

**Government Ensures Orang Asli Not Marginalised**  
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PEKAN, June 12 (Bernama) -- The government will ensure no ethnic group or race in the country including the Orang Asli (OA) is excluded from deriving development benefits and major changes implemented by the nation currently.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the government always implemented various policies to boost the standard of living of the group including in the aspect of education.

"It is the right of the Orang Asli to be taken to the fore front of national development, what more when solid support to the government is mentioned, none can match that shown by the Orang Asli.

"If the educational development effort of the Orang Asli community is used as a yardstick, I am proud to see the myriad of successes they enjoy. When I arrived here (Kampung Tasik Mentiga) I was introduced to an Orang Asli student, namely, Hayati Akid who has succeeded in entering a fully residential school.

"Then, I was introduced to Dr Shamsulia of this village who is now a doctor," he said when speaking at a meeting with the leader programme in Kampung Tasik Mentiga, near here, Saturday.

The event was also attended by Chini State Assemblyman Datuk Abu Bakar Harun, who is also Felda Affairs Committee chairman.

The prime minister hoped the successes would become an icon and example not only to the Orang Asli in Pahang but also nationwide.

Najib said the Orang Asli community could now take pride because many from among them were holding high posts not only in the public but also in the private sector.

Names like Nisra Nisran Asra Ramlan, who is currently the Orang Asli Development Department deputy director-general, and Mahat a/l Mat Dong, who is an engineer in the Malaysian Drainage and Irrigation Department, are also the icons of the Orang Asli.

"Also, Dr Amri Dahdi, the first medical doctor from among the Orang Asli community, who is working at the Tuanku Jaafar Hospital, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan," he said.

He said the number of Orang Asli students who had successfully furthered their studies at public universities had risen to 682 in 2013 from 98 in 2010.

He said the number encompassed Orang Asli students who continued their studies at the matriculation, diploma, bachelor and masters levels. According to Najib, the number of

Orang Asli students who furthered their studies to the first degree level also increased to 181 in 2013 and 144 (2012) from 64 in 2006.

More encouragingly, he said more than 40 Orang Asli students had accepted offers to further their studies abroad since 2010.

"From one student in 2010, it rose to four students (2011), seven students (2012) and 14 each in 2013 and 2014. And of the total, 23 sat for their first degrees, 15 (masters) and two (PhD). All these achievements, Najib said, would hopefully spur the Orang Asli young generations to strive harder to succeed in education.

At the same time, he said the government would build more comfortable houses for the group other than opening new plantations to provide job opportunities for the Orang Asli.

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