

COMMENT

Making a difference in adversity

PREPAREDNESS: To bring about real change, Man must do things differently

THE philosophers, thinkers and educationists were the ones who thought about "thinking", and enlightened Man regarding the intelligence of the species. Philosophers, including religious philosophers, explored ideas regarding the soul while psychologists studied human intelligence and scientists engaged in brain sciences.

Psychologists have studied the communication competence of other species and the habits of dogs, monkeys, orangutans and humans.

They have developed various theories regarding behaviourism and cognition. They studied hu-

man intelligence and, early on, conceptualised General Intelligence and Specific Intelligence. Howard Gardner brought a paradigm shift in the understanding of human intelligence by his theory of Multiple Intelligences. Then there is the popular theory of Emotional Intelligence.



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In 1997, Dr Paul Stoltz introduced the concept of Adversity Intelligence and defined adversity quotient "as the capacity of the person to deal with the adversities of his life. As such, it is the science of human resilience".

The scientists study nature, but nature has its own laws. Cumulative human knowledge and human intelligence is what makes a



National Service Training Programme trainees transferring essential items and aid onto two Royal Malaysian Air Force aircraft in Subang recently. The items were flown to Kota Baru in Kelantan and delivered to flood victims there.

difference between species, cultures, races, civilisations.

On a larger scale, "adversity intelligence" is about cultural and national adversity intelligence, developed through historical experiences.

Such experiences can be lessons of adversities learned from relationships with nature, whether harsh environments or the wilds.

It can also be the adversities learned because of clashes between people of different races, religions, ideologies, with conquering, converting or enslavement

ambitions, or just survival.

Individuals, families, communities and societies cannot go to the next level of development without applying intelligence and without mastering adversity intelligence. Nature helps all species and watches out for animals, whether squirrel, birds, polar bear, foxes, et cetera.

Animals in colder climates, from feathers to fur, get ready for the winter by gaining longer hair, growing thicker coats and some even produce winter footwear! However, many of these animals

have become the victims of human-induced climate change.

Humans who induce climate change are expected to be prepared to use intelligence to plan, or face nature's wrath, with adversity intelligence.

Knowing the vagaries and wrath of nature, and the transgresses of Man against laws and social order, man cannot be on the insanity habit, which Einstein defined as "doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results".

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Learning from role models, nature

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To bring about real change and be proactively in command, Man must do things differently, things which will make a difference, to avoid the annual or seasonal recurrences of floods, fire, accidents, landslides, air crashes, leptospirosis and other diseases which can spread. Each time authorities are negligent and not meticulous, and are merely rhetorical, there are costly consequences: lives are lost, property damaged, infrastructure destroyed and the future generations have to bear the burden of the neglect of the generation before them.

When calamities, which are beyond control, occur, Man must have the courage to accept and know that, in other matters, Man can bring about changes. In Islam, it is taught, "Allah will not change the conditions of a people until they change what is in themselves". (Surah Al Rad). Learning from nature, we know that "It is not the severity of the winter which will determine whether the squirrel will survive or not, but it is the preparedness of the squirrel for the winter".

Schools do not teach many important things. Living skills that schools teach are more about management, technical and do-it-yourself skills. Beyond the Living Skills Programme are other equally, if not more important, skills not given priority, which include, social skills like relationship skills, and personal skills like self-respect and self-esteem.

All persons have to learn cognitive emotions from elsewhere, other than from schools. One aspect of cognitive emotions is adversity intelligence. But who are best to teach the curriculum of adversity intelligence? Not feuding politicians, lesser leaders, or oppressive tyrants, or those who are loose cannons. No...

Perhaps the best teachers would be the ordinary persons, the parents, those who toil under trying circumstances to complete their tasks, to earn their meagre dues and put food on the tables for their families, especially for the young ones. The best teachers would be those who make those little sacrifices, those little acts of kindness, love and empathy towards neighbours and strangers who suffer in front of their eyes, those whom they know or do not know who suffer in some distant lands and cultures.

The role models would be the truly charitable person, someone who denies himself some luxury in order to help someone else who needs to survive.