Malaysia’s Ailing English Education System

-- In search of a miracle cure

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In his book An Education System Worthy of Malaysia (2003), M. Bakri Musa details Malaysia’s education system in terms of Malay nationalism, segregation, religious schools, universities and the matriculation system, and the centralized role of government. He then examines education in America, Canada, Germany, Brazil and Chile in search of solutions applicable to Malaysia. He makes suggestions in terms of following different models, introducing four core subjects, ensuring that the student body reflects the larger society proportionately, actively discouraging segregation, revising the school-leaving examination system, allowing parental choice, revamping the matriculation system as well as the entire Islamic stream, patterning high schools after the American schools (if they are academic) or after German schools (if they are vocational), broadening the undergraduate university curriculum, encouraging private sector participation, restructuring the teachers’ colleges, offering incentives to attract talented teachers, and reducing the involvement of government in all aspects of education.

Although Bakri Musa’s evaluation of the Malaysian system is well-founded, his experience with the American system is sketchy, leaving wide gaps in his theory. This notwithstanding, he makes many suggestions which, if followed, would genuinely improve the educational system of Malaysia. (21 ページ; 120 分)

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