

# Citizenship for peace: Identity and conflicts in multiethnic Malaysia

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## **Abstract**

*Modern states are known as nation-states but most of the post-colonial states are made of multinational and multi-ethnic groups. It is said that the Third World States are still under the process of nation-making. Conflicts in the multi-ethnic states are often articulated on the lines of identity and culture. Identity based conflicts require proper understanding of the root causes of conflict. Basic Human Needs theory argues that there are some non-negotiable basic human needs which are distinct from the subsistence needs. Unless needs such as recognition, security, participation and redistribution are considered in the resolution process, a sustainable peace would not be achieved. On the contrary, it is bound to repeat over the time period. Citizenship is an important concept as it defines who is in and who is outside the polity. Generally, it links to the dominant majority culture of the state, consequently it excludes minority ethnic and cultural groups from the exclusive idea of the nation-state. Hence the study argues that there is a direct relationship between the notion of citizenship and identity conflicts. Liberal notion of citizenship confers on an individual a status of equal membership to the polity but it was seen that states in practice are often not able to maintain their neutral position. Thus the paper argues that articulation of demands and grievances of the different ethnic groups in a multicultural state can be addressed through a flexible liberal notion of multicultural inclusive citizenship. A case study of Malaysia is used for empirical support of the study.*

**Key words:** citizenship, identity conflict, multi-ethnicity, multicultural citizenship, Malaysia

## **1. Introduction**

It is said that absence of conflicts in a society is abnormal, thus it is inevitable for any society. What matters is that how state manoeuvre in accommodation and recognition of various articulations. Conflict is not violence; it is merely one of the tools of articulation. It can be articulated in many ways. Johan Galtung (1996) understand the process of peace through the help of the concept of 'structural violence' that is non-egalitarian and discriminatory practices that causes human misery like poverty, hunger, repression and social alienation. This structural violence in social systems is maintained by exploitative means through gross violation of human rights based on ethnicity, race, religion or gender. Such structural violence works slowly in eroding human dignity and values, eventually leads to severe conflicts and many times transforms into violent resistance. Hence elimination of repression and discrimination is an essential element of sustainable peace.

It is pertinent to distinguish between basic human needs and subsistence needs because a human being is not merely a biological creature but also emotional,

social and political. Often conflicts in multi-ethnic society are defined in terms of subsistence, but the pattern of most conflicts in the post-Cold War era is surrounded on the assertion of other unmet human needs, such as protection, identity, recognition, participation and accommodation of distinctiveness of minority groups. Thus understanding the root causes of the social conflict in terms of these human needs are essential for the development of human being.

John Burton (1990) is a pioneer in applying Human Needs theory in defining social and political conflicts. He argued that if basic human needs are neglected, then groups in conflict will not hesitate to use violence to claim their rights and meet their needs. Burton identified basically four types of needs in particular and defines it as universal and non-negotiable and hence should be addressed as a basis for any negotiation and peace settlements. He didn't categorise these needs in any order, however, argued to address altogether. Some of the essential basic human needs are; stability and safety; identity i.e., a perception of self in relation to the others; recognition of individual's identity as well as from the others; community development with personal fulfilment.

In a multicultural state, the perception of any injustice related to the distributive system can provide a fertile ground for the exploitation of identity because it concerns with the matter of universal needs and survival of the groups and individuals. Therefore the needs which are paramount in the understanding of social conflicts are identity and its recognition, security, and personal development.

## **2. Understanding Conflict**

Paul Collier (2007) developed an econometric model which talked about the relationship between natural resources and the outbreak of violent conflicts. Variables such as vast reserve of natural resources, slow economic growth, undemocratic politics and primordial characters of polity are the common causes of violent social conflicts. Hence in this theory, the key element is greed for the emergence of violent civil conflicts. It is an important model, but emphasizing merely on 'resource factor' in any social conflicts won't give us a broad explanation of the causes of conflicts in a diverse society. It will provide only a partial analysis of a complex conflicting situation of countries such as Sri Lanka, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d' Ivory or Myanmar. Threat perception, real or imaginary and dissent in fulfilling of basic needs, can lead to conflicting situations. Also, this action would escalate further and turn into severe violence if the size of the affected group is large. In a social conflict and particularly in ethnonationalist conflict, basic needs theory identified 'identity' as one of the most crucial basic needs because it can be used as a catalyst for group mobilization. According to Rothbart and Cherubin (2009), the notion of identity mainly derived from common narratives, symbols, and sense of otherness from other groups. Many scholars stress identity as a key factor in the concept of conflict. However,

merely considering identity as a cause of social conflict would make our analysis incomplete. It is perceived that Identity is a socially constructed and a dynamic concept. It depends on the alliances, mobilizations and manipulations (Doucey, 2011, pp. 1,5).

Common perception under the modernisation process was that it would ultimately wither away the traditional values and institutions based on parochial identity in the process of creating national unity. In other words, despite the multi-ethnic character of society; it produced a nation based on modern liberal democracy and individualism. It is often argued that Third World states are still under nation building process. The term 'nation' that had emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe had different nuances from the understanding of Third World states.

Although strong parochial identities weakened over the time but, traditional values and related institutions are still persisting and putting great pressure and influence over social life. The state tried to spawn a sense of national citizenship that ameliorates the parochial identities. This temptation to a large extent failed to recourse the complexities of deeply divided societies. Circumvent process by the state to minimise the diversity often flippant the minority culture and identity. End of cold war escalated the democratic process. The space provided by the democratic process to the marginalized group spawn opportunity to these groups to articulate their demands for the equal share and fulfillment of basic human needs vis-à-vis dominant community. Consequently, minority community often expresses their sense of citizenship in communitarian form.

Using 'identity' in the mobilization of a group is much easier and quicker. When conflicts are manifest on the basis of identities, people have a very little option to remain outside of the conflict situation because of a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group. It is often argued that leaders and elites of the group manipulate collective identity in order to generate support or mobilisation in any inter-group conflict. But mobilisation of identity by someone does not mean that individuals of the group are not approving their collective misery. An individual of a group easily relates his/her discontent in the discourse of identity as he/she could easily relate it with the narratives of shared values and collective fears. While defining the protracted social conflicts, Azar and Moon (1986) focused on identity as an essential human need and its denial can make conflict prolonged and violent.

Human Need theory argues that unless basic needs such as accommodation, recognition, participation and security are not considered in the resolution process, identity based conflicts in the multi-ethnic society would not be resolved; on the contrary, it is bound to re-emerge after a short period of stability. But it does not mean that resources and other material factors have no stake in identity based conflicts, however, when elements of identity are present in the articulation of conflicts it overrides other issues. Hence our resolution of conflicts will focus on

how the state deals with issues of recognition, security, participation, acceptance and distribution while resolving the identity conflicts in a multi-ethnic society.

In any identity based conflict, collective identity and its security, in particular, will always be a paramount issue. Thus any agreement regarding resolution should be concomitant to element of assurance related to collective fear of all belligerent groups. Also identity conflicts are not necessarily caused by intergroup differences but could be caused by collective fear of the future about their distinct language, culture, identity in a multiethnic setting (Lake & Rothschild, 1998, p. 4).

### **3. Defining Inclusive Citizenship**

Citizenship is traditionally linked to the state and its majority national people consequently it excludes different ethnic minority groups from the idea of the nation-state. Hence state's definition of exclusive citizenship creates identity conflicts, particularly in a multiethnic society. Hence this paper argues that there is a direct relationship between the notion of citizenship and ethnonationalist conflict and concept of differentiated and multicultural citizenship has a potential to establish peace and stability in a multicultural state.

Citizenship is a contested issue (Lister, 2003, p. 3) particularly in a multi-national or multiethnic state. Many scholars such as EnginIsin, Bryan Turner and Balibar, criticised the normative framework of citizenship formally composed of rights and obligations because it set it as a legal status associated with a nation-state. Rather than simply focusing on citizenship in terms of legal rights, there is now a consensus that citizenship must be related to social process through which individuals and social groups articulate their claim. Before going into the detail discussion on the nature of the inclusive citizenship policies in order to address the root causes of the conflicts in multiethnic state, let me discuss the changing nature of the concept of the citizenship which gives us how the notion of citizenship no more considered as merely representative of culture and identity of the dominant group of the modern multiethnic state.

The concept of citizenship has been refined throughout the period of history starting from older Greece to the modern era. It has been mooted and stretched to increase the circumference of the citizenship by incorporating civil and political rights to include groups who were excluded due to various uneven criteria. For instance, the area of citizenship was improved during the 18<sup>th</sup> century by including a wide range of common population; nonetheless, in terms of inclusiveness it was still limited to those who had certain amount of property. Even the announcement of rights of man after the French revolution, political rights were not given to all, for example, having property remained an important criteria for getting the right to have the right to vote. In other words, rights were not granted universally, it excluded women, children, slave and poor etc. In fact, women were excluded from voting right till the mid-years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the West. Much improvement

has been made in the field of citizenship rights since the end of World War-II. Post-war period saw the spreading of civil and political rights along with the social rights in order to curtail the entrenched socio-economic inequalities of society so that it ensures the equal participation of individuals in the national polity.

T. H. Marshall (1950) defined the concept of citizenship on the basis of three kinds of rights; the first was the civil rights developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and established the system of rule of law. The Second type was political rights, which gave the right to vote and representation. The third sets of rights developed in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century under the notion of social rights and helped in the establishment of a welfare state. Marshall's conception of citizenship was highly criticised as his understanding was based on common identity. For instance, Marshall formulated his idea from the conception of a nation-state, having a common identity, shared history, culture and language. It excludes national minorities and other ethnic communities living in the same nation state. Increase in the process of immigration from poor and developing state after the end of colonialism to developed nation-states has created multicultural societies. So the emergence of heterogeneity in the post-colonial world also escalated the demands for the separation of citizenship and nationality. Therefore, the notion of citizenship has shifted towards more inclusive in outlook by addressing the issues of identity, difference and recognition of other ethnic groups.

When the demands for more inclusiveness on the basis of the cultural differences of the minority ethnic communities within the notion of the nation-state escalated, cultural aspects were added to the discourses of citizenship. Their demands mainly revolved around their culture and express their differences in terms of race, ethnicity or native language. Some scholars like, Kymlicka even argued about the more particularistic type of citizenship rights. Kymlicka suggests a "need to supplement traditional human rights principles with a theory of minority rights" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 5). However, Kymlicka also argued that different groups require different rights provisions. Therefore, citizenship debates shifted towards addressing the roots of the demand of the ethnic minorities, who were often denied basic human needs because of their difference in culture or religion.

Here question arises why a multiethnic state needs a multicultural inclusive citizenship when there is already a provision of the liberal notion of the citizenship which gives equal status to every individual in the society irrespective of their differences. Also, even if the number of nation-states was to increase in number, it is likely that most states would remain multiethnic and multicultural in its character. Then, the question is how can people with their different conception of good life accommodate and live together as members of the nation-state?

Recent literature on citizenship has pointed out that modern societies are ethnically and religiously diverse and theoretically no state can be called as a pure nation-state. Similarly, only majority vote cannot satisfactorily fulfil the norms of

the democratic values because outcomes of it can only represent winners and not a consensus. Consequently, ethno cultural and other marginalized minorities are excluded from the real exercise of power.

It is also evident that voices can only be effectively heard if public perception does not merely reflect the majority's cultural tradition, language, religion, but it is accessible to all ethnic and religious groups within society. As Joseph Carens (1996) argued, citizenship is not simply a legal status, but also has a psychological dimension. Citizenship represents a sense of belonging to a collectivity and for that people must have an emotional attachment, identification and loyalty (pp. 111-113). In this context, minorities must have a sense of collective participation and representation under the notion of inclusive citizenship through various accommodative provisions.

Then, what inclusive citizenship means, when it is viewed from the perspective of the excluded communities, is an important factor in the understanding of rhetoric of marginalized. Naila Kabeer (2005) argues,

“Their testimonies and actions suggest there are certain values that people associate with the idea of citizenship which cut across the various boundaries that divide them. These values may not be universal but they are widespread enough to suggest that they constitute a significant aspect of the organization of collective life and of the way in which people connect with each other” (pp. 1-3).

She identifies four vital elements of inclusive citizenship. First, doing justice in the treatment of people as equal as well as differently, second, simultaneously recognise and respect the essential value of all human beings with the recognition of their differences. Third, have some autonomy to exercise and control their affairs and lastly, harmony, means, able to acquaint with others and to act in unity with them in their claims for justice and equality (pp. 3-7).

#### **4. Modes of Inclusive Citizenship and Mitigation of Conflict**

Conventional techniques are not sufficient in the management of identity based conflicts as they do not effectively address the underlying issues related to a group's need. McGarry and O'Leary (1994) classified various methods for the regulation of ethnic conflict. For the elimination of difference, state adopts methods such as genocide, forced population transfers, partition/secession and assimilation whereas methods for managing differences they used mainly hegemonic control, territorial autonomy, non-territorial autonomy and integration (p. 94).

The first two methods for eliminating differences, that is, genocide or ethnic cleansing and mass-population transfers cannot be considered legitimate means in the contemporary world. Similarly, hegemonic control comes under the category

of non-democratic system. Even presence of hegemonic control could be seen in a democracy with formal equal citizenship status to all. In case of secession or partition as a solution, due to presence of heterogeneity in every society, it merely relocates issues of ethnic/cultural conflict to the newly formed state; therefore secession might not produce desirable resolution of issues. Similarly, assimilation advocates a complete merger of the various cultural groups into the wider national culture and eventually tries to form a single national identity. It violates the vital characteristic of individuals who have multiple affiliations.

Historically, assimilation or integration of different cultural group in the majority would never be peaceful. Conflict resolution means the transformation of the relationship between conflicting parties. Inclusive citizenship has multiple dimensions and has the ability to create an inclusive public space for all. The notion of inclusive citizenship challenged the dominant understanding of the citizenship in terms of the nation-state at various levels. It argues modern states are not a mono nation-state but multi-nations in nature. This means that there are individuals which belong to different communities with distinct 'societal culture'. It also recognises that citizenship comprises two types of allegiances, on one hand, they relate to a larger political community and at the same time, they also have a sense of membership of a particular cultural community. In other words, citizens practice two kinds of identity simultaneously i.e., political community at the national level and cultural membership at the subnational level. Therefore, it is not very conducive to presume citizens to be similar in all aspects.

In liberal tradition, states are considered as neutral in making of policies. Historically, in the process of the nation-building, race, religion and caste had been used for excluding different minority groups and individuals from the public and political platform. Democratization process has challenged these discriminatory policies and destroyed the myth of the state's neutrality in the dealing of diversity under the notion of the nation-state. Inclusive citizenship argues about the need for positive distinctions among citizens where few indicators of identity and cultural aspects should be recognised for equal treatment. Therefore inclusive citizenship has been seen as an alternative to the resolution of real or potential ethnic tension.

It provokes to rethink the idea of the unity among the different ethnic communities of a state. It helps in the development of allegiance among minority ethnic groups towards the state as they get their due recognition. On the contrary, enforcement of homogeneity will produce only counterproductive results. Robinson (2009) used the Afrobarometer data to conduct a study and found that 75 percent of respondents from 16 sub-Sahara countries of Africa have viewed no conflict between their national citizenship and distinct cultural and ethnic identity. As it was evident, the emergence of many identity conflicts in many post-colonial states was mostly revolved around the assertion of accommodation of the basic human needs particularly related to the culture and security of their collective rights.

However many considered it as a flawed view as it leads to the escalation of demands from the present demanding community as well as from other small communities. But there is no empirical evidence of this claim. It is an assumed notion that if the state tried to accommodate various claims and differences by the institutional arrangements, it would make the state weak by creating dual or multiple allegiances (Mahajan, 2010, pp. 1-5).

Multicultural inclusive citizenship is not a new concept; it is as old as human civilization. Different cultures have always co-existed and respected side by side in many empires, such as millet system of Ottoman Empire and other eastern civilization. Different kinds of the group have different histories, needs, aspirations and identities. Different groups face different kinds of challenges hence, require different kinds of accommodation policies. For example, groups like Kashmiri or Scottish demand autonomy from the central government to manage their own affairs whereas immigrant groups want measures that will make it easier for them to participate in the institutions of the state. Therefore collective rights are a contextual phenomenon.

For inclusiveness, three kinds of special measures are often cited under the notion of inclusive citizenship. These are; (a) Recognition and Accommodation: cultural and social rights in the form of affirmative action plan for the minority group and symbolic recognition and accommodation of the distinctive societal values in public space (b) Autonomy: self-government rights for national minorities and indigenous communities (c) Representation of Voice: representation of groups or their members in the institutions of state.

One of the most sensitive issues for the ethnic minority groups is the question of their language. Preservation of language is closely related to the culture and identity of the community as well as to the economic opportunity in the state institutions, thus, recognition of minority language in the form of second language or first language if demanding minority community is concentrated in a single territorial area, would have a lasting effect in the integration of minorities within the larger notion of nation-building process. Consequently, it would enhance their sense of inclusiveness within the larger community.

Again, symbolic recognition of the elements of the minority culture is an important aspect of the inclusive policies. National song, public holiday etc. all symbolised the culture of the majority group. It generates a sense of exclusion among minority groups in terms of their cultural representation in national identity as well as in the public sphere. A symbolic gesture of minorities is an important grievance in their struggle for equal status within the larger state. Under the democratic system, minorities also seek for the recognition of some community practices such as personal law especially related to family inheritance and marriage. Almost all liberal democratic countries including USA and Canada have two or more system of law operating within a single political system. Arguments

for recognition of minority legal systems are closely linked to rights for self-government, especially for the indigenous and national minority groups. In a multi-religious society, like Malaysia and India, allowing family law among religious communities can be considered as a form of autonomy or toleration. But this also raises the danger for some of their members such as women because of some non-liberal traditional legal system. Some scholar supported state intervention in case of violation of the basic human rights of the vulnerable groups such as women but, it is often seen that intervention is counterproductive. Instead of intervention, empirically it is more feasible if voices of reform come out from the community itself. For instance, Muslim women are now strongly articulating their dissents against some practices of communities such as the provision of Triple Talaq, which violates the rights of women.

Self-government rights are the most controversial among the minority rights discourse. This right is generally associated with territorially concentrated ethnic groups. Communities who are concentrated in a specific region over a long period of time have a history of self-government. In fact demand for the right to self-determination is one of the important articulations in a multi-ethnic state where there is a long history of a violent conflicting situation between the state and the minority community. One of the effective measures that have been used under the notion of inclusive citizenship is accommodation, which often requires strong measures based on the degree of autonomy to the minority (Mahajan, 2010, p. 8)

It is argued that granting these rights would weaken the nation-state. However, it is seen in multiethnic states that when centre increases its influence on the ethnic groups, it produce an adverse result. It can be argued that promotion of local government is an important aspect for the establishment of a democratic polity.

##### **5. A case of multi-ethnic Malaysia**

This section will discuss the development of Malaysia's model of citizenship and how the institutional arrangements of the different voices of the various ethnic groups have been accommodated within the notion of the inclusive citizenship during nation-building process.

Malaysian citizenship formulated on the notion of differentiated citizenship in which collective rights of ethnic groups are recognised with individual rights. In Malaysia, the Malays and indigenous Bumiputra comprises 61.8% of the population. The Chinese are the second largest ethnic group which make up 22.5% of the population and 7% are Indian. Other groups only account for 0.8% of the population with 8.1% of the population are non-citizens (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2010).

Colonial rule of British started the ethnic division of Malaysian society particularly in terms of language, religion, and royalty. The British rulers created occupational segregation on the basis of ethnic lines, i.e. Malays for agriculture,

immigrant Chinese and Indians for commerce or trade and plantation or mine worker respectively. Consequently, it established a deep sense of interethnic divisions in colonial Malaysia. To understand the nature of contemporary inclusive citizenship in Malaysia, first, we need to review various demand and articulation of the minority groups of Malaysia.

At the time of independence in 1957, Malaysia's demographic landscape was changed from a Malay dominating homogenous society to a multi-ethnic heterogeneous society due to the acceptance of the immigrant Chinese and Indians as the citizens of a new state. Malaysian constitution adopted a federalist structure with consociational nature of the ethnic accommodation in the polity of the state. Article 153 of the constitution privileged Malays not only by guaranteeing the special position of Malays and the Malay language but also article 3 adopts Islam as the national religion and article 38 and 181 recognise a special position of a Council of Rulers composed of ethnic Malay Sultans (Arakaki, 2009, p. 81). The Constitution defines all ethnic Malays as Muslims at birth and makes Islam as the religion of Malaysian federation. Though article 153 of the Constitution asserts the special position of the Malays and the indigenous peoples it also legitimatise the interests of all other ethnic communities. At the time of the independence, Malays were basically living in the rural area and did agricultural activities only. On the other hand, Chinese were indulged in the trade and commerce whereas Indians were mostly employed in the plantations and public services. Overall, ordinary majority of Malays were very poor at the time of independence.

End of colonial era started an important turning point for Malaysian society particularly in dealing with pluralism and multiculturalism. Despite having low or not much experience in unity in diversity and parliamentary democracy, Malaysia's different ethnic communities presented a good example of tolerance on the matters of differences and evolved a sense of commonness and foster mutual respect within the pluralistic society during constitution making negotiations. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Malaysian society is free from any racial or ethnic problems and religious tensions. However, as far as violent ethnic or religious tensions are concerned, there are but not many major ones.

Postcolonial Malaysia started its national identity-making process by using an exclusive ideology of the Tanah Melayu means Malays are the Malaysian despite its multicultural society. Malaysia adopted the cultural policy which was based on the dominant culture of the Malays. Non-Malays were expected to identify with Malay culture. This policy of assimilation was opposed by non-Malays. On the other hand, an assertion of multiculturalism, which promotes cultural diversity, faced Malays resistant as it perceived as a threat to Malay privileges guaranteed under the constitution. Therefore, at the onset, Malaysia adopted neither assimilation nor multiculturalism policies in their purest forms. Instead, Malaysia crafted its policies of citizenship somewhere in between assimilation and

multiculturalism that is incorporating both Malay cultural dominance and the recognition of some non-Malay cultural rights (Segawa, 2013, p. 213).

Ethnicity is the key element in the political scenario of Malaysia. All political parties are constructed along the ethnic line. Compromises were made between the Malays and non-Malays during the constitution-making process on the questions of rights and privileges of Malays as an indigenous people of Malaysia and granting of citizenship status to all non-Malays. Constitution secures Malays' superior position in terms of language, religion and position of traditional Malay sultans. On the other hand, Malays accepted a constitutional status of liberal citizenship regulations for all non-Malays on the principle of *jus soli*.

One of the pivotal policies under the idea of inclusive citizenship for a multicultural setting is the sharing of the political power among different ethnic/cultural groups. This could be implemented with the help of federal or consociational system of governance. Lijphart identified Malaysia as a consensus democracy. Some policies of Malaysia comes under the principle of consociationalism, such as grand coalition with minorities, cultural and group autonomy to minorities to manage their internal affairs such as education and religion (Lijphart, 2004, p. 97).

Since independence, Malaysia is governed by an alliance called National Front (NF) comprised of United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). This coalition ensured that the minorities have representation in political institutions and it also protected the ethnic interests at various level of decision making process. Since it is a multi-ethnic coalition, Indians, Chinese and Malays have share of seats in different districts which lead to a kind of proportional representation of the various ethnic groups. This kind of democracy based on power sharing, spawns long ethnic peace in ethnically diverse society of Malaysia (Lijphart, 1996, p. 266).

Notwithstanding, a gradual polarization was developing among different communities particularly between Chinese and Malays during the period of 1963-1969 which led to the breakdown of the inter-ethnic consociational system in 1969. This was basically considered as a result of the widespread poor socio-economical condition of the majority Malays and many argue that common people had believed that national alliance at the centre failed to fulfil their promise of the development of the Malay community even though Malays recognized the superior economic position of non-Malay.

On the other hand, non-Malays mainly the Chinese challenged Malay political hegemony which was an essential part of the Alliance bargain at the time of constitutional making. In the election of 1969, National Front of Malays, Chinese and Indian lost many seats to the opposition although they secured the majority in the parliament but, it created a sense of fear among the Malays for their future

prospects in the polity of Malaysia. As a result, widespread ethnic violence was committed by the Malays against ethnic Chinese. Thus Alliance failed to secure ethnic harmony from perceived or real hysteria in 1969. In the past however it had been successful in the compromising on many ethnic issues with support from their respective ethnic groups.

In order to create unity on the basis of national culture in post 1969, national government formulated a national cultural policy on the basis of certain principles such as upholding the constitution, rule of law, good behaviour and morality. A National Culture Policy (NCP) was adopted in 1971 which aimed to create a composite national culture based on three basic elements namely indigenous culture, suitable elements from the non-Malay cultures and Islam as an important component because it is an official religion based on the constitution (Suhana & Jacob, 2012, p. 72).

Since this policy was more inclined towards Malays, Chinese and Indian political parties whether in government or in opposition opposed the policy. One of the outcomes of this policy was the implementation of Malay as a sole official national language. Malaysia recognises the Chinese and other minority languages as a medium of instructions up to the secondary level of schools only, but post-school education should only be permitted in Malay and English. Non- Malay's main concern against the language policy was that they see it as an attempt of assimilation in majority culture by Malay majority.

Even at the colonial times, Islam has always been a pivotal point of Malay identity but, in general, the Malays rejected the claims of imposing Malay culture on minorities as the government never force any community to embrace Islam or practice Islamic way of life. On the contrary, due to rabid interpretation of Islam by some Malay groups, religion per say emerged as a factor for clash within Malay community. As it has been evident in the political struggles between UMNO and PAS (Islamia Party of Malaysia), where state led by UMNO with the help of coercive measures often try to subvert the challenges of Islamic parties. Secondly, during Mahathir regime, Islam was articulated in terms of modern and universal progressive aspects of Malaysian society that generate broader sense of inclusive sphere among non-Malays communities (Hamayotsu, 2000, p. 356).

According to article 11 of the constitution, every community has freedom of religion and can freely practice their cultural values and activities even in public spheres such as the celebration of Dragon dance and Chinese New Year by the Chinese community or construction of Hindu temples. For instance, Malaysian Indian Hindus established Southeast Asia's biggest idols in Gombak Selangor without being a majority community. The government has officially recognised many cultural activities of the Non-Malays like, vernacular primary school, recognises public holiday during Chinese New Year, Hindu festivals like Deepavali as well as Easter and Christmas.

Beside cultural accommodation and recognition of the minority culture, redistribution of the material resources is considered as prominent policy under the social rights of the inclusive citizenship. In case of Malaysia, the situation is somewhat different because here majority community is socially and economically much marginalised and minority group mainly Chinese and Indians are in control of trade and commerce. In this matter, 1969 ethnic riots have changed the approach of the Malaysian state. Hence, Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP) was announced in 1970 as the policy for addressing the economic inequalities among different ethnic groups. The NEP had two aims. First, poverty eradication regardless of race and eliminate the identification of race with economic function. However, the main target was to end the socio-economic marginalisation of the Malays. In the 1960s, 74% of the poor household were Malays against the 17% and 8% of the Chinese and Indian respectively (Ahmat, 1980, p. 722).

NEP formulated the objectives to end income and wealth disparities through economic growth. To achieve the NEP's target of 30% stake of Malay in the business and trade, the government used an affirmative action of positive discrimination for Malays in education and commerce. At the same time to prevent discontent among the Chinese community who were dominating the business sector, the government actively tried to develop the economy rapidly. It was considered that high economic growth would benefit all ethnic groups (Chopra, 1974, p. 446). NEP transformed the business sector and economy radically. For example, NEP has an objective to eliminate poverty across the ethnic communities. This objective has been achieved to a large extent. In Malaysia, the poverty rate was 49% in 1970 which was reduced to 16.5% by 1990 and 8% by 2002 (Jomo, 2004). Reduction in poverty of Malays also helped in the eradication of perceived threat of the Chinese economic supremacy and provides an environment for stable peace.

As stated earlier, Malaysia tried to craft its national identity on the notion of 'Malaya for Malaysia' instead of 'Malaysia for Malaysia' at the beginning. This exclusive ideology was also one of the reasons for the separation of Singapore from the federation of Malaysia in 1965. Najib Razak, the current Prime Minister, in order to further broaden the inclusiveness of citizenship, introduced the new slogan of '1Malaysia'. The objective of the 1Malaysia is to create oneness or unity within a multi-religious and multi-cultural notion. The slogan of '1Malaysia' recognises its diversity of ethnicity, religions and beliefs and, willing to build more inclusive citizenship for all groups. 1Malaysia propounded on the principles such as acceptance of difference and the principle of social justice, which are concomitant to the idea of inclusive citizenship.

## 6. Conclusions

Malaysia has been able to manage its ethnic violence successfully. Measures were taken after the 1969 ethnic violence that helped in the creation of the interethnic tolerance and cooperation. Significant improvement in the economic progress has changed the socio-economic position across the ethnic groups. Also reduction in poverty level among the Malays, mitigate the threats of Chinese and Indian which were used at the time of 1969 violence. Second, although there are some restriction on press and debates on sensitive issues such as the special position of Malays and citizenship rights of Non-Malays, on the other hand, multiethnic coalition that is National Front (NF) accepted more political parties and provides a large platform for different ethnic parties to cooperate and negotiate with each other. NF coalition moreover moved beyond ethnic differences in order to create an effective coalition where all ethnic groups are represented.

This article argues that understanding the root causes of conflicts particularly identity conflict by the Human Need theory which stresses on the non-negotiable basic human needs which is other than subsistence needs, such as, safety/security, belongingness, dignity, cultural security, freedom, distributive justice and participation are pivotal for the conflict resolution. Inclusive citizenship not only gives an identity to an individual but also provides a psychological understanding of belongingness to the wider society for the minority communities. It is possible that policies of inclusive citizenship differ from one state to other state but most of these policies contain similar anti-discrimination measures. Again, these policies not only resemble each other but they are also resembled one because of their origin, as these policies emerged when minority communities rejected assimilation (Uberoi, 2008, p. 406).

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