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THE IMAGE OF THE SIKHS IN MALAYSIA

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Dedicated to,

All people who are different and who are so different!

LAT

for the inspiration

All people are the same it's only their habits that are so different!

Confucius

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Mr. Dr. Amarjit Kaur and Mr. Dr. ... for the study. I would also like to thank my respondents and friends who helped distribute the questionnaires.

Finally, I would like to convey a special thanks to my family and friends for their love and encouragement throughout these years.

Thank you

Harpreet Kaur
March, 2020

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Finally, I would like to convey a special thanks to my family and friends for their concern and encouragement throughout these years.

Thank you!

Manvir Kaur
March, 1987

SINOPSIS

Ini adalah satu kajian deskriptif yang melukiskan imej kaum Sikh di Malaysia. Ia cuba mengkaji imej stereotaip orang-orang Sikh dengan meneliti cara penggambaran mereka dalam media massa. Satu kajian soalselidik juga telah dijalankan ke atas sampel 100 orang penuntut di Universiti Malaya untuk mengetahui pendapat mereka.

Bab 1 menggariskan tujuan, skop dan metod kajian. Beberapa konsep yang berkaitan juga dibincangkan untuk memberikan suatu pemahaman tentang rangka konsep yang digunakan dalam kajian ini.

Bab 2 memberikan satu latarbelakang ringkas mengenai sejarah sosial kaum Sikh di Malaysia. Ia menggariskan sifat penghijrahan dan struktur pekerjaan mereka yang awal. Ia juga mengkaji corak kontak awal antara orang-orang Sikh dengan kumpulan-kumpulan etnik yang lain di mana imej stereotaip orang-orang Sikh telah diperkuatkan melalui pembahagian masyarakat kolonial mengikut garis-garis etnik.

Bab 3 menumpukan kepada penggambaran imej orang-orang Sikh di Malaysia seperti yang dibayangkan dalam media massa. Ia mengkaji imej-imej dahulu dan kini berdasarkan sifat-sifat fizikal, budaya dan sosio-ekonomi yang dikaitkan dengan orang-orang Sikh.

Bab 4 mengandungi analisa data kajiselidik yang dijalankan ke atas sampel 100 orang penuntut Universiti Malaya.

Bab 5 adalah kesimpulan bagi kajian. Ia meneliti imej kaum Sikh dalam masyarakat Malaysia.

This is a descriptive study concerned with the delineation of the image of Sikhs in Malaysia. It attempts to examine the stereotyped image of the Sikhs by drawing out from the mass media the manner they are portrayed. A questionnaire survey was also carried out on a sample of 100 University Malaya undergraduates to explore their opinion.

Chapter 1 outlines the aims, scope and methods of study. Some relevant concepts are discussed to provide an understanding of the conceptual framework used in the study.

Chapter 2 provides a social background on the social history of the Sikhs in Malaysia. It outlines the nature of Sikh migration and their early occupational structure. It also examines the nature of early contact between Sikhs and other ethnic groups whereby stereotype images of Sikhs were reinforced through compartmentalization of colonial society along ethnic lines.

Chapter 3 focuses on the delineation of the Sikh images in Malaysia as portrayed in the mass media. It examines the past and contemporary images based on physical, cultural and socio-economic characteristics attributed to the Sikhs.

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Chapter 4 contains the analysis of the survey data collected from a sample of 100 University Malaya undergraduates.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion of the study. It examines the image of the Sikhs in Malaysian society.

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Malaysia is an interesting "laboratory" for the study of ethnic images. These images appear as part of the social heritage of society. The different ethnic groups hold various ideas and beliefs about one another. These images are people's characterisations or generalisations about other people. They can be positive or negative depending on whether they are praises or derogatory remarks. Intergroup imagery is believed to determine intergroup behaviour in a multi-ethnic society. Therefore, to understand the nature of inter-ethnic relations in this country, one needs to know the images held by the various ethnic groups towards themselves and others. It is believed that a proper delineation of the stereotyped image of ethnic groups can prove useful in forging economic, political and social unity in this country.

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INTRODUCTION

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I. Aims of Study

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different images of Sikhs, the study also aims to find out the stereotyped image of the Sikhs.

II. Scope of Study

The study concentrates on the delineation of the image of Sikhs in Malaysia. It focuses on the process of ethnic stereotyping in Malaysia. Overt cultural differences and the political and socio-economic structure of our society tend to form the basis of stereotypes. The study examines the physical, cultural, economic and social characteristics attributed to the Sikhs. The social history of the Sikhs in Malaysia provides the background for the study. Ethnic images in the media are analysed assuming them to reflect the attitude and perception of Malaysian society in general. To ascertain the currency and popularity of these images, a survey was carried out among 100 University students. They were questioned on various aspects pertaining to Sikh ethnic stereotypes.

III. Research Methods

The methods for data collection were library research, media analysis and a questionnaire survey on a sample of 100 students in University Malaya. In the delineation of the Sikh image in Malaysian society, attention centred on any relevant material found in books, magazines, newspapers or characterizations in cartoons, songs, movies and television programmes. Scarcity and difficulty

in obtaining relevant material was a handicap. Observation and analysis of the media also tended to be subjective. The interpretation depended on my own generalizations. Therefore, I have included many illustrative 'examples' as part of the delineation. The survey data served as a guide in my illustration.

The survey was carried out in August, 1986. The target was to collect at least 100 complete questionnaires. They were distributed to the students through friends and course-mates who stayed in the colleges and off-campus. Thus, it was easier to get back these questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to be brief and in the open-ended format. This was to enable free expression of different ideas and beliefs concerning Sikhs held by the different ethnic groups. Questions covered aspects of ethnic names, identification, cultural, occupational and social characteristics concerning the Sikhs in Malaysia. The response was considerably good. Most of the students were co-operative, and some expressive. There were also a few who thought it was a "joke" - the questions sounded funny to them, especially in assigning most typical traits of the Sikhs.

IV. Some Relevant Concepts

"Image" as used in research on public opinion corresponds to what has been called stereotypes in this study. The work done on stereotypes serve as the conceptual framework for this study.

Stereotypes

The term "stereotype" originated in the technology of printing where it refers to a solid metal plate cast from the mold of a type. The major purpose of stereotyping is to produce a printing surface that can be used for thousands and thousands of impressions without needing to be replaced. Thus the adjective "stereotyped" has come to mean "mechanically repeated" or in a broader usage, "hackneyed" or "trite". The noun "stereotype" has been widely used as a social science concept. Its usage was introduced by an American journalist Walter Lippmann in his book called "Public Opinion". Lippmann (1922) applied it to the field of attitudes and ideas because of the rigid character of the mental processes which mould the material of experience into fixed patterns. Lippmann recognized stereotypes as part of a "simplifying mechanism to handle the real environment which is altogether too big, too complex and too fleeting for direct acquaintance" (Nelson et al. 1971 : 103). As Lippmann points out, "for the most part we do not see and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us and

we tend perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture" (Eysenck 1955 : 244). "A man's actions are not based on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him. It is the way in which the world is imagined that determines at any particular moment what men will do. Thus, we react, not to the real word, but to our reconstruction of it - the pictures in our heads" (Nelson et. al 1971 : 103).

The Study of Ethnic Stereotypes

Each of us hold simplistic and inaccurate images of different groups of people. Here, stereotypes can be defined as a "category that singles out an individual as sharing assumed characteristics on the basis of his group membership" (Nelson et. al. 1971 : 103). This means that when it is known of a person belonging to an ethnic group, then automatically the individual will be given characteristics which are assumed as "generalization" of the ethnic group. In empirical research, the term "stereotype" has usually been employed as a derogatory designation for "group concept". Katz and Braly (1933) define ethnic stereotypes as "traits attributed to an ethnic group which the judging group shows high agreement." They describe racial prejudice as "a generalized set of stereotypes of a high degree of consistency which includes emotional responses to race names, a belief in typical characteristics associated with race names, and an evaluation of such typical traits" (Fisher 1983 : 295).

The purpose of stereotype research is to investigate the picture or cognitive structure that we act upon as if it were real. Most studies on ethnic stereotypes have used one of the 3 techniques : the adjective checklist, ratings of photographs or ratings of statements. The adjective checklist as a measure of stereotypes was developed by Katz and Braly in 1933. In the classic study on stereotypes, they selected 84 characteristics commonly used to describe different racial and ethnic groups. 100 Princeton University undergraduates were asked to select 5 trait names judged to be most characteristic of 10 different ethnic groups : Germans, Italians, Blacks, Irishmen, Jews, Americans, Chinese, Japanese and Turks. The adjective checklist was prepared based on earlier characterizations and descriptions by some other students. In spite of a large number of adjectives available for selection, there proved to be considerable agreement in the assignment of "most characteristic" features to the different groups. For instance, the most common words assigned : Germans - scientifically minded, industrious, stolid; Jews - shrewd, mercenary, industrious; Negroes - superstitious, lazy, happy-go-lucky; Chinese - superstitious, sly, conservative; Turks - cruel, religious, treacherous; Japanese - intelligent, industrious, progressive; Americans - industrious, intelligent, materialistic; Englishmen - sportsmanlike, intelligent, conventional; Irishmen - pugnacious, quick - tempered, witty and Italians - artistic, impulsive, passionate (Ogionwo 1980 : 100).

The adjective checklist has been criticised on the grounds that it limits the subject's description to a preselected list of traits. The adjective checklist may not contain the traits relevant to the group. However, it is still the most common method used for investigating stereotypes and it has to be always updated to maintain its effectiveness.

The Dimensions of Stereotypes

In the discussion of stereotypes, 5 dimensions have been proposed by Edwards : content, learning, uniformity, direction and intensity (Nelson et. al. 1971 : 105 -110).

"Content" refers to the traits making up the stereotype. The frequency of a trait attributed is not considered. Thus, it is possible that a trait may be considered very characteristic of a group at one time and less so at a later time, and still be considered as part of the stereotype content at both times. The content of stereotypes can remain stable or change through time. For example, the traits assigned to the Jews (shrewd, mercenary, industrious, grasping, intelligent and ambitious) in 1933 were found unchanged by Gilbert (1951) after 18 years. On the other hand, the Japanese stereotype changed from a favourable image in 1940 (intelligent, industrious & progressive) to a negative image in 1950, after the Second World War (sly, treacherous & extremely nationalistic).

The traits forming the stereotypes also change through time and age in the process of "learning". Blake and Dennis (1943) found that the traits in white children's stereotypes of Negroes changed with age until reaching a stable content similar to that of adult stereotypes. It was proposed that the young white child acquires first of all a generally unfavourable attitude towards the Negro but gradually, with increasing age and experience, he learns to apply the adult stereotypes, some of which are complimentary.

"Uniformity" can be measured through the frequency of the individual traits assigned to a group or the importance of a term to the stereotype. Gilbert (1951), replicating the Katz and Braly (1933) study, found less uniformity among Princeton students than Katz and Braly (1933) 18 years before. He suggested that fading of the stereotyped image was due to social science teaching, to the heterogeneity of the sample, and to the disappearance of stereotypes from cultural media. La Violette and Silvert (1951) suggested that attaching traits to all members of an ethnic group was antithetical to the "thinking man" image of the college student. The reluctance of students to ascribe traits to the ethnic groups may be due to a cultural emphasis on avoiding prejudice but it does not demonstrate that the student cannot assign the common stereotypes. The reluctant students can be aware of the common stereotypes but are unwilling to admit them personally. Uniformity in assignment of stereotypes reflect the homogeneity of the attitude towards the stereotyped group. Discrepancies within the group are reduced by the tendency towards a reference group norm.

"Intensity" can be determined from the stereotype by a social desirability rating of the traits or separately by a favorability ranking of ethnic groups. It has been shown that both high and low-prejudiced individuals hold stereotypes but the high-prejudiced individuals are more likely to hold more intense stereotypes. Thus intensity is a consequence of individual attitude, rather than an inherent characteristic of stereotypes themselves.

As in the case of intensity, "direction" can be determined from the stereotype terms, whether having more or less favourable terms. Preference in ranking the stereotyped groups also serve as a rough estimate of intensity and direction.

Most studies, however, have been done to investigate stereotypes as part of a larger study of prejudice. Thus, very little work has been done on the relationships of the dimensions of stereotypes.

Stereotypes : Media of Expression

The investigation of stereotypes, being "pictures in one's head" are not restricted to psychological studies. Stereotypes often find expression in society through the media. Studies have found evidence that the mass media certainly aids the process of learning and maintaining stereotypes in society. Klineberg (1950), distinguishes between "public stereotypes" and "stereotypes held by individuals" (Ogionwo 1980 : 121). The former refers to stereotypes that appear in the media. The manner in which different ethnic groups are portrayed

by the media can influence individuals who have earlier lacked an opinion and also serve as additional support and proof for those who have already received a stereotyped opinion.

Stereotypes can be observed in the fictional and nonfictional characterizations of ethnic groups in magazines, newspapers and books. Literature works like Dickens' "Oliver Twist", Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" and Marlowe's "The Jew of Malta" all contribute to the creation of a stereotyped Jew. Newspapers also present stereotypes. They can be crudely expressed verbal statements of the man on the street or on a higher ideological level, surrounded with intellectual and pseudoscientific rationalizations. Political speeches can be filled with stereotypic phrases like "the forgotten Americans" and "the silent majority" coined by President Richard Nixon. Stereotypes are also apparent in the news reports of biased commentators with overgeneralized editorial statements.

Stereotypes can also be found in songs in the form of fixed characterizations like "watermelon loving, tap dancing Negro," "the siesta snoring Mexican" and "the sidewalk whistling Irish cop." Television programmes, movies and commercials also present rigid stereotyped characters. This can be seen in the case of minority images in American productions, for example, the Chinese are usually laundry men or a coolie cook like Hop Sing in "Bonanza". A Chinese actor wanting to be a success in the American movie business will probably have to play Charlie Chan's son. Jews are portrayed as unscrupulous in money matters and Italians belong to the Mafia.

Prejudice, Discrimination and Stereotyping

Most social psychologists regard prejudice as an attitude - more specifically, a simplistic, hostile attitude towards a group of people and the individuals in that group. Prejudice therefore covers the 3 components of attitudes: the cognitive component, including all the ideas and beliefs about the social object of the attitude; the affective component, involving the feelings toward the object; and the action component, comprising the behavioural tendencies toward the object. In the case of prejudice, the cognitive component is simplistic and inaccurate. This is expressed in the concept of stereotype : an oversimplified and rigid set of beliefs about a group of people. Stereotypes involve gross generalizations acquired through misinformation that ignore individual differences and are resistant to change even in the light of new information (Fisher 1982 : 287).

Ehrlich (1973) proposes some principles to account for prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping :

Stereotypes about ethnic groups appear as a part of the social heritage of society. They are transmitted accross generations as a component of the accumulated knowledge of society. They are as true as tradition, and as pervasive as folklore. No person can grow up in a society without having learned the stereotypes assigned to the major ethnic groups. But while ethnic stereotyping has been a constant in folklore, in literature, and in history, we should not overlook the fact that within societies the primary targets of stereotype assignments have changed over time. Even where targets remained stable, the content of

assigned stereotypes stand in a reciprocating relation : as intergroup relations change, intergroup imagery changes. In cycle, changes in intergroup imagery affect changes in intergroup behaviour. These reciprocated effects may be stable or they may spiral in an increasingly negative or positive direction.

(cited in Fisher 1982 : 297)

Stereotyping can also be viewed in the cognitive approach.

Hamilton accounts some aspects in this approach : First, cognitive biases result in stereotyping. Categorization of similar objects into classes reduces complexity and brings order to our world. When we group people into ingroups and outgroup, we automatically develop a positive bias towards our own group and a simplististic perception of other groups. This process is enhanced when groups have clear distinguishing characteristics such as skin color or manner of dress. Second, once stereotypes are formed, they result in further cognitive biases. We tend to process information about social groups in ways that are congruent with our existing stereotypes. Third, stereotypes have important consequence on our behaviour. Essentially, stereotypes are maintained through the self-fulfilling effect they have on social interaction. For example, a prejudiced white may hold a stereotype of blacks as distant, untrustworthy and less intelligent. In interaction, the white person may be unfriendly, maintain a greater interpersonal distance and end a conversation as soon as

possible. The black person will likely reciprocate this unfriendly behaviour, thus "confirming" the white person's stereotypes. Such behaviour can also be explained in terms of ethnocentrism:

Ethnocentrism is based on a pervasive and rigid ingroup-outgroup distinction : it involves stereotyped imagery and submissive attitudes regarding ingroups, and a hierarchical, authoritarian view of group interaction in which ingroups are rightly dominate, outgroups subordinate.

(Fisher 1982 : 299)

Ethnic stereotypes are usually described as unfair generalizations of entire groups and as such equated with prejudice. However, Taylor and Simard (1978) suggest that stereotypes can also have a more positive role to play in intergroup relations. The negative view of stereotypes possibly arises from the American "melting-pot" approach, emphasizing ethnic and cultural homogeneity. The social reality of a multi-ethnic society is that different groups will seek constructive relations with each other while still maintaining their cultural distinctiveness. Stereotypes that reflect cultural differences of which groups are proud may help these groups relate effectively with one another. The cognitive process underlying positive stereotypes is the same as with negative stereotypes but the underlying motivation and social consequences are very different. Here, stereotypes show "consensus among members of one group regarding the attributes of another group." Socially desirable stereotypes reflect mutual attraction between groups while at the same time each group maintains its cultural distinctiveness. Each group stereotypes the

other in the same way that the group stereotypes itself. Members of each group value their own attributes as well as those of the other group. Intergroup tension may exist but mutually positive attitudes generally prevail (Fisher 1982 : 298).

Kernel of Truth Hypothesis

It is often asserted that since stereotypes are so widely held, they must contain a small core of truth. If a stereotype remains unchanged for a long period of time or if it is shared by many different people, this is usually taken as proof that there exists a reality behind the image depicted by the stereotype. By comparing an ethnic group's perception of itself with its perception of how other groups perceived it and how other groups actually perceived it, we can find out the existence of a "kernel of truth" in stereotypes (Ogionwo 1980 : 118-119).

There is a two-way processing of stereotyping. Stereotypes applying to a certain group are equally potent in influencing the behaviour of that group. For instance, what is expected of the Negro, is likely to affect the behaviour of the Negro. Studies have shown that an individual's identity or self-concept is often created for him by those with whom he interacts and such a self-concept can be learnt so thoroughly that the individual's actions may come to be seriously affected by it. The point here is:

1. When a given ethnic group is labelled with certain stereotypes, other members of the society, aware of and responding to the attached labels, tend to develop new expectations concerning the labelled or stereotyped group.
2. This has the consequence of modification of self-image, on the part of the affected group, tending to internalize those labels attached to it.
3. These processes, in turn may lead to adoption of self-concept or identity with the development of new values and greater likelihood of being more permanently confirmed in that image (Ogionwo 1980 : 119).

Ethnic Stereotypes in Malaysia

Few systematic studies have been done on ethnic stereotypes in Malaysia. Alvin Rabushka (1971) is the pioneer researcher who conducted a systematic study measuring Malay, Chinese and Indian stereotypes. Otherwise, there are a number of studies which investigated stereotypes as part of a larger study of ethnic relations and attitude. The discussion of ethnic stereotypes in Malaysia takes a different approach from the social psychologist in the West. In the present case, they consist of "generalizations about members of certain ethnic groups, of opinions about a people considered as a unity and about their character" (Ogionwo 1980 : 97).

Stereotypes are exceedingly common in Malaysia just as in any multi-ethnic society. The Chinese are generalized as "hardworking but dishonest," the Malays as "lazy and easy going," the Indians as "dirty and dishonest." Although these statements may be resented by the various groups concerned yet one generally thinks of the other as such. This is often confirmed in the studies. However, it has been less demonstrated as to the extent to which their appearance can seriously hamper contact and understanding between human beings of different ethnic groups. It may well be that most of these stereotypes are rather of "innocent" character, filmy models, which the majority of people would be prepared to abandon, if they should have a broader contact with the ethnic group in question. But it is also possible, in fact more probable, that stereotypes are a serious barrier to interpersonal understanding.

Several scholars have written on intergroup imagery in Malaysia. T.H. Silhock states that:

The Chinese firmly believe that their wealth and Malay poverty are the natural consequences of Chinese industry, thrift and adaptability to modern ways, and of Malay indolence, thriftlessness, and conservatism.

(cited in Rabushka 1973 : 64)

Gayl Ness (1964) describes that:

It is widely believed that the Chinese are achievement-oriented, industrious, opportunistic, avaricious, and are sharp businessmen. Malays are held to lack achievement orientation, to be lazy, and to show a distaste of hard labor. At the same time, they are believed to be loyal, polite and proud. The Chinese are held to be self-possessed, the Malays headstrong and erratic. The Chinese are believed to be self-reliant, while the Malays rely upon government assistance and protection - a result of spoon-feeding of colonial protection. The estate Indians are generally considered to be low in mental ability, lacking in self-reliance and achievement orientation. The urban commercial class of Indians, on the other hand, share many of the characteristics of the Chinese, especially in commercial and financial matters; they are not, however, thought to be as industrious or as work-oriented as the Chinese.

(cited in Rabushka 1973 : 64).

Peter Wilson (1967) describes the Malay villagers view of

Chinese and Indians:

Malay villagers appear to hold to the opinion that all Chinese are dirty. The principal meaning implied is not so much physical dirtiness as ritual impurity, and this attitude finds its most powerful, symbolic expression in the contrast between the Malay injunction against the eating of pork because it is unclean and the extreme penchant of the Chinese for pork ... Thus no matter how clean a Chinese may be, he is always ritually impure to the Malay.

In general, villagers seem to regard Indians as people to laugh about : the blackness of skin, hairiness, and the skinny men and fat women seemed to amuse them most ... Village men and women alike object to, or find most peculiar, the smells associated with Indians. Most Indian stores

have an incense stick burning, and there is often blended in with this the smell of scent. The smell of Indian cooking seems characteristic to Malay villagers, to whom the body smell of Indians is also oppressive. A major reason given by villagers for not travelling on a bus at night is that the smell of Indians is so strong ... But whereas the Chinese are ritually or mystically dirty, Indians are considered squalid.

(cited in Rabushka 1973 : 65)

Milton Esman (1972) states that:

Malays regard themselves as scrupulous in their dealings with outsiders as well as one another, faithful in all obligations to their families, friends, religion, and rulers, and concerned more with the quality of human relations and with the unhurried enjoyment of simple, decent living than with material acquisition ... Malays have a less flattering image of Chinese : hard-working, ambitious, insatiably acquisitive, clever but unscrupulous in transactions outside their families, coarse and insensitive in interpersonal relations, ritually and physically unclean, unreliable in their values except their enduring obligation to ancestors and thus to Chinese culture and to China, regardless of the regime temporarily in power.

Chinese regard themselves as hard-working, progressive, concerned with improving their lot through their own efforts in a competitive and often hostile environment, and faithful to their family and social obligations. To a Chinese a "typical" Malay is lazy and superstitious, without motivation to improve himself through education or hard work, preferring to subsist on handouts or patronage from relatives of the government than to earn his way through diligent work.

(cited in Lee 1975 : 38)

The following story tells about the stereotyped image of the Malays:

A poor Malay was lying under a coconut tree when a rich Chinese man passed by. The Chinese asked the Malay why he was not working. The Malay asked the Chinese why he should work. The Chinese explained: "If a man works hard, he will make a lot of money, and some day he can enjoy a good life". The Malay asked, "What is a good life?" The Chinese responded by saying that a good life is relaxing and not doing anything. So the Malay said: "What I am enjoying now is what you are after through hard work. So why should I bother with work at all?"

(Wu 1982 : 24)

Wu (1982 : 24) describes that :

Stereotyped Indians are arrogant, domineering, talkative and rude. A joke told by a Chinese detective about how to make a criminal confess conveys views of the Malays, Chinese and Indians:

A Malay will confess as soon as you threaten him with imprisonment. An Indian will confess after you put him in solitary confinement. He cannot stand to be without somebody to talk to. A Chinese will confess when you put him in the same cell with an Indian, he cannot stand the talkative Indian.

(Wu 1982 : 26)

Several inferences can be made about ethnic stereotypes in Malaysia. Most commonly, stereotypes develop out of cultural differences. Such stereotypes reflect ethnocentrism. Each group tends to perceive their own group in favourable light, while

undersirable characteristics are attributed to others and between-group differences are often exaggerated. For example, Malays may characterize Chinese as 'kasar' (not refined). This characterization is due to judgement of an outgroup by their own values and expectations of behaviour. The Chinese social etiquette is not the same as that of the Malays. Thus failure of people to see other cultures in their own context tends to form the basis of stereotypes. Another example is seen in the case of language difference. The Chinese have a stereotype that South Indians are less trustworthy than Malays, whose language most Chinese can speak. The Chinese have a figurative speech for untrustworthiness, that is "kong ke-ling-kia" or "speak Kling language." "Kling" is a derogatory term for South Indians and to speak in a Kling language means that one is not only dishonoring one's words, but also twisting facts. This is related to the fact that speaking an Indian language seem to the Chinese to require a lot of tongue-twisting (Wu 1982 : 51).

The political and socio-economic structure of our society is also a source of ethnic stereotyping. Since socio-economic differentiation accompanies ethnic differentiation, many stereotypes emerge from the social and economic roles of each group. Thus, Chinese tend to see Malays as controlling the government and Malays see Chinese as controlling the economy. Since Malays are able to receive some favors from the government, many Chinese tend to discredit the success of individual Malays. Stereotypes often grow out of the experience of interaction. A few cases of Indians cheating the Chinese are usually sufficient to perpetuate the stereotype

that Indians are not trustworthy. In the same way, Malays feel that the Chinese are dishonest in business, discriminating and charging them higher prices.

On the whole, the stereotypes reflect ethnocentrism and misunderstanding between ethnic groups, usually misleading descriptions of the culture and personality of an outgroup. They also portray the friendly or hostile nature of intergroup relations. In fact stereotypes often form the basis of prejudice. For example, a Chinese may judge a Malay as not being good at Science and Mathematics simply because of the stereotype that Chinese students are good in Mathematics and Science but Malays are not. Such a case is obviously a prejudice derived from a stereotype. However it cannot be denied that the stereotypes appear as useful devices storing large amounts of information acquired as part of the social heritage of Malaysian society.

CHAPTER 2

THE SIKHS IN MALAYSIA : BACKGROUND

The Sikhs form a tiny minority in Malaysia. In the 1980 census, they were enumerated at 32,684 persons, comprising barely 0.3% of the total population in Peninsular Malaysia. However, they can be considered as most conspicuous of Malaysia's numerous ethnic groups. Their turbans and beards, distinguished physique, traditional dress, unique names and pronounced predominance in specific occupations create an impression of a close-knit homogenous community. The consciousness of their distinctive identity is highlighted in the local folk terminology. Most Malaysians utilise a wide range of labels to describe the Sikhs, mainly "Benggali", "Bhai", "Babu", "Benggali Tonchet" and "Singh".¹ This chapter attempts to provide a brief background on the social history of the Sikhs in Malaysia.

¹ Benggali, Bhai and Babu are usually used for all North Indians. Benggali Tonchet and Singh refer exclusively to Sikhs. Tonchet refers to the topknot worn by Sikh men.

Social History

Sikh immigration into Malaysia was engendered by British rule in the 19th and 20th century. However, no exact date can be given as to when early Sikhs arrived in Malaya due to lack of documentary evidence and research. There are suggestions that from the time Sir Stamford Raffles took Singapore in 1819, Sikhs from Malwa in the Punjab started coming to this region. Early migrants could have been exiled political prisoners who had opposed British rule in India. However, most people believe that the Sikhs first came to Malaya as policemen. The first batch of 110 Sikh policemen arrived in 1873, brought by Captain Speedy in the service of the Mantri of Larut (Lopo vol. 1 1971 : 5-16). The official sponsorship of Sikhs to serve as policemen in Malaya formed the background for the migration of Sikhs into Malaya during the colonial period.

In Malaysia, especially in the colloquial terms, a Sikh is often though mistakenly referred to as a "Benggali". This curious phenomena is most difficult to explain. The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu record that in 1509 A.D when the bearded Portuguese sailors, under the command of Lopez de Sequiera, made their first appearance on the shores of Malacca, the local people stroke the beards of these "Benggali Putih" or "White Benggalis" (Lopo vol. 1 1971 : 1). It is believed that in the early days of Indian migration into Malaya in the late 19th century, the Malays referred to them as either Kling or Benggali. Harrison recorded that, "The generic name given by the Malays to Indians other than Tamils is 'Bengali' and under

this head come the Dogra, Sikh, Pathan, Panjabi Mussulman, Kashmiri, Waziri, Rajput, Afghan, Behari and all the breeds of men from India who are not either 'Kling Hindu' or 'Kling Islam' (Lopo vol. 1 1971 : 1). The practice continues even today.

The Chinese and South Indians too commonly refer to Sikhs as Benggali. It is believed that in the colonial days the Chinese feared the Sikh policeman and nicknamed them "Mungkali Kwai" or "Benggali Devils". It is usually explained that the Sikhs were known as Benggalis because they embarked for Hong Kong or Malaya from the port of Calcutta, the capital of West Benggal.² The Tamils came from Madras while the Sikhs, from Punjab. Contact between them in India itself was almost non existent in the early 20th century. Consequently the Sikhs arriving at the Straits Settlements from Calcutta came to be known among their own countrymen from Southern India, by the province of their port of embarkation - Benggal. This problem of widespread confusion and ignorance has often led even a Malaysian - Sikh to describe himself as a Benggali.

The early Sikh immigrants, mainly policemen and soldiers can be described as "third country nationals" who were enticed either by deliberate policy or by economic opportunities to settle in the

² A Benggali is a native of Benggal province of undivided India (the state of West Benggal of India today). West Benggal is at least 1,000 miles east of Punjab and the language and other ethnic characteristics of the true Benggali and Sikh are quite dissimilar. The Sikhs are natives from the province of the Punjab.

European colonies to play roles as middlemen minorities.³ The British were faced with the problem of internal security in 19th century Malaya. It was an underdeveloped country, crime was rampant, and the population composed of various different races was widely dispersed all over the country. The British particularly feared the Chinese whose 'kongsis' (clan associations) and secret societies easily broke out in feuds. The Malay chiefs, dispossessed of their authority had to be watched carefully to prevent trouble in the early years of British rule. The question of the security force was much debated on. The British desired to maintain a police force that was not racially akin to the majority of the population to ensure that there would be no division of loyalties. They had explored various avenues such as Malays, Javanese, Bugis and Sumatrans, Chinese, Jawi Pekans, South Indians and Europeans but found them either unsuitable or not feasible. Their favourable attitude towards Sikhs was initially influenced by their personal experience with the security forces in India.⁴ They were eagerly sought for

³ The British maintained Malaya as a "colony of trade," manned by a relatively small number of white colonizers with the aid of members of a co-opted indigenous elite, or imported "third country nationals" who served as middlemen and low echelon officials, chaffeurs, or household help. The Sikh policemen, soldiers and truck drivers all over the British Empire belong to this type.

⁴ The British generally used the term 'Sikh' to refer to almost all the North Indians - Punjabis (Sikh, Muslim and Hindus) and Pathans from the Northwest Frontier provinces of India.

recruitment in the Malayan security forces because of their reputation, being 'loyal', 'brave' and they had proved capable of dealing with the Chinese in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the Sikhs had little connection with the rest of the population in Malaya.

Pioneer immigrants, on visits to India initiated further influx of Sikh migrants into Malaya. In the early phase, most of them were of the illiterate class with nothing but their "martial strength" to recommend. However not all were recruited in the security forces. Many of them were rejected mainly because of medical requirements. These men settled down as caretakers, watchmen or dairymen. Sikh bullock-cart owners were also engaged in mining and money-lending activities. In the later phases, a large number of the immigrants came from the commercial and educated classes, motivated by the offers of subordinate employment by the British and opportunities for commercial enterprise. The Sikhs established small businesses mainly retail trade and were employed in the public services.

The Sikhs concentrated in urban areas, creating little 'Indian' settlements in the major towns of Malaya and this facilitated their organisation into a closely knit community. Relations between Sikhs and other communities were along narrow economic interests. Early contact with the Malays was in the form of law-enforcement officers and businessmen. The Sikh cloth seller peddled his wares to the rural Malays. A number of Malay clients became indebted to Sikh moneylenders and this caused ill-feeling between them.

The relationship with the Chinese depended on the nature of employment and class. The Chinese feared the police and military group because the British used the Sikhs to suppress rebellions among the Chinese. They were respected as guardians of law and order. Apart from them, the Chinese formed customers of the textile merchants and moneylenders. Sikh bullock-cart drivers transported tin-ore for the Chinese. The Chinese also employed Sikhs for their security operations, at mines and commercial buildings. Early relations between South Indians were limited to an official character. Sikh guards were often employed on rubber estates or on coolie lines to prevent coolies from absconding. The Sikhs and South Indians also lived in the same villages. Many bullock-cart drivers, milk-vendors and cloth peddlers employed South Indians as assistants. The South Indian labourer also formed important customers of the cloth-vendors.

Thus, the categorization of colonial society along ethnic lines produced segregation and also produced stereotype relations between the communities. Inter-ethnic relationship was mainly governed by narrow economic interests. There were few situations for closer social relationships and religious and cultural differences made contact doubly difficult.

CHAPTER 3

IMAGES IN THE MASS MEDIA

The media provides evidence for research and analysis of the "public image" of Sikhs in Malaysia. In the delineation of the Sikh image, attention centres on the "common" media and it is assumed to reflect or influence the attitude and perception of the general Malaysian society. This chapter examines the past and contemporary images of the Sikhs based on the physical and cultural, occupational and social characteristics of the Sikhs in the Malaysian society.

I. Physical And Cultural Attributes

Physical and cultural differences tend to form the basis of ethnic stereotypes in the Malaysian society. The different ethnic groups perceive these overt differences in their own cultural context. Physical appearance, manner of speech and behaviour are important cues in the process of social perception.

The Sikhs are recognized by their distinguished physique and turbans. They are generally big (tall, sturdy or obese) in stature. Distinguished facial features can also be observed, as characterized in the following illustrations - the 'long' nose. Their appearance

is enhanced by the turban and beard. Examples 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 show that the turban and topknot of the Sikhs is often the "subject" of a joke. What does it imply? Does the turban and beard give a weird, funny and impractical look? Or, is it merely an attribution of ethnic identification? (Example 4, 5 and 6). In Example 7, the Sikh character has a "fierce" and "quarrelsome" look while Lat's characterizations in Example 8 portray "strength".

The differences in other cultural aspects are highlighted in Example 8. Distinguished dietary habits are attributed, for example, chapatis, milk and ghee. This is also shown in examples 9, 10 and 11. Jo Ann Craig (1984:150-151) also attributes some dietary habits:

Northern Indians love lentils (dahl) and wholewheat breads (chapatis, etc.). Wholewheat products form a staple part of their diet. Southern Indians, on the other hand, love rice. They don't feel that they have had a proper meal without it. Indians are fond of yoghurt. A favourite drink is made by blending some plain yoghurt with a little water and crushed ice; salt or sugar can be added. (Southern Indians usually prefer salt, Northern Indians sugar). They generally enjoy very sweet and rich desserts and butter, which they associate with nutrition.

This implies that the physical attributes of Sikhs may well be related to their food habits.



BOLA SEPAK: 'PENANDUK'



Example 2 (Siri Produksi Gila-Gila
Dengan Reggie Lee,
1985 : 23)



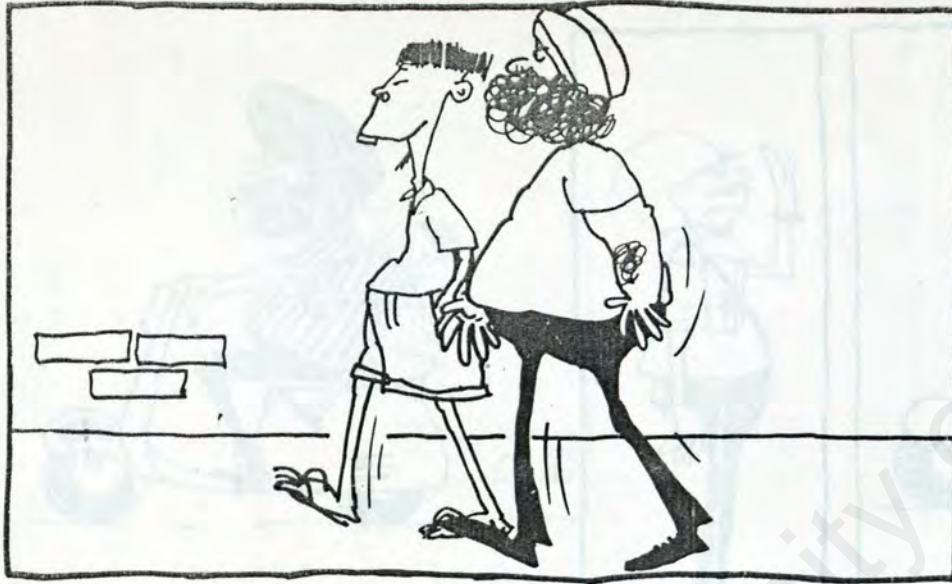
BOLA SEPAT: PENANDOK

Example 3 (Siri Produksi Gila-Gila
Dengan Reggie Lee,
1985 : 12)



MUHiBAH

Example 4 (Made in Malaysia, 1984:21)



XL

Example 5 (Made in Malaysia, 1984:49)



SUATU HARI DI KLINIK R. SINGH

Example 6 (Siri Produksi Gila-Gila Dengan Reggie Lee, 1985 : 77)



Tersasul Oleh: Ajam

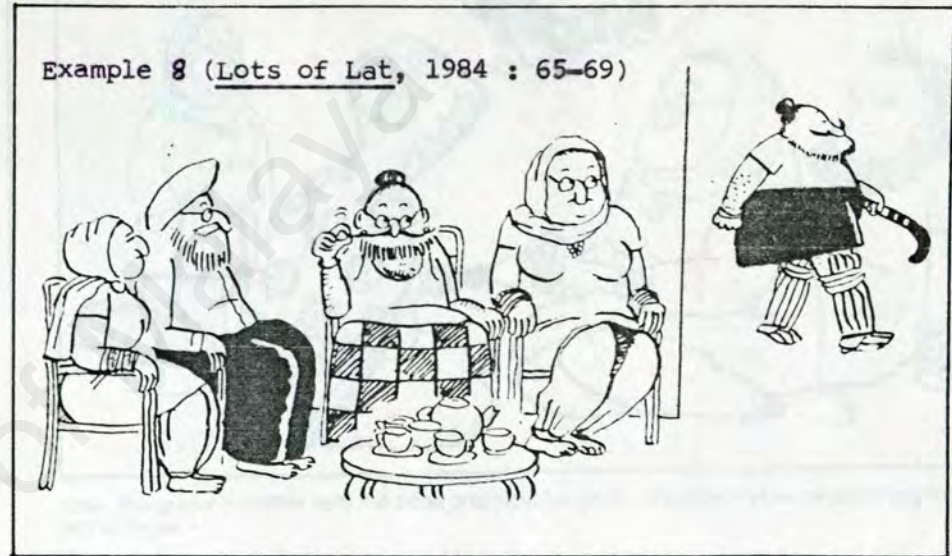
Example 7 (Komedi, Dec. 1986 : 37)



AT A SIKH WEDDING



Secret marriage plans are whispered as soon as the Punjabi girl approaches maturity.



Hence the matchmakers are sent out on their assignment: to scrutinise the selected young man.





At the bethrothal ceremony in the temple, the future father-in-law claims the groom by presenting him with gold bangle, a ring and sweets.



Later, the groom's mother visits the bride and picks her as her daughter-in-law by placing a ring on her finger.

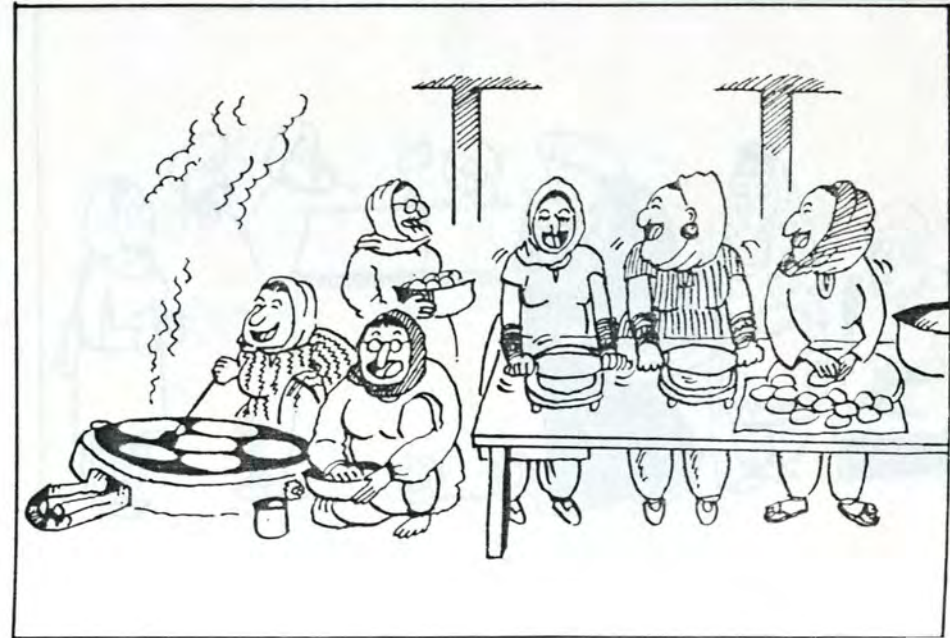




A day before the wedding, the groom and a party led by his father were invited to the bride's house.

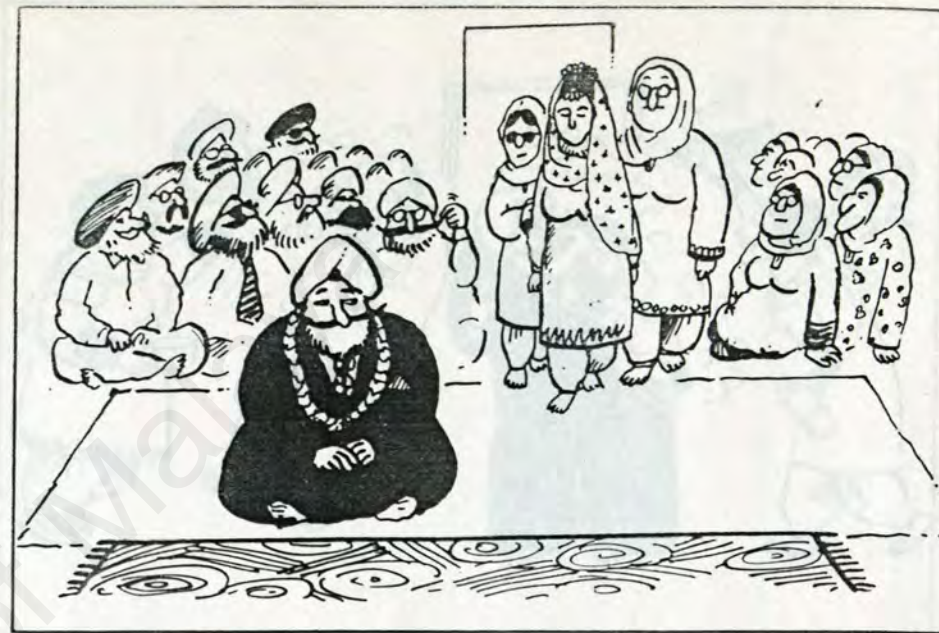


The meeting of the in-laws often portrays strength.

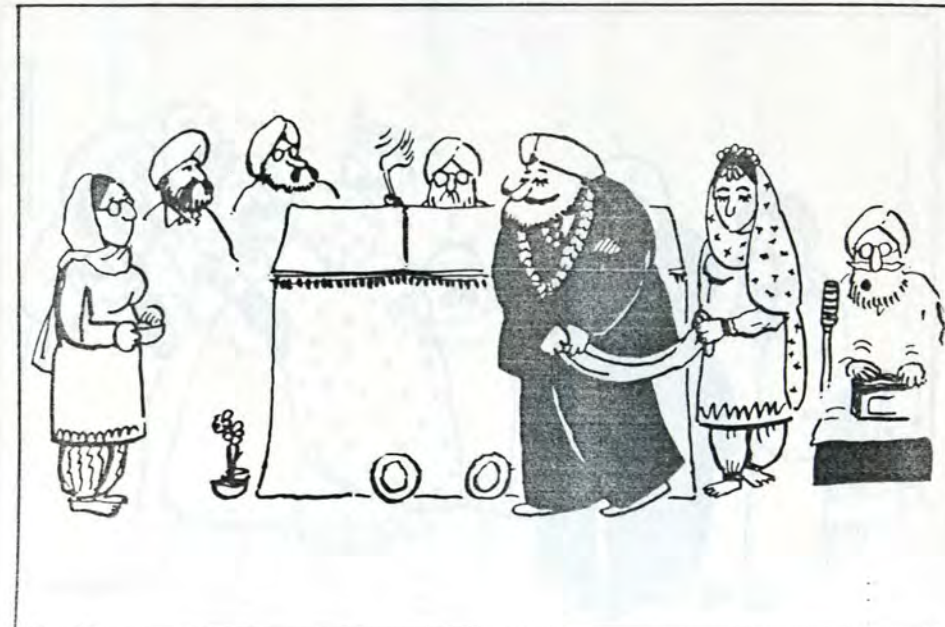




The wedding day begins with the arrival of guests. Non-Punjabi cover their heads with cloth on entering the temple.



The awaited moment the arrival of the bride, dressed in her finest embroidery.





After the ceremony comes lunch and food is always in abundance.



On arrival at the bride's house for lunch, the groom and his bestman experience ragging - the Punjabi girls' style.

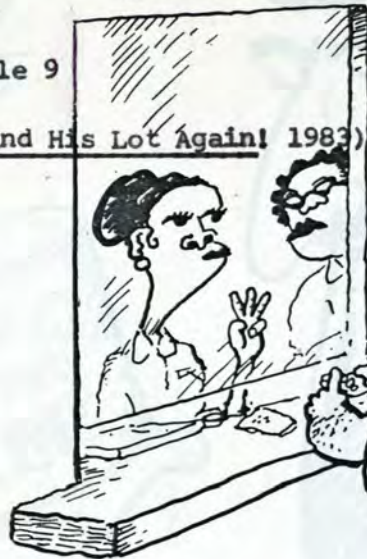


DISPENSARY

Example 9

(Lat And His Lot Again! 1983)

PILL DULU KA
SUSU DULU?

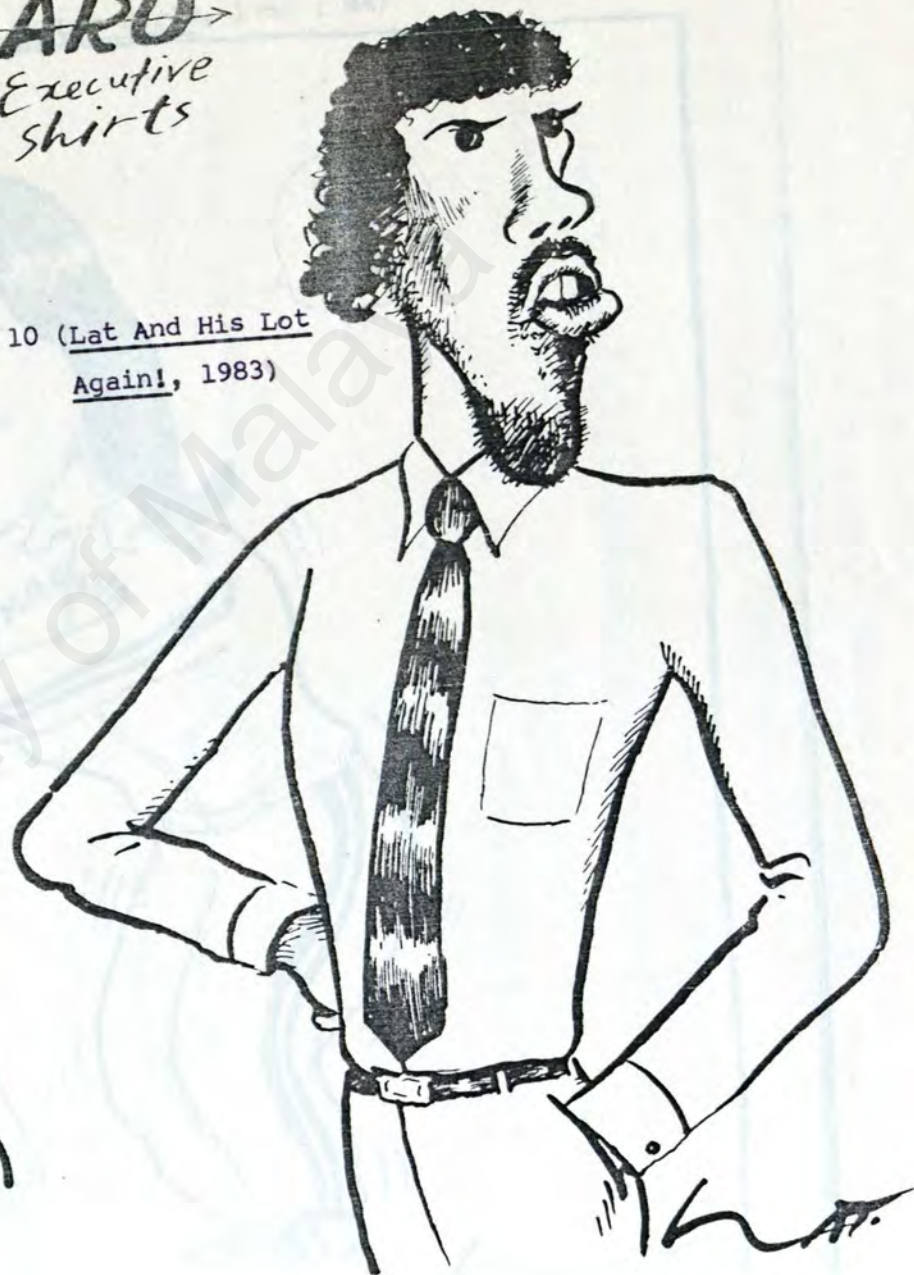


FOR
the
BEST
GHEE...
GET



ARU
Executive
shirts

Example 10 (Lat And His Lot
Again!, 1983)





II. Occupational Specifications

The occupational structure of the Sikhs is also a source of ethnic stereotyping in Malaysian society. In the early days of Sikh migration to Malaysia, the Sikhs concentrated in a few simple occupations, as described by Harrison:

Had the police rejected him as a recruit he would have had to descend to the profession of a watchman to some large firm or some wealthy Chinese. This is not so desirable as the Police ... Perhaps our Sikh policeman might have been reduced to the purely unofficial occupation of herding cows ... a favourite pursuit of his race in this land where grazing costs nothing, grass never runs short, home rent may be so low half-a-crown a year if you squat on government land, and no one objects to your wearing a single garment made out of a flour bag, when you have eaten the flour. Many a Sikh so dressed may be seen driving a bullock cart.

(cited in Sidhu 1983 : 299)

Thus, among the 'traditional' occupational specifications of Sikhs in Malaysia are policemen, watchmen, dairy farmers and moneylenders. It is believed that the stereotyped image of Sikhs is much related to these occupational specialities. This is explored in the selected occupational types below:

Policemen

Sikhs are often attributed with 'martial qualities' like strength and bravery. This is probably due to their physical appearance, enhanced by historical military pursuits. For example, the definition of 'Sikh' in Grolier Encyclopedia, attributes:

Sikh ... largely of a Jat stock, they are hardy, tall and bearded people ... largely recruited for the native Army. During World War I, they rendered good service on many fronts and gained several Victoria Crosses.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 1)

Another definition in Encyclopedia Americana attributes:

Sikhs ... The religion is a reformed Hindu sect and the Sikhs are often called the Protestants of the Indian subcontinent. They have supplied some of the world's best soldiers.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 1)

T. Walter Wallbank describes that,

The Sikhs developed into a strong militant brotherhood, famous throughout India for their military prowess. Their military tradition was perpetuated by their service in the British Indian Army where the Sikhs gained fame for their heroism and soldierly qualities.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 1)

The Sikhs who were recruited in large numbers to serve in the British Indian Army became their 'best soldiers'. Lord Field Marshall Wavell, once attributed that:

The Sikhs contribute more soldiers of the army in proportion to their numbers than any other class in India. They have fine physique, are quite intelligent and have good concept of themselves and have never forgotten that they once ruled all North Western India, including Kashmir - first class soldiers in every way.

(cited in Lopo vol. 1, 1971 : 25)

Thus, the Sikhs became famed as "Police of the British Empire" (Lopo vol. 1, 1971 : 25).

In British Malaya, the word police was almost synonymous with the Sikhs. They seemed to have almost sole monopoly in the police service of the Straits Settlements and the Federation of Malaya (See Example 12). Here are some accounts of the situation:

The first policeman you meet is an Indian, a Sikh, with curled beard and moustache.

Sentries walk up and down the corridors near which is the Sultan's jewel-room ... These soldiers are Sikhs, with white turbans and fierce, rolling eyeballs.

(cited in Lopo vol. 1 1971 : 25)

Isabella L. Bird noted in 1879,

Taiping ... Sikh sentries guard this house (Assistant Resident Mr. Maxwells) by night and day. They wear large blue turbans, scarlet seats and white trousers. There are 450 of them recruited for India from among the Sikhs and Pathans. They are to all intents and purposes soldiers drilled and disciplined as such, though called "Armed Police," and are commanded by Major Swinburne of the 80th. Regiment. There is a half battery of mountain rifled guns, and many of these men are drilled as gunners. Their joy would be in shooting and looting, but they have not any scent for crime. They are splendid looking men. with long moustaches and whiskers, but they plait the long ends of the latter and tuck them up under their turbans. They have good natured faces generally, and are sober, docile, and peaceable when off duty they wear turbans and robes nearly as white as snow and look both classical and colossal.

(cited in Lopo vol. 1 1971 : 32)

Police Force: The way we were

Looking back
at our Police Force...
100 years ago—

Sri Menanti
Police station →



70 years ago...

Example 12 (Lat's Lot, 1978 : 130).

Malay States
Guides

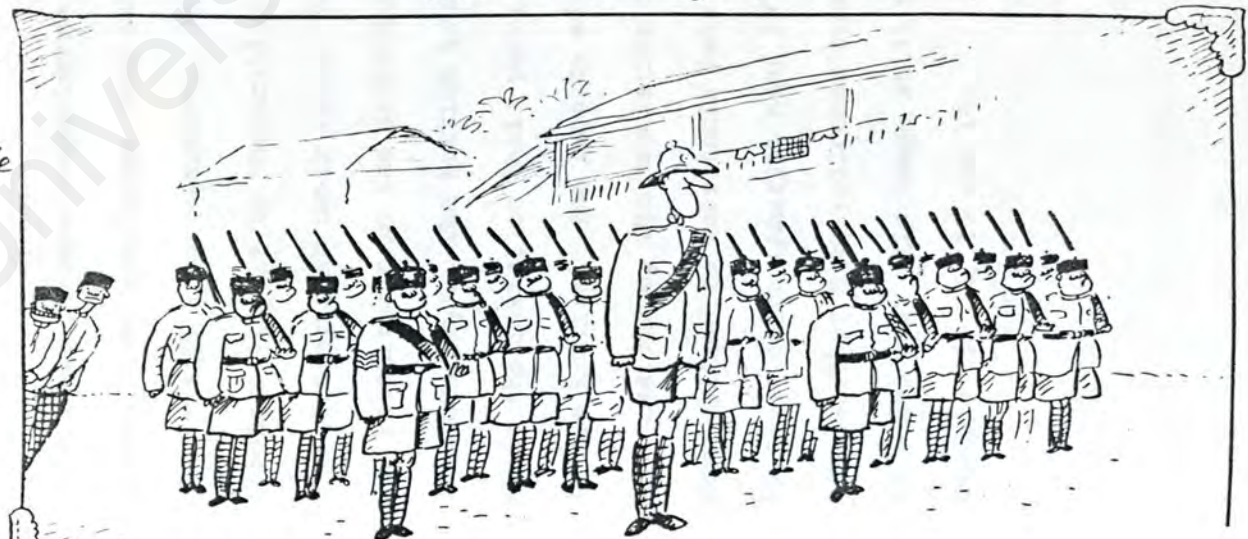


Standing— L/Cpl. Jaimal Singh, Sgt. Bagh Singh, Sgt. Kishan Singh,
Sgt. Thaman Singh, Dr. Maj. Santa Singh, Sgt. Sirdar Singh,
Cpl. Anokh Singh, L/Cpl. Sundar Singh.
Sitting— Jemadar Mull Chand, Subedar Elim Din, Sub. Jawala Singh,
Lt. Col. Walker C.M.G., Sub. Fateh Singh,
Jem. Jawala Singh, Jem. Jag Singh.

50 years ago →

This is a parade
at the Central
Police Station
Malacca.

Everyone except
Parade Commander
P.J. Shannon,
is seen wearing
a "bakul" hat.



The British held a good impression of Sikhs in the security forces and this was the basis of their good relationship. R.A. Butler stated in 1947:

The British had the happiest possible relations with the Sikh community, and, of all the martial races of the world, the Sikhs probably had built up the greatest reputation ...

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 16)

From their personal experiences with Sikhs in the Indian security forces, they attributed that Sikhs were 'reliable', 'conscientious' and 'fairly incorruptable'. During the Indian Mutiny, the Sikhs remained 'loyal' to the British while the rest of Northern India rebelled against their rule. Thus, the Sikhs were eagerly sought for recruitment in the British Army because of their proven 'loyalty' and 'bravery'. The British trusted the Sikhs as security officers while the Sikhs, on their part, professed 'unquestioned loyalty' to the British. The loyalty of orthodox Sikhs to the British was also assured by the regulation that all Sikh soldiers and policemen were obliged to wear their hair and beards unshorn as prescribed by their faith (Amarjit Kaur 1973). As a result, the 'loyal and trustworthy' Sikh policemen became a prominent figure in Malaya. It seems that this image still continues today, as illustrated in example 13, 14, 15 and 16.

MAJALAH HUMOR NASIONAL**GILA-GILA****BEST SELLER****15hb. JUN 81**

HARGA KAMI
\$1.20¢
LAGI
MURAH
KDN 0040/81
MC(P) 119/12/80

DEPAN PUNYA JALAN
ADA BAIK KA BAIIII?

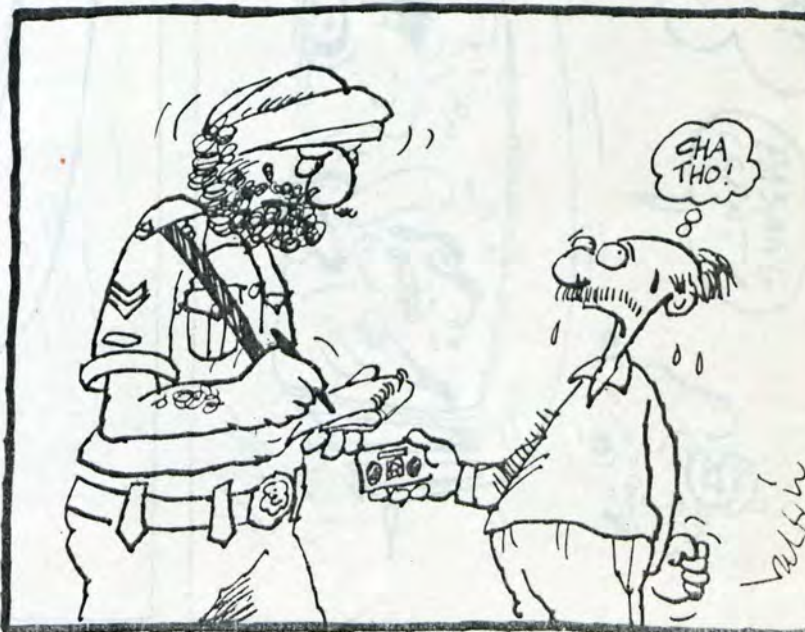
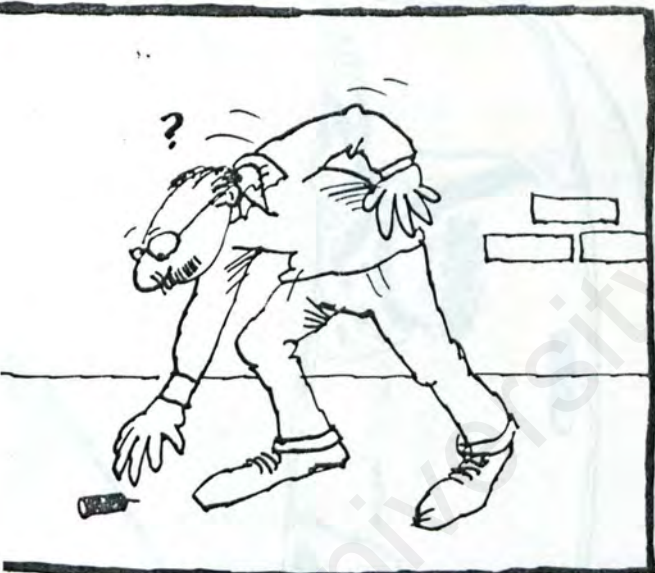
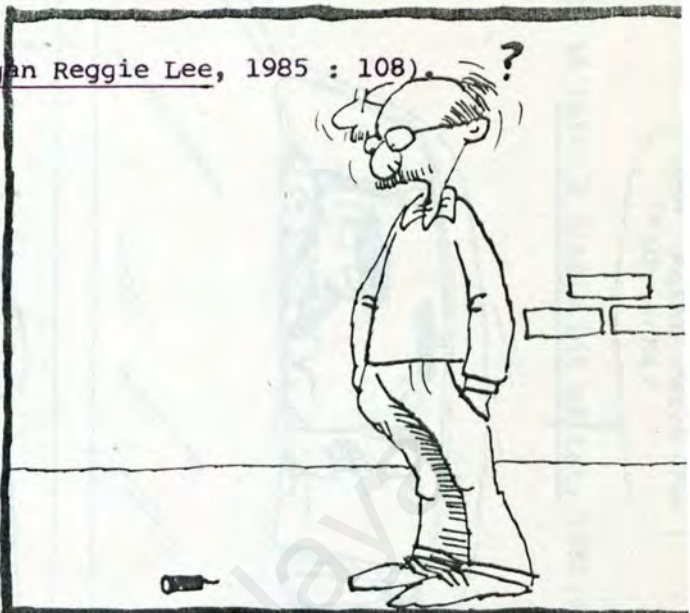
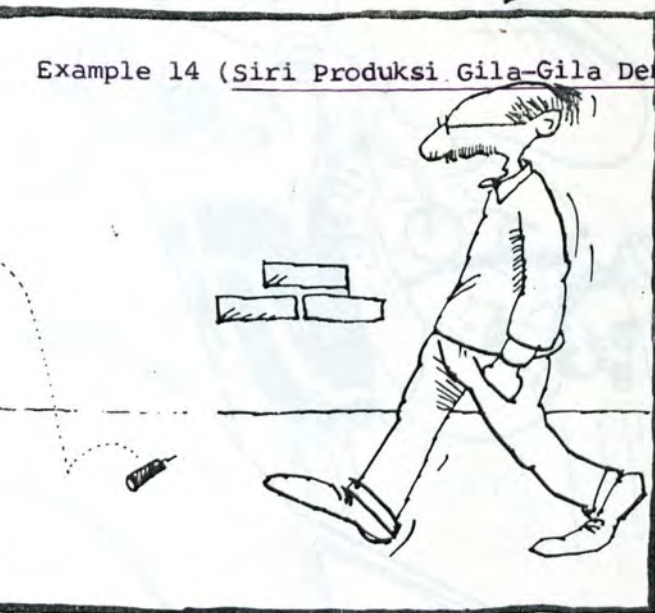
OK!... SEMUA ADA
BAIK! MINYAK BOLEH
TEKAN SEKARANG?



51

CHA THO

Example 14 (Siri Produksi Gila-Gila Dengan Reggie Lee, 1985 : 108)



HA PASAL POLIS TU
IKUT KITA?

Example 15 (With a little bit of Lat, 1980:70)



ALAMAK!
KITA LUPA
PASANG
SEAT BELT!

PASANG
CEPAT!



Example 16 (Lat And His Lot Again! 1983)

HALO!
RADIO MALAYSIA IBUKOTA?
INI SGT. JASBIR BUAT
LAPORAN LALU-LINTAS...
JALAN BANGSAR
TAAADA
TRAFFIC JAM...



The Sikh policemen served the British purpose of dealing with the local population. The Chinese (Cantonese) feared the Sikhs and nicknamed them "Mungkali Kwai" or "Benggali Devils". There was a common saying among the Chinese that :

they could fight Europeans ... no man could stand against the Black Devils ... for whenever one of them lifted his rifle, a Chinaman fell and they did not know how to miss.

(cited in Amarjit Kaur 1973)

The Sikh policemen proved to be "conscientious" policemen who usually captured their quarry. Their stature, bearing and devotion to duty earned them the title of "Benggali Devils" and the Chinese developed a healthy respect for Sikh policemen as guardians of law and order. It is believed that local stereotypes of Sikhs concentrate on the "fearful" Sikh policeman. Many Chinese and Malay mothers utilise the Sikh policeman as the "bogey man" to discipline their children (Ibrahim 1981).

Watchmen

The martial attributes of the Sikhs are also portrayed in this occupational specification. In the early days, the Sikhs were employed as sentries, escorts and Residency guards and their 'capability' led the private sector and businessmen to enlist Sikhs as watchmen, guards and caretakers. The Chinese relied almost entirely on Sikh watchmen for security of person and property. The Sikh watchmen, popularly known as "Jaga" were stationed at mines, commercial buildings and private dwelling houses. They also stood guard over coolies at mines to prevent them from absconding. Their main qualifications were their attributed "martial strength" and reliability. The hazardous conditions in remote and rural areas in British Malaya probably enhanced their image.

The following poem describes a watchman's life.

Left Behinds

His death came soft and dry-eyed
He went as he came, friendless, alone on a
ship full of Indians - they were not of his parts
Going through his shack, another jaga would find
old Indian envelopes. And a letter would reach
his wife, children and home; telling of his sad
departure. They will sing a song of
lament - how the fortune hunter had gone
away, really this time, but never to return.
Never more to bring silk, plush, and
plastic 'Globe Silk Store' bags. He will be given
a hero's lament, his Marco Polo legend
repeatedly recited. Unaware, that in the
land of 'Gold' he had lived in a jaga's shack,
With a gunny sack and mat over his bug-filled
dust enriched, flesh-cutting stringed bed.

His rusty-edged tins of Dalda,¹ half filled
with worm-eaten dhall. His switch to
extravagant Q.B.B. Australian - made Ghee
had been short lived.

His ten cents accounts book, illegible to strange
eyes, neglected of daily oily thumbs-leaves
interests and credit sums and half-gone kootus.²

The unswept obscure concerns of his hut
multiplying cockroaches and chichak tails -
a legacy to the next alert watchful.

The sacred words of the 'Daily' record a
private history - a fly leaf witness of orgies
of opium sticks and Chinese samsu.

The glee of the Dumex baby, out of place from
the towkay's kitchen, holds brush and soap.

No relics of the hunter, no sign of the
amassed wealth in the one silver spoon
and coloured pot. And they lament for
silk, satin and pawn-shop gold.

- PRITAM KAUR

(cited in Amarjit Kaur 1973 : 72)

The 'Jaga' image of Sikhs is portrayed in Example 17 and 18.

They also appear in local advertisements and movies, for example the
'Big, Strong, Friendly' Sikh 'jaga' of The Chartered Bank advertisement
and the character in the Malay movie 'Mekanik'.

¹ Dalda - clarified butter of Indian make

² Kootus or Kutus - a form of tontine

Setelah tempat tinggal Birch
diberi tahu, maka Mato Tige pun
pergilah hingga sampai ke tempat
yang dituju.

(Siri Produksi Gila-Gila Dengan Don 1982-1988)



Balik balik muka bai.
Tak da muka lain ke?



BENG! BENG!!!
Hensap. Bodo tarak
sekolah ka? Tarak
baca itu sana
papan tulis ka?

Baca saya tak tau.
Tengok gambar
saya tau la. Itu lu
punya gambar ka?



U saya punya datuk
punya gambar jugaaaa!

WAA! Itu macam kalu,
awak punya datuk
veteran punya jaga la?

Hei kici, lagi satu
kali perli, awak
punya kaplaa picah.



Apa bikin sini
mari? Awak mau
jumpa sama siapa?

Saya mau jumpa
itu Birch jugak.
Boleh ka?

Tak boleh!
Tak boleh!

Aisei, awak marah
kalu macam
Shasi Kapoor la!



SHASI KAPOOR?
Itu aktor Hindustani ka?
Ada serupa Sasasaya punya
muka ka? Ada betul ka?

Sabijik!

Ya ka???

KEH! KEH! KEH!



Awak mau jumpa tuan Birch
bukan? Awak boleh terus pigi,
dia mandi jugak la saya
ingat sekarang.

Aisei, awak senyum
kalu tiga bijik maca
Shasi Kapoor.

Ya Kaa?

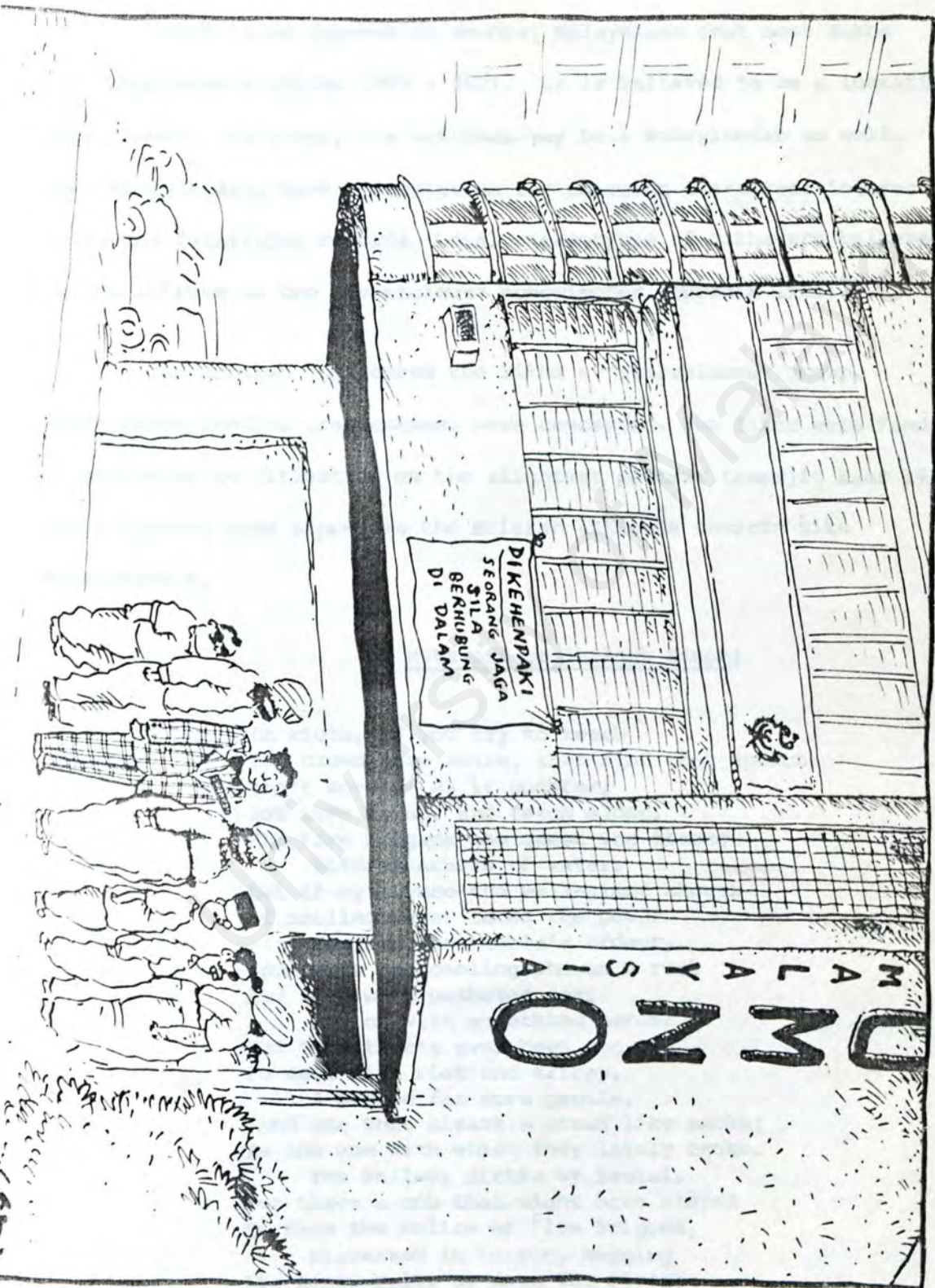


Nor wonder!
Banyak perempuan
senyum sama saya.
He he he!

KAH!!
KAH!!!
KAH!!!!



Example 18 (Entahlah MakJ : 33)



Moneylenders

There is an impression amongst Malaysians that most Sikhs are moneylenders (Sidhu 1983 : 302). It is believed to be a lucrative side income. At times, the watchman may be a moneylender as well. Sikh moneylenders have a reputation for charging exorbitant interest rates and falsifying records. Local stereotypes of Sikhs are believed to concentrate on the "avaricious" moneylender (Ibrahim 1981).

The British considered the Sikhs a "quarrelsome" group. Where money-lending transactions were concerned, the Sikhs were fond of resorting to litigation on the slightest pretext (Amarjit Kaur 1973). The following poem expresses the British attitude towards Sikh moneylenders.

Hats off to Shylock Singh!

In riots, if you try to teach
The crowd some sense, then find that speech
Don't move'em as it oughter,
You give it up, and fetch along.
The Fire Brigade who great the throng
With cataracts of water.
But if by chance the well-aimed shower
Of cooling water lacks the power
To damp the rabble's ardour,
You give the cooling shower a rest
And then with unabated zest
Lay on with something harder
But tho' that's ever been the way
To deal with riot and affray,
A method far more gentle.
(And one that clears a crowd like smoke)
Is the one with which they lately broke.
The Railway Strike at Sentul.
For there a mob that might have stayed
To face the Police of Fire Brigade,
Dispersed in terror, hugging
Its money-belts as down the street
Came Shylock Singh on eager feet

To claim his pound of "daging"
 We looks towards you, Shylock Singh,
 You've shown us what a simple thing
 The routing of a crowd is;
 What need for minious of the Law.
 What I.O.U.S. will overawe
 The toughest pack of rowdies?

- 'L'

(cited in Amarjit Kaur 1973)

III. Social Characteristics

Apart from occupational specifications, selected social characteristics are often attributed in an ethnic 'image'. In the case of minority groups, a few cases of 'prominent figures' in society, contribute to the formation of the 'image' of the group itself. This is often enhanced by media coverage. Political speeches and comments by respected public figures often contain generalizations and stereotypic phrases. For example, Tun Abdul Razak in 1969 remarked that:

... Today, members of the Sikh community are to be found in many other spheres of our national life-business, in the civil service, in education, in engineering, in politics, in the legal and many other professions

Guru Nanak gave the Sikhs not only a religion but stresses piety of heart and sincere devotion to one Great God. Guru Nanak also founded a well-knit society on catholicity of religious doctrines, social equality, democratic ideals, patriotic fervour, and a heroic spirit of valour and self-sacrifice.

Malaysia is proud to have within itself this liberal cultural heritage of the Sikhs.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 20)

Teh Ewe Lin, State Executive Councillor, Penang in 1969

comments that:

Although your community is in the minority, you are, nevertheless, a compact and active component of our multi-racial society.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 20)

The Sikhs are often attributed to be 'active' and 'athletic', probably an 'image' enhanced by their physical attributes. Sir Donald Mac Gillivray describes that:

The Sikhs are a race renowned for their fighting traditions and these traditions of courage and endurance are also manifest in peaceful pastimes.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 18)

R.K. Tandon, Commissioner of India in Malaysia in 1956

stated:

The Sikh community has always been known for its great sporting traditions and they have brought the same spirit to bear on their daily lives and in their avocations. By their industry, enterprise and devotion, the Sikhs have won the admiration and respect of everyone.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 19)

Tun V.T. Sambanthan, President of Malayan Indian Congress in 1956 attributes that:

Though they may be small in number, the Sikhs have always been prominent on the sports fields of the country.

(cited in Lopo vol. 3 1971 : 19)

Sporting characteristics are also attributed with reference to Sikh participation in the national scene. Prominent sports and athletic figures receive much coverage in the media. Contemporary Sikh sports and athletic personalities include national footballers, Santokh and Serbegeth Singh; national athletics coach, Nashatar Singh and a rather long line of Singhs in hockey.

Selected behavioural characteristics are often attributed in an ethnic image. Stereotypes grow out of experience in inter-ethnic interaction. A few cases of outward behaviour by members of a minority group can easily develop into a stereotyped image attributed to the group itself. Newspapers convey these ideas through their wide coverage and reports on such incidents. This can be illustrated by the following incident.

In 1906, a Sikh constable was prosecuted and sentenced to prison for attempting to molest a Chinese woman in Singapore. Subsequently, he appealed to the Supreme Court and his sentence was rescinded. This caused great resentment among the Chinese in Singapore. Since they could not take retaliatory action on the constable concerned or on the police community, one of them issued a circular advising the Chinese to dismiss all Sikhs in future. The dismissed watchmen, bullock-cart drivers and milk vendors appealed to the secretary for Chinese affairs who put up the case to the Chinese Advisory Board. The Board arranged for a meeting with the employers concerned and subsequently the Sikhs were reinstated in their places of work.

(cited in Amarjit Kaur 1973 : 281-282)

Selected characteristics of public figures from minority groups often develop into a group image because they are often highlighted in the media. For example, the characteristics of Karpal Singh as a prominent opposition leader and lawyer would give an impression of Sikhs being "argumentative", "quarrelsome" or "quick-tempered" (Also see example 19). The headlines in the papers tend to enhance these characteristics. Another such example, can be observed in presentation of headlines concerning the affairs in Punjab. One always sees headlines like "Militant Sikhs seige temple" or "Sikh terror in Punjab" or "Sikh Militants Kill Hindus". Such verbal statements portray the image of Sikhs. This can often influence interethnic imagery.



Tara Singh was an active member of the Literary and Debating Society.

CHAPTER 4

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

A questionnaire survey was carried out on a sample of 100 University Malaya undergraduates. The questionnaire was designed to investigate their general impression concerning Sikhs in Malaysia (See Appendix 1). The questionnaire examined the characteristics of Sikhs from various aspects : ethnic names, identification, certain cultural features, occupational specifications and stereotypes. It also attempted to examine interpersonal relations with Sikhs among the students. The questions were formed in an open-ended format. This enabled the respondents to be free to express themselves and at the same various ideas and beliefs could be gathered. The list of trait names was derived by careful study of the media, as illustrated in the earlier chapters. Although it seems like a forced-choice question, it was intended for deriving consensus among the different groups concerning the given traits. This served as a guide in my earlier illustrations.

The Respondents

The sample reflects the ethnic composition of the general population in campus. It composed of 50 Malays, 32 Chinese and 18 South Indian students. The number of male and female students is about equal.

Table 1 : Respondents : personal relations with Sikhs

Relations	Malays (N=50)	Chinese (N=32)	South Indians (N=18)
Good	2(4%)	4(13%)	8(44%)
Not very good	1(2%)	6(19%)	3(17%)
Just acquaintances	16(32%)	7(22%)	5(28%)
None/know who they are	21(42%)	10(31%)	2(11%)
None/don't know who they are	10(20%)	5(15%)	0(0%)

Ethnic names

Only 38% of the Malays had personally known Sikhs. 20% of them had no Sikh friends and did not know who they were. However, they recognised the term "Benggali" and were able to identify the "Sikhs". 40% of the Malays agreed that "Benggali" is an appropriate reference for Sikhs. This is mainly because it is commonly used (30%). 15% explained that it is a special reference used to identify and distinguish the Sikhs from Tamils. One explained that it originated from

'traditional history' (Sejarah Melayu silam). The other 40% of the respondents did not know if "Benggali" was appropriate. This can be attributed to confusion since the term "Punjabi-Sikh" had already been mentioned earlier. Only 3 respondents could explain that the Sikhs were a different group whereby the Benggalis originated from Bengal and most of them were Muslims. One student attributed that "Benggali" is a derogatory term.

Half of the Chinese had personally known Sikhs. 62% of them did not if "Benggali" was an appropriate reference. 9% explained that it was rude; disrespectful or didn't sound nice. One mentioned that it was not an insult but a nickname like 'Black' and "Negro". 72% of the South Indians explained that "Benggali" is inappropriate as the Sikhs as actually Punjabis.

Regarding the term "Bhai", most respondents did not know what it meant. Some attributed that it referred to the "long beard" (1%) "top knot" (1%) or "turbaned moneylender" (1%). One explained it as a short-form for "Benggali" or another name for "Benggali" in Tamil. Only 5 respondents could explain that it meant "brother".

Ethnic identification

The physical appearance of the Sikhs are clear identity markers. The turban and beard were the most common criteria for identification (57%). 34% of the respondents described that the Sikhs were tall or big in stature, 15% described about

their long hair - topknot wrapped in the turban and the plaits of the girls. 14% described facial characteristics - sharp nose and skin color - fairer compared to South Indians. 31% also described their distinct dress, referring to the Punjabi dress of the women. Some mentioned other symbols like the steel or iron bangle (11%), name - ending with Singh or Kaur (11%) and language (8%), as means of identification.

Why the turban and beard?

Most of the Malays (66%) and Chinese (78%) did not know why the Sikhs kept turbans and beards. However 31% of the respondents were able to explain, attributing that it was because of religion and tradition. One male Malay student related a story that once upon a time, the Punjabis grew 'horns' (tanduk) on their heads. The turban was used to cover the 'horns' and the hair was also let to grow long as to cover the 'horns'. The South Indians related stories about identification during war, described that it had some significance of 'rebellion'. It is assumed that the Indians were generally more aware of Sikh customs and traditions being more culturally inclined with them.

Occupational Specifications

Most of the respondents were able to identify the 'occupational specialities' of the Sikhs. The most commonly attributed occupations

were 'jaga' and security guards (60%), lawyers (35%), doctors (26%), dairymen (23%), textile and sportsgood businessmen (20%). Only 7% mentioned moneylending. One attributed that Sikhs were generally professionals or had higher status occupations. Some miscellaneous occupations mentioned were bread-vendors (3%), teachers (3%), postmen (1%), jail warden (1%), hawkers (1%) even barber (1%). However 7% of the respondents did not specify the occupations as they explained they were involved in many fields and were not specific, especially the younger generation.

Common Characteristics

97% of the respondents were willing and able to identify common characteristics of the Sikhs. Only 3% did not answer this section. They made statements explaining that it is not right to make simplistic generalizations about a group of people and it would be a "narrow-minded" judgement. I attribute this to their own liberal attitudes. However, it is also possible that they were aware of the stereotypes but not willing to admit to them. On the other hand, it is surprising that so few made such statements! Table 2 shows the 6 most common traits attributed to Sikhs by the 3 different groups. They reflect the 'group-concept.'

Table 2 : Most Common Traits Assigned to Sikhs

Malays (N=50)	Chinese (N=32)	South Indians (N=18)
Strong (34)	Strong (16)	Strong (12)
active (30)	active (13)	brave (8)
athletic (27)	talkative (12)	militant (7)
talkative (18)	conservative (10)	athletic (7)
aggressive (16)	stubborn (10)	aggressive (6)
militant (14)	brave (9)	talkative (6)

There is considerable uniformity in the traits attributed. This is measured through the frequency of the specific traits assigned. There is consensus on the Sikhs being strong, active, athletic, talkative, aggressive. The social desirability of the traits attributed have to be judged in the different cultural context. For example, the Chinese attribute that the Sikhs are conservative and stubborn. This reflects the self-concept of the Chinese in general. Both the Malays and Chinese think that the Sikhs are talkative, probably reflecting the difference in the manner of speech. The Chinese believe that the Indian languages require a lot of 'tongue twisting'.

It would be misleading to say that the different ethnic groups have a certain stereotype. It is more accurate to say that a particular stereotype exists among its members, but not all of them necessarily subscribe to it. In fact, the stereotypes a person attributes to another group depends much on his own experience of interaction.

Social Distance : Toleration

Table 3 : Social Distance Towards Sikhs

Relationships	Malays (N=50)	Chinese (N=32)	South Indians (N=18)
Getting Acquainted	50 (100%)	31 (97%)	18 (100%)
Close friends	42 (84%)	27 (84%)	16 (89%)
Neighbours	47 (94%)	30 (84%)	17 (94%)
Sharing a room	22 (44%)	22 (69%)	14 (78%)
Sharing a house	22 (44%)	20 (63%)	14 (78%)
Marriage	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	5 (28%)

As shown in Table 3, the Chinese and Indians are more willing to share a room or house with Sikhs while the Malays prefer their own kind. This was mainly because of difference of religion and culture. One male student attributed that they were "dangerous" (bahaya) and "fearful" (menakutkan) one stated that the Sikhs were "dirty" (pengotor), and "noisy". One stated that it was to avoid "sensitivities"

and misunderstanding. Eight male students expressed willingness to marry Sikhs. 8% of the Malays mentioned that they would consider if their partners became Muslims. One male student described that the Sikh girls were "kasar" (not refined); one said it was "not suitable" (tidak sesuai). The female students mentioned that they preferred their own group (8%) and said mixed-marriages were "difficult" (susah) (6%). One simply put it, "tiada special orang Singh" (nothing special of the Singhs). The rest explained it merely as difference of religion and culture.

All of the Chinese students would not marry Sikhs, mainly because of different culture or religion (65%). One simply said : "I am a Chinese". 3 female students explained it because of family or parents. One attributed that the Sikh culture and tradition restricted wives. One male student mentioned of their "smell" (bau). Another stated that he had "no Sikh girl friends to consider" while 2 others said they were "not interested". The South Indians also mentioned religion and culture as reasons. One female student mentioned about Sikhs being "harsh" - resorting to wife - beating. While another explained that she "could not get along" with Sikhs. One male student said that he disliked their "behaviour".

Interpersonal relationships

It is impossible to determine the nature and quality of interpersonal relationships of the respondents. It is believed that favourable contact and interaction would affect the image towards the group itself. On

the other hand group conflicts or images might not be reflected in interpersonal relationships. I could find no systematic connection between stereotypes and social behaviour. Stereotypes are much dependent on personal factors.

In some cases, an intense stereotype does affect social behaviour towards the stereotyped group. For example, a male Malay respondent who was 'acquainted' with Sikhs, described them as strong, quick-tempered, conservative, talkative and militant. He was only willing to be acquainted but not accept them as close friends, neighbours, share a room or house. He explained that they were noisy. As to marriage, he attributed that Sikh women were 'kasar' (not refined). A female Malay respondent who was acquainted with Sikhs held the stereotypes as strong, quick-tempered, aggressive, revengeful and helpful. She was not willing to accept them as close friends, share a room or house and marriage due to personal experience of a friend. Here, it shows that intergroup imagery does effect, social behaviour and willingness to associate with members of the stereotyped group.

On the other hand, stereotypes may not affect personal relations or behaviour. For example in the case of a Chinese female student here: She had no personal Sikh friends, even did not know who they referred to but attributed that 'Benggali' was a derogatory term. She stereotyped Sikhs as strong, conservative, revengeful, talkative and active. She was willing to associate with Sikhs in all of the relationships except marriage, explaining that their customs and traditions "restricted" wives.

It is believed that personal contact and interaction often forms the basis of group image. In one case, a male Chinese student claiming to have quite good relations with Sikhs described them as stubborn, talkative, greedy, militant. He did not want to share a room or house or get married because of their 'smell'. One female Tamil student acquainted with Sikhs described them as strong, aggressive, cruel, athletic, militant. She did not want to marry Sikhs explaining that they resorted to 'wife-beating'.

The adage holds that unfavourable stereotypes will be relinquished only when individuals know each other on a personal basis. However this is much dependent on personal factors. Moreover superficial interaction or unfavourable contact and interaction helps little in improving stereotypes. It could be that stereotypes are just filmy ideas picked up from the media. It could also be that stereotypes reflect much truth and are enhanced by personal experience. Whether stereotypes are matched with social reality or not, they definitely have a psychological reality.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The delineation of the Sikh image may serve to elucidate what it is to be a Sikh in our society. It would at least give an idea on the "mental pictures" that form with the terms "Sikh", "Benggali" or "Singh" in Malaysian society. In short, one might recall a familiar Malay song:

Kici-kici lembu jaga
Sudah besar masuk askar
Sudah pencen bank jaga
Satu senapang peluru dua
Kici-kici lembu jaga

Ada misai tada janggut, itu kucing
Ada janggut tada misai, itu kambing
Ada janggut ada misai, tu 'Brother Singh'
Lu depan kasi, dia suka belakang pusing

Pagi-pagi dia jaga itu lembu
Malam kalu dia perah itu susu
Depan belakang dia juga boleh sapu
Itu dia kita panggil 'bulldozer' baru

Hospital dalam dia kerja doktor juga
Perut sakit kepala pening boleh jumpa
Kalau encik belakang mesti jaga-jaga
Takut-takut itu jarum busar punya

Polis dalam dia ada sarjan kerja
 Api merah jalan dia tangkap juga
 Taboleh 'settle' taboleh cakap, marah juga
 Kalau mahu itu boleh belakang kira

Tada duit jangan susah boleh jumpa
 Tada banyak tapi mesti sepuluh dua
 Taboleh bayar kita boleh bikin cerita
 Bunga 'settle' itu pokok ada juga

Kalau bongkok belakang mesti jeling-jeling
 Eksos tutup itu badan kasi pusing
 Takut-takut belakang ada tu 'Brother Singh'
 Nanti langkah panjang berak senang mata juling

Kici-kici dia suka bola hoki
 Sudah besar dia main bola ragbi
 Kici-kici dia makan tu capati
 Siki besar dia hantam itu todì.

Ini lagu nyanyi ada gurau juga
 Tamau marah, tak mau hantam sama saya
 Saya nyanyi bikin abang hati suka
 'Complain' mari saya kena buang kerja

Kici-kici lembu jaga
 Sudah besar masuk askar
 Sudah pencen bank jaga
 Satu senapang peluru dua
 Kici-kici lembu jaga
 Siki besar perempuan jaga

The song, in a typical Punjabi accent, illustrates the physical, cultural, occupational and social characteristics of the Sikhs. The beard and moustache is the "subject" of the joke, being related to the "beard" of a goat and whiskers of a cat. The topknot is described as a "hockey ball" and the turban, a "rugby". It also mentions the "capati" and attributes the drinking habit of the Sikhs. The Sikhs are characterised as a dairymen, soldiers, watchmen, doctors, policemen and moneylenders. The policemen is "quarrelsome" and "corruptable" and the moneylender "avaricious". The sexually suggestive lyrics could well attribute the sexual virility of the

Sikhs, probably relating to their physical attributes. I believe, there is much more to the song than mere images !!!

Implicit in our use of stereotypes is an old conception of W.I. Thomas that "if a situation is defined as real, then it is real in its consequences". Such popular images, however widely diffused, are likely to leave only superficial impressions unless the Sikhs' structural position in our society is more fully explored.

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Saudara/i,

Soal selidik ini membentuk sebahagian dari kajian saya yang bertajuk 'Pembentukan Stereotaip Etnik Di Malaysia - Satu Kajian Kes Mengenai Kumpulan Etnik Punjungan'. Sukarita saya sekiranya dapat saudara/i menjawab soalan-soalan berikut dengan seikhlas hati. Anda tidak dikehendaki menyatakan nama anda.

Di atas kerjasama saudara/i, terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan berbanyak-banyak terima kasih.

1. Kumpulan Etnik :

2. Jantina: ☐ Lelaki ☐ Perempuan

3. Umur : _____

4. Tempat asal: ☐ Bandar/Petian ☐ Kampung

5. Tempat tinggal sekarang: ☐ Dalam ☐ Luar kampus

6. Latarbelakang persekolahan:

Sekolah Rendah

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Kebangsaan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Cina
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Tamil
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lain-lain (nyatakan)

Sekolah Menengah

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Kebangsaan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Cina
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah berasrama penuh
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lain-lain (nyatakan)

Appendix 1

Saudara/i,

Soal selidik ini membentuk sebahagian dari kajian saya yang bertajuk 'Pembentukan Stereotaip Etnik Di Malaysia - Satu Kajian Kes Mengenai Kumpulan Etnik Punjabi-Sikh.' Sukacita saya sekiranya dapat saudara/i menjawab soalan-soalan berikut dengan seikhlas hati. Anda tidak dikehendaki menyatakan nama anda.

Di atas kerjasama saudara/i, terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan berbanyak-banyak terima kasih.

1. Kumpulan Etnik : _____
2. Jantina: ☐ Lelaki ☐ Perempuan
3. Umur : _____
4. Tempat asal: ☐ Bandar/Pekan ☐ Kampung
5. Tempat tinggal sekarang: ☐ Kolej ☐ Luar kampus
6. Latarbelakang persekolahan:

Sekolah Rendah

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Kebangsaan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Cina
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Tamil
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lain-lain (nyatakan)

Sekolah Menengah

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Kebangsaan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah Cina
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sekolah berasrama penuh
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lain-lain (nyatakan)

7. Adakah anda mengenali secara 'personal' seseorang dari kaum Punjabi-Sikh?

☐

Ya

☐

Tidak

(a) Jika 'Ya', sejauh manakah

(b) Jika 'Tidak', tahukah anda

anda mengenalinya?

siapa yang dimaksudkan

sebagai kaum Punjabi-Sikh?

☐
☐
☐

kenal dengan baik

tidak begitu baik

hanya kenalan sahaja

☐
☐

Ya

Tidak

8. Ramai dari orang Malaysia merujuk kepada kaum Punjabi-Sikh sebagai 'Benggali'. Pada pendapat anda, adakah rujukan ini patut digunakan?

☐

Ya

☐

Tidak

☐

Tidak tahu

Jika 'Ya'/'Tidak', kenapa?

9. Ramai orang Malaysia yang suka memanggil orang-orang Punjabi-Sikh, 'Bhai'. Tahukah anda makna perkataan ini?

☐

Ya

☐

Tidak

Jika 'Ya', sila jelaskan.

10. Bagaimanakah anda mengidentifikasi orang-orang dari kaum Punjabi-Sikh?

11. Orang-orang Punjabi-Sikh biasanya tidak memotong rambut mereka. Orang-orang lelaki biasanya memakai serban dan menyimpan janggut. Tahukah anda mengapa mereka berbuat demikian?

☐

Ya

☐

Tidak

Jika 'Ya', sila jelaskan.

12. Pada pendapat anda, apakah bidang-bidang pekerjaan yang biasanya dikaitkan dengan kaum Punjabi-Sikh di Malaysia?

13. Tolong senaraikan 5 sifat yang anda fikir paling tepat memberi gambaran (most characteristic) mengenai kaum Punjabi-Sikh.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

13. Di bawah ini ialah senarai tret-tret yang dirasakan mungkin memberi gambaran mengenai orang-orang Punjabi-Sikh.

- (a) Tolong kaji senarai ini dan fikirkan sama ada tret-tret berkenaan boleh diterima sebagai sifat-sifat umum (common characteristics) bagi kaum Punjabi-Sikh.

	Ya	Tidak	Tidak tahu
kuat (strong)			
cepat marah (quick-tempered)			
agresif			
peramah (friendly)			
konservatif			
setia (faithful)			
kejam (cruel)			
giat bersukan (athletic)			
keras hati (stubborn)			
suka keseronokan (pleasure loving)			
berani (brave)			
suka bergaduh (quarrelsome)			
rajin (industrious)			
pendendam (vengeful)			
dapat dipercayai (trustworthy)			
banyak bercakap (talkative)			
suka menolong (helpful)			
tamak (greedy)			
cerdas (active)			
militan			

- (b) Tolong senaraikan 5 sifat yang anda fikir paling tepat memberi gambaran (most characteristic) mengenai kaum Punjabi-Sikh.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

14. Tolong nyatakan sama ada anda sanggup atau tidak untuk terlibat dalam keadaan- keadaan berikut bersama-sama dengan orang-orang Punjabi-sikh?

(a) Berkenalan.

Ya

Tidak, sebab: (sila nyatakan) _____

(b) Menerima sebagai kawan karib.

Ya

Tidak, sebab: _____

(c) Tinggal berjiran.

Ya

Tidak, sebab: _____

(d) Berkongsi bilik.

Ya

Tidak, sebab: _____

(e) Berkongsi rumah.

Ya

Tidak, sebab: _____

(f) Berkahwin.

Ya

Tidak, sebab: _____

----- TERIMA KASIH -----

Bawdy lyrics set to old songs

THE tape came without a casing. There was no way to find out who the producer was, the name of the singer or where it was recorded.

But one thing was obvious. It was no local top 10 compilation.

The cassette had been retaped from somebody else's copy, which was bought from one of the streetside stalls in Penang. Despite the amateurish recording, the sound was surprisingly clear.

It opened with a jazzy intro. Whoever was on the keyboards sounded skilful enough.

And then the lyrics hit you. "Kici kici,

lembu jaga, sudah besar...." sang the singer in a Punjabi accent.

It was a familiar song. One hears it often in pubs. But to hear it reproduced on tape, with the bawdy lyrics made even bawdier now that the tape is being sold to the public, came as a shock.

Penal Code Section 292 (A) states that it is an offence "to sell, let to hire, distribute, publicly exhibit or in any manner put into circulation any obscene object whatsoever".

Offenders are liable to be slapped with a fine or jailed for a maximum of three months, or both.

It would not do to print the lyrics. Suffice to say they had references to

sodomy.

The opening bars of the next tune, *Jingling Nona*, were easily recognisable. But again, the words had been changed.

Wahai Cik Minah, mudi bibe
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lam, gua beli seluar dalam, lobang-lo-bang. The verses, which get more vulgar, had direct references to masturbation.

Ufusan Konsumer April 1986

OBSCENE MALAY SONGS Bring culprits to book

MALAY SONGS with obscene lyrics are making their way into the market and fast becoming a big money spinner for many music shops.

CAP has received several complaints from consumers regarding these objectionable songs. The songs come in cassette tapes with seemingly harmless covers. Consumers who have unknowingly bought such tapes have expressed shock over the vulgar language and many sexual innuendoes in the songs.

According to sources, these tapes are very popular with the young and even schoolchildren have been seen buying them. Some parents have expressed fear over the impact of such songs on their children.

A CAP survey has found that these tapes are easily available. One such tape, *Kecil-Kecil Lembu Jaga* was found selling in Penang, Seberang Perai, Sungai Bakap and Nibong Tebal. The cover has an illustration of a man sitting on his bullock cart. It does not however tell who the singer, recording company and distributors are.

The law says that it is an offence to sell or distribute



The tape which comes with a seemingly harmless cover

guilty can be jailed up to three months or fined or both.

Yet such tapes are selling openly in record shops, music stands and even at the pasar malam.

Cassette songs with vulgar lyrics

SUNGAI PETANI, Sun. — Parents here are concerned over the sale of a certain cassette at the pasar malam. It has recordings of songs with sexually suggestive lyrics.

The cassette has 12 songs containing wordings in Malay that imply sexual relations. It has been on sale for about one month. There are also two English numbers recorded in the cassette that is priced at \$2 each.

The singer's name however is not printed on the cassette cover that depicts a man sitting on a bullock cart with the name of the album *Kecil-Kecil Lembu Jaga* and *Pergi Pasar Malam*.

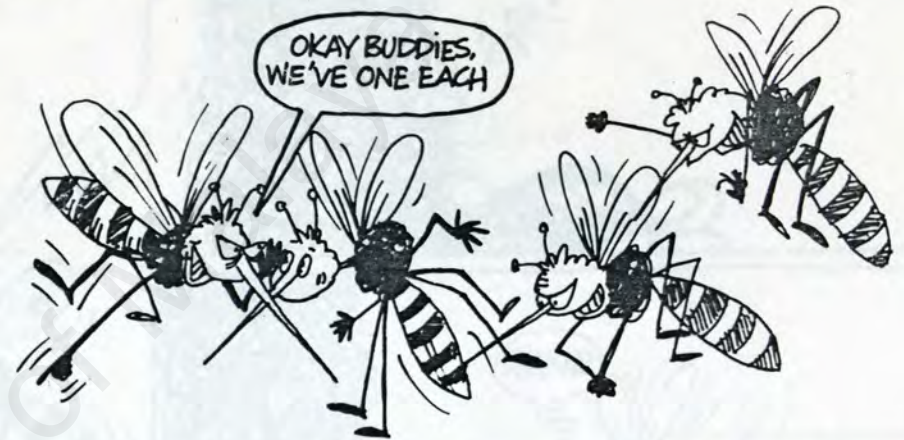
The cassette is available on request from many cassette stands and record shops here and its sales brisk.

An anxious parent here, Mr M. Chinniah, has lamented that the authorities should ban the sale of such cassettes immediately.

Mr Chinniah who is also the PPP vice-president said the matter must be taken seriously by the police and those responsible must be caught and punished for producing and selling such cassettes "just for the sake of money".

EMPAT SEKAWAN

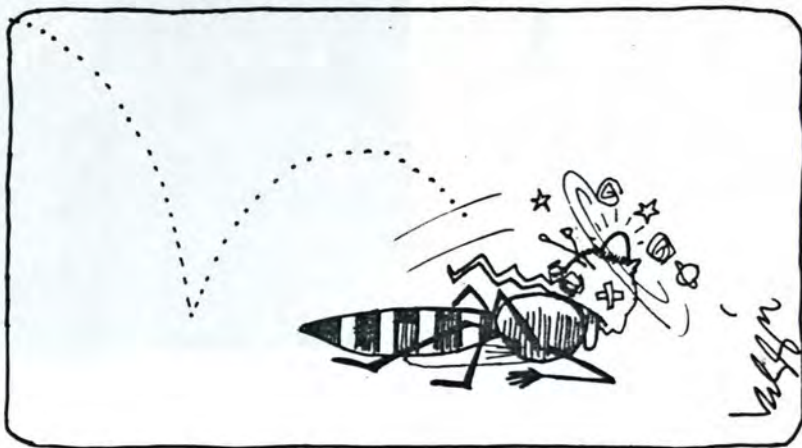
(Made in Malaysia, 1984: 28-29)



SLEPP!

YUM! YUM!

BLURP!!
Hi@! Hi@!
Hi@!



The watchman and his charpoy

THE charpoy or traditional Indian bed which was once a common sight especially in the commercial areas where Sikh watchmen used to work is rare sight these days.

One watchman who still uses it, B. Sardara Singh 63, said charpoys were commonly used by Indian and Sikh soldiers and policemen here before the war.

"Nowadays the younger generation prefer sleeping on mattresses," he said.

"For me however, the charpoy is comfortable, and I do not like sleeping on a mattress, even at home.

"It is not because I have been sleeping on a charpoy all my life, but because it is much cooler to sleep on it as it allows air to come through," he added.

Sardara said a charpoy today could cost as much as \$100.

Nylon ropes

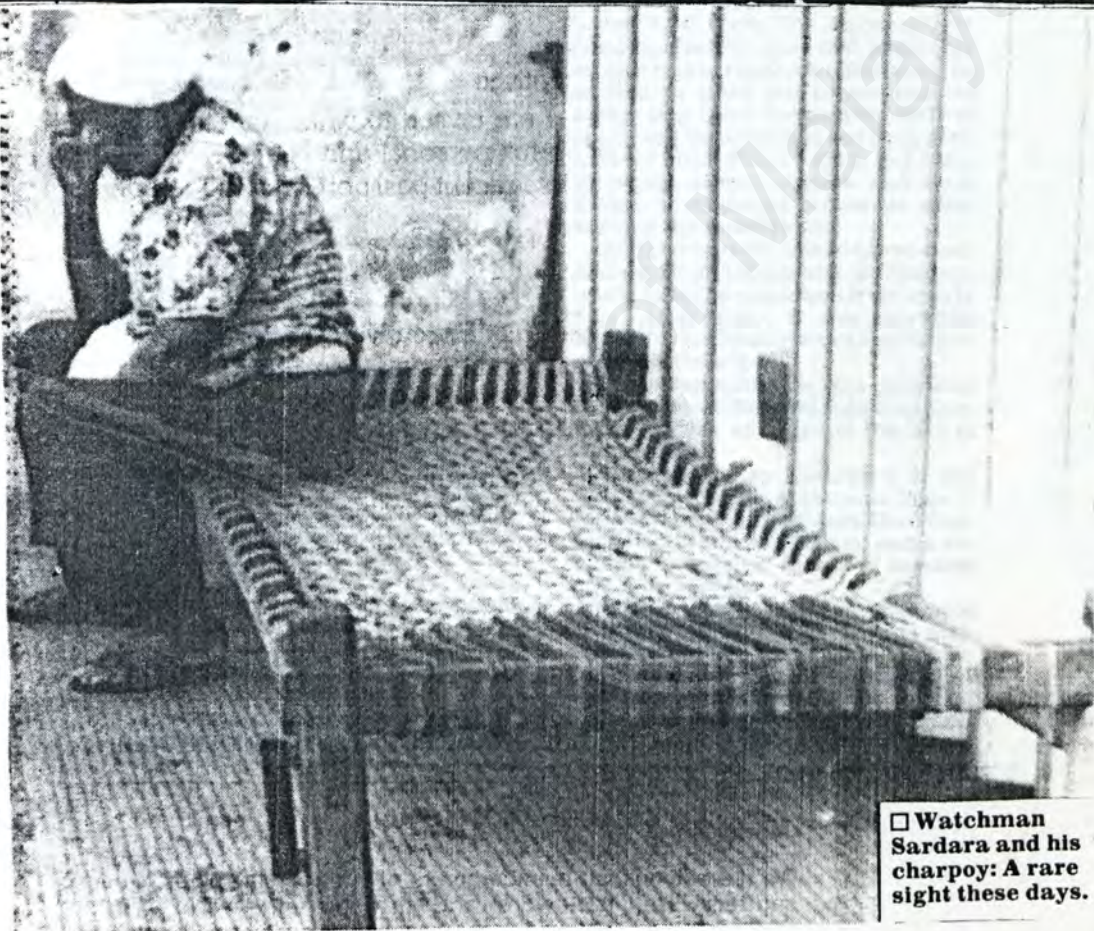
He made his own with the help of friends, opting to use nylon ropes instead of hemp or coconut fibre, because the latter tended to be rougher and were not as lasting.

He said for those who would like to own one but

do not know how to mat the ropes, it is possible for them to buy one at the Penang Prisons.

Sardara said that not only are charpoys fading from the scene, but also watchmen like him.

"Big companies and banks prefer to hire armed guards from security companies instead of old guards like us who are only armed with sticks," he said. — FREDDIE NG



□ Watchman Sardara and his charpoy: A rare sight these days.

(New Straits Times, August, 1986)

● PRETAM SINGH — From watchman to lawyer

PRETAM Singh's (right) great achievement is to have mastered the art of snitching time. He calls it "effective time management." He credits this, together with faith and determination, for his current professional standing — as a Magistrate with the Rawang Court.

During his schooldays, Pretam would be a schoolboy by day and a co-herd in the evening, looking after his father's cows. "My father was discharged from the police after he was wounded in an engagement with the communists. His pension was \$100 a month. There were six children in the family, and as usual, some relatives to help support them. My father worked as a watchman, and earned \$150 a month. To supplement his income, he started rearing cows — which meant all of us started rearing cows."

It was not until he was in the Sixth Form that his father gave up rearing cattle. "Privately, I was relieved. With cows, whether it was a Saturday, a Sunday, Deepavali or Christmas, they still needed to be taken out to graze. There was no such thing as a holiday."

Voluntary counsellor

He passed his MCE on his third attempt after failing the Bahasa Malaysia paper twice, and while attending Sixth Form as a private student, worked as a watchman with the Chartered Bank in Petaling Jaya from 10pm to 6am every day. The young Pretam was then offered a place in the Arts Faculty of the University of Malaya, but turned it down because of lack of financial support — "poor people have poor connections".

Instead, he took up a job as an Assistant Superintendent of Customs and



after three years, enrolled for an external LLB from the University of London. For the next five years, his routine was to reach his office at seven so that he could put in one hour of study; skip lunch for another hour of study; and between 4pm and 5 pm grab another hour. From 6.30pm to 8.30pm he would attend classes, and from 9.30pm to midnight would be spent burning the midnight oil.

On Saturdays, he attended two-hour classes from 3.30pm and on Sundays would be in the classroom from 6pm to 8pm. After eight, it was Saturday Night Fever. Sunday was a holy day — off to the temple.

In the meantime, he was promoted to the post of Superintendent of Customs. He was admitted to the Bar in August 1985.

Pretam is also chairman of the Youth Wing of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism, and a voluntary counsellor to prison inmates and drug addicts.

"He has shown by his own example that whatever the obstacles one may encounter in life, they should be made to serve as stepping stone to success," said this nominator for the award. That's how the watchman of yesterday became the lawyer of today.

(New Straits Times, 5.12.1986)

2 Sikhs from outside India charged

DELHI, Fri. — The government yesterday registered a case against two Sikh militants on charges of plotting to overthrow the Parliament.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in the case, said it follows a Canadian court remanding Parmar and his associates to police custody and charged them with, among other offences, plans to blow up the Indian Parliament.

An Indian news agency reported last week. Two England-based militants, Atish Singh

NEW STRAITS TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1986



timesworld

NEW STRAITS TIMES FOREIGN NEWS SERVICE

Sikh terror unveiled at

NEW STRAITS TIMES, TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 19

Sikhs still divided over raid on temple

DELHI: A month after military policemen killed 300 Sikh extremists at the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the mainstream leaders of Punjab re-emerged angry and divided over wisdom of the

By STEVEN WEISMAN

"Those who are at the helm of affairs should study the history and character of Sikhs," said Prakash Singh Badal, a former Punjab Minister who is Mr

la's severest critic of the extremists "ca won over by violence and affection." Barnala ordered the extremist leader they pro pendent Singh called Kh Gandhi's assassin under severe from all on

Five killed in Punjab

DELHI, Mon. — Five people were killed in overnight violence in the north-eastern state of Punjab, the United News of India reported today.

The slayings increased this year's terrorism-related death toll in the Sikh-dominated State to at least 110. Under the latest attacks, Sikh militants killed a deputy police superintendent and his son in a raid on his house near the India-Pakistan border, UNICEF gunmen escaped.

Police and paramilitary troops rushed to the area and launched an extensive hunt for the killers, the news agency

Another police official's son was seriously wounded in an attack in a militant stronghold of Baba Bakhal (265 miles) northwest of Amritsar, near the Sikh holy city of Amritsar.

298 die in battle for Golden Temple

Police hunt Indira killer's

Sikh gunmen kill seven

NEW DELHI, Sat. — Suspected Sikh militants shot dead seven people in the Punjab late yesterday which they had declared "Martyr's Day" in memory of the slain assassin of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, newspapers reported here today.

Two gunmen on a scooter killed six people during a terror night-ride through the industrial city of Ludhiana, the newspapers said quoting local agencies.

Three biscuit factory workers were shot dead and two others injured in the first blaze of fire. The attackers moved on towards a hospital, killed two more and wounded another who later died in hospital.

Another bullet-ridden body was found at Jalandhar, the reports said.

A police spokesman told the Press Trust of India that the authorities had not thought Sikh militants would be able to strike in Ludhiana because tight security precautions had been taken.

Several rallies were staged in the Punjab in memory of Beant Singh, a police sub-inspector who assassinated Mrs Gandhi on Oct. 31, 1984.

About 200 militants praised him as a hero in a march led by his widow Bimal Kalsra on the Golden Temple in Amritsar. — Bernama-AFP

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