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Beating punk culture through the parents

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The spread of punk culture among Malaysian youths has prompted the Religious Development Department (formerly Religious Affairs Department) to introduce seminars on parenting skills in schools, suraus and mosques in the country soon.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said officers from the department as well as those from Pusat Islam would be involved in organising the seminars where the target group would be the Parent-Teacher Associations of all schools.

"Our emphasis will be the PTA since the members are parents with school-going children.

"We will co-operate with schools to hold the programme in an effort to rid this country of all negative elements affecting the youths, especially punk culture."

He said it was vital to strengthen the family institution, first and foremost, by inculcating good values which had to be taught by parents to their children.

"Parents are the ones to be blamed first if their children are involved in negative activities.

"They should shape their children to become good citizens."

Abdul Hamid was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's displeasure over the spread of punk culture which was reported in the newspapers yesterday.

Abdul Hamid was speaking to reporters after opening an exhibition at Masjid Negara, in conjunction with Ramadan, which boasted booths on healthy food consumption, inflation and road safety.

He added that a separate programme on parenting skills for those who planned to start a family would also be held to ensure a healthy future generation.

To rehabilitate youths involved in negative activities, including punk culture, he said the department would include them in Rakan Muda programmes.

On the change of the department's name, which took effect on Jan 1, Abdul Hamid said this involved a major revamp in the department's overall structure.

The structuring, to be done in stages, included a higher number of employees, and upgrading of existing posts.

"With this change, we have also transferred the Radio Television Malaysia's `Dakwah Unit' to our department.

"Hopefully, (with the revamp) we will succeed in combating all the social problems affecting the youths as quickly as possible," he said.

Among the agencies taking part in the exhibition are the Health Ministry, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, Road Transport Department, Royal Malaysian Police and the department's Tithe Collection Centre.

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