

Bullying is more than just an adolescent menace

By [Dzulkifli Abdul Razak](#) - May 17, 2022 @ 12:00am



Bullying is deeper than a superficial adolescent menace! - NSTP file pic

Just as we were about to be convinced that bullying is an act practised by immature adolescents as part of an egoistic urge during their growing up years, the recent cases involving the medical fraternity threw a spanner — or is it a stethoscope — into the works!

This time, it involved a class of well-respected professionals who had sworn to dedicate their vocation to the betterment of human life.

The Covid-19 tragedy nailed this into our heads as most frontliners came from the medical and related fraternities.

They laid their lives on the line, but bullying was never part of this. As stated in the Hippocratic Oath: First do no harm!

So many were taken aback by news reports which made the tragedy public.

More so later, when they learned that there was more to the story from years before.

Some quarters who attempted to make light of this issue have been taken to task by members of the fraternity who wanted it to be resolved once and for all.

That it involves, thus far, the public sector is another matter of concern because of the well-known fact that the sector has, for a long time, been overworked, and without saying, underpaid disproportionately.

Yet, many of them keep to their solemn oath uncompromisingly with an overall health outcome that is second to none.

Can the bullying episodes then be isolated cases?

Most would like to believe so in order to avoid the good name of the fraternity being tarnished in one go with a broad brush stroke. However, to do so would not only be unfair, but also unjust!

Hence, there were suggestions that the intake of medical students could be more discerning. This has its own merits but controversies too.

The latter used to overwhelm the former bordering on the questions of subjectivity and the link to other accusations like favouritism and nepotism.

But, not necessarily so, if it is properly handled through a well-designed effort.

Using the experience of an Accelerated Programme for Excellence-status university at one time, the selection was made more refined through a hybrid process. Hence it was made more "wholesome" by balancing candidates' numerical scores or grades with that of attitudes, values, as well as deeper professional interest extracted from their psychometric profiles.

It would not be wrong to say that the latter oftentimes provided better nuance over the former.

This is to say that equating a 4-flat score as the ultimate overriding criterion of selection is totally unwise. Moreover, those not selected are better off being channelled to other professional courses of their choice.

The exercise has resulted in a smaller attrition rate of less than two per cent as compared with that without it (12 per cent).

In fact, it also led to the opening up of an off-shore medical campus in India in an attempt to meet the continuous "demand" without compromising the quality of intake. Unfortunately, the selection exercise has since been stopped for unknown reasons.

It is, therefore, time to reconsider it again as an effective measure in recruiting better all-round students.

These students have the potential to develop into more humane professionals who aren't just tough, as demanded by some, in order to avoid being a bully or being bullied, either way.

Such vocabulary has no place in noble professionals across the board, not limited to any one professional group, as in the case with present circumstances.

The ultimate goal is to be human first (*insan sejahtera*) — a goal that is today lost, generally speaking!

And this is a real cause for concern. Bullying is deeper than a superficial adolescent menace!

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