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**SPEECH BY MR SIDEK BIN SANIFF,
MINISTER OF STATE (EDUCATION), AT THE DISCUSSION ON
"SINGAPORE: THE NEXT LAP - ISSUES ON EDUCATION AND
TRAINING AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE MALAY COMMUNITY"
ORGANISED BY TAMAN BACAAN TO BE HELD AT BLOCK 136
BEDOK RESERVOIR ROAD ON THURSDAY, 1 AUGUST 1991 AT 8.00 PM**

Over the last few years, the Ministry of Education has released statistics on the educational achievements of different ethnic groups. This has been done so that each community will be aware of the progress made by their children as well as areas where more attention is needed.

Among the Malay community, there has been quick follow-up action - we've formed the Mendaki-MOE Joint Committee to help Malay pupils achieve their full potential, particularly in English, Mathematics and Science. Various programmes and activities have been organised, both for pupils and parents. This augurs well for the future.

While the progress made by Malay pupils is encouraging, we must redouble our efforts further to narrow the gap between Malay pupils and pupils of the Chinese and Indian communities. With the cooperation of parents and schools, I am confident that this will be achieved in the coming years.

Besides focusing our attention on getting more Malay pupils to pass the various examinations, we must also look at the quality of their performance. In other words, how are Malay pupils doing in terms of the percentage getting good grades? This is important because good grades will provide pupils with better opportunities for higher level education and training, and

subsequently to better careers. They can compete better for places at the polytechnics and universities.

Let me share with you some observations on the performance of Malay pupils in A-level Mathematics. As you are aware, Malay pupils are generally weak in mathematics, a subject which is of great importance in a modern, technological society like Singapore. The figures will show you that they have made tremendous effort and produced commendable results.

Over the last 11 years, from 1980 to 1990, the number of Malay pupils who sat for A-level Mathematics has tripled, from 88 to 243. This is encouraging and is a reflection of the improvements at secondary school. Of these, the percentage of Malay pupils obtaining distinctions has increased from about six per cent in 1980 to 24 per cent in 1990 - a four-fold increase. Similarly the percentage of Malay pupils obtaining Grades A, B or C has doubled from 32 per cent to 66 per cent.

Likewise, Malay pupils have shown improvements in Elementary Mathematics at O-levels and at PSLE. The proportion of Malay pupils scoring a distinction in O-level Mathematics has increased from four per cent in 1980 to 15 per cent in 1990 while the proportion who passed doubled from 28 per cent to 53 per cent. In 1990, about 12 per cent of Malay pupils obtained A* or A in PSLE Mathematics as compared with eight per cent in 1980. The percentage passing this subject has increased from 28 per cent in 1980 to 45 per cent in 1990.

While there is still a gap between the performance of Malay pupils compared to that of Chinese or Indian pupils, I am happy to note that this gap has narrowed. The gap between Malay pupils and Chinese pupils, in terms of the percentage obtaining grades A, B and C, was 31 per cent in 1986, but only 20 per cent in 1990. In O-level Mathematics the gap in quality grades has remained at about 34 per cent whereas in PSLE mathematics, it has narrowed from 35 per cent in 1986 to 30 per cent in 1990.

These are encouraging signs. If our pupils can show such improvements in Mathematics - their weakest subject - I am convinced that further qualitative improvements in their performance in other subjects are possible.

The fact that Malay pupils are capable of achieving quality grades in a difficult subject like Mathematics is very encouraging. It shows that with hard work and appropriate or systematic guidance, Malay pupils are capable of doing well in Mathematics. What pupils need most is confidence that they can tackle Mathematics and not to be discouraged by statistics which show that they lag behind Chinese or Indian pupils. This applies to other subjects as well.

For the more able Malay pupils, we should instil in them a competitive spirit and to excel. They should not to be contented with merely a passing grade. This is indeed crucial. This is the nub of the question. As parents, we could encourage them to read widely, I repeat READ WIDELY, and to participate in enrichment activities so as to stretch them to the maximum. These pupils will serve as role models for the less able and encourage the latter to work even harder to achieve better results. There is no substitute to hard work. That is why my humble formula for success is first, hard work, second, hard work and third, hard work.

My message is therefore very simple. Those who are weak should be given remediation to help them pass but for those who are good, they should be stretched to the limit of their potential and achieve quality grades. Our efforts to help Malay pupils should not be confined to helping only weak pupils. We must also develop and nurture our talented pupils so that there is overall balance in the progress of our community.

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Table No. 1: Performance of Malay Students in 1988

Year	Matriculation	University	Postgraduate
1988	100%	100%	100%
1987	95%	95%	95%
1986	90%	90%	90%
1985	85%	85%	85%
1984	80%	80%	80%
1983	75%	75%	75%
1982	70%	70%	70%
1981	65%	65%	65%
1980	60%	60%	60%
1979	55%	55%	55%

**ATTACHMENTS TO MR SIDEK SANIFF'S SPEECH
ON 1 AUGUST ON
"SINGAPORE: THE NEXT LAP - ISSUES ON
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND ITS
SIGNIFICANCE TO THE MALAY COMMUNITY"**

Table A1 : Performance of Malay students in PSLE Maths

Year	No. Sat	% A*/A	% Pass
1980	8408	8.4	28.1
1981	6356	10.2	29.3
1982	6350	12.5	31.2
1983	6133	16.3	39.9
1984	7056	15.2	37.5
1985	6716	10.6	39.0
1986	6173	12.9	39.0
1987	5756	10.7	40.0
1988	5242	11.0	40.4
1989	5220	12.5	45.3
1990	5026	11.7	45.2

Table A2 : Performance in PSLE Maths by Ethnic Group

		No. Sat	% A*/A	% Pass
MALAY	1986	6173	12.9	39.0
	1987	5756	10.7	40.0
	1988	5242	11.0	40.4
	1989	5220	12.5	45.3
	1990	5026	11.7	45.2
CHINESE	1986	35806	47.7	81.6
	1987	33163	44.1	81.5
	1988	35048	44.1	81.4
	1989	31561	43.6	82.2
	1990	30919	41.7	82.8
INDIAN	1986	2937	22.1	52.2
	1987	2601	18.9	51.3
	1988	2534	19.7	52.2
	1989	2448	18.6	53.1
	1990	2413	18.8	54.1
OTHERS	1986	407	33.4	68.3
	1987	402	32.8	70.1
	1988	398	29.2	71.0
	1989	369	32.0	73.2
	1990	345	30.1	70.7

**Table B1 : Performance of Malay students in O-level
Elementary Maths**

Year	No. Sat	% Dist	% Pass
1980	3128	3.6	28.5
1981	3284	4.5	30.7
1982	3451	5.9	35.2
1983	4155	7.7	35.6
1984	3822	7.9	38.3
1985	2697	10.3	49.2
1986	4212	9.0	38.1
1987	3784	12.8	44.1
1988	3751	14.0	50.8
1989	3672	14.8	51.2
1990	3467	15.1	53.3

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**Table B2 : Performance in O-level Elementary Maths
by Ethnic Group**

		No. Sat	% Dist	% Pass
MALAY	1986	4212	9.0	38.1
	1987	3784	12.8	44.1
	1988	3751	14.0	50.8
	1989	3672	14.8	51.2
	1990	3467	15.1	53.3
CHINESE	1986	31167	43.3	85.2
	1987	30315	49.1	86.9
	1988	31152	49.7	88.9
	1989	32080	49.3	87.9
	1990	31130	49.9	88.6
INDIAN	1986	2233	18.7	53.6
	1987	2098	21.2	55.5
	1988	2077	24.5	60.9
	1989	1998	23.6	62.2
	1990	1973	25.7	65.7
OTHERS	1986	331	26.9	67.1
	1987	337	33.5	66.5
	1988	279	34.1	69.5
	1989	333	30.3	72.1
	1990	321	30.8	70.1

Table C1 : Performance of Malay students in A-level Maths*

Year	No. Sat	% Dist	% Grd A-C	% Pass
1980	88	5.7	31.8	64.8
1981	102	4.9	40.2	69.6
1982	115	13.0	41.7	67.0
1983	133	7.5	41.4	72.2
1984	146	19.9	48.6	72.6
1985	179	19.6	53.1	77.1
1986	230	14.3	46.5	79.1
1987	217	20.3	53.0	74.2
1988	231	18.2	57.1	77.9
1989	269	18.6	56.1	77.7
1990	243	24.3	65.8	89.7

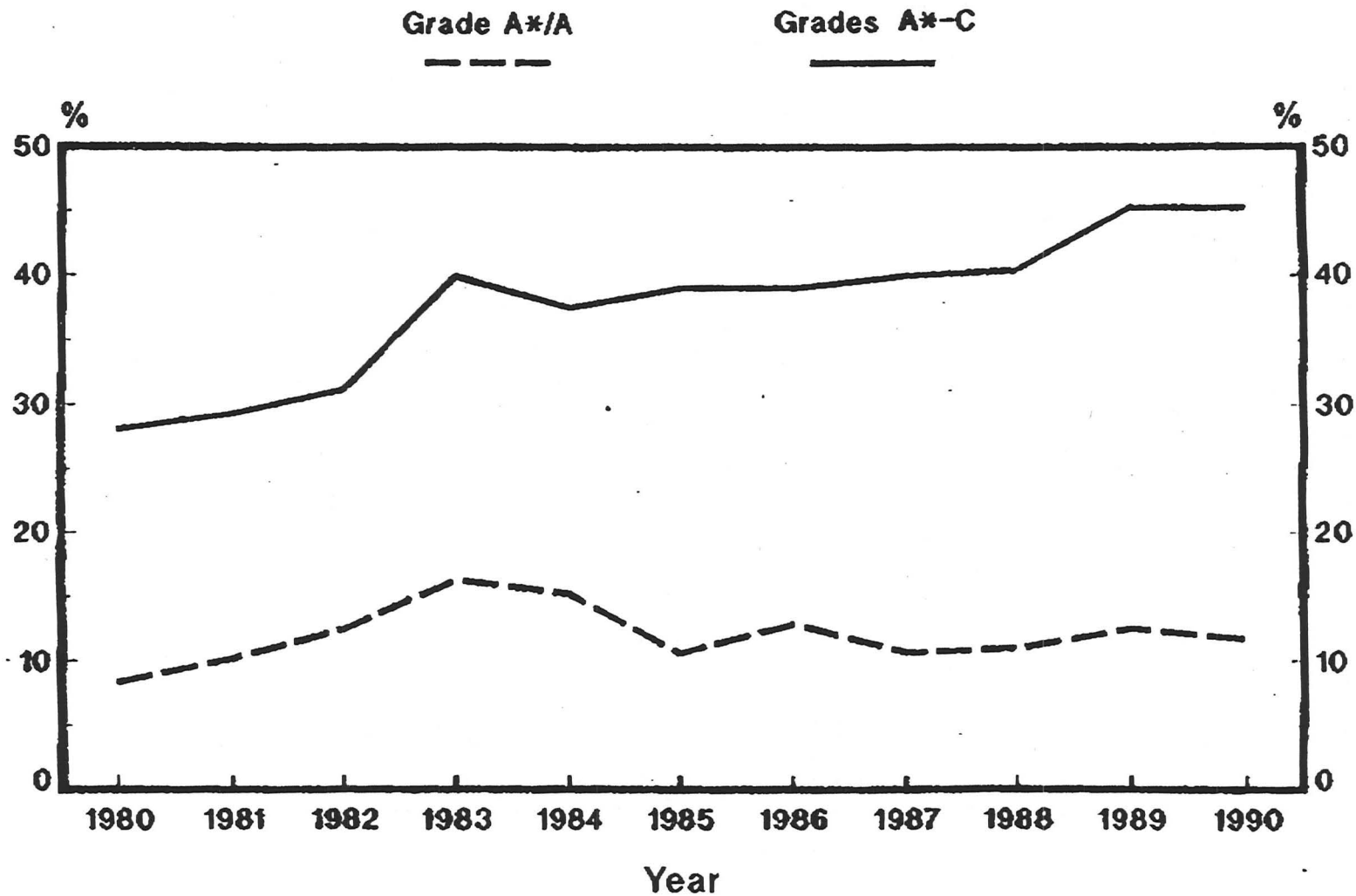
Note : Refers to Mathematics Syllabus A/B/C

Table C2 : Performance in A-level Maths* by Ethnic Group

		No. Sat	% Dist	% Grd A-C	% Pass
MALAY	1986	228	14.5	46.5	78.9
	1987	217	20.3	53.0	74.2
	1988	231	18.2	57.1	77.9
	1989	269	18.6	56.1	77.7
	1990	243	24.3	65.8	89.7
CHINESE	1986	6227	45.0	77.7	93.7
	1987	6732	49.6	84.5	95.0
	1988	7087	47.5	84.1	95.4
	1989	8331	47.2	83.3	96.0
	1990	8008	52.0	86.0	97.1
INDIAN	1986	269	21.2	59.1	82.2
	1987	288	28.5	67.4	83.7
	1988	260	24.6	69.6	88.8
	1989	304	30.9	63.8	89.1
	1990	286	25.9	68.2	90.6
OTHERS	1986	37	29.7	73.0	91.9
	1987	33	24.2	66.7	87.9
	1988	44	11.4	52.3	84.1
	1989	60	31.7	71.7	91.7
	1990	41	43.9	82.9	95.1

Note : Refers to Mathematics Syllabus A/B/C

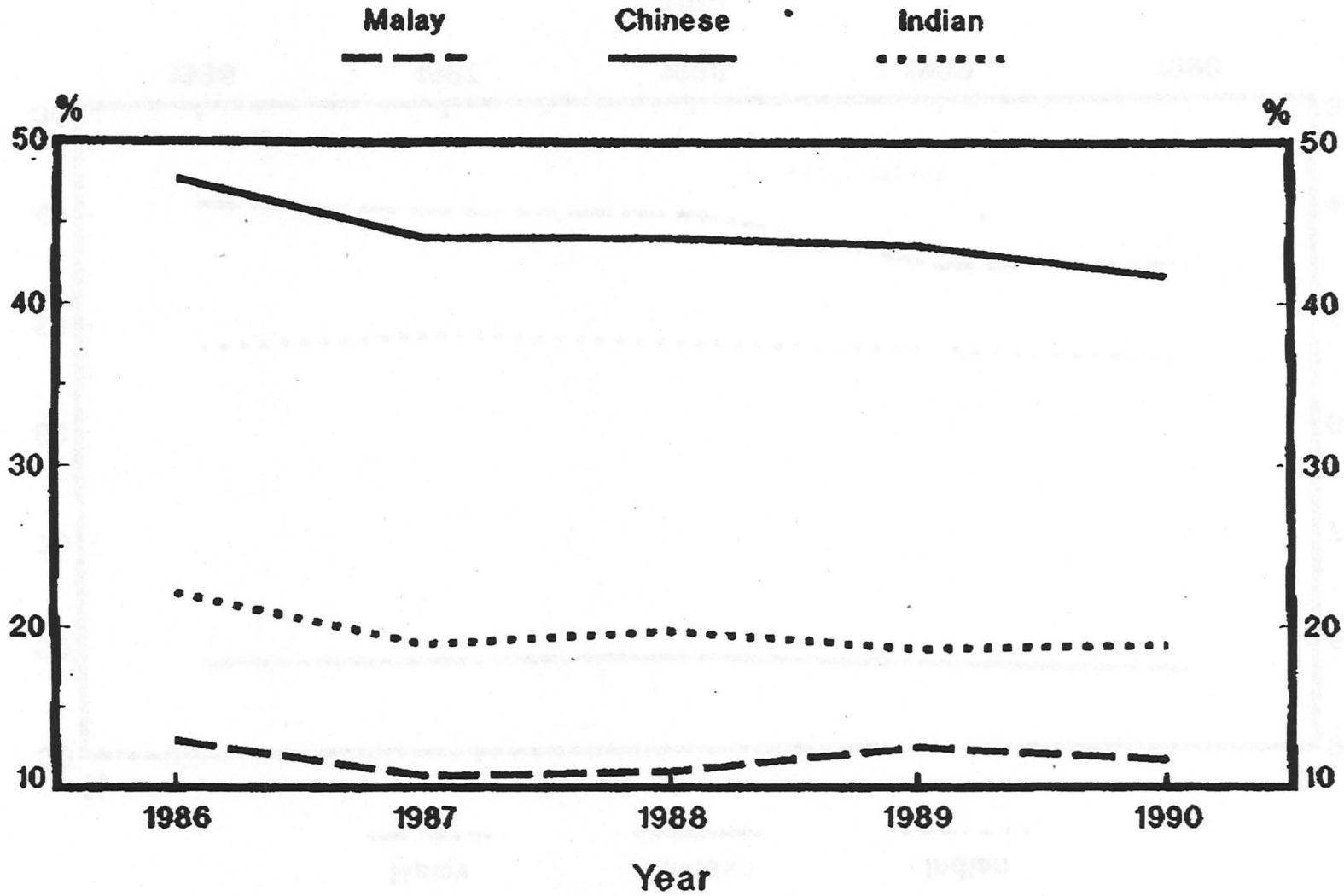
Performance of Malay students in PSLE Maths



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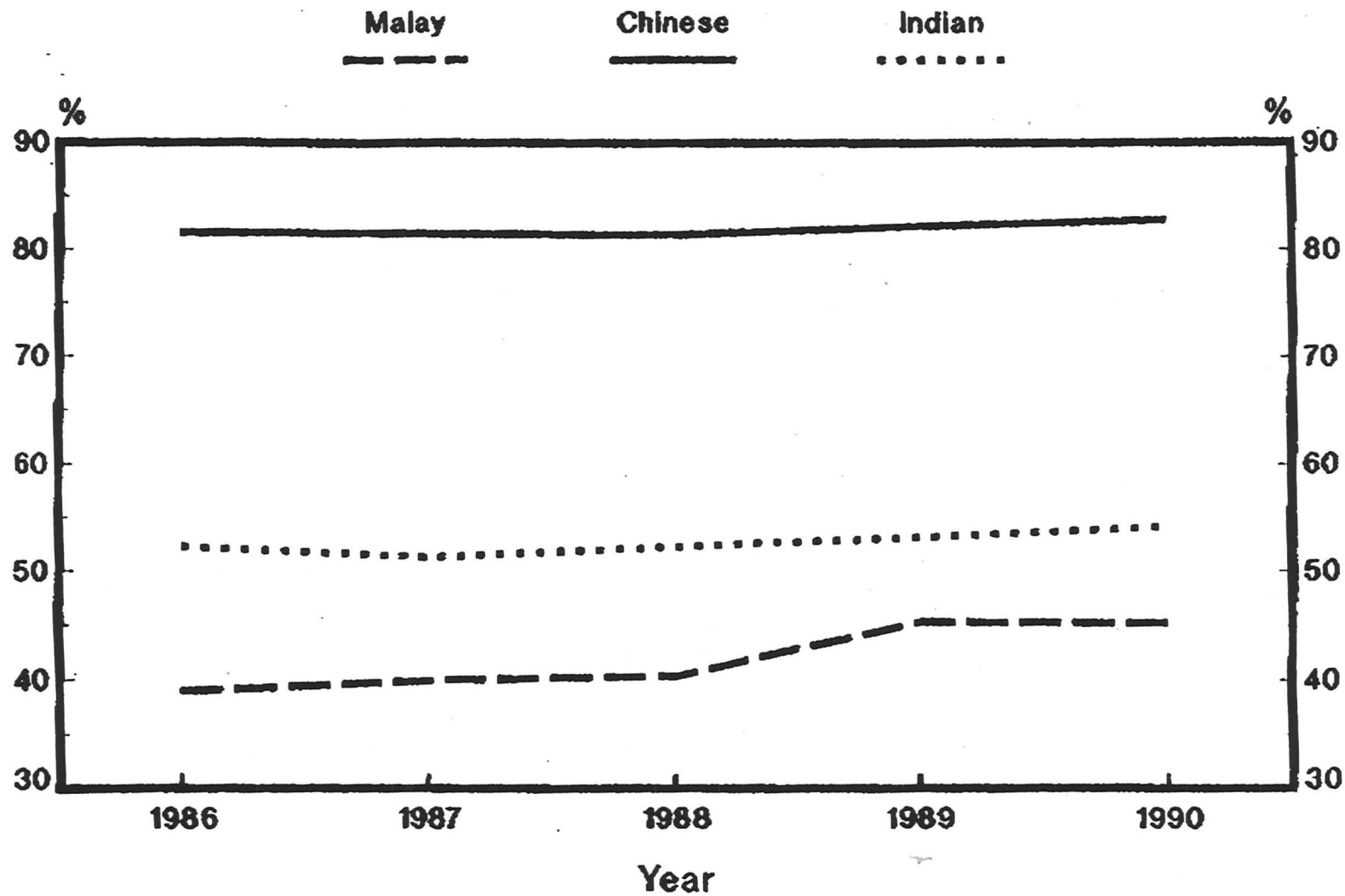
Performance in PSLE Maths by Ethnic Group

Percentage of students with Grades A*/A

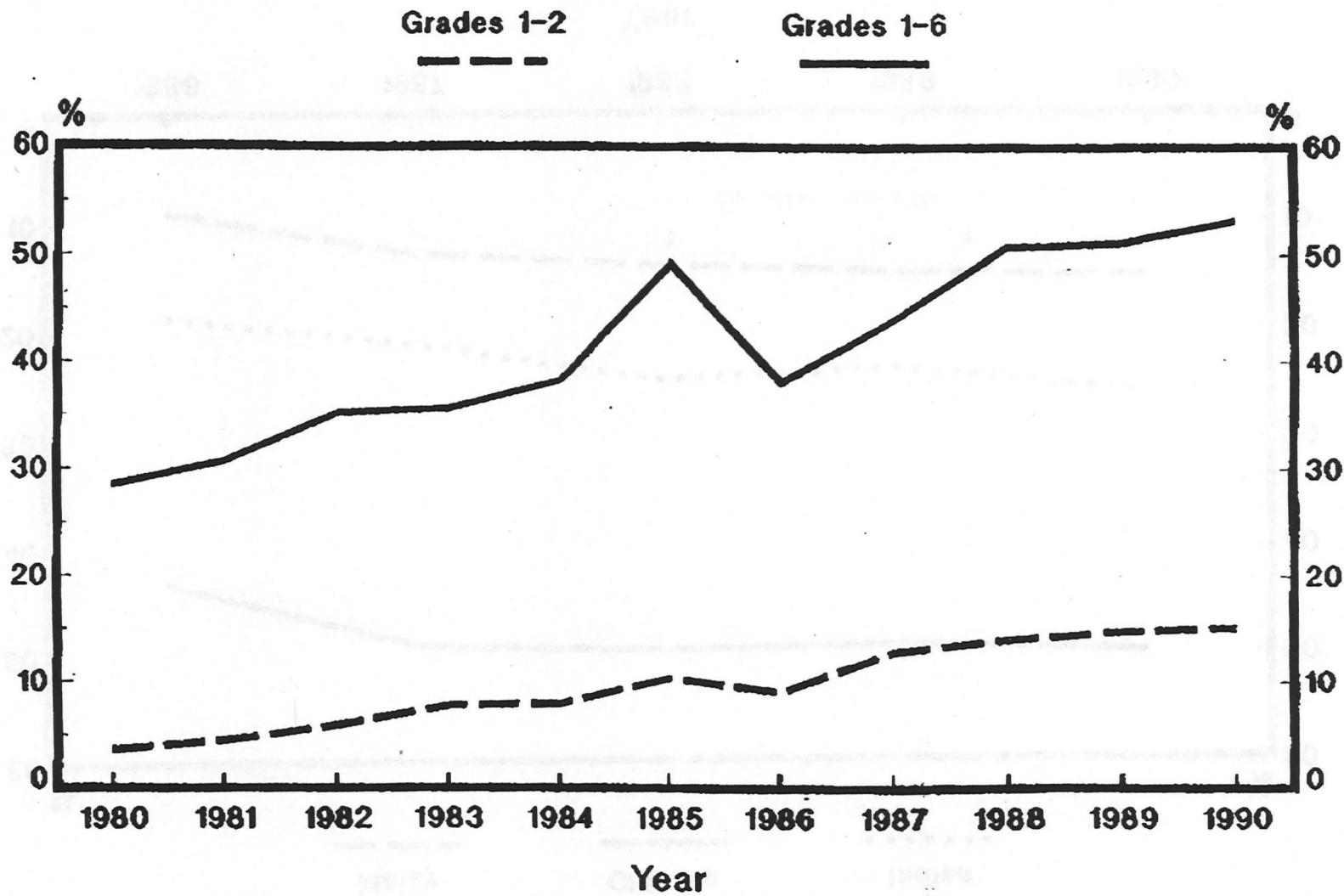


Performance in PSLE Maths by Ethnic Group

Percentage of students with Grades A*-C



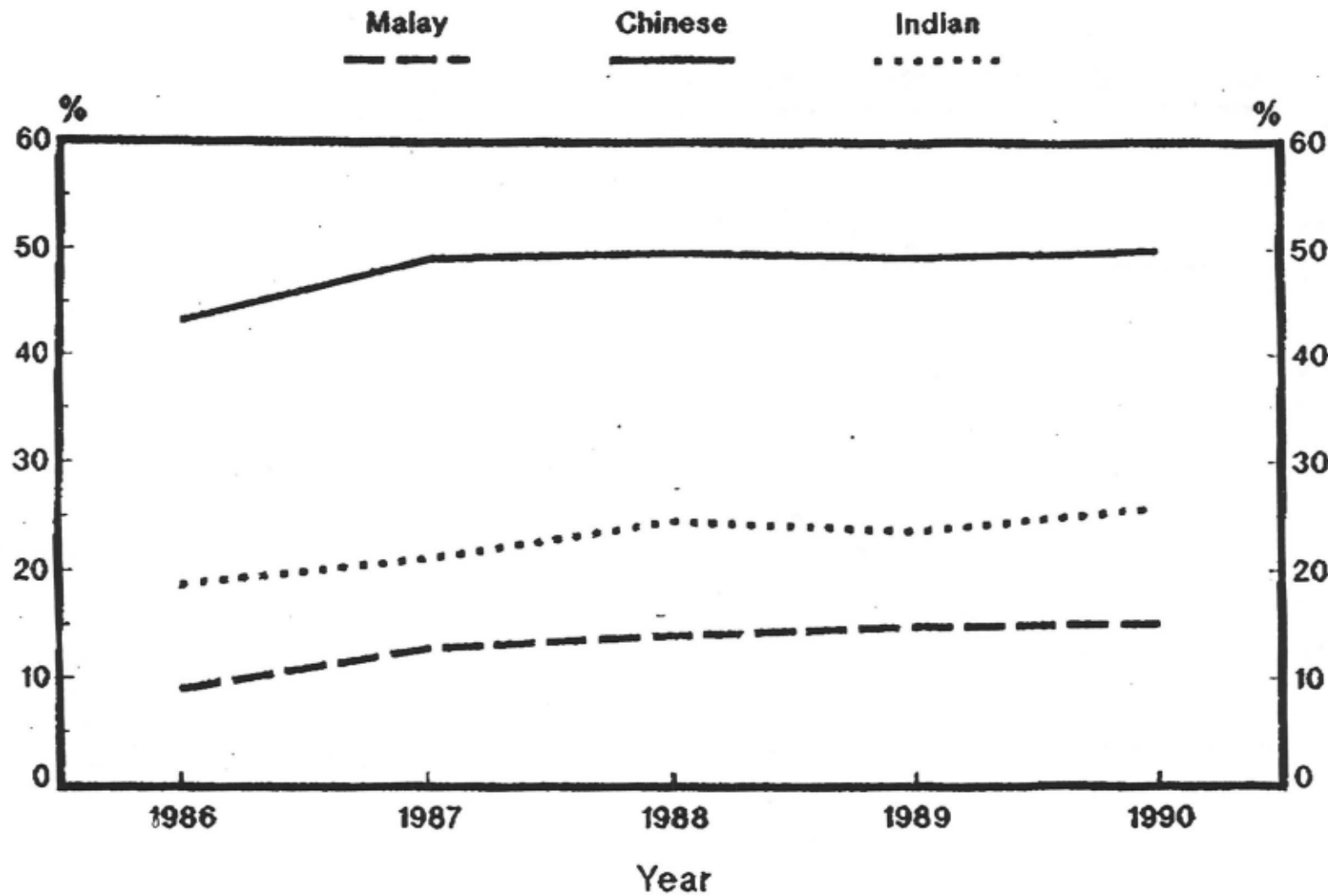
Performance of Malay students in O-level Maths



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Performance in O-level Maths by Ethnic Group

Percentage of students with Grades 1-2



Performance in O-level Maths by Ethnic Group

Percentage of students with Grades 1-6

