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MIC-Samy (Equity)

EFFORTS TO INCREASE INDIAN EQUITY REST ON THE GOV'T, SAYS SAMY VELLU

SHAH ALAM, Aug 21 (Bernama) -- Efforts to enlarge equity ownership of the Indian community from the present 1.5 per cent to 3 per cent by 2010 is dependent on the total commitment and action on the part of government agencies assigned to implement the policy, said MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

"Individuals and self-help initiatives have started to emerge. But, without direct government intervention no lasting change can occur," he said in his policy speech at the two-day 58th MIC annual general assembly which began here today.

The assembly was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and attended by most of the 14 Barisan Nasional (BN) component party leaders. Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad along with 4,500 MIC delegates.

The MIC president, who is also the Works Minister, said that ensuring effective delivery of this policy, of raising Indian equity ownership, was in line with the BN manifesto that promised to ensure that no group was neglected or left behind.

However, he said that the MIC appreciated the government for the introduction of small and micro business loans to the community.

"This scheme is user-friendly that even ordinary people managed to access it. The MIC's Micro Credit Unit has managed to secure 2,050 loans amounting to RM18 million to date.

"More such schemes to create wealth in the market place must be organised by the government. The Indian community also requires business training opportunities to ensure that they develop into successful entrepreneurs," he said.

Touching on Tamil schools nationwide, he said the fact remained that out of the 524 Tamil Schools in the country, about 106 schools require new buildings as these schools were in bad physical condition for effective learning.

Furthermore, Samy Vellu said, the community was also concerned over the categorisation of 376 such schools as partially-aided.

"Sir, we appeal to you that Tamil Schools must have adequate facilities. Allocating needed funds is within the means of our government and over the next few years the government must rebuild at least 15 schools a year.

"In so doing, the Indian community would feel that the government is directly providing equal access to good infrastructure and quality education," he said, directing his appeal to the Prime Minister who is Umno president and BN chairman

On another note, Samy Vellu called on the Indian community to undergo a mental revolution in choosing courses to enter public higher learning institutions.

The community, the MIC president said, was trapped into thinking that the best option for them was to study medicine.

"While we have fared well in this profession, Malaysian Indians must pursue other courses of strategic importance such as accountancy, architecture, dentistry, veterinary sciences, pharmacology and bio-technology.

"Breaking lose from a captive mindset is necessary. The MIC will organize seminars and sessions in providing career guidance for young

people in their choice of courses," he said.

However, he said the disadvantaged sections of the community need assistance through specialized programmes for them to have equal access to institutions of higher learning.

The MIC, the largest Indian-based political party in the country, he said, had received over 300 appeals from students who could not secure places in public institutions.

"Greater access to educational loans will enable them to pursue their studies in private institutions of higher learning. Our nation needs this manpower for the many job opportunities available," he said.

On the construction of MIC's Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology (AIMST) in Kedah, he said the campus had reached 70 per cent completion and was expected to be ready by the end of the year.

-- BERNAMA

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