

**Public Perception Of BN Getting Better, More Confident Of Future**  
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**By Mohd Hisham Abdul Rafar**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 (Bernama) -- The people's perception of Barisan Nasional (BN) is better now than in 2008 despite the slew of slander and adverse accusations against it by the opposition.

Political analyst Assoc Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said the change in perception followed BN's success in transforming the nation through the Political Transformation Programme, Government Transformation Programme and Economic Transformation Programme which bore results which the people themselves could enjoy the benefits.

The deputy dean of USM's School of Social Sciences felt that the majority of the people now realised the various social and welfare programmes carried out by the BN government that it has made it difficult for the opposition to deny these efforts.

The programmes include the Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia (PR1MA), Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M), Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M), Skim Amanah Rakyat 1Malaysia (SARA 1Malaysia), Transformasi Kedai Runcit (TUKAR) and Menu Rakyat 1Malaysia which have won the hearts of many Malaysians.

"Programmes that can clearly improve the people's living standards, welfare and comfort are what they all want, especially voters in the rural areas. As for urban voters, besides benefiting from these programmes, they also appreciate the national leadership's transparency and willingness to listen to their problems and work at solving the problems," he told Bernama.

Sivamurugan said this had and was still being done by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin during their every visit to places and every walkabout to meet the rakyat (people) all over the country to get feedback, and as a result, negative perception of BN had decreased.

He said although the 13th general election was approaching, the fence-sitters, however, were still cautious in choosing which party to represent them and to continue with the development efforts and not just showering them with empty promises.

"Although quietly they're assessing what have been done by both the BN and opposition governments since 2008, I can say that BN will win back the protest votes cast in the last general election," he said.

Sivamurugan said the continuous efforts by the prime minister and his deputy could draw votes from the fence-sitters, what more if the same commitment were shown BN leaders at all levels.

"Of course everyone needs to work really hard to get the votes," he said, adding that the candidate factor and issues he or she championed were also very important in ensuring victory for a party.

Meanwhile, Felda Youth Council president, Anuar Abd Manaf said that a study on public support it conducted showed that more than 60 per cent of youth in the country now supported BN.

He said the bad perception that had been created by the opposition by portraying the BN government as cruel, oppressive and neglecting the people including youth could no longer influence as the youth themselves and their families could enjoy one benefit after another from the government's efforts.

"They, especially the medium and small-income earners, are grateful for such programmes as the PR1MA (housing), BR1M and KR1M (to cushion the effects of rising cost of living.

"These could not have been enjoyed if the opposition were in power. The opposition have only been making empty promises. The young generation now sees the BN government as sensitive to the needs of the people, hence has implemented many welfare programmes," he said when contacted, here, today.

Anuar said youth rejection of BN in 2008 was because they had been bombarded with negative perception of BN, besides the fielding of election candidates that did not meet their criteria and BN programmes not seen as youth-friendly.

"But the government today has changed and has shown seriousness in getting close to the youth through various means like Facebook, Twitter and 'turun padang' (going to the ground) by the leaders, thus youth support for BN is increasing."

He believes that young voters who make up over 40 per cent of new voters will be inclined to vote for BN for continued development, unity, prosperity and economic growth for them to build a better life and future for themselves.

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