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Why our scholars appear uninterested in their studies

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I REFER to "Academic success is not handed out on a platter" (NST, July 3). I recall seeing a picture published in the Press years ago showing university students staging a demonstration in London.

There was this bobby with his hands behind his back who faced the students and said: "You don't need a university education to do this."

Today our Prime Minister is saying the same thing to our university students, only adding "even idiots can do this".

It is not that our students have no interest to study. It is, I believe, the rather easy availability of scholarships and study loans offered to them and also a trend to join the bandwagon (to stage street demonstrations).

In the early eighties, my son was pursuing his degree in the US. He was on company sponsorship.

While he was there, he met many Malaysian scholarship students and this was what he observed.

For the first year they showed a lot of enthusiasm and were serious in their studies. However, this slowly melted away when they got to know their way around. The seniors showed them the "ropes".

From then on, skipping lectures and assignments, for example, became very glaring. Many would use their scholarship funds to travel around the country and began to ignore their studies.

Why they had adopted this attitude was not hard to understand. They reasoned that it was unnecessary to put in that extra effort simply because at the end of the day, they were assured of passing and graduating.

Furthermore, jobs especially in the government sector, were waiting for them at home. So what the writer had highlighted in his letter that his students were very lackadaisical towards their education was not something out of the ordinary.

The Prime Minister had said, "The Malays are not stupid or unintelligent, they are just not interested about study."

I can show proof and agree to this.

Malay doctors like Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, Datuk Seri Dr Megat Khas Megat Omar, Dr S. Cassim are still remembered by people of my age.

And what about our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali. Even my six-year-old grandson can recognise them whenever they appear on TV.

Then there was the late Tun Mohamad Suffian, Datuk Harun Hashim and Tun Salleh Abas who are experts in law.

These are but only a few Malays who "are interested to study" and hungered for academic excellence. Through hard work they had achieved what they wanted to be. So why cannot the Malay students of today do likewise with all the assistance provided them?

If they are not interested in studying why not give their places to others more deserving?