

Assessing Knowledge of Human Rights Practices in Malaysian Schools

SUHAKAM

Every human being wants to be treated with dignity. The desire is inborn as numerous research findings have revealed that self-esteem is vital to a person's well-being and effective functioning. For people to treat each other well, they have to know what their rights are so that they can uphold their rights as well as respect the same rights that others are entitled to.

The increase in reported incidents of problematic behavior and delinquency clearly reflects that violations of human rights are rampant among students. Violence is a common occurrence in schools as indicated by numerous incidences of vandalism, gang fights, assaults, extortion, molestation, bullying and arson. Recently, several cases of sexual abuse took place in schools along with a few incidences of rape. Students' security, both physical and sexual, is threatened by these acts of violence.

Many people associate Vision 2020 of Malaysia with the economic aspiration of the nation. But it also extols the challenges of being a moral, ethical and caring nation. The Ministry of Education's reports on disciplinary problems and gangsterism, the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of National Unity and Social Development's report on delinquency, and the Police reports on criminal offences of the young clearly demonstrate that the Vision 2020's aspiration is difficult to attain if programs are not carried out to arrest the present trend of rising behavioral problems.

For programs to be effective, they have to be based on empirical data. Designers of intervention programs have to understand what the problems are and the sources of these problems. Several programs have been put forward and some of them have been implemented to

curtail social problems.¹ Judging from the upward trend in behavioral and delinquent problems, these programs have not been very successful. A new approach is probably warranted.

Perhaps knowledge of human rights and how violations of these rights that affect people's well-being and dignity may help lower incidences of problematic and delinquent behavior. This approach places the onus on people (in this case, school children) to be responsible for their own well-being and that of others.

An overarching environment affects the behavior of the people within it. Hence, to a large extent, the philosophy and behavior of the school principal determines the milieu of the school and the behavior of teachers and students. The philosophy of the teachers and their behavior also determine the students' behavior. Students' misbehavior and delinquency should not be seen as students' problems but must be analyzed in the context of the school environment which is, to a great extent, determined by the school principal and teachers.

The Sub-Committee on Human Rights Education in Schools (a sub-committee under the Education Working Group of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia [SUHAKAM]) initiated the project in 2002. It was meant to support SUHAKAM's work with the Ministry of Education in drawing up plans to promote

human rights in schools. Basic data on the status of knowledge of human rights and the extent to which certain practices in school infringe upon human rights are valuable information in designing effective school programs, especially for secondary² school.

Hence, this research aimed to survey students' knowledge of human rights as well those of school principals and teachers. Beside these aspects, the research also attempted to examine some school practices, especially in terms of enhancing students' responsibility.

Objectives

This research has the following objectives:

1. To assess secondary students' knowledge of human rights, in particular those that pertain to their lives.
2. To assess teachers and principals' knowledge of human rights, especially the rights due the students by virtue of Malaysia's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
3. To identify practices in school that promote students' awareness of their rights as human beings.
4. To provide some baseline data to help design human rights education in schools.

Rationale

The reasons for carrying out this investigation are as follows:

1. Like all human being, students are entitled to all universal human rights. In reality, problematic and delinquent behavior, directly or indirectly, pertains to violations of the human rights of students. For instance, by being truants, students deprive themselves of the right to education and to employment later in their lives. Ignorance of human rights, especially those that are related directly or indirectly to problematic behavior, can be a contributory factor to behavioral problems and delinquency.

2. Students, who believe in the legitimacy of violence, are likely to display this form of behavior in their interaction with others. Information on students' knowledge of human rights, especially right to security and freedom from violence, will provide an indication of the likelihood of violence occurring in schools and later in their lives.
3. The ethos of the school has a great influence on students' behavior. Beliefs and attitudes of teachers and principals have a determining effect on the school climate. Teachers and principals who believe that students are entitled to human dignity are likely to be caring. They will treat their students with respect by not demeaning their abilities or inabilities and socio-economic background. In addition, teachers and principals who believe in human dignity will not discriminate students on the ground of gender, race and religion. Teachers and principals' knowledge of human rights are essential to the well-being of students because the lack of this notion, especially of the rights of children contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), can result in children being deprived of their rights.
4. The function of schools is not only to equip students with academic knowledge but also to prepare them for adulthood. One of the rights and responsibilities of citizens is to elect their government. School should therefore provide students with this training by allowing them to elect their leaders.
5. Schools that uphold human dignity by practising equality, justice and non-discrimination, caring for the well-being and development of their students, and promoting democracy, are likely to encounter less behavioral problems and delinquent acts in their vicinities.

Sampling

Seven academicians³ from five public universities designed the data-collecting instruments

and carried out the research in 40 secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak (divided into 6 zones) between April-June 2003. Stratified sampling procedures were used to select the schools to ensure these are representative in terms of type of school and locality (see table below).

Zones	Total number of schools	Samples
North	268	6
Central	485	11
South	314	7
East Coast	376	8
Sabah	183	4
Sarawak	156	4
Total	1,782	40

One hundred and sixty students were selected from each school. They comprised 2 classes of Form 2 students and 2 classes of Form 5 students.⁴ A total of 5,754 students took part in the study – 2,628 were in Form 2 and 3,126 in Form 5.

The sampling also covered 2,132 teachers and 142 administrators comprising principals, senior assistants and afternoon supervisors. The research was carried out during the 3-month period.

Methodology

In each school, 3 sets of questionnaire were administered: one set each for students, teachers, and administrators.

The questionnaires were administered by a university lecturer, who is a member of the research team. They were assisted by research assistants, who are university students.

For teachers, the questionnaires were administered in either one or two sessions depending on whether the school is a one- or two-session school. In short, the questionnaires were administered to the teachers in a group (probably during the school break).

They were not allowed to take the questionnaires home.

The questionnaires were administered to school principals individually.

Although different questionnaires were administered to each group of respondents, the questions were almost similar.

Results

1. Main Findings

Only important and interesting findings are discussed in this report.

(a) Knowledge of SUHAKAM

Among students, 73% had not heard of SUHAKAM until the day they participated in the survey (See Table 1). As expected, more of the younger students (80.3% in Form 2 compared to 66.9% in Form 5) did not know of SUHAKAM's existence. Surprisingly, more urban (76.1%) than rural (69.6%) students were ignorant of SUHAKAM's existence. This indicates that SUHAKAM has failed to reach out effectively to students in spite of the logo, essay and art competitions it has organized and the numerous news reports about or press statements by SUHAKAM in the print and electronic media.

The survey showed that 20.2% of teachers and only 7.7% of administrators had not heard of SUHAKAM before participating in the study. The percentage of teachers (78.8%) and administrators (81%) who knew that SUHAKAM was established by an Act of Parliament confirms that most of them are cognizant of SUHAKAM (See Table 2). However, it has to be pointed out that almost a quarter of the teachers did not know that there is a Human Rights Commission in Malaysia. For both teachers and administrators, more male than female and more rural than urban respondents knew of the existence and establishment of SUHAKAM.

TABLE 1. Awareness of SUHAKAM's Existence

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students	73.0	21(.4%)	70.6	75.0	76.1	69.6	80.3	66.9
Teachers	20.2	8(.4%)	13.6	23.3	21.1	19.2		
Administrators	7.7	1(.7%)	6.6	9.1	8.0	7.5		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 2. Awareness of Establishment of SUHAKAM by Act of Parliament

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %
	N	Ms				
Teachers	78.8	7(4.5%)	80.7	79.4	77.8	82.2
Administrators	81.0	9(6.3%)	85.5	75.8	80.0	82.1

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

(b) Knowledge of Convention on the Rights of the Child

Students' knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was ascertained by asking them what the acronym 'CRC' stands for. Four alternatives were given. Table 3 shows that 53.2% of the students gave the correct response. This suggests that more of them knew about CRC than about SUHAKAM. This is to be expected in view of the various campaigns on child rights, such as the campaign on 'Say Yes for Children', and the participation of children in the United Nations Special Assembly for Children and in the Asian Children and Young People Forum in Seoul.

While more students knew about the CRC than SUHAKAM, the reverse was true of teachers and administrators. Very few of them had been briefed about CRC as shown by the data in Table 4.

(c) Knowledge of specific child rights

The students' questionnaire contained 10 items on the rights of the child while the other two questionnaires, for teachers and administrators, had nine. The item, 'It is not wrong to call peers names as long they are not harmed physically' was omitted in the questionnaires for teachers and administrators. The findings on four of the items are discussed here.

(i) Compulsory education

In all three samples (students, teachers and administrators), the majority knew that every child has the right to primary school education and that parents will be fined if they fail to send their children to primary school. Over 70% of the students and more than 90% of the teachers and administrators knew of this right (See Table 5). While these figures are impressive, it is nonetheless worrying that 6.9% of

TABLE 3. Students' Knowledge of Meaning of 'CRC'

	Total		F2 %	F5 %	M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %
	N	Ms						
	53.27	174(3%)	51.4	54.7	52.4	53.9	55.9	50.2

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 4. Teachers and Administrators Given Briefing on the CRC

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %
	N	Ms				
Teachers	6.2	31(1.5%)	8.6	4.9	6.1	6.3
Administrators	7.0	2(1.4%)	6.6	7.0	10.7	3.0

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 5. Knowing that Primary School Education is Compulsory for Children

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students	77.2	31(.5%)	75.1	78.9	77.8	76.5	74.0	79.8
Teachers	93.1	17(.8%)	92.3	93.4	92.3	93.9		
Administrators	95.1	1(.7%)	93.4	97.0	94.7	95.5		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

the teachers and 4.9% of the administrators are ignorant of this requirement when the 1996 Education Act had been amended in 2002 to make primary education compulsory for every child between the age of 6 and 12.

(ii) Special education

Over 90% of the students, teachers and administrators indicated that children with disabilities should be placed in special schools and not in the mainstream of education, in spite of the inclusive education policy of the Government (See Table 6). This sentiment could have arisen from their observation of cases where the placement of children with disabilities in the mainstream did not benefit these children. For instance, placing a hearing-impaired child in a regular class where teachers and classmates do not know sign language or where there are no support services can isolate the child, since communication is impossible. Their sentiments could also be the outcome of felt-inconveniences and problems of having a disabled child in their class. Whatever their reasons for placing children with disabilities in special schools, it is evident from the data that they are unaware or unconcerned about the right of children with disabilities to education and to be

nurtured in as normal an environment as possible for them to develop, especially socially.

(iii) Freedom of expression

An overwhelming majority of the students, teachers and administrators agreed that children should be allowed to express their ideas and opinions even if these are contrary to those held by adults. Agreement with this statement was recorded among 95.6% of the students, 96.7% of the teachers and 97.2% of the administrators (See Table 7). These statistics imply that teachers and administrators would encourage students to speak up in class, ask questions and contribute to class discussions. It is hoped that this practice is being carried out in schools.

(iv) Name-calling and ridicule

While Article 13 of the CRC accords children the freedom to express ideas and impart information, it also charges them with the responsibility of respecting the reputation of others. However, sensitivity towards the feelings of others does not appear to be evident in a substantial portion of the student sample – 30.2% felt that it is not wrong to call their peers names so long they are not physically harmed

TABLE 6. Children with Disabilities Should be Placed in Special Schools

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students	90.0	11(.2%)	87.7	91.8	87.1	93.1	89.3	90.5
Teachers	92.9	8(.4%)	92.3	93.1	90.5	95.7		
Administrators	92.3	2(1.4%)	93.4	90.9	89.3	95.5		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 7. Children Given Freedom of Expression

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students	95.6	22(.4%)	94.2	96.8	95.5	95.7	95.1	96.1
Teachers	96.7	9(.4%)	95.4	97.4	96.7	96.7		
Administrators	97.2	1(.7%)	98.7	95.5	96.0	98.5		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

(See Table 8) and 39.2% did not think it is wrong for teachers to ridicule and humiliate students to motivate them to study (See Table 9). Perhaps, this practice of ridiculing students to make them work hard is so common that they have come to accept it as the norm. This surmise is based on the finding that as high as 28.8% of the teachers and 14.1% of the administrators expressed similar sentiments.

More male than female students approved of calling their peers names if physical harm is not involved. This trend was also seen in acceptance of the use of ridicule and humiliation to motivate students to study. Similarly, more male than female teachers and administrators approved of using ridicule to induce students to study. More rural than urban teachers and administrators approved of this practice.

More than 40% of the Form 2 students approved of teachers using ridicule to spur them to study. Even the percentage of Form 5 stu-

dents was not small, as 36.3% approved of this practice. Thus, it seems that both young and more mature students approve of ridicule and humiliation if applied as a motivational tool.

(d) *Caning*

There are two distinct schools of thought on the use of caning to discipline children. There are those who believe that caning is the best and most effective means of deterring offenders, especially persistent offenders and those who commit serious offences. Their reasoning is based on the need to curb misbehavior and ensure that offenders toe the line. In contrast, there are those who are against caning, which they consider to be a quick-fix and punitive solution. Furthermore, they believe that such punishment generates resentment, increases aggression, and is not rehabilitative or remedial in outcome.

TABLE 8. Approval of Name-calling without Physical Harm

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students	30.2	11(.2%)	33.5	27.6	29.3	30.8	30.0	30.4

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 9. Approval of Use of Ridicule and Humiliation to Motivate Students to Study

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %	<i>F2</i> %	<i>F5</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>						
Students	39.2	19(.3%)	41.5	37.4	35.5	43.2	42.5	36.3
Teachers	28.8	15(.7%)	30.1	28.2	26.5	31.5		
Administrators	14.1	1(.7%)	15.8	12.1	10.7	17.9		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

The data in Table 10 suggest that the majority of teachers and administrators agree with the practice of caning persistent offenders, as 79.5% of the teachers and 71.8% of the administrators replied in the affirmative to this item.

The use of the cane to discipline students appears to be quite common, since 51.9% of the students answered ‘yes’ to a question on whether caning is a common practice in their schools (See Table 11). More boys (59.8%) than girls (45.6%) replied in the affirmative to this item. Since the rules do not allow girls to be caned, they are probably less affected by the practice and therefore, perceive such cases to be less common. Caning also appears to be more common in rural than urban schools.

The majority of the teachers and administrators agreed that class teachers should be given the authority to cane students with serious disciplinary problems (See Table 12).

However, the percentage of teachers (74.1%) who wanted class teachers to be given such authority was much higher than that of administrators (53.5%). For both groups, more males (80.7% teachers; 60.5% administrators) than females (70.9% teachers; 45.5% administrators) wanted this authority to be vested in class teachers. Also, more teachers and administrators in rural schools wanted class teachers to have this power (See Table 12). Interestingly, a higher percentage of rural students claimed that caning is a common practice in their schools. Does this indicate that rural students are more unruly or does it imply that teachers and administrators in rural areas are less restrained in using the cane?

(e) Selection of class monitors

A monitor is usually expected to keep an eye on students whenever the teacher steps out of

TABLE 10. Approval of Caning of Persistent Offenders

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>				
Teachers	79.5	113(.6%)	84.0	77.4	76.6	83.0
Administrators	71.8	1(.7%)	77.6	54.2	70.7	73.1

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 11. Affirmative Responses to Caning as a Normal Practice in School

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %	<i>F2</i> %	<i>F5</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>						
Students	51.9	35(.6%)	59.8	45.6	46.1	58.1	52.8	51.2

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 12. Class Teachers Given the Authority to Cane Students with Serious Disciplinary Problems

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>				
Teachers	74.1	9(.4%)	80.7	70.9	70.8	78.0
Administrators	53.5	0	60.5	45.5	42.7	65.7

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

the classroom. Other duties of the monitor are to collect or distribute books, run errands for the teacher, and in some cases collect fees on behalf of the teacher. Monitors are given responsibilities and a certain degree of authority but, at the same time must serve the class and teachers.

Almost 30% of the students agreed that monitors should be chosen by the class teacher and not by students themselves (See Table 13). As expected, more of the younger students (31.8%) agreed with this suggestion than older ones (25.3%). But, contrary to expectations, more boys (31.1%) than girls (26%) wanted the monitor to be selected by teachers. There was a higher level of acceptance of the idea among urban students. This finding was surprising, as there is an assumption that urban students are less acquiescent in nature than their rural counterparts. While the majority of the students want the right to select their class monitors, there is still a substantial percentage that prefers not to exercise this right.

Nearly half of the teachers (45.9%) felt the class teacher should select the monitor. However, the administrators were more inclined towards giving the right to students to choose

their own leaders, with only 26.1% agreeing to monitors being selected by the class teacher.

(f) *Selection of prefects*

Prefects, being entrusted to keep law and order in schools, have more authority than monitors. They are usually senior students who are able to lead and are respected members of the school.

Surprisingly, the study showed that most students want teachers and administrators to have full authority in selecting prefects. While 78.5% of the students agreed to giving administrators and teachers the full authority to appoint prefects, 70.4% of the teachers and 56.3% of the administrators were in favour of this practice. This suggests that less than 20% of the students are confident of their ability to select their own leaders. In contrast, nearly half of the administrators were willing to share the authority with students.

The statistics imply that the majority of the students do not mind having no say in the appointment of prefects. However, such a practice contravenes the CRC which promotes not only the survival, protection and devel-

TABLE 13. Approval of Selection of Class Monitors by Teachers

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %	<i>F2</i> %	<i>F5</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>						
Students	28.2	11(.2%)	31.1	26.0	29.2	26.4	31.8	25.3
Teachers	45.9	22(1.0%)	43.5	47.0	49.6	41.6		
Administrators	26.1	0	22.4	30.3	25.3	26.7		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

opment of children, but also their participation – particularly in making decisions that affect them.

(g) Discrimination

Article 2 of the CRC concerns the obligation of the State to protect all children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to protect their rights. Part II of the Federal Constitution protects all Malaysians from discrimination on the grounds of race, gender and religion. The majority of the students, teachers and administrators were cognizant of this provision in the Federal Constitution. More than 80% of the students knew that the Federation Constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, race and religion (See Table 15). The percentage of teachers and administrators who were aware of this was even higher, exceeding 90%.

Still, their awareness has apparently not been translated into action because 63.6% of the students claimed that discrimination has occurred in their schools; 12.9% alleged the occurrence of discrimination to be ‘always’ and 50.7% declared it to be ‘sometimes’. More boys (67.5%) than girls (60.5%) maintained the occurrence of discrimination to be frequent. Occurrence of discrimination also seemed to be higher in urban (65.9%) than rural (61.0%) schools. Students attributed discrimination to be mainly due to race, ability and even physical attributes.

It is interesting that, among both students and teachers, a substantial number did not respond to this item. This could indicate fear of further discrimination if they disclosed the occurrence of this practice. If this is true, then it is most worrying because discrimination alone is bad enough without being compounded by a fear of revealing the truth.

TABLE 14. Approval of Selection of Prefects by Teachers and Administrators

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %	<i>F2</i> %	<i>F5</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>						
Students	78.5	13(.2%)	79.0	78.2	77.9	78.5	79.8	77.4
Teachers	70.4	33(1.5%)	71.5	70.0	69.8	71.1		
Administrators	56.3	2(1.4%)	53.9	59.1	49.3	64.2		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 15. Awareness of Non-Discrimination Against Gender, Race, Religion in the Federal Constitution

	<i>Total</i>		<i>M</i> %	<i>F</i> %	<i>Urban</i> %	<i>Rural</i> %	<i>F2</i> %	<i>F5</i> %
	<i>N</i>	<i>Ms</i>						
Students: <i>Gender</i>	1.5	52(.9%)	79.0	83.5	82.7	80.0	77.4	84.9
<i>Race</i>	83.2	51(.9%)	80.4	85.4	83.3	83.1	79.2	86.6
<i>Religion</i>	82.3	56(1.0%)	79.6	84.5	82.7	81.9	78.7	85.4
Teachers: <i>Gender</i>	95.3	34(1.6%)	94.7	95.6	94.3	96.4		
<i>Race</i>	93.7	39(1.8%)	92.6	94.1	92.4	95.1		
<i>Religion</i>	94.0	37(1.7%)	93.2	94.5	93.6	94.6		
Adminis: <i>Gender</i>	94.4	2(1.4%)	94.7	93.9	92.0	97.0		
<i>Race</i>	95.1	1(.7%)	96.1	93.9	93.3	97.0		
<i>Religion</i>	96.5	1(.7%)	97.4	95.5	94.7	98.5		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

The study showed that discrimination was not only observed but also felt by students. Almost half (49.9%) of the teachers agreed that there is discrimination in schools. This item was omitted in the administrators' questionnaire because the researchers felt that it would be difficult for administrators – as managers of the schools – to give an unbiased view of this occurrence.

Even if discrimination is occasional, it can still produce feelings of ill-will and resentment. Discrimination on the basis of ability could hamper students' development. For example, giving preferential treatment to academically able students while ignoring, scolding or ridiculing weak students would generate frustration and resentment among the latter. This could lead to dislike or hatred for the teacher and/or disinterest in the subject, culminating in a sense of alienation.

(h) Safety

In spite of claims of discrimination in schools and reports of assaults, gangsterism, bullying,

vandalism and other forms of social ills in schools, the majority of students, teachers and administrators said they felt safe in school. Among students, 81.9% declared feeling safe in school, while about 90% of the teachers and administrators expressed the same sentiment.

Conclusion

The CRC is one of the five human rights instruments that Malaysia has signed and ratified. Since Malaysia has signed and ratified very few international treaties, the CRC must be one that the Government considers to be important to the well being of children and feels confident of implementing effectively. Despite the importance placed on the CRC, very few teachers and school administrators have been briefed about this Convention.

Having knowledge of the rights is not enough. This knowledge must be translated into practice if children are to benefit from the rights accorded to them to ensure their survival, protection, development and participa-

TABLE 16. Affirmative Responses to Occurrence of Discrimination in Schools

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students: <i>Always</i>	12.9	73(1.3%)	16.2	10.2	13.0	12.7	13.7	12.2
<i>Sometimes</i>	50.7	73(1.3%)	51.3	50.3	52.9	48.3	49.5	51.7
Total	63.4	73(1.3%)	67.5	60.5	65.9	61.0	63.2	63.9
Teachers: <i>Always</i>	5.7	51(2.4%)	3.4	1.9	6.4	4.9		
<i>Sometimes</i>	44.2	51(2.4%)	47.6	40.2	47.6	40.2		
Total	49.9	51(2.4%)	51.0	42.1	54.0	45.1		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

TABLE 17. Affirmative Response to Safety in Schools

	Total		M %	F %	Urban %	Rural %	F2 %	F5 %
	N	Ms						
Students	81.9	38(.7%)	80.6	83.1	80.6	83.4	80.3	83.3
Teachers	89.4	32(1.5%)	88.7	89.6	91.4	89.4		
Administrators	90.1	4(2.8%)	90.8	89.4	90.7	89.6		

N = Number of respondents; Ms = Number and percentage of no response

tion. For instance, the majority of students, teachers and administrators are aware of equality and prohibition of discrimination in the Federal Constitution on grounds of race, religion and gender. However, the widespread occurrence of discrimination in schools suggests that such knowledge is not being translated into behavioral change and action.

The provision of rights to children does not give them licence to abuse them. For instance, freedom of expression comes with the responsibility to exercise this right correctly. Thus, while children have the freedom to voice their opinions, express their ideas and impart information, they have also the responsibility to ensure this freedom is not used to damage the reputation of others or to harm others psychologically through verbal abuse. The belief that name-calling is acceptable as long as the other person is not harmed physically demonstrates that students do not understand restrictions on the freedom of speech and the need to uphold the dignity of others.

In exercising their rights correctly, children need good role models. The conduct of teachers and school administrators is important in this respect. If teachers and administrators misuse their rights or deny students their rights, then children are likely to display similar behavior. Therefore, the use of ridicule and humiliation to motivate students to study is worrying because this practice abuses freedom of expression and is not in the best interest of the child. Similarly, the use of the cane to demand compliance with school rules and regulations may deter misdeeds but will rarely teach children how to control delinquent tendencies.

The findings of this study clearly show that programmes that enable students, teachers and school administrators to understand human rights and to respect one another's rights are much needed.

Endnotes

1. One of the programs is the "*Rakan Muda*" (Young Partners) Program.

2. Secondary School (sometimes also referred to Middle School) is basically the same as the American Junior High and High School combined. Instead of the 2 years of Junior High and 4 years of High School in the American High School system, Secondary School is typically divided into 3 years of Junior Secondary School (or Lower Secondary Education, with students aged 13-15) and 3-4 years of Senior Secondary School (or Upper Secondary Education, with students aged 16-19).

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4. Form 2 is the second year (age 14) of Junior Secondary School (or Lower Secondary Education) and Form 5 is the second year (age 17) of Senior Secondary School (or Upper Secondary Education).