

'Pakatan a more promising platform for women'

MalaysiaKini.com

July 5, 2013

By Tharshinaa Chandran

Pakatan Rakyat has gained the upper hand as a more promising platform for women candidates in elections compared to its opponent the BN, a political analyst said.

"Both (coalitions) are getting strong and serious when it comes to women.

"But it seems to me that Pakatan has more courage to field women," Universiti Technology Mara (UiTM) lecturer Sharifah Syahirah Syed Sheikh said at a forum on 'Media and 13th General Election' yesterday.

NONESharifah Syahirah said this when asked by Malaysiakini as to which of the two coalitions were likely to engage more women politicians, during the question-and-answer session of the forum held at the Royale Chulan Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

She said the opposition coalition fielded more women politicians in the 13th general election because its political structures were still new and green and therefore, more open to changes within its domain.

"Pakatan is still very new, and we have just seen its (potential) in this election. When it is new, it enables its women to demand more from the party," she said.

'Women in BN less likely to be demanding'

NONESharifah Syahirah (right) said the women politicians in BN were less likely to be as demanding and this was due to the party's rigid structure moulded over the course of 56 years.

If BN wanted to encourage more women politicians into its nest, it needed to have new structural changes to achieve this feat.

"(Prime Minister) Najib Abdul Razak said in an Al-Jazeera interview, 'I can change the monarchy, but Umno needs a longer time to change because it's well-structured.'

"BN is well-structured. It has more than 50 years of construction, so to change, it needs time," Sharifah Syahirah added.

Of the 222 parliamentary seats contested in GE13, only 24 seats were given to women.

According to Women in Parliaments: World Classification by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Malaysia ranked 110 out of 139 countries in terms of the percentage of women in the Dewan Rakyat or Dewan Negara.

Women attained 10.4 percent of the seats in the Dewan Rakyat and occupied 16.9 percent of the Dewan Negara in GE12. It is widely acknowledged that women are under-represented in politics and in public life in Malaysia.

For example, in the run up to the last general election, then Wanita Umno deputy chief Kamilia Ibrahim made a dramatic decision of resigning from the party, after complaining that the contributions of the women's wing had been sidelined.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/234875>