

TEACHING GAMELAN IN SILENCE?

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Introduction

Malaysia's development agenda as a country has yet to fully recognise the need for equal participation of people with disability (PWD) in all sectors especially economic, social and politic (Dennison Jayasooria, 1999). Despite the first special education classes that was set up in 1962 in Kuala Lumpur for the 'deaf' (Mohammed Hashim Omar, 1966), and special program such as Community Based Rehabilitation program(CBR) in 1983, Malaysia has yet to fully implement inclusive policy and practice to accommodate special need children and adult in the Malaysian agenda. However in the late 1990s with the development of international policy and convention on the rights of a child specifically the United Nation Convention of the Right of a Child (UNHCR) and policy initiatives by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Malaysia begin to take affirmative action with robust social policy parallel to the global disability movement in particular education and welfare policy (Zalizan M. Jelas & Manisah Mohd Ali, 2012) .

With the enactment of Education Act (1996) and recently, Disability Act (2008), education and welfare provision of Malaysia slowly affirm to the needs of the nation and to ensure equality for people with disability.. The focus of policy and programme for special children gradually change from charity to right base. Two main areas of opportunity and assistance from the government cover mainly the education and welfare provisions. The two ministries in charge directly with these Acts are Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (Ng Lee, M., Yen Abdullah & Ching Mey, S, 2011; Zalizan M. Jelas & Manisah Mohd Ali, 2012). Both of these provisions continue to accommodate the basic needs of Malaysian citizens including people with disability. However, only selected PWDs are able to participate in the special class or school and the country development agenda.