It's time for Kadazandusuns to know the potential value of their language.

♦ From A12

Besides its academic potential, graduates in the language can also hold other related skilled courses such as becoming a publication consultant at the Domestic Ministry (KDN), Malaysia Information Department, Astro, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), National Translation Institute, Textbook Division of the Ministry of Education, local newspapers that publish the Kadazandusun texts, and non-governmenal organizations (NGO) or private institutions which are involved in the production of documentaries for the ethnic culture in Sabah. Moreover, knowledge of the language and of the ethnic culture in Sabah among Kadazandusun language graduates can become their foundation for initiating their own publication studies for publishing audio-visual materials that are to be broadcasted within and without the country.

Notwithstanding the quest for knowing the potential of the Kadazandusun language, some Kadazandusuns still cannot see what the government is trying to reveal to them regarding the potential of their language. This condition (inability to see), according to Bating, could be due to the effects of their parents' upbringing and how they grew up in their own community. For instance, they had not been exposed to the importance and moral obligation of valuing their language; they had not learnt the value of utilizing their knowledge of the language; they had never seen a community of their own whose life standard is the result of being skilled in their language. One scenario that could arise from being lackadaisical in valuing their own language is that a Kadazandusun undergraduate studying at a government's institution might decline an offer to study his own language in the hope that he would be offered to study a more glamorous subject. One excuse was ever given by a Kadazandusun candidate and it was very disappointing and humiliating to his own people: "The Dusun language is not nice bah!" That was how the candidate rejected the offer. Even in the schools there are Kadazandusun students who ridicule or understate the ability of their non-Kadazandusun friends who have chosen the language as an elective subject. At first, such a friend cried in the class for finding the language tough. On the other hand, the Kadazandusun friend admitted to that non-Kadazandusun friend how easy it was for him to learn his own language. "Ahh, this language (Kadazandusun) I speak at home, sure it is easy!" In actual fact, the student speaks BM at home. Certainly the BM language that he speaks is a Sabahan BM which he mixes with the Kadazandusun language.

Then what had happened? The non-Kadazandusun student who cried obtained an excellent examination result, whereas the one who ridiculed him did not get an excellent result. The difference in the results showed that the one who ridiculed did not really study the language in an academic way, and at home also he did not speak the language properly, whereas the student who cried certainly gave full attention to his Kadazandusun language in the class and to answer many exercises in an organized manner, revised his notes, and read the textbook and other reference materials.

It can be inferred from the above scenario that the Kadazandusuns are facing a dilemma which makes them not achieving anything from their language. They had not seen the academic values, knowledge values, and the potential (commercial) values of studying or researching their language. It is time they learnt to know the potential value of their language. But, are they really to know the potential? If they do not act positively on this issue by now, they would never see the opportunity to pluck the fruits of knowing the potential of their language...