

THE NEEDS OF THE MALAYSIAN YOUTH WITH REFERENCE TO A FOCUS GROUP

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Background of Study

The youth of a country is generally regarded as an asset in the making. This group will need to have the power to move and to develop the country and for this their potentials need to be continuously supported, equipped and developed. But, until now efforts to involve the youth in structured and organized activities have been limited. We feel that the correct course of action is to change a certain group of youths only. Therefore, the time has come to identify which particular section of the youth would benefit the most from the limited resources at our disposal, and how best to use those resources towards engaging and motivating them.

Youths nowadays have their own expectations and needs which are compatible with the development of the country. According to Sarver, Verma and Johnson (2000), meeting the different developmental needs of the youth as they advance through age-related growth stages is a challenge for the youth development professional. Educational psychologists have identified adolescent developmental needs and the tasks associated with these needs. These tasks involve learning and fulfilling physical, social and intellectual roles. They also argued that a youth organization which is successful in reaching its goals is of great value and therefore would be attractive to young people. Jaaffar (2005) agreed that youth organizations must not only focus on how to play 'kompang' or 'cempuling' or on wearing 'batik', but must show their self worth be acknowledged by what they had done.

Havighurst (1952) mentioned that at the youth stage the demands of society gain ascendancy over the internal needs of the adolescent and that the developmental tasks required to be undertaken during this period help prepare the adolescent for adulthood. Furthermore, Erikson (1985) described the adolescent stage as one of seeking identity in the midst of role confusion. He reckoned that youths are concerned with the question of connecting roles and skills already acquired with adult occupational prototypes which they will enter, and how they appear in the eyes of others. In a similar vein, Cobb (1998) spoke of identity formation, in which adolescents move beyond a simple

11. Khān, 'Aksir-*fi usūl al-tafsīr*).
12. Nawāb Šiddiq Ḥasan Khān, *Ithāf al-nubalā'*, p. 36.
13. Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic literature*, (with a Foreword by H. A. R. Gibb), Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, 1967, pp. 36-7.
14. Rashid Ahmad Lūdhīyānwī, *Introduction to Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī's ḥāshiyah*, p. 17.
15. A. F. L. Beeston, *Bayḍāwī's Commentary on Sūrah 12 of the Qur'ān (Text, accompanied by an interpreting rendering and notes)*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, pp. v-viii (Preface).
16. *ibid.*, p. vi.
17. J. Robson, 'al-Bayḍāwī', *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edition), vol. i, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1960, p. 1129.
18. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (eds.), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 58.
19. M. G. Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of India to Arabic Literature: From Ancient Times to 1857*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1967, 16.
20. H. A. R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature: An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, 87.
21. 'Abdu'llāh Yūsuf 'Alī, *The Glorious Qur'ān: Translation and Commentary* (including an Introduction by Abu'l-A'īā Mawḍūdī and a Foreword by Khurram Murad), The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1978, 17 f.n., 118-120.
22. Joseph Ilyan Sarkis, *loc. cit.*, 612.
23. Tash Koprū Zadeh, *Šaqā'iq al-Nu'māniyah*, quoted by Nawāb Šiddiq Ḥasan Khān in *al-Tāj al-Mukallal*, Bombay, 1963, 242. (See various editions).
24. Joseph Ilyan Sarkis, *loc. cit.*, 831.
25. *ibid.*, 1068.
26. Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1967, 36. Ḥajjī Khalīfah (Kātib Čelebi), *Kashf al-zunūn*, part iv, 925, part vi, 241; part ii, 914.
27. Zubaid Ahmad, *loc. cit.*, 36. See also *Khulāṣat al-āthar-*fi* a'yān al-qarn al-hādī 'ashar*, vol. ii, part 318.
28. Zubaid Ahmad, *loc. cit.*, 272. (Muḥammad Šādiq, *Ṭabaqāt Šahāh Jahānī*, British Museum MS, No. 169B and Rampur Library Catalogue No. 27. See also Abu'l-Faḍl 'Allāmi's *A'in-i Akbarī*, ed. by Blochman.
29. Zubaid Ahmad, *The contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature*, (*loc. cit.*), 273-4. See *Fihrist-i kutubkhāna-i asafīyah*, iv, 201.
30. Zubaid Ahmad, *loc. cit.*, 280-1. C. A. Storey and A. J. Arberry, *India Office Library Catalogue*, 1119.
31. Zubaid Ahmad, *op. cit.*, 284.
32. *Ibid.*, 284-5. Nawāb Šiddiq Ḥasan Khān, *Ithāf al-nubalā'*, 427.
33. *Ibid.*, 275. 'Abdul Ḥamīd, *Mifrah al-kunūz*, A Hand-list of the Arabic MSS in the Bankipur Library, 268. 'Abdur Raḥīm, *A Catalogue of the Oriental Section of the Library of Islamia College*, Peshawar, 27.
34. Rahman 'Alī of Lucknow, *Tadhkirah-i 'Ulamā'-i Hind*, 1911.
35. *Ibid.*, 285. See also Nūr al-Dīn Zaydī, *Tājall-i nūr bi-tadhkirah-i mashāhir-i Jawnpūr*, part 3, 93.
36. *Ibid.*, 279. See also Azad Bīlgramī, *Ma'thir al-Kīram*, 219.

identification with their personal childhood image of parents to synthesizing elements of this earlier identity into a new whole, one that bears their personal interests and values. Research in this area shows that individual maturity and life satisfaction come as one's developmental needs are satisfied (Sarver, Verma and Johnson, 2000).

In line with this, youths may get involved in groups that have the same interests, needs and functions. According to Baron (2000), people join groups or associations to satisfy important psychological and social needs, such as those for giving and receiving attentions and affections or for a sense of belonging. It also helps us to achieve goals that we cannot attain alone, for example, we cannot possibly win a football game if we play it alone. Furthermore, groups contribute to a positive social identity and it becomes part of their self concept. Matsumoto (2000) also argued that people join groups that have a common goal or with those members they can establish a friendship. Culture is one of the important aspects that divide people into different in-group or out-group relationships. Jaaffar (2005) reckoned that organizations in Malaysia are still culture-oriented and we should integrate them in order to attract more youths to join them.

According to Reeve (2001), however, a person's needs can be manipulated by the environment. Quasi-needs are situationally induced wants and desires that are not actually full-blown needs in the same sense as physiological, organismic and social needs, for instance, the way we think, act or feel may be different in different situation. People can be influenced and change their needs. Thus, one of the most influential devices is the media; it plays an important role to influence youths' needs and interests. For instance, the famous TV programme, Fear Factor has influenced youths who love challenge all over the world (*The Star*, June 15, 2005).

The Berita Harian mentioned that youths that are not involved in any organization had become a major hindrance to the country's development. In addition, not much is known about the youth in this country; the Ministry of Youth and Sports do not have systematic knowledge, especially about the more than 5.5 million youths not involved in the recognized associations and organizations. To establish a basic, strategic and suitable program, correct and adequate information about the youths, i.e. their characteristics, interests and needs, is very much needed.

The focus group study presented here is one of the earliest actions to establish a Malaysian youth database with the basic aim of fulfilling the need to recognize and understand a certain sections of the youth of the country.

Introduction

In general, this study is designed to recognize and understand the characteristics and aspirations of some particular types of youths. That is, the objective of the study is to define and confirm the categories, characteristics, norms, interests and expectations of these youth groups in the country. The focus of the study is limited to the youths that do not join any association recognized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS). To be more accurate, this study is based on the following research questions:

1. What are the needs of and values held by these youths which are reflected by their norms, habits and interests?
2. What are the limitations, obstacles and pressures that cause them not to join those associations and organizations recognized by MYS?
3. What are the hopes and expectations that enable them to find ways and means to get involved in the work of development?

Method

The needs of the youths are complex and based on numerous psychosocial and cultural factors. Thus, in order to have a fair set of data that will simultaneously preclude the possibility of a simplistic and reductionist conclusion, this study approaches the youth needs problem in a pluralistic manner. This begins with a discussion with the focus group using a participatory and interpretative design. A focus group interviewing involves a group dynamic that is more difficult to guide than individual interviews. It could be defined as a group consisting of typically 7-10 interacting individuals who may not be unfamiliar with each other but have some common interests or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue.

The main characteristics of the study are given below. The focus group discussion was held with 11 groups (with a total of 83 youths). Each group consisted of 6 to 10 participants. In summary, these youth groups portrayed the following types:

Group Category	No. of Participants
i. Busy Malay Professionals	12
ii. Coffee Beans Chinese Professionals	10
iii. 'Mamak' Stalls Indian Professionals	7
iv. Female Youth Government Servants	6
v. Semi-professional Malay Youths	6
vi. Karaoke Youths from Batu Pahat	6
vii. Kg Awah Youths	10
viii. Unemployed Indian Youths	6
ix. Musolla Youth	7
x. 'Finding Direction' Female Youth	7
xi. Unproductive Youths at the fringe of Kuala Lumpur	6

These youths were chosen using word-of-mouth and snowballing techniques. The task of finding and gathering the participants was carried out according to the agreement between the researcher and the focus group facilitator. Hence, all the groups consist of participants who know each other. The youths chosen to join this research had to meet the following conditions:

1. Age between 15 to 40 years,
2. Not a student of any school or higher learning institutions, and
3. Do not belong to any formal association or organization.

Seven facilitators were selected for this study based on their experience in focus group research. In order to increase the understanding of the facilitators and coordinate their activities, discussions were held before the start of the research. The place of discussion was agreed between facilitator and the individual group participants. The researcher joined the discussion session as a passive observer. Before the start of the discussion session, the facilitators met the participants in order to explain the aim of the meeting and its regulations as well as the rights and responsibilities of the participants. Participants were also asked to complete a short questionnaire on their background. The main points of all the group discussions revolved around the following three aspects:

1. Interest, activity and normal habits of the youths in their free/spare time,
2. Limitations, obstacles and pressures faced by the participants, and
3. Their opinions and expectations towards association and organization.

Every focus group discussion session took between 1 to 2 hours. Every discussion session was visually recorded. The tapes were later transcribed as raw data for analysis. Every discussed transcript was repeatedly read and analyzed independently by three researchers and two assistant researchers. The analysis focused towards identifying and confirming the related themes of the research questions. With the existence of an apparent psychosocial cultural diversity of the people interviewed, a specified theme was accepted for analysis if it was found to be repeated in three discussion transcripts.

All researchers were involved in the confirmation and coordination of themes including the process of affixing the labels on the tapes. Transcript extracts were identified that would support and strengthen the conclusions in answering the research questions.

Results

1. Youth Free/Spare Time Habits and Interests

Data showed the existence of a variety of habits and activities in the free time as carried out by the discussion participants. As generally expected, all participants involved themselves in sports, entertainment, and social and religious activities. The habits and interests of these youths cover many types of activities during their spare/free time including soccer, badminton, jungle trekking, going for a walk, picnicking, socializing, cooperative/community service, watching movies, fishing, window shopping, surfing the Internet, family activity and reading. It is clear that sports, social and entertainment activities were the norm and have value among the participants. However, upon further scrutiny it is found that there exists a clear repetitive theme that dealt with the habits and interests of specific youth groups. Six main themes came out of these analyses that could be summarized as follows:

- (1) *The Young Malay Professionals who do not have any spare/free time at all*
The typical young Malay professional in this study would be a medical doctor, engineer or university lecturer. Their average age is 28 years, and they are married. The following abstracted discussion reflected their activities and interests:

No spare time. If do have, spent reading, finding information through the Internet. Be with family, having recreation, bring child(ren) to park or just go for a walk with family...between job and family, that's all. Work, work, nothing else but work, and the remainder for child[ren] and wife. No variety to social life.

The normal pattern and interest towards this limited sport and social activities can also be seen occurring among the female government servants and the semi-professional Malay youths. All of them have a family.

- (2) *Mamak' Stalls and Coffee Beans Youth.*

Socialization, chitchatting, planning programs by making the 'mamak' stalls or coffee beans restaurants as the centre for meeting clearly indicated the activities and spare time interest of the youths especially among the young Chinese professionals and Indians, and the unmarried government servants. According to them.,

Up to chit-chatting. Finished the conversation, we all went back. Nothing else to do...to me this grueling is not wrong, its normal guys flirting, the gals chit-chatting...but not until 3, 4 am.

Well, topic is wide ranging...from latest fashion to international topics...you can talk about everything from your girl-friends to your career...I really enjoy I chat, from Formula 1 to soccer...

I, eh... sleep and chit-chat with friends...gossips, ah...to be frank, about other persons, mostly about girls that we know...I [also] talk about activities and share some latest news like what's happening in KL...we plan to have [futsal] tournament between us, we're planning to have a group committee to have the tournament.

- (3) *'Finding Direction' Female Youth and the Musolla Male Youth who are always active and interested*

These two groups reported the most number and types of activities involved and interested in. Majority of them were unemployed graduates. The first group consists of female youths who claimed they were "still looking for direction" in their future life, while the second group consisted of people who were pious, mosque-going or religious teachers.

For instance, this group of participants reported of their involvement in a variety of activities including bowling, futsal, kayaking, flying fox and gruelling,

hanging out with friends and watching movies. They were also interested in carrying out new challenging activities; one of them said, "Occasionally thought about feeding tigers, new things, right!"

In general, most of the participants in the Musolla group were always involved in voluntary activities especially in cooperative/community service, teaching the Qur'an and giving tuition. This group also had a deep interest in the behavioral and spiritual development. One of them reiterated,

Youths nowadays from material and physical aspect, can do [anything]; from spiritual aspect, no [they cannot do so]...if possible, [you] have to force the spiritual aspect [on]to these youths like the enforcement of the National Service.

(4) *VCD, Fashion and Karaoke Youth*

Entertainment is the salt and pepper of these youths' life. But the types of interest might differ as influenced by the background of the value system and/or culture of a particular youth. The habits and interests towards entertainment were patterned by the differences that exist between the subcultures. The theme that showed these difference can be proven as a result of the discussion with the Karaoke youth group. The members of this group, of age around early 20s, already hold jobs and use their spare/free time to entertain themselves by watching VCDs, imitating youth fashion and going to karaoke. To them,

I want to be happy...I seldom watch TV...I watch VCD, ghost film, historical movies, Kung Fu movies...window shopping, following clothing fashion, modifying our car [engines], listening to music, singing, playing jokes...these activities full of stimulation...relax myself and reduce [work] pressure.

When asked whether the parents allowed them to go to karaoke, the response given was:

No, [my] parents don't allow...I can sneak out of the house and go to karaoke outside...when with friends, we can sing the song, "don't go home today" [laughter].

(5) *The Village Youth and the Unproductive Youth—forever hoping*

The participants in these two groups repeatedly stated their intentions and wishes to be active in all kinds of sports, entertainment, and social activities. They voiced their interests in soccer, ping-pong, indoor games, extreme sport, X-games, camping, ICT and following delegations for visits. But, the reality is different. The discussion with both these groups brought out the reality faced by them, for example,

Here, there is no indoor games, no recreation place, no soccer field....so

we have to rent here and there, occasionally far away...there is badminton, takraw, volleyball; but the place is limited; many of us, why wait for an hour then only can play...lack of playing place for youth; too many, if wait for a long time, no need to wait, better for me to gruel, meet member...

Last time, have [soccer] field, now do not have... now there is nothing anymore. The field was there but the owner wants money, if we want to play in the evening, we have to pay...normally the spectators pay, but this one, the players pay.

Due to previous limitations, all participants admitted that they

have no activities, go here and go there, normally...TLDM (sleeping, loafing and eating)...grueling, if have coins, call people, disturb them, call girls here and there...all of us ride motorbikes in a convoy. If really faced hardship, then racing...that racing, got bets. Bets using money, even until now. Like last year, a bit different. The year of 1997, if not money, then 'bohssia.' Now, no news already...Girls now know how to choose...if win motor only, don't look; nowadays, win a car, then look...anyway, now they have become the clubbing type.

(6) *Volunteer Activity Potential*

Interest for voluntary work is one theme that comes out in several of the focus group discussions. The youths who had no association with any organizations were involved in such voluntary work as tutoring, teaching the Qur'an and carrying out cooperative or community services in their own area. Besides that, they also hinted their readiness to contribute in voluntary services.

The young Malay professionals consisting of doctors, engineers and lecturer, for example, said that they prefer activities that are related to their professions such as Mercy organization. The "Finding Direction" female youths also agreed that:

Sometimes want to do volunteer work but...if last time in University I join Caring Club, so every week we go to the orphanage, do activities with them. When finished (at university) we are tied with UiTM (Marra Technology University)...no continuity...we want to find experience. Because we at U we did...we had skill but cannot contribute.

The opinions of the unemployed Indian youths seem to be captured in the following,

[Youths] can do social work and help people...so many things, so they can pass their time...they can build up charity and society, we can help. I mean they should help, have campaigns there are some charities. So people who have nothing [to do] can actually go and help.

The Kg Awah youths were prepared to be trained as volunteer trainers if the Youth and Sports Department were prepared to hold seminars for them to train as voluntary trainers.

Why Do they not Join an Association?

None of the youths chosen for this study joined any association that was recognized by MYS. The main reasons why these youths did not join any association are discussed below.

(1) Failure to Convey Information

The data of this study showed the existence of a communication breakdown between associations and specific youth groups. As regards the youths, they testified that they did not receive information about MYS-recognized associations; they did not know about any activities carried out by the NGOs. If information was disseminated, they were confused and did not clearly understand; if they did understand and tried to gain membership, they felt that there was no enthusiastic response from these organisations. According to the focus group members,

[Any] youth association I did not know... the one I know was 'Rakan Muda' ... 'Persatuan Belia 4B', did not know and never heard of.

I have never seen one TV program where they introduced any one association or activity that they conducted. We did not know which channel we can use to contribute. If the previous channel and program related with our expertise, we can assist. In my opinion...the existence of these association were really not known...the public did not know, lots of people did not know...In the Indian association such as the Youth Bell Club, Hindu Youth Organization like the YMCA we really know, but many among graduates themselves did not know...if graduates themselves do not know, the school students really would not know any of these things.

Rakan Muda is actually [good] but no follow up...when you finish school...lacking already...most of the time they are focusing on youth [who are] still in school.

[I] became a member but no feedback...the association [people] make activities, but I did not know...they said they will tell, call, give card... but nothing at all!

(2) Unattractive Association Programs

The focus group members hinted at the weaknesses in the structure, program and activities as the reason why they did not join any association. The weaknesses

voiced by the members included,

Whatever was the program...the program they had the type that was not the logical type...they do whatever, as they like seminar activity, don't quite like, we like the one that had more activities. If seminar from morning until evening, we just sleep at the back.

The sewing classes, that's previous youth...the current youth, no more. Normally, things like this only our mothers...association workshops they had, only theory, and no interaction with people who had their own businesses. This kind of workshop occasionally boring, I feel it's already outdated. They have to think of something creative to lure and attract the youth.

What I need is an organization which could assist me in my career...I need that kind of society to help me to upgrade myself first before I can upgrade my fellow friends.

(3) The Gap Between the Youth and The Much Older Leader of the Youth Association.

The generation gap between the youth leader and the youth they lead was found to have a direct effect on joining any association. Overall, the focus group member said,

Occasionally [leader is] adult...difficult to cooperate with them...difficult for the adult to give chances...cannot ask a lot of questions...new opinion, all not right!

Hence, they were of the opinion that,

Lots of these associations being led by senior youth...I don't quite believe...because they do not know what we want!

Therefore, this might produce doubts and the blame as,

Inefficient administration lasted only for a while. When its youth strength, management, administration becomes weak...eventually youth do become weak...example for courses, after that no follow-up.

The program they do, time for election then they do the program...that time only all busy...not continuous; when the program finished, it just ended like that, after that all quiet down.

(4) Prejudice towards Association

The information given by the participants showed numerous negative impressions and opinions about associations. Some were of the opinion that the youth

associations contained negative political elements, for example inefficient management, cronyism and choosing pets or loved ones only.

Lots of these associations mixed with political elements. When these political elements entered, it caused the professional group to lose interest because inefficient management:

In every organization, there is cronyism, politics...even if we involve ourselves in association, afraid we cannot upgrade, whatever decisions are all for their friends, their cronies, our part is not working there; that's why we do not join [association].

We can't quite afford, maybe [because] double standard...they should be capable of playing soccer at the high level but no cable, they [were left-out]; eventually they felt hurt...and their talent buried.

There were also claims that the association failed to use the financial budget properly. There were claims that,

Government allocated a huge amount of funds but did not benefit youth, occasionally revolved around the visit for the committee members, specific members only, and self-interest only.

Allocation obtained...But the problem of budget, whatever get, do not know where...not channel to us but channel to other places...flowing into own pockets...Once bitten, twice shy...[last time] at Simpang assist Alang [the association's strong person] but project completed like that only, nothing was given.

Some of the focus group members tried to relate the reason for not joining an association to racial issues. For instance, there were members with the opinion that,

If all Indian, bad impression...Are societies nowadays are conquered by Indians? Are Indians given priority? If Indians are given priority, the rest of Indian would try to join...majority of them are our people, [we] participate, so that we are not left out.

Compares to other [countries], we lag behind...the government always focuses on the programs for the Malays, while there are few programs for the Chinese.

(5) *No Interest in Being in an Association*

A reaction along the lines of "we have no interest [in youth associations]" was found in almost all discussions. It is apparent this lack of interest was motivated by their desire to evade being controlled by the rules of an organisation:

What's interesting in these NGOs? When we join NGO, there must be a leader, we wish for freedom, a whole day at the office being given directive. After office want fun activities, no registration of names.

[Now] we want freedom. In school we are not allowed that, this... in my school we are not allowed to eat sweets. I feel it's something so petty, so why should there be so much of discipline thing...everywhere rules and regulations... we don't like to be kept under rules and regulations... after SPM (Malaysian Education Certificate) we want to enjoy, but they are...

Chances are that their decision not to join any association was a direct result of these associations not being able to meet their needs, such as finding temporary jobs, earning money, etc. They are more interested to do jobs that can earn them extra money.

Hope and Expectation from MYS and NGOs

Even though the focus group participants did not join any association, they still have hopes and expectations. They think that MYS and NGOs are capable of conveying information about organizations to enable them to be involved and contribute to the development of the youth,

Government and NGO must double their publicity, create public awareness and have roadshows to explain to youth all the activities they have prepared.

Ministry needs to produce a list of associations and the objectives of each one, and clarify what the association is based on exactly, carrying out the responsibility smoothly, and what kind of reception they gain from these associations.

The youths want information to enable them to come up with ideas and make concrete contributions, appropriate to the needs of the youths at a particular location. Some do question,

Ok, let's say I want to start a program...I do not know where to go, where to start from, whether to start from YMCA, HYO (Hindu Youth Organization) or anything, Bell Youth Club, I do not know where to start...no platform to stand upon...if I bring this program to the Ministry, would I get permission or given funding, or must I come under a platform in order to obtain funds? Is it sufficient enough for me to prepare a project paper?

The youths without any association also hope that all youth associations become

more responsive towards ideas, views and needs of the youths including ideas on leadership. For instance,

Leadership should also come from the youth. Make it a rule to hold leadership position for not more than 2 or 3 terms. So, this can produce more leaders and give chances for other youth to lead and voice their opinion.

They also need a program that not only can give and prepare them with educational skills all their lifetime, in fact they need activities that produce skills that have also an economic value,

Business. I like if it's from my own effort for example gardening or farming. I like things like that as I feel satisfied...

Associations and the authorities should carefully consider about the natural inclination of the youths towards challenging sports and rough activities as follows,

Because young people like fun and exciting things, the government can organize some good, stimulating activities [such as] car racing in different states or counties...No, car racing is not dangerous. If it is car racing, you can try...its not dangerous.

Rather than putting them all in jail all the time, give them [what they want]...example, allow them to use, maybe Batu Tiga [racing track] every Sunday, government-sponsored, from morning to 12, go there you have instructors, go for timing, or for the best scorer, give them a token...so you can control them.

Even though they did not join any association, they hope to be able to assist the government in getting a variety of facilities including sporting facilities. The essence of the statement, "Government must be sensitive towards the interests of the youth and set up enough facilities for them" can be detected in almost all focus group discussions carried out during the interviewing process.

Lastly, the youths also raised the issue of their balanced development. The implementation of programs and activities should take into consideration not only the spiritual aspect but also the physical, intellectual and social aspects. The following abstract was found to represent most of the groups studied,

Association must also [integrate] spiritual aspect this is good, like integrating archery activity, horse riding, and slotted in-between with religious motivation...the difficulty arise, later looked upon as KMM (Malaysian Militant Group).

Spiritual input must be taken into consideration and must be included in all programs.

Conclusion, Discussion and Implication

This early study found proof that the youths who are not members of any association have many interests and activities that are mostly profitable. They have a lot of expectation from the government and associations for their physical and spiritual development. As an effort to develop the youth of the country, the early study entitled, "United Towards Excellent, Countable and Glorious," proposes three strategies and actions as follows:

Being Responsive Towards Youth Needs

This strategy needs to be given preference due its objective of preparing youth centres with the following traits,

- (a) An adequate centre for sports, recreation, a resource and announcement centre, and guidance and counselling, social, conference and meeting that is easily accessible, for instance according to the ratio of one centre to 50,000 residents or like what is available in the neighbouring country of Singapore.
- (b) Usage of available public amenities and facilities, for example the multipurpose hall, the community hall, sports equipment in schools with the cooperation and commitment from other authorities.
- (c) Matsushita: successfully organized involvement of employers in the industrial sector and manufacturing by helping to setup a sport and recreational centre for youth workers.
- (d) A centre to plan programs and activities using bottom-up methods where it can involve volunteers, and be based on development.
- (e) Themes according to category, types and location of the targeted youths.
- (f) An active and dynamic centre that can attract the interest and involvement of youths from all categories irrespective of race, religion, education, socio-economic condition and culture.

Encouraging a Volunteering Spirit Among Youth

This strategy needs to be given preference for the task of preparing a functional youth secretariat:

- (a) Formulation of policy, rules, and volunteer management programs.
- (b) Identifying and building a database for categories or types of volunteers, for example the professional volunteer group, semi-skilled, the athletes, trainers and seasonal volunteers.
- (c) To create an incentive scheme and a comprehensive acknowledgment of youth volunteers.
- (d) Offer a volunteer management training to all interested and potential youths (teenagers and adults).
- (e) Increase the monitoring by MYS in all programs created by the Parliament Act, and under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (for example, the uniform society or organization at school level) in order to nurture interest and effort of the volunteers.
- (g) To create an understanding and cooperation with voluntary bodies such as the

Salam Foundation and Mercy.

- (h) Analyze systematically and continuously the skills and prestige of volunteers.

Approaching and Understanding Youth

This strategy contributed towards the creation and establishment of a Research Youth Component under the MYS with the focus to fulfil the needs by obtaining information through the following:

- (a) Secondary data of previous research.
- (b) Youth census, quantitative survey all over the country, macro data.
- (c) Needs analysis of youth groups without association or organization.
- (d) The building of youth development model in-line with the database on the local society and culture.
- (e) The structuring of macro database for longitudinal research.

The information thus obtained is used as an important input in the formulation of policy and the country's youth development programs.

It is clear that this research was not conducted just to give a limited picture of the norms, habits, interests, expectations and needs of the youths. All the findings here are limited to the characteristics of the targeted groups. That means a lot more questions need to be asked systematically and scientifically for MYS to understand the habits and mindsets of the youth and respond effectively to their overall needs in order to bring about the physical, moral and spiritual development of those who are not members of any organization.

For instance, are the norms, habits, interests and needs found in this study representative of the characteristics of the youths all over the country? Are the demographic profiles and psychosocial factors able to point out the interests and needs of the majority of the youths in Malaysia? Can these profiles be used as an input to the basic decision-making process and the development program and planning for the country's youth? Does MYS give enough importance to a suitable policy and program? What is the impact of the MYS policy for the youth on their development and vocation, and consequently their support for the MYS? To answer all these questions, quantitative research in this area is very much needed.

Lastly, despite the limitations of the research design and methodology, all the findings and recommendations are based on the fact that in order to realize their potential as an asset to the country all the youth groups' needs should be properly recognized and the Government and other appropriate bodies must try their best to meet them. This includes the youths that do not join any organization. A large number of them 'do not have any problem,' 'want to be on their own' but are willing to contribute to voluntary work if it accords with their spirit. There is also the small group who are 'living without direction' and do really need the guidance and assistance of the MYS. They uttered the following words:

Who does not want to progress?...If a madman knows he is mad, he does not want to be mad forever...not to become like this only...give us a chance, so as not to rot here only, I also want to advance like other people.

We would like to conclude this article on this note of optimism. Due to lack of resources at our disposal, it has not been possible to make any further analysis of the data or establish any sort of proper correlation between the socioeconomic status of the subjects and the sort of answers they have given. This article may be further developed along these lines.

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