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THOUGHTS

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN FACILITATING THE MADANI CONCEPT



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By :

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ali Salman

The backbone of the 'Madani' concept is its emphasis on community balance in its development so that the drive for growth is felt by all groups. For Malaysia Madani, the landmark of the development of a society should not only be in the form of famous and tall buildings but also for the balance between the upper class and the ordinary people.

MADANI is an acronym for a policy that embraces six core values – keMampanan (Sustainability), Kesejahteraan (Prosperity), Daya cipta (Innovation), hormat (Respect), keyakinan (Trust), and Ihsan (Compassion).

Media as a vehicle

The eyes and ears concept of media and communication, making it the guardian of society could be applied to Madani in relation to prosperity, respect, and compassion. Thus, the media will serve as a vehicle to carry the Madani concept to all parts of the community. Since communication is integrated into all parts of our lives, it is pertinent that it is used to spread the Madani core values, especially of prosperity, respect, innovation, and compassion.

New media as a network for empowerment reaches vast places and is capable of promoting and communicating the needs for prosperity, respect, and compassion. Communication is far more than the transmission of information. The exchange of messages and information is important for many reasons. While the content of our communication may help us achieve certain physical and instrumental needs, it also feeds into our identities and relationships in ways that far exceed the content of what we say.

The information-sharing capability of the media serves physical needs, which is an aspect of prosperity. Physical needs include needs that keep our bodies and minds functioning. Communication, which we most often associate with our brain, mouth, eyes and ears, actually has many more connections to and effects on our physical body and prosperity.

At the most basic level, communication can alert others that our physical needs are not being met. This is congruent with Madani which seeks to promote prosperity for all Malaysians. There are also strong ties between the social function of communication and our physical and psychological health. Madani, as it is crafted, seeks to address issues surrounding human beings as social creatures, which makes communication important for their survival.

Instrumental needs

Instrumental needs include needs that help us get things done in our day-to-day lives and achieve short- and long-term goals. In other words, the innovative ways of doing things. This is in line with the Madani element of Daya Cipta. We all have short- and long-term goals that we work on every day. Fulfilling these goals is an ongoing communicative task, which means we spend much of our time communicating for instrumental needs. Some common instrumental needs include influencing others, getting the information we need, getting support, and getting

things done, among others. In short, communication that meets our instrumental needs helps us “get things done.”

To meet instrumental needs, communication should be strategically applied. Politicians, parents, bosses, and friends use communication to influence others in order to accomplish goals and meet needs. There is a research area within communication that examines compliance-gaining communication, or communication aimed at getting people to do something or act in a particular way. It should be noted that compliance gaining and communicating for instrumental needs is different from coercion, which forces or manipulates people into doing what you want.

Relational needs

Relational needs include needs that help us maintain social bonds and interpersonal relationships. Communicating for relational needs helps us achieve the social relation that is an essential part of being human, which cannot be separated from the prosperity, respect, and compassion that Madani seeks to promote. Communication meets our relational needs by giving us a tool through which to develop, maintain, and end relationships.

In order to develop a relationship, we may use nonverbal communication to assess whether someone is interested in talking to us or not, then use verbal communication to strike up a conversation. Then, through the mutual process of self-disclosure, a relationship forms over time. Once formed, we need to maintain a relationship, using communication to express our continued liking of someone and showing concern for their prosperity, respect, and compassion.

As a diverse society, Malaysians need to be aware that communicating for relational needs isn't always positive though. Although we may feel the “need” to be passive, aggressive, or controlling, these communicative patterns are not positive and can hurt our relationships within the larger diverse MADANI society. In mitigating situations like this, communication imbued with respect and compassion needs to be brought to the fore. We can verbally say things like “You're such a great friend” or engage in behaviours that communicate our investment in the relationship, like organising activities in the community where everyone can take part, thereby strengthening the neighbourliness among us.

Sustainable and equitable development

MADANI recognises the right of every Malaysian citizen regardless of background to live in a sustainable environment and contribute to the prosperity of the nation. It supports ventures toward making Malaysia an inventive and creative nation. It fosters

mutual respect among citizens as a social and cultural norm to ensure inclusiveness. It nurtures kindness, care, and love in every member of society to create peace.

In closing, MADANI could be likened to an all-inclusive framework for sustainable and equitable development for all citizens in Malaysia. In achieving the aforementioned, the principles of development communication can be harnessed to facilitate the MADANI agenda moving forward.

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Assoc Prof Dr Ali Salman is with the Faculty of Language Studies and Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan.

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