

**Malaysian women must take on establishment**  
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Asking the Malaysian public to vote out gender-insensitive politicians is akin to water off a duck's back. Malaysians are a lot who scare easily and will never stand up for a conviction which they will hold dear in large numbers. The moment the police and the Federal Reserve Unit trucks are seen within the vicinity, Malaysians easily get scared and are not the type that will go against the authorities for a cause.

Furthermore, being easily bought with money and false promises in the guise of promising 'ceramah', Malaysians are a easy lot to govern. Just show the whip and they will follow. So just how is it possible for Malaysians to vote out gender insensitive politicians? It will never happen.

All throughout the world, women leaders are emerging ever more powerful to show that they have a better form of participatory democracy which they can offer in their leadership, but the question is, has it worked? Malaysian women learning their politics from the men and are just the same as the men when it comes to politics, the Malaysian way.

They expect positions, endorsements, patronage, publicity, popularity, awards and last but not least blind 'ampuism'. So one can ask how much more different are they from the men? If we can find at least a group of Malaysian women who are ready to take on the establishment and lead a revolt for better and fairer governance, Malaysians will definitely follow. Malaysians are good followers but not good leaders or fighters.

Highlighting gender insensitive issues in public rallies which are closely watched by the prying eyes of the Special Branch of Bukit Aman, will not get any aspiring politician far, as most Malaysian women are not at all bothered about gender sensitivity. They just brush it off as a joke and carry on. Therefore issues of gender insensitivity being harped on in an election rally is actually a waste of energy because the actual picture shows Malaysian women being high achievers in almost all fields of endeavour.

Getting the common Makcik, Ah Soh and Amma to think gender sensitive is not going to be easy because the ruling coalition has other ways of making their candidates win.

To further make matters worse, women from the ruling coalition are not that serious about gender issues and are very complacent when their male counterparts chide women in their speeches and quotations. They never comment, it is just swept under the carpet and the poor NGOs and women's groups are ones that keep the pressure on until a publicity stunt is carried out to show fake remorse.

Therefore, come what may, the women in the ruling coalition and the majority of Malaysian women in the rural, semi-urban and urban areas are ardent supporters of the current administration. To change these women will be the greatest task which the women's groups and NGOs will have to shoulder should any real change to the political scene of the nation take place.

Sexism, being gender insensitive and machismo will always be part and parcel of the Malaysian political fabric until and unless all Malaysian women irregardless of race and religion can get together and put an end to the elitist democracy and positive discrimination that we are so well known for. Till that time comes, we can all shout all we want but nothing will

change.

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