



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to the Editor

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FACE HARSH REALITIES THAN BE SEDUCED BY VIOLENT FICTION

There are more than ample studies on the effects of media violence on children. *Kabali* reflects the harsh realities that plagued the Indian community and the movie can influence children ingraining in them that violence is part and parcel of life.

It was reported in August 2013 that 40,313 members belonging to 49 illegal organisations had been arrested for involvement in armed robbery, theft, vehicle theft, extortion, illegal activities, narcotics and secret society dealings.

Of the 49 gang organisations, 38 were Indian gangs that were involved in gangsterism and most of the gang members were in the 20 to 30 years age group. With that age group, it means that they are in their prime.

The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) reiterates the call for the ban of *Kabali* because, as responsible consumers, we cannot allow gangsterism to be normalised even though it is 'entertainment'. The same goes for any other movies that portray violence and sex.

It is paradoxical to claim that scenes of brutality and killing is part of 'entertainment' and that children aged 13 and below are able to watch it.

Statistically Indians make up about 7 per cent of the population in Malaysia but they form 70 per cent of the criminal population in jails. This is a great disparity that we cannot turn a blind eye to.

According to Federal police (Bukit Aman) Criminal Investigation Department director Deputy Commissioner of Police Datuk Hadi Ho Abdullah, Indians (7.1 per cent of country's population) made up more than 70 per cent of secret societies; Chinese (23.7 per cent of country's population), more than 25 per cent; and Malays (50.4 per cent of country's population), 4.77 per cent.

The main contributing factor causing the high number of Indians joining secret societies is the unfavourable socio-economic environment. As such, Indians have:

- The highest mortality rate. Indians recorded the lowest life expectancy at birth with 67.7 years (male) and 75.8 years (female).
- Only about 5 per cent made it to tertiary level while others dropped out along the way.
- The highest alcoholism rate (Malaysian Indians spent about RM150 million during festivities as reported in 2015).
- The second highest drug addiction rate (0.11 per cent) in proportion to the respective ethnic population.
- About 70 per cent of prisoners are Indians.
- More than 70 per cent gang members are Indians.
- 41 per cent of beggars.

While the lives of the marginalised is going on as usual, *Kabali* collected RM12 million after a week of screening in Malaysia.

Entertainment might lull the mind but it is going to vaporise when reality sinks in. CAP wonders how much would the underprivileged benefit if they could have half of that amount (RM6 million) for skills training or being provided assistance for their school-going children.

CAP wishes to point out that the 11th Malaysia Plan outlined what was done to address the concerns of poor Indian community through entrepreneurship and skills training during the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015), and the promise of giving special attention to reduce school dropouts.

The entrepreneurship and skills training programmes provided for the poor Indian community benefitted 167,500 individuals. Out of this number, more than 10,000 youths received skills training programmes; 30,000 adults had entrepreneurial training programmes; and 127,500 primary and secondary school students underwent education enhancement programmes. However, there is no breakdown of these figures in the *11th Malaysia Plan* or the *Elevating B40 Households Towards a Middle-Class Society – Strategy Paper 2*. ‘B40’ refers to households with income up to RM3,855.

Therefore, it is not known how many of these programmes had been conducted on a one-off basis or how they are structured? Statistical breakdown is important as we need to know how the community actually benefitted.

CAP wants to know if the Government has any definite plans to address or eradicate the problems faced by Indian community mentioned earlier, particularly on poverty, gangsterism and low education. The 11th Malaysia Plan is critical in helping the Government to eradicate poverty in the last lap to realise Vision 2020.

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