak has a great deal of material available to teach about the contribution of the Chinese communities.

A specific example of a major cultural influence which has been omitted in the current history textbooks is the importance of rice in most of the indigenous people's history not only in Malaysia but elsewhere in Asia. In fact traditional arts and crafts such as Pua Kumbu, basketry, weaving, traditional music and dances, the celebrations of the Kaamatan in Sabah and Gawai in Sarawak are rooted in their common relationship with rice.

Studying rice history will enable us to gain useful, relevant and important knowledge including that of agriculture, technological advancement, mortality, trade, tradition, culture, human civilizations and interaction with others beyond the confine of Malaysia such as China. Local connections relating to the history of rice may lead to the answer as to the Melanau's connection with the Chinese in that in the past it is believed that the Melanau community in Sarawak had the

largest collection of Chinese ceramics. Archaeological finds¹⁴ at Sireh Cave in the Serian District in Sarawak discovered potteries, shells, beads and human burials. The sherds of pottery found indicated that rice husks had been used as a *temper* which had been added to the clay to prevent breakage during the firing process. Preliminary macroscopic examinations of the sediments found at the same level as the pottery and large amount of inorganic material in the surrounding vicinity provide evidence to the presence of rice as cultivated crops as early as 2300 B.C. in Borneo. In more contemporary writings, Malcolm Gladwell, in his book the ‘Outliers’, makes a connection between China’s rice paddies and math test scores of Asians. He claims that rice cultivation is unique for being labour intensive, with multiple growing seasons and requires minute attention to detail. Gladwell argues that rice-based societies have a profound emphasis on careful attention to detail and the relationship between hard work and reward – skills perfect for mathematics which may explain why Asians tend to score higher in mathematics.

Rice is a staple food for over half of the world's population and accounts for over 20 percent of global calorie intake¹⁵. Over 90 percent of the world’s rice is produced and consumed in the Asian Region. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Malaysia (MOA) the price of rice at world’s level has increased significantly as compared to year 2007¹⁶. The price of Thai White rice has increased by 164%; Vietnam White rice by 212%. These increases have impacted on the nation’s paddy and rice prices. According to MOA, self sustainability level of the nation’s rice production for Malaysia has yet to reach 100%, and was targeted to reach 86% by year 2010. Population increase, use of land for other more profitable commodities like palm oil, loss of land for planting rice to pave the way for housing development and other infrastructure development make rice production a challenging issue for Malaysia.

How do we ensure that affordable rice is available to the people? How did the people in the past tackle it? What is the significance of the stories of Huminodun¹⁷, and other Asian folklore relating to rice? The reduced importance given to rice planting has resulted in changes in social demographics. In particular, the role and presence of the Bobohizan (Kadazan priestess) in Sabah has dwindled in significance; and women’s role in agriculture such as planting, harvesting, and looking after the spiritual well-being of the padi as well as maintaining the land have also been affected and as a result their relationship with their community has changed. How does this translate to our overall culture and tradition when we turn more and more into other food source as a staple diet? Will this change in our food source affect our identity? After all “*More than politics, religion or culture, rice is the one thing that truly defines Asia.*”¹⁸

¹⁴ Paul Beavitt, Edmund Kurui, Gill Thompson. *Confirmation of an early date for the presence of rice in Borneo: Preliminary evidence for possible Bidayuh/Asian links*. Borneo Research Bulletins, Volume 27, page 29 - 38

¹⁵ Alias Bin Abdullah, Shoichi Ito and Kelali Adhana. Proceedings for Workshop and Conference on Rice in the World at Stake, 2. School Lunch Programs and Rice Consumption Behaviors: International Comparison. 2006: *Estimate of Rice consumption in Asian Countries and the World Towards 2050*. Tottori University. Web Source: <http://worldfood.apionet.or.jp/alias.pdf>

¹⁶ National Food Supply Policy (2008-2010). Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Malaysia. Web source: <http://www.agribdc.gov.my/nationalfoodsupplyguaranteepolicy20082010>

¹⁷ The Kadazan/Dusun believes the spirit of ‘Huminodun’ lives in every plant, in which rice is considered to hold the highest hierarchical position in the plant world. The Kadazan/Dusun holds a deep sense of respect and admiration for Huminodun. Beauty pageants are held every year during the harvest festival in Sabah and the crowning of the Unduk Ngadau (representing the spirit of Huminodun) is the highlight of the Harvest festival Online Source: <http://kdca.org.my/archives/138>

¹⁸ Quoted by Ronald Cantrell, Director General of International Rice Research Institute in

IV. CONCLUSION

The contents of the textbooks did not present an equal coverage of background history of Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak; factual information is inadequate, incomplete and in some instances inaccurate.

In doing this review, the main challenge was how to review the textbooks to include Sabah and Sarawak perspectives when much of Sabah and Sarawak perspectives are based on cultural influence that predates 'modern history'.

Much emphasis has been given in the current textbooks to political history of Malaysia. However, in the context of Malaysia, especially with the multi cultural and multi racial make up of the people, studying just political history without equal attention to socio history leaves the student or other readers unable to grasp the true discourse of the Malaysia's past. An even more balanced history study would be one that includes ethnology study. Example of a good starting or reference point for ethnology is introducing history of rice in Malaysian history textbooks. By doing so, it avoids the tendency to view history in a racial manner like the current textbooks. Looking at rice, instead of race, opens up the discourse on history of Malaysia from its prehistorical background, culture, traditions, arts, crafts, music, beliefs, oral history, architecture, agriculture, social structure, and wider context of Asia and world as a whole.

The focus on the Kesultanan Melayu Melaka as the point of reference for the root of Malaysia's civilization fail to take into consideration the historical roots of the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak, as well as the important role of the Orang Asli, Chinese, Indian, Eurasian and other races in the history of Malaysia. The Malaysian history textbooks therefore do not present the reality of a diverse racial, cultural and social history of Malaysia. The textbook does not leave the reader with the understanding of the complexity of development and of the importance of asking the right questions, and of curiosity since the history presented do not reflect the complex background of Malaysia. Failure to take into account the real context and historical background has made making decisions and policy very complex in the present day Malaysia.

Similarly, the formation of Malaysia was dealt with in a one-sided perspective of Peninsula Malaysia. The contributions of Sabah and Sarawak leaders were not included. The challenging and crucial negotiation processes were inadequately delved into. This leaves the reader with the false impression that the formation of a country is an easy task and that the negotiation process ended upon the formation of Malaysia. In fact, the negotiation process is an on-going and continuous process to ensure recognitions, balance and harmony. Most of past and contemporary issues in Malaysia and elsewhere are in fact demands for recognition, and that much of human politics is driven by the need for dignity and recognition.

Further, the history textbooks fail to act as catalyst for the students and other readers to ask critical questions and understand the complexity of the evolution of the country's institution. History should provide important guidepost for understanding the trajectory of a country's

development and nation building. In depth and meaningful studies of past civilization and rising nations are not included in the textbooks. The world is heading into a multipolar world where power is shared with other countries and groups of peoples; and that an understanding of global governance is crucial as increasingly the roles of corporations and government overlap. The history textbooks main focus is on Islamic civilization. This is important but without proper and balance grounding in other world civilization and history it will be difficult to put context and understand contemporary issues and challenges that the country is facing and will face in the future. Quoting Seymour Martin Lipset, "*Those who only know one country know no country.*"

There is a tendency to present history as a series of moral tales, to enhance group solidarity. The narrative presented in the textbook is simple and all moving in one direction. It does not show the complexity of human experience or the different interpretation of the past. It doesn't encourage critical thinking or analyses, nor is it stimulating enough for the reader to raise questions. This defeats two of the main purpose of studying history – that is of curiosity and asking the right questions.

Much of the problems – political, racial, religious – that Malaysia is facing may have been exacerbated by the way History is viewed and treated in Malaysia in that the 'Civilisation System' part of Malaysia's history is largely ignored apart from the heavy focus on Islamic influence as presented in the current History textbooks. The way history is presented in the textbooks follows a Western perspective of State/Nation system. More focus on civilisation system such as tribal history of Sabah and Sarawak and Orang Asli history, and acknowledging these two different systems in order to derive Malaysia's official history may help to form the basis from which "collective identity" of Malaysia can be formed. The problem of what constitutes Malaysia's "collective identity" has escalated over the years. In the rush for 'independence' past leaders failed to focus on the greatest necessity of a new nation – that is of the identity of her peoples. Malaysians are still confused as to who 'Malaysians' really are – hence the tussle over who came first, Malay Supremacy, Malaysians of Indian and Chinese descents being treated as aliens, and ignorance of the indigenous peoples' rights. After 48 years Malaysians are still struggling with identity crisis.

Why is it important to verify our history? It is because in studying history the student learns of the demands of veracity, study of knowledge formation, and history of histories. Skills which are essential for analysis and creation of a critical mind.

Why study history? Why is history so often invoked in popular discussions? Amartya Sen in his talk "History and the Enterprise of Knowledge" discussed what he terms as some distinct motivations that influence the public's interest in history. These are epistemic interest, practical reasons, and identity scrutiny. Epistemic interest he defines as curiosity about our past, historical curiosity, that is our way of demanding for truth on a particular subject. Practical reasons, he explains is where historical connections are often invoked in the context of contemporary politics and policies. When contemporary acts and strategies are made based on selective history by certain groups, it bound to attract counteracting arguments which too invoke history and then inevitably those affected by this dispute are forced to take an interest and find themselves in a battleground not of their choosing but by unfinished business of others. Identity scrutiny is where history or our past strongly influences our perception of our identity. We look for a place where we belong, our identity, by searching for shared history with a particular group in order to get a

sense of belonging in which we can identify ourselves, where allegiances with these identity groups is obtained through evocation of a shared history. In the current identity scrutiny of Malaysian, being of a multiracial, multi religion, of varying cultures and traditions, it is hard for the people to have this shared history to create a common identity for all Malaysian. It is therefore imperative that Malaysian accept that the people do not share a common historical background but instead look into identity scrutiny based on the time and context of when Malaysia was formed. That Malaysia is for all Malaysian not withstanding race, religion, economic status, location, who came first. That the historical background and identity can serve as a basis to create understanding and foundation for contemporary identity of Malaysians and Malaysia, that is post 16 September 1963.

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