

**Hak Bumiputera perlu kekal, kata presiden PAS**  
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Hardcore poverty in Kuala Lumpur is not impossible, says the director of University Malaya's Centre for Poverty and Development Studies, Sulochana Nair.

"It is possible for extreme poverty to occur even in big cities like Kuala Lumpur. Anyone can be earning this sort of income," she said in response to government statistics that the capital is considered an area of hardcore poverty.

Yesterday, Segambut MP Lim Lip Eng revealed answers to his questions raised in Parliament in April, which were mailed to him last week, in which the government said that as of June, there are 92 areas with hardcore poor people.

According to data from the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, the national average household earning of those under the hardcore poor category was RM440 or less a month.

Those considered poor earned RM750 or less and those in the low-income category earning RM2,000 a month or less.

"Hardcore poor are those who can barely afford to buy food and they cannot survive without assistance. We found that most of these families are in debt because their expenditure is several times higher than their income," Shahrizat explained.

Gov't must conduct more holistic studies

Sulochana said the government should conduct more holistic studies to better eradicate the problem of poverty in society.

"Is the government's policy reaching the target group? Perhaps there is a leakage along the way? These are issues that should be addressed," she said.

She said poverty issues should be made mainstream so that the community and corporations would develop a higher sense of responsibility toward the eradication of poverty.

"If all Malaysians believe that we cannot live in such conditions (of poverty), then it is our responsibility collectively to address the problem. It is not just up to the government alone," she added.

However, the government could take initiatives to educate the public.

"They (government) should conduct awareness programmes and let the public know that poverty is also a violation of human rights. People living in poverty should be told of their entitlement as well," Sulochana added.

'NEP worsened plight of the poor'

Klang MP Charles Santiago (right) said the lack of considerable efforts on the Klscah launch civil society award 191207 charles santiagopart of the government, among others, was a key reason why the problem of hardcore poverty was yet to be tackled.

"Even World Bank statistics have shown that the efforts (in poverty eradication) are failing. It's just that the BN government is finally admitting to it now.

"The government reduces the perimeters every year. From RM900, it went to RM720 and now RM500.

Around 200,000 people, a third of the labour force in Malaysia, is in poverty.

"The National Economic Model efforts (such as the Federal Land Development Authority rural schemes) have failed partly because the government depends on the free market, which doesn't work anymore," Santiago added.

The Selangor DAP vice chairman opined that the NEM actually worsened the plight of the hardcore poor citizens.

"Human Resources Minister S Subramaniam himself has admitted that it (NEP) actually lowered the workers' minimum wage. So the government must increase the minimum wage (to eradicate poverty)."

Santiago also said the finance and trade ministries, the Malaysian Employers Federation and the local business community would object to wage increment measures.

"This is because they are attempting to promote Malaysia as a low-wage destination for investors."

Parti Socialis Malaysia secretary-general S Arutchelvan (left) said it was not jerit ride for change campaign shah alam event 171208 arutchelvansurprising that Kuala Lumpur was rated as a city with hardcore poor.

"This is hardly surprising as Malaysia has the second highest income disparity in Asia. Most cities in the world have a lot of poor people.

"The government wants to portray a different image to the world, but the incidence of poverty lurks within the concrete jungle," he said.

Arutchelvan also said the poverty line was "ridiculous" as it was set too low.

"The base earning level for the hardcore poor category in Kuala Lumpur should be doubled to at least RM1,500," he added.

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