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Nepotism in opposition 'worrying'

NOT HEALTHY: Academics fear progress of other capable leaders will be blocked

CARISMA KAPOOR

THE possibility of a cabinet consisting of several members of "elite families" could become a reality if the opposition coalition comes to power after the next general election.

Several political analysts had voiced concern over the matter as according to them, practising nepotism was unhealthy for the future of Malaysian politics.

Universiti Teknologi Mara's associate professor Dr Ismail Sualman said it was becoming a trend to rope in family members into the highest echelons of one's party.

This was evident in opposition parties such as Parti Keadilan Rakyat, where its de facto leader is Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, while his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, is the president, and their daughter, Nurul Izzah, is a vice-president.

Other examples include DAP chairman Karpal Singh and his son, Puchong member of parliament Gobind Singh Deo; and DAP's Lim Kit Siang and his son, party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

"Nowadays, it is getting normal

for you to see family members among the top management of opposition parties," said Ismail, adding that this did not provide an opportunity for others in those parties to show their leadership capabilities.

"To have a framework of discussion solely among family members in a political party is unhealthy."

He added that voters should think about this aspect of those parties before electing their representatives who will form the government.

Ismail pointed out that in Barisan Nasional, a family member would normally assume a high-ranking position in the party only after their elders had either retired or passed away.

Another political analyst, Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani said despite it being "normal" for nepotism to be accepted, such as in opposition

parties, most countries did not accept the practice of giving favours in the form of ministerial posts to family members.

But the associate professor at Universiti Utara Malaysia pointed out that not all politicians in this

country were in favour of such practices.

"For example, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not allow his children to become top leaders in Umno during his premiership.

"Only now has he highlighted his son, Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir," he said.

"This concept however, has never been applied in the opposition."

Azizuddin said nepotism was obvious in the composition of the top leaderships of PKR and DAP.

"If this practice continues, other capable candidates will not get the chance to be in top posts," he said.

Society, he added, needed to be enlightened on the concept of nepotism to prevent it from becoming a norm.

"It's difficult to convince people unless they come to realise the risks of letting families being in control of the government," he added.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's History, Politics and Strategic Study Centre senior lecturer Abdul Ghapa Harun had a dissenting opinion.

He argued that it was not a problem for family members to exist in a cabinet as long as they remained professional.

"It's becoming a tradition in the Malaysian political system for parties to consist of family members," said the political analyst, casting doubt on any negative impact this could have on society.

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Associate Professor Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani
Universiti Utara Malaysia political analyst

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**Dynasties
in the
opposition**

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail

Karpal Singh

Lim Kit Siang

Nurul Izzah Anwar

Gobind Singh Deo

Lim Guan Eng