

PKR takes battle for crucial women votes to YouTube
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PETALING JAYA, April 11 — PKR has taken the fight for women's votes to popular video-sharing site YouTube, launching today a campaign video aimed at courting the key demographic ahead of the May 5 ballot.

The video is among a series of other campaign clips touching on rice bowl issues produced by the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) anchor party as part of its Election 2013 social media push.

"Women are one of the main pillars of a country's development. Each progress and development begins at home... as a woman with a career, I hold responsibilities in office. They are all heavy.

"The same goes to all the women in Malaysia. Those who are housewives have various challenging duties... however, cost of living is rising. Income becomes more insufficient. Violence against women has worsened," party president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (picture) told reporters at the launch of the video.

The video shows a single Malay mother living in a flat somewhere in the middle of the capital city taking care of her two children. While she juggles between caring for her growing daughter and a schooling son, she earns a living as a "kuih" seller.

In between the clips are several captions that highlighted the mother's nurturing hands as the ultimate love, a symbolic message that everything, including the nation's growth, begins at home.

At the end of the video, a caption reads "vote for change, vote for a better future".

Dr Wan Azizah said the video was part of the party's effort to educate voters on the need for a government that recognises the important economic and social role of women.

"I believe PR will uphold women's rights together with our effort to build a better Malaysia," she said.

Political analysts and observers have said fence-sitters — especially women working at home and the young — will be crucial in determining the results of the coming polls.

To tap their support, PR in its election manifesto offered cash payments and childcare incentives for women, promising to raise the socio-economic status of the key voter demographic should the pact win federal power.

This includes setting up a Housewives Savings Fund and disbursement of RM600 in annual cash payments yearly to housewives nationwide, while childcare incentives worth RM1,000 will be given annually to those with children aged 12 years and below.

It also promised to set up a local maid agency to help households reduce their dependency on foreign domestic workers.

Barisan Nasional (BN) on the other hand pledged to increase the number of women in

decision-making positions, and offered incentives to those working from homes, especially single mothers.

Communications analysts polled by The Malaysian Insider said young voters will be more influenced by viral online videos ahead of Election 2013 than advertisements because such clips strike a chord with them.

Both BN and PR are now locked in a race to exploit the platform by loading up their respective campaign videos on YouTube in the lead-up to what is touted to be Malaysia's tightest general election in recent history.

YouTube Malaysia is one of the country's most visited sites with some two million unique visitors daily.

There are 13 million Facebook users, which show a 46 per cent penetration of Malaysia's 29 million-strong population, according to social media monitoring website Socialbakers.

Malaysia's Internet penetration was 62 per cent as of January last year. A total of 64 per cent of Facebook users in Malaysia are aged between 18 and 34 years.

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