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Positive start in fighting social ills

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THE Negri Sembilan Government, concerned over ever-increasing social ills in the State, is taking steps to bring the problem under control before it becomes too serious.

Responding to a call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Monday, the State Government has gotten down to work and drawn up 120 activities to be implemented to combat the ills.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad said all efforts would be channelled to making people realise that it is time that they discard unhealthy practices and instill moral values in their life.

The State Government has been realistic in roping in all Government agencies, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector for the activities that they have planned.

He added that all organisations that had been earmarked for the programme would have to plan activities to get the people involved so that they will be kept fully occupied and keep away from unhealthy activities.

A special committee has been formed and it has already identified seven target groups which need to be given special attention to curb the growing ills.

The groups which have been targeted are schools, families, youths, Felda settlers, industries, entertainment centres and foreign workers.

The special committee will have to work hard to solve the existing social ills.

To start with, growing indiscipline in school will have to be checked. Unlike 30 or 40 years ago, certain groups of students are no longer respectful of their elders or even their teachers.

Times have changed. Not only teachers but even parents have a tough time trying to instill discipline in their children.

This problem is not only prevalent in the urban but also in rural areas.

Children are now easily influenced by the lifestyle of Westerners and also from watching uncensored video tapes which are easily available.

Secondary students can be seen openly smoking in public before and after school hours.

They are bold enough to do this as they know teachers are powerless to take any action against them.

If the teachers tick them off or punish them, the students will not hesitate to report the matter to their parents, who without finding out the truth, will march to the school to confront the teacher involved.

Teachers often times cannot also be blamed for not taking strict action against students who do not comply with school regulations.

"At the end of the day, trying to do our duty in checking indiscipline in school does not pay. At times, we not only get abused but students and parents go to the extent of threatening to take action against us," said a teacher who declined to be named.

"We are aware that indiscipline in schools has gone from bad to worse but it is better to close not only one eye but both eyes to avoid getting into unnecessary trouble.

"Even our superiors prefer to wash their hands off any problems and like to be in the good books of parents and department officials in order to get their promotions," he said.

"To play safe, it is better to keep quiet rather than look for trouble. It is sad to see discipline in schools go down the drain but unless the

attitude of parents change, social ills will be difficult to curb," added the teacher who has been in the service for 20 years.

The State Government has rightly identified that most schoolchildren with problems normally come from broken families, and parents involved in either dadah or secret society activities.

These groups of people badly need counselling. The special committee will have to tactfully tackle these groups and make them realise that unless they are prepared to change their ways, their children will grow up to be a problem to society.

It is heartening to see the State Government make a concerted effort to find ways to check the growing incidence of social ills in the State.

All their attempts will not be successful if the people are not prepared to co-operate and take part in activities which have been planned for their benefit.

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