

Whither the Indians in PKR?
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At the turn of the last century, our forefathers were kidnapped from India by the British and brought to this land as indentured labourers.

They formed the bulk of the tappers in the rubber estates, the coolies in the road and rail building gangs and the menial workers in the local councils.

Later they were joined by other immigrants from the sub-continent to serve in the civil, health, education, legal services and the police force. Together with the other communities, they helped build this nation which they, and we, now call home.

Today, ethnic Indians make-up 7.1 percent of the total population.

A minority, but a sizable one. There is no Indian-dominated parliamentary constituency. However, there are many constituencies where Indians hold the decisive votes. Indians are 6.8 percent of registered voters but they do not have an effective political representation.

MIC have been hijacked by the Samy Vellu mafioso, Gerakan regard Indians as a joke, Indians are second-class members in DAP while IPF, PPP, HRP, Makkal Sakti, etc. are only interested in vying for the Indian quota on the BN gravy train.

Events after the Hindraf sponsored demonstrations in 2007 raised our political consciousness. We were made aware that we did not have political representation.

We discarded MIC, rejected BN and looked to PKR in particular, and PR in general to represent us politically. We registered in droves as PKR members such that 25 percent of PKR members now are ethnic Indians. Cometh GE12, we threw our support to PKR and PR.

Two and a half years after the tsunami, the political fortunes of the Malaysian Indians have not changed for the better. The Indian underclass is still ignored. The grievances of the Indian community are still summarily dismissed.

Even in PR controlled states, Indians fare no better: Hindu temples are demolished in Selangor, Indian squatters are evicted without proper compensation in Penang.

The idea of a multi-racial political party was appealing. We hoped that in such an environment the minority would be given enough space. We prayed that a leader who had suffered injustice would empathise with the injustice we are facing.

Alas, our hopes and dreams are dashed. Events in PKR lately have proven that Indians are still marginalised. No Indian was elected to the MPP in the recent party elections.

Token Indian leaders would be appointed to fill the quota: self-serving leaders whose primary interest is to hang-on to Anwar's coat-tail in the march to Putrajaya.

The future of the Indians in PKR is bleak. A PKR where the incoming deputy president had brazenly called another PKR leader of Indian origin, a pariah.

It is time that we Indians, as a community, re-evaluate our support for PKR. Indian

members of PKR should not be taken for granted. We should suspend our membership en-masse until the leadership of PKR make serious amends to earn our support.

Being a direct member of BN, by-passing MIC, PPP, Gerakan and the likes, is always a viable alternative. The so-called 'Third-Force' could be an option too, but it is an option we should carefully evaluate.

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