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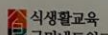
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Malaysian Food Heritage, Hospitality, And Dietary: Between Culture And Education

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is a salad bowl of multi-ethnicity adding to the flavor of multicultural and traditional food practices. Traditional food or cuisine is not only relished for people's self-satisfaction but also to be treated as a cultural heritage. All ethnic groups have ingrained a deep association with their traditional food, which is indeed an "epic" to Malaysians. This gastronomy is highly regarded as a core ingredient in defining "hospitality" at homes and also becoming a tourism product. On the one hand, traditional foods have become part of the routine culture and national heritage; while on the other hand, people still lack awareness on taking healthy food. Consequently, it results in the high rates of obesity and overweight among the populations. In 2016, Malaysian was announced as the highest rate of the population with obesity where nearly half of its 31 million population are regarded as obese and overweight (35.7% Indian, 32% Malay and 19.7% Chinese). With such recognition, Malaysia has marked herself as the highest overweight rate in Asia. In order to address the issue of obesity and overweight because of dietary practices, the government institutions and other stakeholders had initiated awareness and education programs on the good dietary practices. However, there are no clear research findings showing that Malaysians took measures to address health issues which could or have resulted from traditional foods consumption. Campaigns and programmes were introduced to ensure that the future generations of Malaysian would appreciate their health and physical appearance even better. This paper will discuss the appreciation of food as a cultural heritage which detrimentally effects on the health condition of Malaysian. Through literature review and simple survey, this paper will also discuss efforts and role of stakeholders in educating public on good or healthy dietary practices among Malaysians for the protection of the future generation without distorting the value of traditional food heritage itself.

Keywords: Traditional food, food heritage, dietary, awareness, education, and Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on heritage often entails issues like "conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, recreation, recuperation, revitalization, and regeneration" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1995: 369). Heritage is not sustainable, or lives on its own; therefore, it requires protection, and when objects, material or anything is protected; it means a value is added to it. The prime aim of declaring something (place, material, object or practice) as a heritage means that something was at a risk of vanishing because there was no utility or function of that