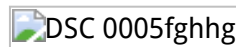


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USM ACADEMIA FORWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS TO TACKLE FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS ISSUE



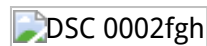
PENANG, 27 May 2015 – The influx of foreign workers is an issue that is seen recently as becoming more critical, requiring a holistic approach that demands the involvement of many parties, including the academia.

According to Dr. Shankar Chelliah, who lectures at the School of Management (SOM) in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and chairs the International Business Programme, there are many factors contributing to the influx of foreign workers into the country.

He said, one reason is due to the high demands from the industry which is very much in need of plenty of low-cost labour force, apart from the lucrative job offers attracting such workers to this country.

“We cannot deny the fact that foreign workers are currently seen as a necessity; as the country progresses to become a developed nation, they form the workforce in the rapidly-growing industries in the country, especially in sectors such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing among others.

“However, this scenario requires a holistic monitoring and regulatory mechanism, which includes looking at whether such needs for foreign labour are real or merely short-cuts towards paying lower wages to such workers.



Therefore he said, a specific research under a grant from the Ministry of Home Affairs entitled ‘Foreign Workers in Malaysia: Challenges, Way Forward to Become a High Income Nation’ has been conducted to closely scrutinise this issue.

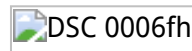
The project which is led by him, and done collaboratively with other researchers from SOM, among others aims to prepare a proposal to be forwarded to the policymakers to tackle this critical issue in an effective manner.

“From this research, a comprehensive proposal would be conveyed to the Government, to seek the most suitable mechanism for the Government, industries and communities to work together to achieve the status of becoming a developed nation.

“In that respect, other relevant issues would also be included in the proposal, including the current scenario of having foreign workers in the country from the context of policies, demands of the industrial sector, the social impact and others,” he said.

He also stated that, currently the research is nearing completion and would be forwarded to the Home Ministry the latest by next month.

He said this at a special press conference in conjunction with the programme entitled ‘Seminar on Foreign Workers: Policy, Issues and Future Framework’ held here today.



Two respective panellists, the first being the Senior Industrial Relations Officer from the Malaysian Trade Union Council (MTUC), N. Balakrishnan and the second, Immigrations Officer (Penang Port Branch), Afifah Abd. Razak were present to discuss the topic in detail, with active involvement of students from SOM.

The discussion includes the perspective of MTUC on the real issues on the ground, viewpoints of the industries, recommendations to the policymakers and others, apart from the immigration perspective in terms of statistics, policies, regulations and future direction. - Translation: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin/Text & Photos: Marziana Mohamed Alias



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