

MAHATHIR-QUALITY

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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 20 (BERNAMA) -- ~~DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR~~  
MOHAMAD SAYS THERE SHOULD BE A MORE CONSCIOUS AND CONSCIENTIOUS  
EFFORT BY CIVIL SERVANTS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF WORK AND  
SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAYS THAT QUALITY CONTROL IN THE GOVERNMENT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT AS QUALITY CONTROL IN MANUFACTURING.

WRITING ON 'QUALITY CONTROL IN GOVERNMENT' IN 'BULLETIN INTAN', A NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PUBLICATION, HE SINGLES OUT COUNTER SERVICE AS THE AREA IN NEED OF URGENT ATTENTION FOR IMPROVEMENT.

HE SAID EVERY ASPECT AND EVERY STEP IN THE PROVISION OF COUNTER SERVICE MUST BE STUDIED AND FAULTS AS WELL AS WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED TO BE FOLLOWED BY CORRECTIVE MEASURES.

THE PERSONNEL MANNING THE SERVICE SHOULD ALSO BE MADE CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED FOR QUALITY IN THEIR WORK AND THEY MUST BE RETRAINED, TO ENSURE THAT A SUITABLE STANDARD IS CONTINUOUSLY MAINTAINED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR CONCEDES HOWEVER THAT THE KIND OF TRAINING THE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SYSTEM (MAS) INSISTS FOR ITS CABIN CREW MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR ALL COUNTER SERVICE EMPLOYEES BUT FEELS THAT SOME ASPECTS OF IT CAN BE INCORPORATED IN THEIR TRAINING PROGRAMME.

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THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTS THAT MALAYSIAN COUNTER SERVICE PERSONNEL EMULATE THE EXAMPLES OF THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS WHO WERE TRAINED TO SMILE AND SAY 'HAVE A GOOD DAY'.

'THERE IS NO REASON WHY OURS CANNOT DO THIS. A 'SELAHAT, DATANG' AND A SMILE FROM A CUSTOMS OFFICER AT THE AIRPORT CAN DO WONDERS FOR TOURISM AND THE NATION'S IMAGE,' HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAYS THAT BESIDES COUNTER SERVICE PERSONNEL, OTHER IMPORTANT GROUPS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT ARE THOSE HANDLING MATTERS DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC, SUCH AS PROCESSING DOCUMENTS AND APPLICATIONS.

THESE GROUPS, HE POINTED OUT, MAY NOT COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC AT ALL BUT WHAT THEY DO WILL AFFECT DEALINGS INVOLVING THE PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT.

HE SAYS THAT AS MOST OF THEIR WORK ARE LARGELY ROUTINE, THE PUBLIC CAN BE EFFICIENTLY SERVED IF THE EMPLOYEES ARE CONVERSANT WITH THEIR WORK;

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HE REGRETS HOWEVER THAT THERE ARE STILL THOSE PERSONNEL AND THEIR SUPERVISORS WHO ARE IGNORANT OF THE CORRECT FLOW OF WORK, THUS RESULTING IN INCOORDINATED DELAYS WHICH COST MONEY TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC.

'GOOD QUALITY SERVICE MEANS PROMPT, COURTEOUS, AND TROUBLE-FREE SERVICE THAT INCURS MINIMUM COST. THERE SHOULD ALSO NOT BE EVEN A HINT OF CORRUPTION,' HE SAYS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO POINTS OUT THAT WHILE QUALITY WILL BE MOST NOTICEABLE WHEN THE PUBLIC IS INVOLVED, IT DID NOT MEAN THAT WORK WHICH DOES NOT INVOLVE THE PUBLIC CAN BE ALLOWED TO BE MEDIOCRE OR POOR.

'ALL GOVERNMENT WORK MUST INVOLVE THE PUBLIC; AT LEAST INDIRECTLY. BUT EVEN IF THE INVOLVEMENT IS NOT OBVIOUS, QUALITY SERVICE IS STILL ESSENTIAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND WELFARE.'

'IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE IN GOVERNMENT, FROM POLITICAL LEADERS TO LIFE ATTENDANTS, CULTIVATE QUALITY ASSIDUOUSLY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES,' HE SAYS.

-- BERNAMA 1306/AZ