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# Non-Malays still shying away from teaching profession

By **SARBAN SINGH**

SEREMBAN: Non-Malays are still shying away from the teaching profession despite the additional perks given by the Government over the years.

Insisting that there is no quota system in the selection of teacher trainees, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Razali Ismail said although non-Malays are encouraged to join the service, many are still reluctant to do so.

"We are doing our best to attract the non-Malays but they are not applying. We do not select only Malays for teaching jobs," he said.

Razali said there is a shortage of Chinese and Tamil teachers not only in vernacular schools but in national schools as well.

"In fact, I had also spoken with my colleague Dr Wee Ka Siong (Deputy Education Minister) on the possibility of holding campaigns to attract the Chinese to become teachers.

"We need to get the numbers to correct the racial imbalance," he said Wednesday, adding that the ministry had also conducted "walk-in" interviews to attract non-Malays to teach in vernacular schools.

Razali was asked to comment if efforts are being made to get more non-Malays to join the teaching service to reflect the country's multi-racial composition.

Asked if the non-Malays are staying away from the profession as they are not considered for promotions, Razali denied it.

"We don't leave out the non-Malays when it comes to promotions. In fact, the ministry has even introduced the time-based promotions so that those eligible will be automatically promoted," he said.

Razali said the non-Malays are more interested in joining the private sector rather than the public sector as they feel the perks are better.

"From the feedback I get, they are not keen on making teaching their career. They prefer to become entrepreneurs as there are better prospects," he said.

Razali was speaking to reporters Wednesday after opening the 7th National Teachers' Activity Centre (PKG)

convention at a hotel here.

He said there was an urgent need to set up more PKGs in the country to ensure more teachers can be trained. At present, there are only 368 such centres catering to the needs of teachers of some 10,000 schools.

"On average, one PKG provides training for teachers from 27 schools. We need to have more PKGs if we want our teachers to be better trained," he said.

Razali said in Sabah and Sarawak, one PKG serves up to 80 schools and this has to be corrected.

"Also, the PKGs need to be restructured as each one only has three staff members. The positions at these centres also need to be upgraded as the present ones are only for DGA32 qualified personnel who are non-graduates," he said.

Earlier, Razali made a surprise visit to Sekolah Menengah King George V, a premier school here.

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