

Single religion studies will hurt race relations, says MCA

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Forcing students to study about just a single religion is detrimental to race relations, said MCA Wanita vice-chairperson Heng Seai Kie.

She was referring to the government's move to make Islamic and Asian Civilisation Studies (Titas) compulsory for private university students.

NONE"By making it compulsory for students to study only on one religion, (it) will aggravate racial and religious relations and create prejudice and narrow-thinking people.

"This is not conducive to Malaysia's diverse background of many races, religions and cultures.

"Thus, the government should focus on creating a harmonious, stable and united country instead," Heng said in a press statement today.

As such, she said it would be more appropriate for the government to amend the subject to include religious civilisations from around the world, instead of merely restricting it to the Islamic civilisation.

The change, she said, would promote social harmony in a multiracial country and help cultivate a generation that has wider perspectives on international affairs.

"If our students are only limited to studying Islamic civilisation, this will prevent students of other races from learning more about the other major religions and civilisations of the world.

"This is not good in the long run as not only will it harm our racial harmony, but it will also reduce Malaysia's competitiveness," she said.

'Make subject elective'

Meanwhile, DAP national organising secretary Anthony Loke said the idea of introducing an understanding of various civilisations to students was worth encouraging, but said it should not be made compulsory.

NONE"The approach to make learning of the subject compulsory gives a negative

picture among students that they are forced to take a subject against their free will.

"Such an approach will not result in the intended cultivation of understanding and positive values," he said.

Loke, who is also Seremban MP, also hit out at Malay rights pressure group Perkasa for branding DAP "extreme" for opposing the subject to be made compulsory.

"DAP is aware there are racist elements that try to twist Kampar MP Ko Chung Sen's statement and slander DAP as being against Islam.

"We stress that DAP has never been against Islam or any other religion and defend the position of Islam as the federation's official religion as enshrined in Article 4 of the federal constitution," he said.

He urged the government to reconsider the decision and said the party was in favour of the subject being made an elective in private universities.

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