

Indians have been played for fools all along
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The current social-political fanfare played out by Indian community leaders in general and MIC in particular gives rise to certain salient points that need to be addressed. The question of how and why the community is constantly exemplified in the discourse of poverty and backwardness needs to be addressed.

MIC's constant regurgitation of worn out resolutions does nothing to uplift the plight of the community it claims to represent, but rather a ploy to prolong the political careers of those who helm the party. The Maika and Telekom scandals among the other unresolved issues hounding the party, serve to illustrate this point.

Emotive issues such as Tamil schools and Hindu temples are often drummed up without fail in each and every election season. As part of campaign efforts, MIC politicians will always be seen in full living color in the estates extolling the virtues of a Tamil education and hence enjoining parents to commit their children to Tamil schools and nowhere else. These very politicians will never do the same.

In reality, Tamil schools have thus far been utilized to keep the community in ignorance and want - the conditions that will necessitate the very existence of MIC - a political tool far overused in what is commonly known as 'mandore' politics.

One thing should be made clear, MIC only represents a subsection of the general 'Indian community'- that mainly of Tamil/Hindu origin - the subsection of South Indians from the lower rungs of society that were brought in by British rule to work the plantations and to toil as laborers. This historical projection of MIC is one that narrates strife and petty fiefdom among the key political figures, and destitution of the estate masses whom the party supposedly represents.

Let us also acknowledge, on the other hand, that an overwhelming majority of Indian professionals (Tamils included) do not associate with MIC for reasons best known to everyone - it is simply pointless - in a sense that they are enlightened enough to realize the futility of investing any resources into what has become a dysfunctional organization.

They are also pragmatic enough to acknowledge the benefits of hard work and determination to better oneself without the 'blessings' of MIC. The examples of success of the Malayalees, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Jaffna Tamils and other Malaysian Indian ethnic groups serve to endorse this point.

Nevertheless, one can quite fairly attest to S Samy Vellu's contributions to the community during his long reign as party president. I believe credit has to be given where it is due. However, is he the answer to all that afflicts the community or has he become the very bane of its existence?

One does not need to recite the deep-rooted class-ism within the Indian community along the narrow lines of caste and creed. Any discerning Malaysian may be puzzled by the incessant need by the community to form even more Indian-based political parties given that they make up the smallest of the three major ethnic groups.

One will also get an earful of an excuse that Indians should not be 'herded' into one single political entity simply because of their minute size. Often, one will hear of the 'need' to organize politically due to the differing interests and demands brought about by the inherent 'diversity' of the community.

Such convenient 'justifications' serve no one but the few who craftily set out to profit from such vicious deceptions. Malaysian Indians should wake up and realize that they have been played for fools all along. The very politicians who time and again claim to represent your cause are the very reason for your plight.

This is not to discount Barisan Nasional's or the federal government's shortcomings in caring for all those

in need, regardless of race, but one should never fail to look for answers from within.

The community needs to first rise up and take some responsibility for their own dilemma. Close the toddy shops, turn off the Tamil films, and end the aimless chatter. Take stock of your own issues and learn from those with fruits on their trees. Stop patronizing MIC and let it die a natural death.

If these needy Indians could do away with the party, perhaps they will have more time to better themselves. An anecdotal Malay proverb serves to teach us, 'It is bad for others to oppress you, but it is worse for you to allow them to keep oppressing you when you can choose otherwise.' Needless to say, God only helps those who help themselves.

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