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KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 5 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD CRITICISED PARENTS WHO +ABDICATE+ THEIR PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THUS CAUSE MUCH OF THE ILLS OF THE WORLD TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS, CHILDREN WERE NO LONGER BROUGHT UP WITH THE PROPER TRAINING AND VALUE SYSTEMS TO ENABLE THEM TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEMS THEY FACED IN LIFE.

OPENING THE 5TH ASIAN CONGRESS OF PAEDIATRICS AT WISMA MCA HERE, HE ALSO BLAMED CERTAIN PAEDIATRICIANS FOR CAUSING SUCH ABDICATION DUE TO THEIR THINKING THAT THEIR ROLE WAS LIMITED TO THE CARE OF THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND NOT THEIR DEVELOPMENT INTO GOOD CITIZENS OF A CIVILIZED SOCIETY.

HE RECALLED THAT ONE MEDICAL DOCTOR, WHO THROUGH HIS BOOK ON THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN, HAD CAUSED THE DISINTEGRATION OF NOT ONLY FAMILY UNITS BUT IN MANY INSTANCES THE SOCIETY ITSELF.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE TREMENDOUS EFFECT OF THE BOOK RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF THE HIPPIY PHENOMENON, CO-HABITATION, FREE SEX, HOMOSEXUALISM AND COMMUNAL FAMILIES.

+EVEN THE ADVENT OF AIDS HAS NOT JOLTED THEM AND US TO (AWARENESS) OF THE DELETERIOUS EFFECT OF THE WRONG VALUES THAT WE HAVE TOLERATED AND INDEED BY DEFAULT ACCEPTED.+ -- MORE
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR URGED MORE DOCTORS TO WRITE BOOKS AND GUIDE FAMILIES, IN PARTICULAR MOTHERS, ON THE RIGHT WAY TO BRING UP HEALTHY CHILDREN.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT MOTHERS OF TODAY WERE A +CONFUSED+ LOT, BEING COMPLETELY LOST BETWEEN THEIR DESIRE TO DISCIPLINE THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR ABHORRENCE OF +CHILD BASHING.+

+THEY JUST DO NOT KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE SITUATION. THUS, CHILDREN ARE LIKELY TO GROW UP INTO NOTHING MORE THAN ADULT IMITATIONS OF THE BRAT THEY ONCE WERE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID CHILD BASHING SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED BUT CHILDREN WHO HAD COMMITTED ANY OFFENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN LIGHT PUNISHMENT TO REMIND THEM THAT THEY LIVE IN A WORLD THAT WAS STILL BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT CRIME WOULD BRING WITH IT PUNISHMENT.

INSTEAD, THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED, MANY MOTHERS FELT CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE PUNISHED BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO SMALL TO UNDERSTAND AND WERE ALSO IGNORANT. THIS RESULTED IN THE CHILDREN GROWING IGNORANT AND NOT PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE RESPONSIBILITIES AS ADULTS. -- MORE
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+IS IT ANY WONDER THAT WE SEE TODAY THE CHILDREN OF MANY GOOD FAMILIES TURNING TO DRUGS AND CRIMES AND A LIFE-STYLE THAT IS WHOLLY HEDONISTIC, CONTRIBUTING NOT AT ALL TO THE BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY?+ HE ASKED.

IN THIS RESPECT, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR BELIEVED THAT IF CHILDREN WERE ARTICULATE AND COULD EXPRESS THEMSELVES, MILLIONS WOULD BE CRYING OUT WHY THEY WERE EVER BORN AT ALL.

IN MANY INSTANCES, MANY CHILDREN WERE DEPRIVED OF ADEQUATE FOOD, PROPER SHELTER AND CLOTHING AND EXPOSED TO DANGEROUS BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS WHILE THOSE IN THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY LACKED LOVE.

THINKING ALOUD AND ASKING WHETHER IT WOULD BE A KINDNESS TO STOP PRODUCING CHILDREN CONSIDERING THE STATE THE WORLD WAS NOW IN, HE HOWEVER CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT +NOTHING HEIGHTENS UP OUR DULL MOMENTS AND OUR OLD AGE MORE THAN THE SOUND OF CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER AND THEIR INNOCENT CHATTER.+

ON WHY MALAYSIA NEEDED A 70 MILLION POPULATION BY THE YEAR 2100, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID A LARGE POPULATION HAD A ...

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+IN OTHER WORDS WE HAVE A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NEED TO BE MORE POPULOUS. IT IS THE KIND OF THING THAT DOCTORS AND SOCIOLOGISTS ABHOR BUT WE THINK THE REASONS ARE GOOD ENOUGH.+

ON MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH IN MALAYSIA, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT HAD BEEN ACCORDED THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN THE COUNTRY'S HEALTH PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND THE INTEREST OF BOTH MOTHER AND CHILD HAD ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED IN ALL OTHER RELATED PROGRAMMES.

PAEDIATRICIANS FROM 35 COUNTRIES AND FOUR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND AGENCIES HAVING INTEREST IN CHILD-CARE ARE ATTENDING THE FIVE-DAY CONGRESS ORGANISED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY THE MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WERE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH ALI, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION PROF BENJAMIN SCHMIDT, AND PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PAEDIATRIC SOCIETIES IN THE SOUTH EAST ASIAN REGION (APSSEAR) PROF TONG SOO CHO. -- BERNAMA
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