

'Early retirement among teachers worrying'

SEREMBAN: A claim by the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) that in recent years, some 10,000 teachers have applied annually for early retirement is worrying as this can affect the quality of the education system, says Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan.

The Umno deputy president said the Education Ministry needed to explain why so many were choosing to go on optional retirement when they could still contribute.

"The NUTP's estimate also far exceeds the ministry's statistics released on Nov 9 last year, which stated that it received only 4,360 applications for optional retirement from teachers beginning January 2021.

"The ministry has to intervene and arrest this trend as the early retirement of teachers, especially those experienced, is a huge loss to the country," he said in a statement yesterday.

According to the **Statistics Department**, there were 233,365 teachers in government and government-aided primary schools in 2015, and 181,975 in government and government-aided secondary schools.

On Monday, NUTP secretary-general Wang Heng Suan said the trend in recent years was worrying as most of those who applied were experienced teachers either in their early or mid-50s.

He said some teachers were probably no longer interested in the profession due to online learning and teaching introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Teachers, he said, were also unhappy as they were being burdened with more non-teaching responsibilities and that poor Internet quality for online teaching made the process tougher.

The ministry, he said, could counter this by hiring assistant teachers to take over some of their duties.

Wang said the ministry had carried out a pilot project in 2019 when it hired some 10,000 assistant teachers on a contractual basis in Kedah, Sabah and Melaka but this was discontinued due to the lack of funds.

Mohamad said the challenges faced by teachers during the pandemic could have taken a toll on their emotional and psychological well-being.

"This does not include the fact that they may be burdened with clerical work that interferes with their actual task," he said.

The Parliamentary Select Committee for Education, he said, should also seek clarification from the ministry on the matter.

This, he said, was important as teachers played an important role in the nation's development and in shaping the personalities and thoughts of students.

“There should be no compromise on their welfare. There is surely something wrong if so many teachers are choosing to go on optional retirement while they are still productive and can contribute effectively,” he added.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2022/04/20/early-retirement-among-teachers-worrying>