

PM Give women due recognition

By SHAHANAAZ SHER HABIB and REMA NAMBIAR

KUALALUMPUR: Women should not be denied promotion on the basis of their gender, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said there had been cases in the public sector when women were overlooked simply because they were women.

"Perhaps, such instances can be overcome by re-orientating men," he said after launching national Women's Day

celebrations.

Present at the launching were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, National Unity and Community Development Minister, Datuk Napsiah Omar and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Paduka Rafidah Aziz.

Dr Mahathir said men should admit that women sometimes performed better than them in education and business.

"Men must come to terms with this fact and give women the due recognition," he said.

They should not, he added, take advantage of

the fact that Malaysian women were not militant.

Dr Mahathir said he was glad that women here, in their fight for equal rights, did not emulate their counterparts in the West.

"There, the fight for equality has led to moral decadence. If the husband is not faithful, the wife is also not faithful," he said.

"Marriages have broken up as a result and the family institution is being replaced by single parent family where, sometimes, the child does not even know who his father or mother is."

He said that, although the women's liberation movement in Malaysia was not extreme, their lifestyles had changed over the years.

Many young women were working in factories far away from their villages and families, he said, adding that such women could get involved in undesirable activities if they were not given proper guidance.

"Their employers should organise religious classes for them, provide them with recreational facilities and get them involved in healthy social activities," he added.

He also said that as many women continued working after marriage, Malaysians should revive the extended family system so that their children could be looked after by their grandparents.

He said that having foreign maids to take care of young children was not healthy as they might absorb foreign culture and might end up not knowing how to speak their mother tongue properly.