

Headline **Give sex education in schools say NGOs**
Date **04 Mar 2010**
MediaTitle **Malay Mail**
Section **News**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **20,816 / 49,000**

Language **English**
Page No **2**
Article Size **254 cm²**
Color **Full Color**
ADValue **2,110**
PRValue **6,330**



Give sex education in schools, say NGOs

By **NAJIAH NAJIB**

— najiah@mmail.com.my —

PETALING JAYA: Saying 'no' to sex education in schools will not be fair to students, said non-governmental organisations.

Malaysian Islamic Consumer Association (PPIM) secretary-general, Datuk Ma'amor Osman, said the issue is how to have a suitable teaching model.

Educators must first ascertain what level of understanding students possess and then work out a module that fits, he told *The Malay Mail* yesterday.

Ma'amor said it was not about teaching students how to have sex, but more of how to safeguard their reproductive organs.

"Young people are curious. They need to know that males and females have different organs.

"What can they do to take better care of these organs? How will it affect them if these organs are misused?

"What are the implications of pre-marital sex? How do they protect themselves from being violated?" he noted.

Ma'amor said having multi-religious students in a class will not be an obstacle either. "It may be better so that students can make comparisons. No religion encourages free sex. Plus, it may help students understand each other's religion better."

His views were echoed by Malaysia Hindu Sangam president, S. Mohan, who said sex was normal in all religions.

"Sex is not biased. Everyone does it. So, everyone has the right to understand what sex is all about."

He said sex education in schools was crucial as youngsters were getting more exposed via multimedia channels.

"To fulfill their curiosity, they surf the Internet and watch pornographic movies. But, this media doesn't teach them the impact of sex in later life.

"Sex education must be compulsory, particularly at the secondary level. Knowing about it can help control sexually-transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS, as well as prevent teen pregnancy."

Women's Aid Organisation executive director, Ivy Josiah, believes sex education is a matter of capacity building.

"Sex education is an urgent social



MA'AMOR: No religion encourages free sex

need. We need to make teachers understand that it's not that complex a subject to teach sex. It's just like combining biology with moral classes," said Josiah, a professional teacher herself for 13 years.

She said the directive to implement sex education in schools must come from the Cabinet and the government should start pilot projects now.

"It must be a combined effort between relevant ministries — Education, Health, Women and Family, and related government agencies. These bodies need to sit down and figure out how to implement sex education in schools."

Josiah said it was best for sex education to start as early as from kindergarten.

"It can start with 'good touch' and 'bad touch', and children be made aware of their body parts. It can also help prevent child sexual abuse."

Secondary school students can be taught about boy-girl relationships, bodily integrity, reproductive rights and such.

"I believe it can be a very exciting journey for both teachers and students if they can talk about it freely. This issue can't be a taboo forever."

National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general Lok Yim Pheng had reportedly said local teachers don't want sex education in schools.

Pheng said: "Teachers lack formal training in the complexity and sensitivity of the subject and are not confident to teach it."

She also said sex education was more challenging in Malaysia because of the country's multiracial, religious and cultural elements, with each ethnic group having its own thoughts on the subject.