

## **YOURSAY | Keep politics out of education**

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YOURSAY | 'Their political survival superseded the need to reform the higher education system.'

Maya: This is so true. Everything and anything is related to politics, which is then played up to race and religion. This has been our culture for some time now. But will they, when they are happy with the privileges provided?

The whole issue of brain drain is nothing else, but this. Many are happy if everything is on a level playing field for a better future, especially for their kids. The elites in the political circle control this and could not care two hoots. That is precisely why the emergence of religious political parties and many have also crept into the education system.

The elites will just move away and they are kind of untouchable because of their wealth. That leaves others to face the full brunt of the green wave, which will be the New Malaysia of the future. Only time will tell.

Therefore, changes in the education system will just not happen. The only way forward is to have one system for all. Again, that is not politically viable for obvious reasons, which is equal rights for all Malaysians. One big example is our ex-finance minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz.

He has changed and evolved, from an elitist to a banker, to a senator, and a politician. Despite losing his seat, he still managed to sneak in as international trade and industry minister. The person who won against him, former health minister Dzulkefly Ahmad from Amanah - one of the main parties in the government - is a good politician who speaks for all but was denied any post, simply because he is not an elitist.

Does it not say a lot about the whole system driving the country into further misery? The truth will never be accepted and anything else is just another scam accepted as truth.

Siva1967: It is not rocket science as to why the standards of our government-linked universities have dropped tremendously. This is clearly the direct interference of the political elites who used the university entries as a political tool to hoodwink the public, especially the Malays, that the then ruling party has "improved" their lives by churning out a high number of graduates as a sign of a prosperous generation, preferring quantity to quality.

The sliding of the ratings is the direct result of the said action. But does anyone actually give two hoots that the ratings had slid? No, the process continued year after year despite the signs being written on the wall for all to see. No education ministers from the 1980s until now did anything to arrest the slide.

Their political survival superseded the need to reform the higher education system. The entrance qualification was lowered to benefit a higher number of students from a particular race. The result is garbage in; garbage out. It does not matter whether the education minister comes from a political background or an academic background.

We really need to take a hard look at our education system across the board, not just tertiary level but in its entirety. An honest and merit-based system must be put in place and not just at the student level, even the teaching classes as well as at the academic lecturing and management level. Are there academics of the same calibre as Ungku Omar Aziz, Syed Hussein Alatas, and Khoo Kay Kim still around?

We must accept that without an honest and sincere approach to keeping politics out, only then a real reform can take place. If that is not done, we will still have this same debate 10 years down the line.

MS: While everything argued by the writer is sensible and merits consideration, the fundamental flaw in Malaysian education is the toxicity of “ketuanan-ism” which has seeped into every nook and cranny of the country’s administration. It is only when the country is scrubbed clean of that poison that any change for the better is possible.

Until then, every sensible idea that emerges will not be considered because even doing so as an exercise will spook the majority that was weaned on race and religion as the be-all and end-all of existence.

Salvage Malaysia: The problem is that Prime minister Anwar Ibrahim announced it too fast without considering many other things. Too hasty trying to be popular. Think carefully first.

For example, is Johari Abdul Ghani not fit to be a chairperson of any big government-linked company just because he’s a politician? He owns many businesses and turned many around successfully too. He knows his economics better than many others. Do you think the ex-banker minister Zafrul knows his economics well just because he wasn’t a politician then?

So it should still be based on meritocracy even though he happens to be a politician. For those without relevant experience, then regardless of whether you

are a politician or not, you are not qualified.

PK5001: The education system in Malaysia is in the doldrums. First, we should look at Singapore, which has a world-class system. We should revert to English medium schools and have Bahasa Malaysia as a compulsory subject as before. Upgrade the quality of teachers. Take religion out of schools.

We need a government willing to take action despite protests from the jaguh kampung. This may be an unpopular move, but it is the Malays who will gain by being globally competitive.

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