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Music as a Platform: Instilling the Spirit of *Keluarga Malaysia* through ‘Keluarga Malaysia’

By

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Music is a substantial component of arts and cultures, it amuses people, and as such, it provides an effective forum for conversations about societal issues. The explanation is that music has a strong capacity for persuasion and facilitates the spreading of a message that people of all racial and cultural backgrounds can comprehend. Music aids in spreading previously unknown messages, ideas, and awareness. Music also promotes awareness and social change by fostering a sense of community, encouraging bravery, and uniting people.

People listen to music on the radio, sing along, and repeat the lyrics so that they and other listeners truly receive the songs’ messages. This allows listeners to comprehend the music’s meanings and discuss those messages.

For instance, the musical group U.S.A. for Africa performed the song ‘We Are the World’, which was co-written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie in 1985. A group of musicians then performed the song to raise funds and increase awareness to fight against famine in Africa. The song was later rendition to support Haiti following a severe earthquake. Over 100,000,000 USD has been raised by the U.S.A for Africa in 35 years to combat poverty in Africa and America. Even in 2022, after people worldwide were and still are affected by COVID-19, the song’s messages of optimism, unity, and generosity will still be relevant to instil positivity and togetherness. It is bizarre how song lyrics and phrases can uplift spirits and encourage people to keep holding on.

The ability to move and evoke one’s feelings makes music a very powerful tool. That is why many patriotic songs were introduced and embedded in Malaysian minds since childhood. Songs like “*Tanggal 31 Ogos*” and “*Warisan*” by the late Sudirman will surely be sung by the pupils across the country during the Independence Day celebrations at schools in Malaysia. ‘Standing in the Eyes of the World’, another famous patriotic song sung by Malaysian Queen of Rock, Ella, will be played during national and international sports events such as the Sea Games, Commonwealth Games, and others. Then, same goes with the “*Ekor Harimau Sejati*”

song. Malaysians will chant it during football games, and the spirit echoes in every 'Malaysian's heart and soul in the football stadium.

Malaysia's economic development has been remarkable since its independence and has had remarkable fiscal and educational growth in a calm setting. Today, Malaysians are forming more inter-ethnic friendships and connections, a change in mindset that shows they are becoming more accepting of multiculturalism. Furthermore, as quoted by Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's first Prime Minister, "*Our future depends on how well many different kinds of people can live and work together.*" Malaysia is the only nation that can provide us with this special atmosphere to learn this ability, giving us a competitive edge in the age of globalisation. Malaysia is a country for people born and nurtured in a society where cultural and religious variety are commonplace, and the constitution recognises multiculturalism.

Keluarga Malaysia concept was introduced by YAB Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob on 22 August 2021 in his inaugural speech as the 9th Prime Minister of Malaysia. The *Keluarga Malaysia* concept unequivocally demonstrates the value of family structures and support systems in dealing with difficult circumstances. It honours ethnic and cultural variety as the nation's cornerstone while aiming to strengthen political stability, boost national wealth, and unite the *rakyat*.

Keluarga Malaysia upholds three main cores: inclusivity, common ground and contentment. Besides that, *Keluarga Malaysia* is meant for all Malaysian of all races, religions and cultures, where the differences in social settings will be celebrated, not despised. We must support this initiative because it is the foundation for fostering compassion, inclusivity, togetherness, and respect among the many different members of our Malaysian family.

However, due to existing racial prejudice, derogatory remarks, and inappropriate statements made by certain governmental and community leaders, Malaysia's current racial imbalance indicates a serious breakdown in harmonious racial relations between different races. Conflicts between different societies can result in social problems and collapse because intercultural tolerance is one of the fundamental tenets of peaceful coexistence. Internalising it, especially among the younger generation, is a lucrative yet critical effort to prevent conflicts within societies.

The emergence of so many trends and racist content on social media is like a virus creeping deep into the bones of our young generation, disrupting the spirit of togetherness among Malaysians. All of this can severely jeopardise Malaysia's peace, harmony and unity.

Due to these cultural disparities, the media is now regarded as a tool for fostering racial harmony and national solidarity among Malaysians. It is safe to say that the media is crucial for raising awareness of and promoting cultural traits among people of all racial and religious backgrounds. Therefore, media should prioritise creating a feeling of community, solidarity and moral and responsible society. The national television station and social media platforms are of utmost value in maintaining and promoting multiculturalism among Malaysians.

In order for the principles and ideas of *Keluarga Malaysia* to infiltrate each Malaysian's heart, the *Keluarga Malaysia* song was written and promoted through the media platform as songs can address enormous crowds, making them a predominantly powerful medium for encouraging such values and social consciousness.

The lyrics in *Keluarga Malaysia* truly highlight and promote the concepts of *Keluarga Malaysia*. For example, in verse 2, line 1-3 “*Ini masa, Buang permusuhan, Padamkan sengketa dijiwa*” and in verse 7, line 1-3 “*Hanya kita, Rakyat berbagai bangsa, Mampu membangunkan membentuk arah untuk Malaysia*” encourages that it is the moment for Malaysians to put aside our differences and disagreement as in sharing values, opinions, political ideologies, racial issues and others. Malaysians should start living as one family where everyone from all walks of life should support each other and be the best *Keluarga Malaysia* we can be.

In order to realise YAB Dato’ Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob’s vision of “*Keluarga Malaysia*,” it is hoped that the song will serve as one of the platforms. If Malaysians can also understand, grasp and embrace the concept of *Keluarga Malaysia*, then and only then will the *rakyat* be able to unite and bring about social, political, and economic change.

“Ayuh kita zahirkan impian bersama menjunjung semangat yang bernama Keluarga Malaysia!”

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