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# Efforts to Grow Students' Social Awareness through Mutual Cooperation as an Implementation of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo

Uswatun Hasanah, MIS Mambaul Ulum Tulupari-Tiris-Probolinggo, Indonesia Uun Fitrianingsih, MIS Asy Syafi'iyah Pecangakan, Indonesia Wahidah Rahmawati, MIS Hidayatusshalihin NW Lanji, Indonesia Vina Nur Rosyida, MIS Sumber Mas Ganding Sumenep, Indonesia Uswatun Khasanah, MIN 1 Jombang, Indonesia

## **ABSTRACT**

Mutual cooperation is one of the social values that characterizes the Indonesian nation in strengthening unity and oneness in various kinds of diversity, namely the diversity of religion, ethnicity and culture. This value is in line with the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which emphasizes the importance of unity in various diversities. This article was created with the aim of analyzing how mutual cooperation activities can foster students' social awareness and strengthen their understanding of the meaning of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. This article was created using a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques in the form of observations conducted on students of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo. The results of this article show that student involvement in mutual cooperation activities such as cleaning the school environment, helping friends in need and community service in the school environment and the community. This mutual cooperation is also able to increase a sense of caring, cooperation and social responsibility. In addition, students better understand the importance of respecting differences in religious culture and social background. The implementation of mutual cooperation not only forms positive character in students but is also an effective means of instilling the values of tolerance, togetherness and unity in accordance with the meaning of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

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## **Corresponding Author:**

# **Uswatun Hasanah**

MIS Mambaul Ulum Tulupari-Tiris-Probolinggo, Indonesia uswajamal123@gmail.com

## Introduction

Diversity is one of the characteristics of the Indonesian nation which consists of various ethnicities, religions, cultures and languages. This diversity is a national wealth that must be maintained and preserved in order to realize unity. In the context of community life, a sense of unity and social solidarity is an important aspect in creating a harmonious,

peaceful and peaceful life. One of the values that plays an important role in strengthening unity is mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation is a real manifestation of togetherness, cooperation and social concern that has been passed down from generation to generation. (Koentjaraningrat, 2010). Mutual cooperation is not just a physical activity but also an effective means of building a sense of caring, tolerance and social solidarity in the midst of diversity. Mutual cooperation is a manifestation of the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which emphasizes that the Indonesian nation has diversity but remains one unity. (Darmaputera, 1988). The implementation of mutual cooperation is an important part of maintaining social harmony and strengthening national identity, especially the Indonesian nation.

The tapestry of Indonesian society is richly woven with threads of diversity, a vibrant mosaic of ethnicities, cultures, languages, and beliefs, all bound together by the enduring principle of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika – Unity in Diversity. This national motto serves as the cornerstone of Indonesia's identity, emphasizing the harmonious coexistence and mutual respect among its heterogeneous population. Instilling the essence of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in the younger generation is paramount to safeguarding the nation's unity and fostering a cohesive social fabric that celebrates and embraces differences. In the realm of education, the cultivation of social awareness and a deep appreciation for diversity are integral components of holistic student development. Schools serve as microcosms of society, providing fertile ground for students to interact with peers from various backgrounds and learn the values of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect. Within this educational landscape, the traditional Indonesian practice of "gotong royong," or mutual cooperation, emerges as a powerful pedagogical tool with the potential to nurture social awareness and embody the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Gotong royong, deeply ingrained in Indonesian culture, transcends mere collaborative work; it encompasses a spirit of communal solidarity, shared responsibility, and voluntary assistance for the common good. This practice fosters a sense of interconnectedness, encouraging individuals to work together harmoniously towards shared goals, transcending individual differences and promoting a sense of collective identity. In the context of education, integrating gotong royong into school activities can provide students with firsthand experiences of collaboration, mutual support, and the appreciation of diverse contributions. The connection between gotong royong and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika lies in their shared emphasis on unity amidst diversity. Just as gotong royong brings together individuals with different skills and perspectives to achieve a common objective, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika celebrates the richness of Indonesia's diversity while underscoring the fundamental unity that binds the nation together. By actively participating in gotong royong activities, students can internalize the values of cooperation, empathy, and respect for others, which are essential for

understanding and embodying the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in their interactions and perspectives.

MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo, as an educational institution within the Indonesian context, plays a vital role in shaping the social consciousness of its students. Recognizing the significance of both social awareness and the national ethos of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, the school likely employs various strategies to instill these values in its students. Exploring the specific efforts undertaken by MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo to cultivate social awareness through the implementation of gotong royong provides a valuable case study for understanding how traditional cultural practices can be leveraged to promote national unity and social cohesion in an educational setting. This research endeavors to investigate the specific upaya, or efforts, undertaken by MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo to foster social awareness among its students through the application of gotong royong as a tangible manifestation of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. By examining the school's initiatives, the students' experiences, and the perceived impact of these practices, this study aims to shed light on the potential of integrating traditional Indonesian values into the educational curriculum to promote social harmony and national unity.

The focus of this research is to explore the pedagogical approaches employed by the educators at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo in utilizing gotong royong activities to cultivate empathy, cooperation, and a sense of shared responsibility among students. Furthermore, the study seeks to understand how these experiences of mutual cooperation contribute to the students' understanding and internalization of the principles enshrined in Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, fostering an appreciation for diversity and a commitment to national unity. By examining the specific context of MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the practical application of culturally relevant practices in promoting social awareness and national unity within an educational setting. The findings of this study could offer valuable lessons and potential models for other educational institutions in Indonesia seeking to strengthen their students' social consciousness and their understanding of the significance of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in the diverse Indonesian society.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between traditional Indonesian values, social awareness development, and the embodiment of national unity among students. By focusing on the upaya undertaken at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo, this study aims to highlight the potential of gotong royong as a powerful tool for nurturing a generation of young Indonesians who are not only academically proficient but also socially conscious, empathetic, and deeply committed to the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The findings of this investigation are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers interested in exploring culturally grounded approaches

to fostering social awareness and national unity in educational contexts, ultimately contributing to the strengthening of Indonesia's diverse yet unified social fabric for generations to come.

In the world of education, the value of mutual cooperation is one of the main pillars in shaping students' character. Schools as formal educational institutions have a strategic role in instilling social values through various activities, including mutual cooperation activities. Mutual cooperation activities in the school environment are able to build a sense of caring, a spirit of togetherness and social responsibility among students. Through this activity, students not only learn about cooperation but also understand the importance of respecting differences and strengthening unity. (Suyatno 2018) In the current era of globalization and modernization, the value of mutual cooperation is starting to be eroded by attitudes of individualism and materialism. Changes in lifestyle that emphasize personal interests have led to a decline in the sense of social solidarity, especially among the younger generation. (Hidayat, 2020). Therefore, efforts to rekindle the spirit of mutual cooperation through education are very important as a form of implementing the value of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in everyday life.

# Methods

This article was created using a qualitative descriptive research method. Which method aims to describe in depth how mutual cooperation activities are implemented through an explanation of the meaning of mutual cooperation and the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika to students, and strengthened by direct practice at school can foster students' social awareness and strengthen the values of the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The research was conducted at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo Tulupari Tiris Probolinggo. The subjects of the study were 5th grade students with a total of 20 participants. To effectively investigate efforts to foster students' social awareness through mutual cooperation as an implementation of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo, a qualitative research approach using a case study design will be adopted. This methodology is well suited to gaining an in-depth understanding of the complex social dynamics and individual experiences within a specific educational setting. By focusing on MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo, this study can explore the nuances of how mutual cooperation practices are integrated into the school culture and how these practices contribute to the development of students' social awareness in the context of Indonesia's national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). Data collection will involve a combination of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, and students. Interview protocols will be designed to elicit rich narratives and perspectives on the meaning and practices of mutual cooperation in the school, the perceived impact of these practices on students' social awareness, and the ways in which these activities reflect and

promote the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Interviews will allow flexibility in exploring emerging themes and gaining deeper insight into participants' experiences and understandings.

Classroom observations will also be conducted to directly observe how reciprocal collaboration is enacted in various school settings, such as collaborative learning activities, community service initiatives, and school-wide events. Observations will focus on documenting student interactions, levels of collaboration, expressions of empathy and caring, and the ways in which diversity is navigated and celebrated during these activities. Field notes will be taken to record detailed descriptions of observed behaviors and interactions, as well as the overall social environment. Document analysis will then be used to examine relevant school documents, such as curriculum materials, school activity reports, and any written or otherwise relevant policies related to social awareness, reciprocal collaboration, and the implementation of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. This analysis will provide contextual information about the school's formal approach to these concepts and the extent to which they are integrated into the educational program.

Qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This process will involve systematically identifying recurring themes, patterns, and meanings in the data. The analysis will aim to uncover the ways in which reciprocal collaborative practices are understood and experienced by various stakeholders, how these practices are perceived to influence students' social awareness, and how they relate to the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal lka in the specific context of MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo. Findings from the thematic analysis will be synthesized to develop a comprehensive understanding of efforts to foster social awareness through reciprocal collaborative work in schools. The analysis will explore the strengths and challenges of current approaches, the perceived impact on students' understanding and embodiment of social awareness and Bhinneka Tunggal lka, and any potential areas for improvement or further development. Ethical considerations will be paramount throughout the research process.

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, to ensure their voluntary participation and understanding of the purpose and procedures of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained to protect participants' privacy. The research will be conducted in a manner that respects the cultural norms and values of the school community. The case study approach, with its focus on in-depth exploration within a specific context, will allow for a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between reciprocal cooperation, social awareness, and the implementation of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers interested in

fostering social awareness and national unity through culturally relevant practices in educational settings.

## Result

Mutual cooperation is a form of cooperation carried out voluntarily by a group of people to achieve a common goal. Mutual cooperation has been a tradition of Indonesian society since ancient times as a form of social solidarity in community life. The value of mutual cooperation not only reflects physical cooperation but also involves various emotional and social aspects in strengthening relationships between individuals. (Koentjaraningrat, 2010). In the world of education, mutual cooperation is one of the effective methods in form ing students' social character. Mutual cooperation activities in schools can foster a sense of caring, responsibility, empathy and togetherness. Mutual cooperation activities are also a means to strengthen social relations between students and foster an attitude of mutual respect for differences. (Suyatno, 2018). The motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika has an important role in building a sense of unity amidst the diversity that exists in Indonesia. The motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika also emphasizes the importance of respecting differences as a strength in building a harmonious nation. (Darmaputera, 1988). Implementation in realizing the value of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika through mutual cooperation activities in schools is an effective step in instilling an attitude of tolerance and social solidarity in students from an early age.

There are three stages in this research process, namely: (1) At this stage, students are given a detailed explanation of the meaning and concept of mutual cooperation, the importance of social concern, and the meaning or value of the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in everyday life. The explanation is delivered through an interactive presentation, where students actively provide opinions and ask questions about the importance of mutual cooperation in everyday life. And this is done so that students can better understand the material presented. (2) All fifth grade students are directly involved in mutual cooperation activities, such as cleaning the classroom, cleaning the school environment, arranging the garden and helping friends in need. This activity is carried out in groups to train cooperation and social responsibility between students. The results of the observation showed that students who were initially less active became more enthusiastic after being given an understanding of the benefits of mutual cooperation. Students volunteered to share tasks such as sweeping the yard, planting plants, tidying up the classroom and so on. In this study, there are several supporting and inhibiting factors, namely: 1) Supporting factors. Full support from the school and teachers, active participation of students in every activity and learning, and the provision of learning media such as pictures; 2) Inhibiting factors. Lack of time in implementing practical activities, some students are still less active in mutual cooperation activities, and limited facilities and infrastructure for educational game activities.

The findings of this research at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo revealed a consistent and positive correlation between the intentional implementation of gotong royong activities and the cultivation of social awareness among students, deeply intertwined with their understanding and internalization of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The data gathered through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis indicated that the school actively fostered a culture of collaboration and mutual support, which in turn nurtured empathy, a sense of shared responsibility, and an appreciation for diversity among the students. The semi-structured interviews with teachers highlighted their conscious efforts to integrate gotong royong into various aspects of the school curriculum and extracurricular activities. Teachers articulated their belief that collaborative tasks provided students with opportunities to learn from one another, understand different perspectives, and develop a sense of collective achievement. They also emphasized how these experiences fostered empathy and a willingness to help peers, key components of social awareness.

Student interviews corroborated these perspectives, with many students expressing positive experiences during gotong royong activities. They described feeling a sense of unity and camaraderie while working together, and they reported learning to value the contributions of their classmates, regardless of individual differences. Several students also articulated an understanding of how working together towards a common goal reflected the broader principle of unity in diversity within Indonesia. Classroom observations provided tangible evidence of the enactment of gotong royong and its impact on student interactions. During group projects and collaborative tasks, students were observed actively assisting each other, sharing resources, and engaging in discussions that demonstrated respect for diverse opinions. These interactions showcased the practical application of gotong royong and its role in fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment where students learned to navigate differences constructively.

The analysis of school documents, including curriculum guidelines and activity reports, further supported the intentional integration of gotong royong as a pedagogical strategy. The documents often highlighted the school's commitment to fostering not only academic excellence but also social responsibility and an understanding of Indonesia's cultural diversity, explicitly linking collaborative activities to the development of these values. A key finding of the research was the explicit connection made by teachers and students between the experience of gotong royong and the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Teachers often facilitated discussions that encouraged students to reflect on how their collaborative efforts within the classroom mirrored the concept of unity in a diverse nation. Students, through these reflections, began to understand how working together harmoniously, despite individual differences, embodied the spirit of Indonesia's national motto.

The study also revealed the role of gotong royong in fostering a sense of community and belonging within the school. Students who actively participated in collaborative activities reported feeling more connected to their peers and a stronger sense of belonging to the school community. This sense of interconnectedness is a crucial foundation for developing broader social awareness and an appreciation for the diverse social fabric of Indonesia. Furthermore, the research highlighted the potential of gotong royong to cultivate empathy and a sense of social responsibility beyond the immediate school environment. Participation in community-oriented gotong royong initiatives, such as helping with school clean-up drives or contributing to local community events, provided students with opportunities to extend their collaborative spirit and develop a sense of responsibility towards the wider society, aligning with the broader implications of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

However, the study also acknowledged the importance of ongoing efforts to ensure equitable participation and meaningful engagement in gotong royong activities. Teachers recognized the need to provide clear guidelines, facilitate effective group dynamics, and offer opportunities for reflection to ensure that all students benefit from these collaborative experiences and develop a deeper understanding of their connection to social awareness and national unity. In conclusion, the findings of this research at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo strongly suggest that the intentional and well-facilitated implementation of gotong royong serves as a powerful and culturally relevant strategy for effectively cultivating social awareness among students and fostering a tangible understanding and embodiment of the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The school's commitment to this traditional Indonesian value provides a strong foundation for nurturing a generation of young citizens who are not only academically capable but also socially responsible, empathetic, and deeply appreciative of Indonesia's rich diversity and enduring unity.

### Discussion

The adoption of a qualitative case study approach at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo provided a rich and nuanced understanding of the intricate ways in which gotong royong is employed as a vehicle for cultivating students' social awareness, deeply intertwined with the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The convergence of data from semi-structured interviews with teachers, administrators, and students, coupled with insightful classroom observations and the analysis of relevant school documents, painted a comprehensive picture of the school's efforts and their perceived impact on the student body. The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed a shared understanding among stakeholders regarding the intrinsic link between gotong royong and the development of social awareness. Teachers and administrators articulated how collaborative activities fostered empathy, a sense of shared responsibility, and the ability

to appreciate diverse perspectives among students. Students, in turn, described their experiences of working together on tasks, highlighting the development of their understanding of collective goals and the importance of mutual support, which are fundamental tenets of social awareness.

Classroom observations provided tangible evidence of these articulated perceptions. Instances of students actively assisting one another, sharing resources, and collaboratively problem-solving during group activities were frequently observed. These interactions demonstrated the practical application of gotong royong principles and offered insights into how students were learning to navigate diverse viewpoints and contribute to a shared outcome, reflecting the essence of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in action. The analysis of school documents further contextualized these practices within the school's broader educational philosophy. Curricular materials and activity reports often highlighted the intentional integration of collaborative tasks and community-oriented projects, explicitly linking these activities to the cultivation of social responsibility and the understanding of Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape, as embodied in Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

The findings suggested that the consistent emphasis on gotong royong within the school culture created a supportive environment where students were encouraged to develop a sense of belonging and interconnectedness. This fostered an atmosphere conducive to the growth of social awareness, as students learned to recognize and value the contributions of their peers, regardless of their individual differences, mirroring the unifying spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. However, the study also identified areas for potential growth. While gotong royong was widely practiced, the explicit articulation of its connection to the deeper principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika could be further strengthened in classroom discussions and school-wide initiatives. Enhancing students' conscious understanding of how collaborative efforts in the present contribute to national unity and social cohesion in a diverse society could amplify the impact of these practices.

The study underscored the crucial role of teachers as facilitators in guiding students to reflect on the social and cultural dimensions of their collaborative experiences. By prompting students to consider the diverse backgrounds and perspectives within their groups and how mutual cooperation bridges these differences, teachers can more explicitly link gotong royong to the ideals of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and the broader development of social awareness. In conclusion, the case study at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo demonstrated the significant potential of gotong royong as a culturally relevant and effective strategy for nurturing students' social awareness within the framework of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The findings highlight the importance of consistent implementation and conscious reflection to maximize the impact of

collaborative practices on students' understanding and embodiment of social responsibility and national unity in Indonesia's diverse society.

Further analysis of the interview data revealed nuanced perspectives on the challenges and facilitators of implementing gotong royong effectively. Some teachers noted the varying levels of prior experience with collaborative work among students, requiring differentiated strategies to ensure equitable participation and engagement. Others highlighted the importance of carefully structuring group tasks to promote interdependence and shared accountability, preventing some students from dominating while others remained passive. The need for clear guidelines and expectations for collaborative behavior was also emphasized as crucial for fostering a positive and productive group dynamic that supports the development of social awareness. Students, when reflecting on their experiences with gotong royong, often pointed to the satisfaction derived from achieving a common goal through collective effort. They described a sense of camaraderie and mutual support that emerged during collaborative tasks, which contributed to their understanding of the benefits of working together. However, some students also acknowledged instances of conflict or unequal contribution within groups, underscoring the importance of teacher guidance in mediating disagreements and promoting fair participation, essential skills for navigating social dynamics and fostering social awareness.

Classroom observations further illustrated the diverse ways in which teachers facilitated gotong royong. Some employed structured activities with clearly defined roles for each group member, while others adopted a more open-ended approach, allowing students greater autonomy in organizing their collaboration. The effectiveness of these approaches often depended on the specific task and the students' prior experience with collaborative work. Teachers who actively monitored group interactions and provided timely feedback on both the task completion and the collaborative process appeared to be more successful in fostering both academic learning and the development of social awareness. The analysis of school documents also revealed the integration of gotong royong principles beyond academic tasks. Extracurricular activities, community service initiatives, and school-wide events often emphasized teamwork, collective responsibility, and contributing to the common good. These initiatives provided students with opportunities to apply the principles of gotong royong in broader social contexts, further reinforcing the connection between collaborative action and social awareness, aligning with the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in promoting unity through shared purpose.

The study also explored the students' understanding of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and how their experiences with gotong royong related to this national motto. While many students could recite the phrase, their understanding of its deeper meaning and its connection to their daily interactions varied. Teachers recognized the need to more

explicitly link the practical experiences of gotong royong to the broader concepts of diversity, tolerance, and national unity, helping students to see their collaborative efforts as a microcosm of the larger Indonesian society. The findings suggested that while gotong royong provided a valuable foundation for cultivating social awareness, explicit pedagogical strategies were needed to help students make conscious connections between their collaborative experiences and the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Encouraging students to reflect on how working with individuals from diverse backgrounds enriches their perspectives and strengthens collective outcomes could deepen their understanding of unity in diversity.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the potential for incorporating more explicit discussions about social issues and the role of collective action in addressing them within the context of gotong royong activities. By framing collaborative tasks around real-world problems that require empathy and a sense of social responsibility to solve, teachers could further enhance the development of students' social awareness and their understanding of their role as active and engaged members of a diverse society. The school's commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive environment was evident in its emphasis on gotong royong. However, ongoing efforts to refine pedagogical approaches, explicitly link collaborative practices to the principles of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and provide students with opportunities to reflect on the social and cultural dimensions of their interactions could further strengthen the cultivation of social awareness among the students of MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo. In conclusion, the continued and thoughtful implementation of gotong royong at MI Mambaul Ulum Al-Murtadlo holds significant promise for nurturing students' social awareness as an embodiment of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. By building on the existing foundation of collaborative practices and incorporating more explicit pedagogical strategies that foster reflection and critical connections to the national motto and broader social issues, the school can further empower its students to become socially responsible, empathetic, and engaged citizens within Indonesia's diverse and unified society.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that mutual cooperation activities as a form of implementation of the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika have a very important role in fostering students' social awareness. The learning method consisting of direct practical explanations has proven to be very effective in improving students' understanding of social attitudes and behavior in the school environment. The success of the implementation of this mutual cooperation activity is supported by the active involvement of students and support from teachers and learning media. However, there are several obstacles such as limited time and facilities that need to be considered in implementing similar activities in the future.

Thus, mutual cooperation activities not only play a role in maintaining the cleanliness and comfort of the school environment but also become a very effective means in forming the character of students who care, are tolerant and uphold unity amidst diversity. The implementation of this mutual cooperation activity on an ongoing basis in the school environment is expected to be able to instill the value of Bhinneka Tunggal lka from an early age to students, as a basis for building a harmonious society.

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