

## The Implementation of the Look East Policy and its Impact on the Community Development in Malaysia: An Analysis

### *Pelaksanaan Dasar Pandang ke Timur dan Impaknya terhadap Pembangunan Komuniti di Malaysia: Satu Analisis*

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#### ABSTRACT

*The Look East policy is not just a political rhetoric of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. This policy has been compiled and loaded with various programs to ensure its success. This policy was introduced with the aim of changing the thinking and paradigm so that it is not too obsessed with the West, especially Britain. For this purpose, the study will analyze the continuity of Malaysia's foreign policy towards Japan has succeeded in molding and forming the Malaysian economy to a high-income nation as well as generating first-class minded people. This study uses a qualitative approach by analyzing secondary data derived from books and articles from international journals to support and compare the opinions of other scholars. It is very important to change the notion that everything that comes from the West is good and replaced as an alternative is to look to the East especially Japan. The implementation of the Look East Policy has seen the Japanese government actively aiding Malaysia to develop infrastructure, trade, industry and technical education. This is a good and positive effort from the Malaysian government to further improve the performance of management and development in this country. In short, the implementation of the Look East Policy has made Malaysia succeed in line with other developed countries. The contributions and cooperation forged through the Look East Policy efforts have given their own impact on socio-economic development and community development in Malaysia.*

*Keywords: Foreign policy; Look East Policy; Impact; Community Development; Implementation*

#### ABSTRAK

*Dasar Pandang ke Timur tidak hanya sekadar retorik politik Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Dasar ini telah disusun dan sarat dengan berbagai program bagi menjamin kejayaannya. Dasar ini diperkenalkan bertujuan untuk mengubah pemikiran dan paradigma supaya tidak terlalu taksud dengan pihak Barat terutama Britain. Untuk tujuan ini, kajian akan menganalisa tentang kesinambungan dasar luar Malaysia terhadap Jepun yang telah berjaya mencorakkan dan membentuk ekonomi Malaysia kepada negara yang berpendapatan tinggi di samping melahirkan masyarakat minda kelas pertama. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menganalisis data primer dan sekunder yang diperolehi daripada fail-fail kerajaan, laporan kerajaan dan akhbar termasuk sumber seperti buku-buku ilmiah, jurnal dan tesis bagi menyokong serta membandingkan pendapat sarjana-sarjana lain. Adalah amat penting mengubah tanggapan bahawa semua yang datang dari Barat adalah baik dan digantikan sebagai alternatif adalah dengan melihat ke Timur terutamanya negara Jepun. Pelaksanaan Dasar Pandang ke Timur telah menyaksikan kerajaan Jepun begitu aktif membantu Malaysia untuk membangunkan infrastruktur, sektor perdagangan, perindustrian dan juga pendidikan teknikal. Hal ini merupakan satu usaha baik dan positif dari pihak kerajaan Malaysia untuk meningkatkan lagi prestasi pengurusan dan pembangunan di negara ini. Secara ringkasnya, dasar luar Malaysia terhadap Jepun dalam pelaksanaan Dasar Pandang ke Timur telah menjadikan Malaysia berjaya seiring dengan negara maju yang lain. Sumbangan dan kerjasama yang dijalinan melalui usaha Dasar Pandang ke Timur ini telah memberikan impak yang tersendiri dalam perkembangan sosioekonomi dan pembangunan komuniti di Malaysia.*

*Kata kunci: Dasar Luar; Dasar Pandang ke Timur; Impak; Pembangunan Komuniti; Pelaksanaan*

#### INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is one of the inseparable tools in a country's international relations. In fact, it is the main consideration in establishing a relationship

with other countries in the world. Malaysia is also no exception in matters related to this foreign policy. Malaysia began to take responsibility for its foreign affairs as soon as the country was free and independent from British occupation on 31 August

1957. Before achieving independence, Malaya was not given the freedom and right to conduct its own foreign policy and was represented only by British diplomats.

The Mahathir's Administration (1981-2003), in particular, had consistently championed their concerns and aspirations to the extent that the Malaysian Premier was regarded as the developing nations' hero. He was the voice of conscience in articulating the plight and challenges facing the developing world. Since then, over the last three decades, Malaysia emerged as an active player in promoting self-reliance of the developing countries through fostering partnership among them, as well as consistently and at times vocally expressing their agenda internationally (Osman & Muda, 2018).

The situation was beginning to experience a transformation when Malaya emerged as an independent and sovereign nation. Thus, the Prime Minister plays an important and influential role in determining the direction of foreign policy, which is professionally managed by diplomats who are trained in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or known as Wisma Putra. Bilateral and multilateral relations with another country are needed not only at the regional level but also at the international level to ensure their respective positions and interests. This shows that foreign policy is the basis for continuing the survival of the country. However, there will be disputes and misunderstandings in adopting internal and external policies that lead to the occurrence of national blocs representing different positions. So, this is where the country's leaders play their role in shaping their respective foreign policies. According to Azrul Azlan (2018), in the context of geo-politics and geo-economics, the Southeast Asian region is an area that is very strategic not only in terms of its position which is the most important route, but also in fact, in trading activities even trust has many such natural resources.

#### FORMATION OF MALAYSIA'S BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH JAPAN AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN 1957

After World War II, the Japanese had risen from their mistakes due to their obsession with expanding their influence in Asia and other continents. The fall of the war taught the Japanese to expand their influence and think through economic, cultural, linguistic and other activities. Therefore, investment

and economic activities are among the mediums of the process. It was difficult for Malaysia and Japan at first to rebuild good relations that had previously been formed and damaged by Japan itself through the process of imperialism in World War II, which had brought a bad image to relations with those countries.

Bilateral relations are relations or diplomacy that are done bilaterally or between two countries only. It is the longest form of relationship or diplomacy implemented since the concept of the nation-state and interaction between these countries. This type of diplomacy is said to be more effective and transparent because only two countries are involved in discussing issues that only have to do between the two. It is also said to be more effective due to the lack of hassles and obstacles that can hinder efforts towards agreement and cooperation. This type of diplomacy is easier to manage because it involves only two countries and all problems can be resolved through consultation or joint discussion if the two countries are in a good relationship situation. However, this bilateral diplomacy is difficult to implement in a tense situation, that is when there is a misunderstanding between the two countries. Therefore, they need a third party or external party to be a *mediator* (facilitator) to help solve the problem (Rusdi & Pandian 2005).

Japan has taken steps to humble itself by persuading and reconciling through the distribution of aid and contributions to those countries. These countries include Malaysia, which received the impact from the brutality of the previous Japanese military rule. After the independence of Malaya, the Malayan Federation government led by Tunku Abdul Rahman was focused on relations with the West as the cornerstone of the administration. This is due to the factors of the background and personality of Tunku and the route to independence obtained from the West to serve as an axis to West Malaysia to the development process-centric Federation of Malaya.

Historically and geographically, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries have received Japanese attention since before the Second World War due to the fact that this region is rich in minerals such as iron ore, rubber and so on. The Japanese, who developed their country and industry a lot have relied heavily on these raw resources to meet their economic needs. Thus, by using Japanese diplomacy strategies, influence and culture can be expanded worldwide through the uniqueness of Japanese identity and technology. Japan in the post-

war era highlighted their true identities which were more characterised by gentleness in firmness than during World War II which was better known for their violent and rude nature by the outside world.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The country as an international political actor strives to interact and establish good relations with other actors in order to achieve their respective national interests. To achieve its maximum national interest, the country uses an instrument known as foreign policy. The foreign policy of a country is an action or policy that refers to the external environment in defending and fighting for national interests while maintaining regional security, economic growth and defending national independence (Duncan 2002).

### THE CONCEPT OF FOREIGN POLICY

According to Mokhtar (2005), foreign policy is the policy practiced by a country in establishing relations with another country. Foreign policy also refers to actions or ideas made by policy makers to solve a problem or bring about change in the international political environment. Meanwhile, Rusdi (2005) also believes that foreign policy is formed to preserve and defend political, security and economic interests as well as other key interests. This policy is driven towards promoting the existence of a harmonious regional and international environment that will provide space to achieve national goals without interference from external threats. It also promotes tolerance and cooperation with all countries that form the structure of the international community.

Foreign policy plays an important role for a country, not only because it can guarantee the interests of the country, but also can prevent external threats from threatening national security. In addition, it can also reflect the attitude or stance of a country in its relations with other countries. Foreign policy is a continuation of domestic policy aimed at maintaining and preserving security, harmony, economic well-being and other national interests. Through the concept of foreign policy, the country will implement all actions whether to defend sovereignty, protect interests and establish relations between countries based on the principles and guidelines that have been outlined in the

framework of foreign policy. Foreign policy is very important to shape all the journeys and actions of a country in terms of political, economic and social. Thus, foreign policy is a principle that is a guide to a country in implementing its foreign actions.

### THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In the beginning, community development was just a small-scale organisational idea that sought to improve the quality of life of individuals living in the community. This ad-hoc organisation plays an important role which includes, among others, solving local group problems such as providing housing needs, maintaining the cleanliness of settlement locations and managing poverty. This entity later evolved into the idea of mainstream institutions and practices which among other things showed the emergence of significant influence among specialised organisations that played a role as community development brokers (DePhilippis & Saegert, 2008).

The approach adopted by Phillips & Pittman (2009) also simplifies the understanding of this concept into only two aspects, namely process and outcome. Process refers to the formation and enhancement of the ability to act collectively. While the result refers to the collective action taken (successfully created) and the impact of the collective action, whether in the form of physical, environmental, cultural, social, economic, political and so on, or all of them. Based on this description, the definition put forward is appropriate: *“A group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e., a planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural and/or environmental situation”*.

From a sociological perspective, “community” is one of the master concepts in community studies based on three factors Firstly, it serves as a system of information about a macro social phenomenon (society) at the micro (community) level; and secondly, it is a unit of analysis to enable researchers to understand society holistically; and thirdly, it allows researchers to make comparisons in terms of differences and similarities in sociocultural, ethnic, environmental, characteristics and social issues within different communities (Gusni 2019).

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOOK EAST POLICY: JAPAN AS AN EXAMPLE OF A DEVELOPED COUNTRY

Leaders are the backbone of the patterning of society. Leadership can be seen in the conduct and attitude of a leader and can also be learned (Madiawati et al 2020). When Mahathir Mohamad became Prime Minister in 1981, he continued the policy of open-door trade. He argued that Britain's monopoly must be broken so that the Malaysian economy is not under Western influence. Colonial policy indeed considers Malaysia's attitude of over-safeguarding its national interests as negative. Malaysia's stance emphasises that 'the Malaysian era is now a time of action, not a time of former slaves who can be enslaved' (Chamil 1982).

Accordingly, the people are advised to be prepared to accept the fact that the East is not always weak and the West is not always great. Thus, under the leadership of Mahathir Mohamad, he surprised the country with a change in the policy he wanted to implement by carrying out a foreign policy that was so different from the previous three Prime Ministers. Due to this purpose, the Look East Policy was announced and was implemented in 1982.

At the beginning of Mahathir Mohamad's rule as in political relations, he also manifested his anti-British orientation in economic relations. The Buy British Last policy is a reflection of his anti-British policy in economic relations conducted in response to the personality of British corporate members who are not only insensitive to Malaysian government policies but also often intervene in matters related to Malaysian workers. The attitude of British businessmen who are not sensitive to Malaysia's domestic economic policy such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) which wants bumiputera involvement in the economy is so annoying to Malaysia (Faridah, 2012). Malaysia is also offended by the British media's attitude in making reports that are prejudicial to the country's domestic economic policy. The British media often reports and describes Malaysia as a country that practises ethnic discrimination in economic relations because the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups according to them are not only denied their rights but also oppressed in the economic and educational fields.

In the era of Mahathir Mohamad's rule, Malaysia's relations with Japan began to move towards a close and strong relationship. He has introduced the Look East Policy (DPT), a Malaysian

foreign policy that applies to East Asian countries, especially to Japan. Various policies are made in an effort to make Malaysia one of the countries that are heading towards a respected developed country. This situation encourages Malaysia to make Japan a country that should be emulated. The rapid development of economic development overcame Western countries in a short period of time caused the leaders of this country to recognise that Eastern powers were also able to match Western powers and this indirectly led to the implementation of the Look East Policy.

Through Malaysia's foreign policy with Japan, the Look East Policy was announced by Mahathir Mohamad on 8 February 1982 during the 5th Joint Annual Conference of MAJECA / JAMECA (*Malaysia-Japan Economic Association*) at the Hilton Kuala Lumpur. This policy means that the government will study, research and select the best examples and role models from Japan by modifying them with the conditions in Malaysia. Japan is a country that is rapidly developing in some areas and more advanced than some Western countries themselves. The success of Japan can be used as an example and role model for Malaysia and further practised to achieve national development goals by improving the performance of management and development of the public and private sectors (<http://pmr.penerangan.gov.my>).

According to Mahathir Mohamad, the essence of the Look East Policy is work ethic, management methods, discipline and dedication. Apart from that, this policy is also Malaysia's effort to change the country's traditional economic policy based on agriculture and mining to become an industrially based country. This policy can also be described as a reflection of Mahathir Mohamad's personality, who is not very comfortable with the West and wants to find new values from the East in developing the country's economy. In the search, he has raised developed countries such as Japan and Korea to be emulated and considered as a role models in national development. However, Mahathir Mohamad still reminded us that this policy does not blindly imitate Japan or Korea, instead the country will be selective where socio-political, cultural differences between Malaysia and Japan will be used as a basis in making any decision regarding this policy.

Japan is a very fast developing country and even more developed than the West in some areas and has become one of the largest investors by channeling Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Southeast



Asia. Japan has built a 'production network industry' that generates high volumes of trade between Japan and ASEAN countries (Kim, 2008). According to Zainuddin (1994), one thing that really attracted Mahathir Mohamad to make Japan the best example is because of Japan's own attitude that has built its country into a world economic superpower over the US atomic waste by adopting the free market which is a unique mix between West and East. This statement is supported by Wariya (1989), who stated that the implementation of this policy by Mahathir Mohamad is because Japan is the most successful industrial country in the world in this century. In addition, the West at that time was experiencing a severe decline, especially among developed countries and factors associated with Malaysia's own economic development. According to Abdul Aziz (1997), the main objective of this policy is to improve management performance in the public and private sectors and national development as well as create a Malaysian society that has positive values and work ethic in order to achieve national progress.

For more than two decades, Mahathir Mohamad led the Malaysian government. Various changes in all aspects he has made both at the domestic level and those involving foreign relations and policies. His government has succeeded in bringing Malaysia into one of the New Industrial Countries (NICs) through development programmes that generate national income at a higher level. In international relations, he made major changes by ending "special relations" with Britain and becoming an officer for developing countries and the Third World.

The approach in the implementation of Mahathir Mohamad's foreign policy has been said to have changed from a policy focused on national defence and security brought by the previous Prime Minister to a more modern and firm foreign policy

in implementing diplomacy involving commercial affairs and national development (Respini & Sahrasad, 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

The writing of this study involves a qualitative analysis approach through descriptive analysis. Secondary sources refer to data or information that has been studied by other scholars on the same topic and the author has used this information as data to support and strengthen the arguments or reviews of this research in addition to being an alternative perspective to understand the concepts and answer the research objectives. For this study, library research methods will be implemented to obtain secondary data and information. To obtain secondary data and information through library research, data and information will be obtained through printed documents such as books and articles related to international relations journals.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Look East Policy is a policy of strengthening Malaysia's diplomatic relations with Japan. The formation of this policy is due to Mahathir Mohamad's belief in Japan since time immemorial which has been an actor in the development of Malaysia. Moreover, due to his frustration with Western civilization which does not respect the countries in the Eastern region and often considers the Eastern countries as an outdated territory and does not follow the currents of civilization. Mahathir Mohamad also thinks that Britain has never been serious about developing Malaysia and only uses Malaysia as a tool to its own economic interests.

TABLE 1. The Impact of Look East Policy on Community Development in Malaysia.

ITEM	The Impact of Look East Policy on Community Development in Malaysia
Management	Application of Japanese style management system through Look East Policy [work ethic & 5S system]
Investment-trade	Increased Malaysia-Japan investment and trade.
Agriculture	Malaysian agricultural industrial development.
Education	Development of technical education sector in Malaysia.

### IMPACT OF THE LOOK EAST POLICY

The things that should be focused on through this policy are craftsmanship and discipline of work, loyalty to the country and enterprise or business in

which employees work, priority to group and not self, productivity (productivity) and high quality (quality), improvement in efficiency, reducing differences and separation between executives and general employees of management systems

that emphasise long-term success and not merely increase dividends or staff income in the short term etc. which are believed to contribute to progress for our country (Prime Department Circular Minister 1983).

The effect of sending students to Western countries does not have a positive effect because after they return to Malaysia makes them more arrogant and do not even want to share the expertise they have acquired. Unlike Eastern countries, especially Japan, the nature of gentleness in efficiency has attracted Mahathir Mohamad to make Japan a model for Malaysia's development. Therefore, it is appropriate for Malaysia to turn its attention to Japan and South Korea to send students to absorb the country's knowledge. The positive effects that occur when most of the students who return from Japan have made a difference to the industrial journey in Malaysia. High craftsmanship and discipline have been applied in the workplace and become a role model for employers and colleagues. Therefore, the government's goal to improve the quality of work among the workforce can be achieved through education programmes under the Look East Policy.

The mission to modernise Malaysia through the Look East Policy begins with increasing Japanese investment in Malaysia. The government has expanded the investment space for Japan and subsequently to other foreign countries. Malaysia acted in this way because Japan since independence has never been tired and has never rejected all of Malaysia's demands in channelling development assistance in terms of infrastructure and economy. Japan sees Malaysia as a potential investment partner and Malaysia places Japan as a good development partner. Thus, the Japanese took the opportunity to expand their investment market in Malaysia, which indirectly helped boost foreign investment in Malaysia.

Malaysia also intends to boost their long-term development by making Japan a development partner. Thus, the action coincided with the world economic situation at that time. The strength of the Japanese economy and the strength of their ports have become an attraction for every developing country, including Malaysia. The move of the world financial market centre to Tokyo has shocked Western countries showing that the eastern region is not a weak and backward region. With the strength of a strong financial fund, Japan will find it easier to channel financial assistance to Malaysia when needed (Chamil Wariya, 1989).

The Japanese economic market has a very wide range of opportunities and has not been fully explored by Malaysia. Japan's careful attitude in choosing investment partners has made their markets difficult to penetrate by other developed countries and made Japan's investment position always safe, secure and can last a long time through Japanese protection policy. Thus, the implementation of the Look East Policy is very appropriate because Japan's interest in Malaysia is very high as well as can help Malaysia build a market in Japan.

The Look East Policy that has been introduced has various programmes to further boost Malaysia's development. The program has involved various sectors and parties. Among the programmes carried out are in the fields of investment, trade, industry, infrastructure, engineering, technical, education, work ethic and so on. This policy can be said to cover all areas and involve all Malaysians. Ultimately, the Look East Policy has become a major policy in terms of its implementation to successfully change the direction of Malaysia's development.

After the Look East Policy was introduced, the investment space on behalf of Japan was opened wide so that Malaysia could explore with the investments made. The Japanese are very careful to choose their investment partners for fear of harming them. However, due to the high trust between the two parties, Japan has made Malaysia an investment partner in Malaysia as well as in Japan as well (Daud et.al, 2016). It has led to the domination of Japanese products in Malaysia to the point of marginalising products from the West.

Infrastructure growth and development in Malaysia has intensified through Japan's assistance and role in the Look East Policy. Malaysia is also not left behind to take advantage by developing foreign industrial zones to attract foreign investors, especially from Japan. There are many industrial zones and areas that have been developed to facilitate investors to develop their plants and factories. By offering systematic facilities, most of these industrial lots have been filled by foreign investors. Apart from the industrial zone, Malaysia has also successfully developed various infrastructure projects such as highway projects, ports, electric power stations, railways and so on (Berita Harian, 1991). The successful infrastructure development further boosted the Japanese investment journey in Malaysia and was placed among the successes of the Look East Policy.

In the field of engineering and technical, Malaysia has developed this field in line with the field of industry and education. By consolidating these areas will facilitate the provision of skilled manpower to meet the needs of the engineering industry and in turn have a positive impact on industrial development in Malaysia. Indirectly, it will also reduce the burden of the country so as not to rely on expert manpower and the use of foreign technology. Through the Look East Policy, the government has established many technical education and engineering institutions in Malaysia. Previously, most local students were sent to Japan to undergo the technology absorption process, but Malaysia could not continue to rely on the process. Through the establishment of this local level institution, Malaysia will be able to produce local product experts and indirectly explore its own technology.

As investment, industrial and technological development activities have become active, the country has accepted the temptation to social development in Malaysia. Especially in the mission to achieve Vision 2020, the thinking and human capital of the country needs to achieve civilization like any other developed country in the world and needs to have its own identity and mold. The Look East Policy has been used as a platform to make the policy a success as Malaysia has made Japan a model on the agenda to achieve Vision 2020. Japan as it is known to be a developed country that is able to compete with other Western countries has been made a model for Malaysia so that the dream of becoming a developed country is realized.

#### 1. Application of Japanese Style Management System through Look East Policy

##### *Work Ethic*

In the public sector, at least the Look East Policy has enabled the government to change the attitudes and habits of working among civil staff to become more disciplined and dedicated to their respective duties. By introducing time cards (coming and going) at government offices, statutory bodies and other government agencies. This implementation can detect whether there are officers who skip work or come late to the office. If there are officers who do not follow their instructions, they will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or dismissal depending on the cases.

The Japanese style time management system is one of the things that is trying to be absorbed through the Look East Policy. Wisdom in time management is one of the factors of success of an organization.

In addition, public departments are also encouraged to hold assemblies in the morning before starting work. In these assemblies, there are certain tentatives including singing the national anthem 'Negaraku' and staff are also required to wear name tags. In addition, emphasis is also given to the concept of the open office which, aims to abolish the wall that separates officers and ordinary employees. Under the attitude change program, the government introduced excellent services, the concept of Clean, Efficient and Trust and Leadership by Example. Apart from that, there is also the launch of the Management Handbook and Quality Improvement and the Overall Management Guide (TQM) (Wariya 1989).

##### *5S System*

Japan places great emphasis on hygiene practices. Thus, there is a concept known as the 5S System. This concept refers to the practise of neat and clean workplace care based on the principle of 'place for all and all in its place. Through this concept, one can practise good discipline and morals that lead to increased productivity (Esa 1999). This system has long been practised in Japan and has been tried to be absorbed into management in Malaysia. 5S means:

- a. Seiri (isolation): i.e., isolating or disposing of unnecessary items in the workplace.
- b. Seiton (arrangement as needed): that is, arrange the necessary items in an orderly manner so that they are easy to take for use.
- c. Seiso (cleaning): that is, clean the workplace thoroughly so that there is no dust on the floor, machines, machinery and appliances.
- d. Seiketsu (hygiene maintenance): that is, maintaining the standard of care and organization of the workplace which is constantly improved from time to time.
- e. Shitsuku (training employees to obey the rules: that is, training employees to obey the rules of the organization and cleanliness at all times.

## 2. Increased Malaysia-Japan Investment and Trade.

In the context of investment, Japan is also the largest investor in Malaysia as most national development projects such as ports, free industrial areas, highway construction, railways, submarine cables and hydroelectric dams have been funded by Japanese and other foreign investors. After the Look East Policy was implemented, Japan has emerged as one of the largest investors after Singapore, the United States, Indonesia and so on. Due to Malaysia's strong prospects with Japan, it has also attracted other foreign investors who have also offered to start investing. Thus, the Foreign Investment Act has been introduced to attract more investment companies from other countries to invest.

Through the Look East Policy as well, Malaysia has succeeded in venturing into the field of automotive manufacturing through investment cooperation. This project is a joint venture of HICOM with a capital contribution of RM 180 million with Mitsubishi Motors Corporation. Apart from cars, HICOM is also involved in the production of motorcycles through the collaboration of HICOM-Yamaha, HICOM-Honda and HICOM-Suzuki which have always recorded profits since 1987. Investment projects showed an increase before the Look East Policy was launched in 1980 with 36 projects with a capital of RM 94.3 million and increased to 45 projects after the Look East Policy was launched. The most significant increase was in 1986 and 1987 when investment projects increased from 45 projects to 54 projects with an increase in project value of RM 116.3 million to RM 715.2 million. This situation occurs when the government has given flexibility to foreign investors to own 100% equity (Awang, 1994).

According to Awang (1994), among the attractive effects of the influx of Japanese investors into Malaysia is the offer of many job opportunities. Most of the Japanese investors who come are from the manufacturing sector which includes 447 companies. According to Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) statistics, Japan is a major production investor in several sectors and offers as many as 300,000 job opportunities in Malaysia. Apart from the manufacturing sector, Japan is also

involved in the construction sector. In 1984, 36 Japanese contractors were established in Malaysia. The most prominent construction project is the construction of Daya Bumi and UMNO Headquarters.

The success of the Look East Policy not only attracts Japanese investors to get a foothold in Malaysia, but it also provides good prospects for the Malaysian economy. Foreign investors' confidence in the Malaysian economic position makes them also interested in investing. The government also opens space for other foreign investors such as Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea, Taiwan and so on. During the period from 1985 to 1989, the average increase in foreign investors to Malaysia was 3.5% and it was a great success for Malaysia in strengthening the economic position and giving a good image to other foreign investors.

## 3. Malaysian Agricultural Industry Development

The Malaysian Government has established cooperative relations with Japan as a mentor country because it has technology that focuses on paddy cultivation. Thus, with the help of the paddy cultivation technology in Malaysia, Sabah has increased the capacity of paddy and in turn, reduce dependence on imported paddy. A total of four experts were contributed by Japan through the financing of the Colombo Plan. The experts are skilled in the field of rice processing machinery management and three experts in rice production. At the same time, surveys and guidance will be conducted by these experts on local rice operators and rice processing plant operators (Economic Planning Unit File 1983). The guidance provided is intended to assist the parties involved in ensuring that production capacity can be increased while reducing costs. Reducing costs will help improve the economic status of paddy farmers so that they can focus on the process of developing the sector.

Progress in the agricultural sector has undergone a positive development in terms of its production. The need to speed up the production process needs to be done by increasing the number of modern machineries. Due to the very limited financial position of the country at that time, the government was not able to meet the needs of the machinery. Various initiatives have



been undertaken by the government to purchase machinery for the agricultural sector of particular interest. In addition to buying, it themselves, the government is also asking for help from several other developed countries to donate machinery for the country's agricultural needs. On 29 August 1968, several types of machinery were donated by the Japanese government to assist Malaysia (Malaysian Information Department File 1968). The plowing machinery was donated along with the logging machinery because in that era, the logging sector was also one of the sources of national income. The assistance provided will help Malaysia accelerate the acquisition of funds from the industry.

#### 4. Development of Technical Education Sector in Malaysia

The process of sending Malaysian students to Japan has had a significant impact on the development of education in Malaysia, especially in the field of technical education. These efforts have successfully provided highly skilled teaching staff to meet the needs of the rapidly growing technical educational institutions. Various Malaysian ministries and government departments are involved in setting up technical education institutions and the need for experienced instructors is very much needed. Such openness shows their seriousness in helping Malaysia to develop a skilled workforce among the locals. It also aims to reduce Malaysia's dependence on skilled manpower from other developed countries in conducting industrial operations in Malaysia.

Furthermore, the establishment of several institutions and technical training centers has further boosted the involvement of youths to dive into the technical field in Malaysia with the establishment of technical schools, vocational schools, technical colleges, MARA Vocational Institute, polytechnics and so on. Revealing the cooperation between Malaysia and Japan, MARA is an organisation that has successfully established many technical education institutions and successfully sent students to further their studies in Japan. In the Second Malaysia Plan (2MP), a total of 240 students were sent to Japan to further their studies there. Now, MARA has the expertise and facilities that can be a technology

absorption center from Japan. Apart from MARA University of Technology (formerly known as MARA Institute of Technology), several MARA institutions have been established such as the MARA Skills Institute, MARA Polytech College, High Skills College and MARA Japan Industrial Institute. The establishment of these institutions is the result of the implementation of the Look East Policy which requires the absorption and technological skills of Japan. MARA is seen as an organisation that often moves to improve Bumiputra education either inside or outside Malaysia.

### CONCLUSION

The efforts and roles played during the implementation of the Look East Policy by both countries have a positive impact on development in the planned community. Now, the Look East Policy which has reached more than 30 years roughly shows that Malaysia has achieved success in its implementation because economic developments and changes have taken place very clearly. Malaysia is also a major contributor to Japan's success as an economic and influential country in the Asian region. Due to the implementation of the Look East Policy, which has opened up a lot of space for Japan to invest in Malaysia as well as other ASEAN countries. The policy has given more intensive improvement to external relations that have been formed years ago. Economic cooperation has a clear impact in various fields, especially in the financial, investment, trade, technical and even education sectors.

The Look East Policy can be considered as a tool to treat the country's economy and as a catalyst for the New Economic Policy (NEP). Japan's selection as a model country coincides with its ability to achieve outstanding success in the field of industry to the point of intimidating other countries, especially from the West. Although this study found that trade and development cooperation was established between Malaysia and Japan before the Look East Policy, the implementation of this Look East Policy has made Malaysia move more advanced. The Look East Policy has also opened up space for Malaysia to be more courageous in venturing into larger scale trade and even successfully become a business partner in various international companies from other developed countries.

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