

## The destruction of SMILES in the Land Below the Wind

Written by jeffgill

Tuesday, 25 May 2010 13:45 -

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by **Dr. P.S. Nathan**

I served as the Timbalan Pengarah Kesihatan (Pergigian) for Negeri Sabah from August 1987 to Nov 1990, In short I was posted from Johore to Sabah to take charge of the Dental Service there.

In 1985 a Survey of Dental Health of the School Children in Sabah was carried out, and I was part of that team that conducted that survey. My team covered mainly the East Coast area of Lahad Datu, Semporna and Padang Tunku area. I was also a member of the Committee that drafted the Survey report, and the Committee made Recommendations for the improvement of the Status of Dental Health of the School Children of Sabah. One of the main recommendations was that all Public Water Supplies should be Fluoridated.

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In 1989 the then Sabah State Government took the most Unfortunate step of 'discontinuing the Fluoridation of Public Water supplies in the State of Sabah' Because "Water" was a state matter, the Ministry of Health could not do anything besides presenting the Report of the Special Committee of the World Health Organisation' that did indeed recommend the "Fluridation (the optimisation of Fluoride levels) of the Public Water Supplies. That Special Committee of the World Health Organisation also noted that 'Fluoridation of Public water supplies was the Most Cost-Effective Public Health Measure known to man'.

Recently I received an e-mail from one of the Dental staff informing me that there was still no Fluoridation of Water Supplies in Sabah!!....even after a 20 years! That was SHOCKING NEWS to me!....for the following reasons:

*\*All the other states in Malaysia have long since enjoyed the Benefits of Fluoridated Water supplies, including Sarawak...Singapore,Hong Kong,Australia, New Zealand etc; have been enjoying the Benefits of Water Fluoridation for some 50+ years now.*

*\*The Sabah Population has the WORST Dental Health in the Whole of Malaysia!...and the 'Caries (tooth decay) levels are easily Twice that of the the rest of MaLAYSIA! The Dentist to Population ratio is also the Worst in Malaysia!*

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*\*I estimate that in the last 20 years some 300-350,thousand Permanant Teeth have probably been Extracted among the school going population of Sabah. and probably another 700,000 Milk teeth extracted,among the Children of Sabah!!...and maybe another One Million teeth among the rest of Sabah's Population!*

I doubt if anyone in his right senses would consider this Dental Care because such astounding levels of Extractions can only mean the destruction of SMILES of the people of the 'Land Below the Wind'!!

So here I am a non-Sabahan, e-mailing this appeal, hoping to highlight the URGENT Need to Re-Think, and re-introduce the 'Fluoridation' of ALL Public Water Supplies in the State of Sabah,as soon as possible. I think that WE Owe the Children of Sabah at least this Social Responsibility and to Help Them Keep Their Smiles for Life!!

So let us stop this destructive Health Care, Stop the Pain, The Blood, the Tears, and the anguish, that has been going on for far too long!!

Let us I not let down the some 450,000 School Children of Sabah .

I would also like to draw attention to an article entitled "Towards a State of Toothless Citizens"

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that appeared in Daily Express, Sabah sometime in the year 1988/89 on this same problem. Unfortunately nothing seems to have changed since then.

This message must be got across to the very people that would really matter – the politicians of Sabah and the people of Sabah.

*This letter was first published in [YB Lim Kit Siang's blog](#)*