

Shock for students conducting Ijok survey
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A multiethnic youth group came up against aggressive response while conducting an election-related survey at an estate near Ijok, where a by-election will take place on Saturday.

The youth-based Youth for Change (Y4C), which had conducted similar surveys in Ijok town and Bukit Badong, was attempting to get the views of Tuan Mee Estate workers as to whether they were receiving sufficient information about the by-election.

However, the 40 students led by convener Lee Khai Loon, were threatened with trouble if they did not stop "disturbing" the workers.

"Do you want 100 of us to come here now?" asked a man who saw them.

Cameron Highlands parliamentarian SK Devamany, who was at the estate, told the youths that they were on private property.

"I advise you to get permission from the estate management. There is a by-election going on. It is not a (suitable) time for you to come here," he said, adding that the youths were welcome to do community work after the polls.

Lee explained the visit as an exposure trip for youths to take an interest in the by-election process.

"It does not have a political agenda," he said.

Perverting the by-election process

Devamany appeared dissatisfied and reprimanded Lee for breaching the provisions of the Universities and University Colleges Act, which prohibits student participation in political activities.

After Devamany walked away, several people warned the students to leave, accusing them of perverting the by-election process by conducting irrelevant surveys.

A man snatched the survey forms from the students and questioned their basis for asking those questions.

Lee said he had obtained permission from an estate worker to conduct the survey.

The by-election was called after the seat fell vacant with the death of MIC's K Sivalingam on April 4. Candidates from Barisan Nasional and Parti Keadilan Rakyat are involved in a straight fight.