

## **Orang Asli families feel brunt of BR1M rejection**

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Several members of the Orang Asli community in Pahang are puzzled that they have not qualified for BR1M assistance, even though they appear to fulfill the criteria set by the government.

A case in point is Ismail Leh, 43, from Kampung Batu Gong, Chini.

He and his wife, Fatimah Basem, 38, had applied for the RM500 aid on behalf of the family but have received a letter stating that they are not eligible for it.

"I am just a rubber tapper and sometimes my wife helps me. We only make about RM600 a month," said Ismail who is from the Jakun tribe.

His five children - aged 17, 13, 12, 7 and 5 - are in school or in kindergarten.

"I don't know... maybe because to fill the form you need to be someone who can read and write well," he said when contacted.

However, Ismail said his father's application for aid had been approved.

According the BR1M guidelines on the Finance Ministry website, children of a household head would qualify if they have children of their own who are not yet working, and earn under RM3,000 a month.

'Ten families affected'

Ismail said his cousin's family who lives in the same village - which falls under the Pekan parliamentary constituency held by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak - has also failed in its application.

"My cousin has two children, both are still toddlers. Her husband works as a contractor," he said.

"In total, I think there are about 10 families in my village who have failed to get the aid."

There have been reports of households failing to obtain assistance. Although some make just over RM3,000 a month, they can barely support a large family on this.

Yet, a philanthropist with a datukship in Triang, also in Pahang, was found to have qualified for the aid, although he subsequently donated the money.

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