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Stress practical aspects of religions, urges NUTP

BUTTERWORTH, Tues. - The National Union of the Teaching Profession wants a school curriculum revamp to make it more practical, saying this was necessary because religious and moral education have been a failure.

Its secretary-general, N. Sivasubramaniam, said although the country had emphasised much on religious and moral education in schools, social problems involving youths had been on the rise.

"We are concerned with the declining standards in the morals of our youths, their unbecoming behaviour and the many other ills besetting them. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself has expressed his concern over this."

"Despite many hours of religious and moral education, the ills are increasing. This means our curriculum has not been successful."

"Pupils learn that they must pray, that they must respect their elders, they learn the importance of discipline, they learn responsibility and good values."

"However, when they leave school, or even in school, these are not translated into action."

"What is lacking is a practical approach. They learn the theory and soon forget about it. The curriculum must be designed to emphasise the practical aspect of values and religion."

Sivasubramaniam said the fact that the country lacked some 5,000 Islamic religious teachers compounded the problem.

He urged for an early solution to this problem.

Sivasubramaniam, who is also the Cuepacs secretary-general, called for moral education to be scrapped and be replaced by religious education.

"The pupils of the various faiths should be taught the practical aspects of their own religions. In this teaching, the common core values of all religions can also be emphasised."

"There is much in common in the various faiths and these should be highlighted."

"Such an approach will also help foster understanding among followers of the various religions, apart from creating a better and morally upright society."

He called for better training of teachers in this area.

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