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Less than 3% of 4.8 million students involved in DLP

BY MARTIN CARVALHO, HEMANANTHANI SIVANANDAM, RAHIMY RAHIM, and AKIL YUNUS

LESS than 3% of some 4.8 million primary and secondary students nationwide are participating in the Dual Language Programme (DLP).

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said those in the programme were participating voluntarily.

"To date, a total of 1,216 schools, representing 587 secondary and 629 primary schools, are participating in the DLP.

"This represents 139,179 students or 2.9% of the total students in the country," Mahdzir said when replying to a question by G. Manivannan (PKR-Kapar) in Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Under the DLP, participating schools will be given the option to teach Science, Mathematics, Information Technology and Communication, and Design and Technology in English or Bahasa Malaysia.

Mahdzir said that unlike the Teaching Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) programme, which is a mandatory policy, the DLP was voluntary.

"The PPSMI was a policy which schools had to implement but was scrapped in 2012 after it failed to be implemented smoothly.

"That is why it was replaced by the DLP, which is not forced upon schools but voluntarily implemented," he said.

Mahdzir added that the DLP would be implemented if there were sufficient teaching materials and teachers for the subjects, and with approval from the respective school heads and parents-teachers associations.

"A school head can reject request to implement the DLP if the school is not ready," he added.

To prepare more teachers for the DLP, Mahdzir said that some 1,730 teachers were being trained online for the purpose.

He acknowledged that more needed to be done to better train teachers to ensure that the DLP could be implemented effectively in participating schools.