

Essay on Discuss the Difficulties That Arise from The Existence of More Than One Language in Your Country

There are many races living in Malaysia. The main ones are the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians and the Kadazans. There are also some Eurasians and people of mixed parentage. As such the number of languages used in this country is numerous. Each race communicates in their own language or languages. Thus difficulties arise when people of one race try to communicate with people of another race.

Among the Chinese for instance, there are difficulties even when they want to communicate with one another, not to mention trying to communicate with someone of another race.

This is because the Chinese were originally from different parts of China, and they all speak different dialects. We have Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Teochew, Hainanese and other less known dialects, and they are as different from one another as German is from English. So when a Cantonese person tries to talk to a Hokkien person, they have to use a dialect that both know, otherwise, communication is impossible.

In the central regions of Peninsular Malaysia, Cantonese is widely used among the Chinese. However, in the northern and southern regions, Hokkien is the predominant dialect. So when a person from Kuala Lumpur who cannot speak Hokkien goes to Penang, he will have great difficulties making himself understood. Likewise, it is the same for a person from Penang who cannot speak Cantonese coming to Kuala Lumpur.

Mandarin is the language used in China. Thus many Chinese here prefer to use Mandarin in their daily lives. However, there are many Chinese

who are not educated in Chinese schools and who do not speak Mandarin. Again difficulties in communication arise. So it is not uncommon to see two Chinese persons communicating in English or Malay.

Among the Malays too there are variations of the Malay language as spoken in different areas of the country. A person from Johore will find it almost impossible to understand a person who speaks the Kelantan dialect. However fortunately they can all communicate in the standard Malay that is used commonly.

The Indians too have different languages, the main ones being Tamil, Hindi and Punjabi. Again difficulties can arise when they try to communicate. Usually, the Indians use Tamil when they communicate among themselves. Alternatively, they might use English. or Malay. The government is aware of the difficulties. caused by the numerous languages and have made Bahasa Melayu (the Malay language) the national language. Malaya is the medium of instruction in all schools. It is also the language used for all official or government matters. Today almost all Malaysians can speak Malay. So there is really no great difficulty in communication between the different races.

However, each race still prefers to. use their own language when they communicate among themselves. This is unavoidable. Happily, this has the effect of making most Malaysians being able to speak in more than one language. This is Of great advantage. It is wonderful to be to switch from one language to another with ease. Often a visitor to our country is quite amazed by this.

Thus having numerous languages give rise to difficulties in communication. However this has been overcome by the common national language, Malay, Finally, it cannot be denied .that being multi-

lingual is much better than being able to speak only one language,
can it?