



TINDAK MALAYSIA

FINANCING WOMEN POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Middle Way Forward for Women's Cause (for GBM)

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Why Women Political Representation is Low?

- Toxic culture found in our Parliament (name calling, language by male politicians)
- Retention of First Past the Post System – limiting contesting space for women and providing hardly any incentives for women issues to be championed
- Elected Women Representatives bear dual responsibilities – one for the electorate and one for the family. Only recently, Parliament made steps to institute child care facility for women representatives





Benefits of Stronger Women Representation in Malaysian Politics

- Shift our political discourse from being centred on race-religious focus to policies of utmost importance: health and education
- Allowing views of women being heard and considered in decision making process in legislative halls
- To reduce corruption in politics
- To facilitate greater diversity and inclusivity in Malaysian Politics





Which Way Forward? Change in Electoral System

- Electoral System either limit (like we have now) or enhance women representation (we should work towards to)
- Countries with or some form of proportional representation have the highest women representation in their Parliaments (exception of Cuba and Grenada)
- Why? Proportional Representation (PR) grants more space of political parties to field women candidates and there is greater chance for women candidates to be elected
- Tindak Malaysia advocates Mixed Member Proportional which retains First Past the Post and introduce Closed List (PR) in tandem
- Should be viewed as Long Term Solution due to its complexities



Which Way Forward? Reserved Seats & Quotas

- Reserved Seats – a number of seats specifically designated for certain demographic (i.e. women)
- Legislated Quotas sets a minimum number of candidates should be women for an election
- Example of Quota (Legislated)- one in three candidates should be a woman
- Both options exist to address gross underrepresentation of women in politics
- Zuraida's 30% seats for women and Top Up Women Only Additional Seats (TWOAS) in Penang are proposed examples in Malaysia

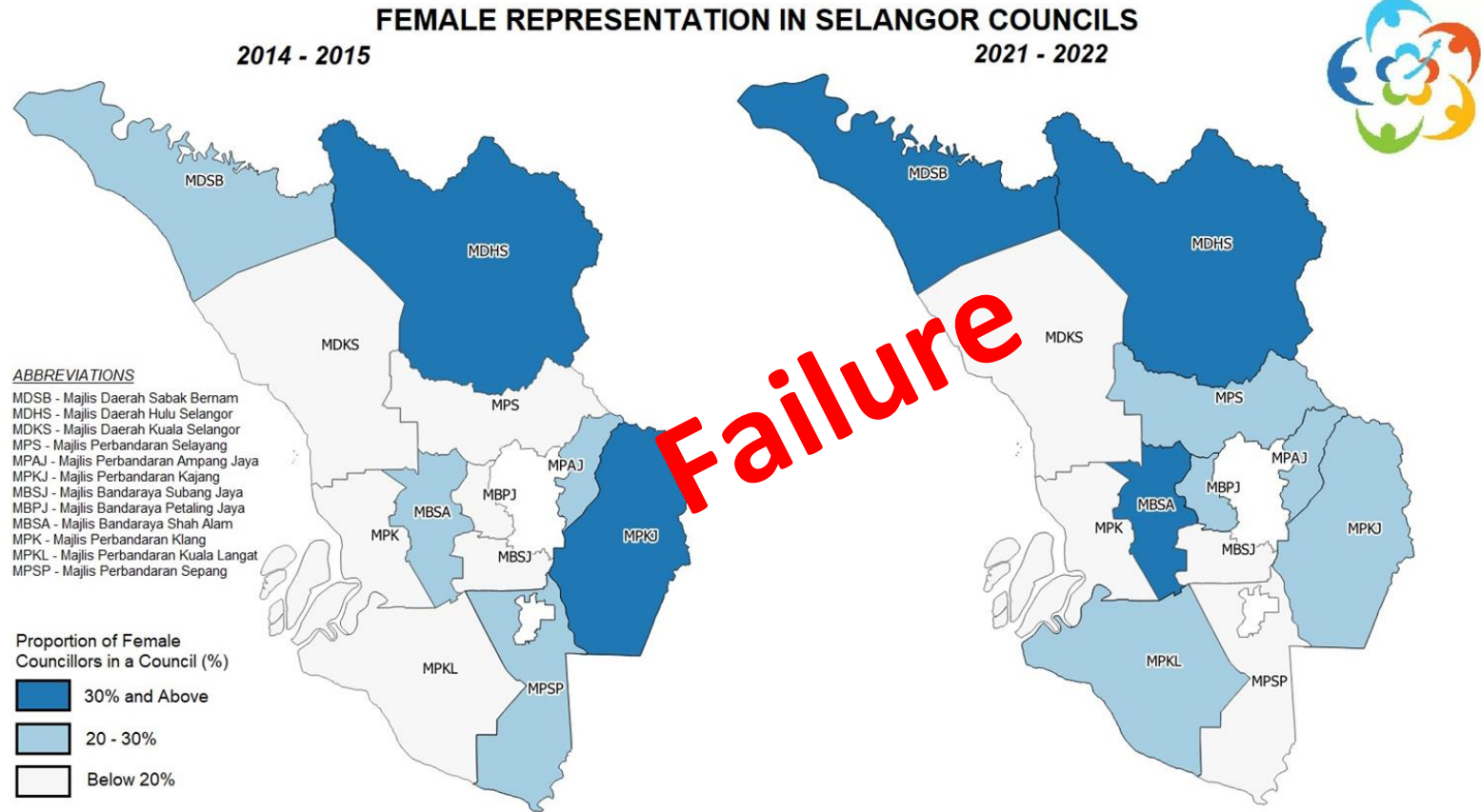


Which Way Forward? Reserved Seats & Quotas

- Voluntary Quota – are targets set by political parties to include a certain percentage of women as election candidates (not mandated by legislation)
- As a party to CEDAW, Malaysia ought to achieve 30% women representation in Parliament in 2030. Currently, we are at 14.86% and we will not achieve if we have do nothing policy
- Quotas is only effective if it is enforced. Selangor's experience of aiming 30% women representation in local authorities was dismal due to lack of enforcement



Which Way Forward? Reserved Seats & Quotas



State government instituted a policy of 30% minimum women representation in local councils (quota like) in **2013**. A year later two councils (out of 12) achieved that

In **2020**, MB of Selangor agreed to implement 30% women representation in local councils. A year later, only three (out of 12) councils achieved that

Source: DUN Selangor, Individual Council Websites, Tindak Malaysia



Which Way Forward? Reserved Seats & Quotas

- Quotas is the fastest way to ensure we attain 30% women representation (Main advantage)
- Downsides
 - Does not address root causes of poor women representation
 - Enforcing good motives, not giving incentives for good actions
 - Can only be viewed as temporary measure
 - May skew the real reason why we want to strengthen women representation
 - Quotas within First Past the Post requires constitutional amendment - complex
 - Relying on Enforcement (of which Selangor – an advanced state – failed to do so)



Which Way Forward? Public Financing

- Dangling a carrot for political parties to field winnable women candidates
- Idea mooted in [Bersih Report](#) on Public Financing of Political Parties
- From the bigger pool of public funding, RM 10 million is allocated to parties to increase women representation
- This **seat based direct public funding** means public funding will be given on proportionate basis to any political party based on the number of women MPs that each political party
- Simply, the more female representatives a party has, the greater funding will be given to party (Reward good action)
- Public Funding can be used to train future women party members



Which Way Forward? Public Financing

- This method has many advantages compared to previous options because of:
 - Rewards good actions (incentive for parties)
 - Ensures party treat women candidates seriously and help these candidate win
 - Long term measure that can be implemented today
 - Multiplier effect of other women strengthening measures (it is a reward system)
 - Don't need EC to enforce candidacy requirements
 - Able to transcend 30% goal discourse to a discourse of political diversity
 - Respect the essence of election – contest between candidates, parties and ideas

Conclusion



- Understanding poor women representation is important for the formation of solution
- The benefits of stronger women representation calls for an action
- The goal of stronger women representation must transcends 30% discourse
- Financing Women Political Representation is the way forward due to simplicity, rewarding good actions and respecting the essence of elections
- NGOs are called upon to learn about this approach and push for financing women political representation



THANKS

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