

PM: No need for women's rights movement in M'sia
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There is "no need for a women's rights movement in Malaysia" as equality has been given from the start, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has claimed.

Speaking at the 50th National Women's Day celebration this morning, he said that Malaysia is even more advanced than developed nations in this aspect.

"In some developed countries, the men were allowed to vote before women but, in Malaysia, women had the right to vote from the start," he said.

"Don't think that everything is better (in the developed nations) as we are way ahead especially in terms of women's rights.

"Women in Malaysia are different to those in other countries. There is no need for a women's rights movement as we have from the start acknowledged equal rights for women."

Najib, who is also Women, Family and Community Development Minister, also said the success of Malaysian women is well known "to the extent that the men are said to be an endangered species".

Addressing 3,000 people at the event in Petaling Jaya, he further said Malaysia women are allowed to join any club, unlike in the US.

"For example, the Augusta National Club recently just admitted two women to its club, when they were previously not allowed," he said.

He said the government works hand in hand with NGOs and the private sector in raising the position of women in policy making, as evident in Budget 2013.

"We provide incentives like grants, double tax reductions and allowances to private early education centres so more can be built, and women can go to work," he said.

"All companies and departments should have creches and I believe the chief secretary can issue a directive on this."

Despite making up 50-60 percent of the tertiary student population, women only make up about 40 percent of the workforce, he noted.

"It's a waste as we spend a lot of money sending women to university but they quit their jobs later. We want them to have families and still work," he said.

Contributions since before Independence

He said that women have been contributing greatly to the nation, since even before Independence.

"It was a woman's veil which was spread out to collect bangles and earrings from other women donated to fund (first PM) Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj's (right) ticket to London in the campaign for Independence.

"Maybe my father's (second PM Abdul Razak Hussein) ticket, too, was funded by women."

Honoured at the event were Rasammah Bhupalan and Sukumari Sehar, who have played a key role in the women's rights and pre-Independence movements.

Also honoured was Fatimah Hamid Don, the first Malay woman to obtain a PhD.

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