

**Samy in MIC like bull in a china shop**  
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I refer to the Malaysiakini report  
Samy says no to cabinet post.

'MIC will work harder in order to win back the Indian community's trust'. So says the former MP from Sungai Siput. He is also quoted as saying, 'I will now focus my energy on MIC and the problems affecting the Indians as I believe that I can still reunite the Indians. I'm sure I can do this as I know everyone. I've done this for 42 years and I know my people.'

This got me thinking about a few questions. Isn't it rather presumptuous of Samy Vellu to think he's the right person for rebuilding Indian Malaysians' trust in the MIC? Besides, what exactly does he mean that he 'will now focus [his] energy on MIC and the problems affecting the Indians'? I thought that was precisely what he was supposedly responsible for during all the years while at the helm of the MIC.

Seems to me, Samy Vellu's apparent awakening to the plight of the Indians has been much too long overdue, and quite frankly, irrelevant. I wonder just why it didn't dawn on him that there was in fact a considerable amount of work to be done to uplift those Indians for whom a generation or more of economic change, development, and opportunities have actually passed them by, and for whom the boom years of Malaysian development seemed to have been nothing more than a mirage.

Was he not, then, focusing on problems affecting then Indians? If not, what exactly was he doing all these years as the unrelenting occupant of the office of president of MIC?

Oh, and just for the record, it also warrants asking why he seems to assume that the Indians are in need of being united. Perhaps he needs to be reminded – again – that we were very united indeed when we sent a resounding message of no-confidence to the current MIC leadership. No. I for one don't see how the Indians are disunited and in need of uniting.

Quite the contrary, we have arguably never been more united than we are now! We are united in our frustration with Samy Vellu's failure as an advocate and voice for our concerns; we are united in feeling neglected and treated as second-class citizens; united in our realisation that we are consistently rendered irrelevant to the priorities of the Barisan National; united in being fed-up about repeated denial of reasonable access to public higher education; united in finding that the path to suicide for our youth is a lot more appealing than the path to hope and fulfillment of their dreams.

### **Need I go on?**

I don't suppose the many 'yes-men' that make up his inner-circle in his MIC can really tell Samy Vellu that Indian Malaysians are united about all the aforementioned, and we, as Malaysians, are going to remain united in affirming our rights under the constitution. And I have a fairly strong feeling that he and his cadres in the MIC have seen that Indians can articulate and affirm themselves in Malaysian society even as the MIC regressed into being practically obsolete.

It appears that the post-mortem that the MIC will undertake will essentially focus more on how to bring Indian voters back into the MIC and Barisan fold, and not much else. Of course, this might take some enticing and 'greasing' of the proverbial wheel, but not much will change. Besides, I for one am convinced that to have Samy Vellu rebuild the MIC would be as constructive as letting a bull run free in a china shop. Have we not seen what his supposed leadership skills have done to the organisation?

This in turn raises a larger question: Does having an MIC really matter now and is it worth resuscitating? Of course, if the answer is in the affirmative, then it warrants considering whether Samy Vellu is indeed the appropriate person to spearhead this process. Well, I think by now you know what I think. And why should those who are committed to rebuilding the MIC want to bother with Samy Vellu?

Would he not just be more of a liability; a sore reminder of the very failure the organisation has become? Beyond being a symbolic albatross, there are other pragmatic downsides to his involvement in any rebuilding effort. There is just too much in-party political baggage, mediocrity, and invested self-interest that will taint any supposed revitalisation process. Having dominated the limelight all these years and, by extension, systematically blocking the infusion of dynamic, articulate, progressive, and new blood into the MIC fold – certainly not the kind that might be independent minded – how can he genuinely and credibly oversee the rebuilding of the MIC?

It might come as a surprise to him that a wide spectrum of Malaysians (Indians and non-Indians alike), have for a long time found the MIC to be a deep disappointment, if not an embarrassment. No sugar coating and public 'kiss-and-make up' such as between S Subramaniam and Samy Vellu will suffice in dismantling the entrenched organisational and structural problems that plague the MIC.

There are, of course, other alternatives and Indian voters have taken a significant step in experimenting with such alternative approaches. There are other real and credible advocates for social justice out there. Opposition parties and civic groups also have long been accessible to Indian Malaysians. In the political arena, Indians have now demonstrated a united (no pun intended!) front in pursuing a more credible multi-racial alternative.

Perhaps the political shift signaled by the twelfth general election will be a true awakening for the Indians (and for that matter, all Malaysians) that conscientious representatives of the people come in all colours, religions and political stripes.

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