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Centre (Special report)

REHABILITATION OF DADAH ADDICTS -- A DISAPPOINTING CAUSE

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 22 (Bernama) -- A resident in the north once questioned the rationale for building a multi-million ringgit centre for rehabilitating dadah addicts in his area.

He questioned why dadah addicts should be helped when there were other poorer people that needed assistance.

The resident's view was obtained when the Home Ministry (KDN) carried out a survey on the construction of the one-stop rehabilitation centre for dadah addicts there.

Deputy Head of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Division of KDN, Mohid Mohamad said society generally questioned why the addicts should be given treatment when they themselves did not want to be rehabilitated.

A study also showed that only 35 percent of the inmates at the rehabilitation centre there were successfully rehabilitated at the end of their treatment session while 40 percent went back to their old habit.

The two-year stay at the One-Stop Centre is actually sufficient to get rid of the addiction. But the question is how long is the former inmate able to stay away from the dadah.

The latest case of rioting by 128 inmates at the Pusat Serenti Karangan in Kulim where five blocks of buildings at the centre had been burnt before the addicts made their escape recently had made the authorities realise that the millions of ringgit spent so far had not really been that effective.

Following the incident, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob admitted that he was ashamed of becoming chairman of PEMADAM while Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said efforts to rehabilitate dadah addicts in the past had failed.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also expressed regret when there were allegations that the inmates escaped because conditions at such rehabilitation centres were uncomfortable.

According to him, the construction of the one-stop rehabilitation centres was not meant to provide comfortable accomodation.

A dadah treatment official said the treatment of dadah addiction needed a strong spirit through tough training.

"Every year the government spent millions of ringgit in rehabilitating dadah addicts whereas 70 percent of them refused to be rehabilitated voluntarily," he said.

The problem that is often highlighted with regard to rehabilitation centres is the overcrowding that has put the authorities especially the police in a lurch.

An official from the Home Ministry described the struggle to rehabilitate dadah addicts as a struggle that was deceiving like sleeping with a short blanket -- pull it to the top to cover the head that is aching from addiction, the feet will complain of being neglected although they worked hard to earn money needed for food. -- BERNAMA

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