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Inculcate good values among students: PM

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday called on teachers to inculcate and instill good and cultural values among students to ensure the country's progress.

He said while parents impart the basis of good culture to their children, it is the teachers who really inculcate good values that ensure the success of a race or country.

"There are efforts by those who want to conquer us. Whether they succeed or not depends on our culture and here teachers play an important role," he said at the launch of the national Teachers' Day celebration in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said the role of teachers should not be confined to imparting knowledge alone. The instilling of good values should be given importance to ensure that knowledge gained will be used wisely when these students become members of society.

He said there are efforts to pollute our culture and make it the culture of failures.

He said there are times when bad values are imparted on impressionable minds by certain quarters to advance their own agenda.

These students will then have a distorted view which will lead them to destroy themselves and society.

"If good values are inculcated in the family and at school, then the race will succeed. The power lies in the hands of teachers," he said. Teachers, he said, play a role in teaching students to distinguish between good and bad cultures.

By having good values and cultures, society will then be able to withstand the destructive cultures of the West.

Western culture, which places importance on individual freedom and that the "individual is king" may have brought success to the West, he said.

"But today, we see the decay in the Western society. Children do not respect parents or teachers," he said adding that it is unsurprising to hear of young students carrying guns to school and killing their fellow schoolmates.

He felt that only those with an inferiority complex will follow these cultures unquestioningly.

Already, he said there are signs of the "dirty" ways of the West infesting here such as the use of swear words in our writings.

He said those who do these things will say that it is "their freedom as an individual and the Government has no right to forbid us to do what we want" even though their actions hurt society and destroy our culture.

This, he said, is a form of recolonisation by the West.

He added that if we are incapable of distinguishing between good and bad cultures and choose to follow bad cultures, this will retard our progress and we will become a backward race.

Dr Mahathir added that while salary and rewards were important, teachers need to feel satisfaction from the results of their work, for example, when they see their students become successful, they will feel that they have contributed to this success.

Teachers, he said, have a right to take some of the credit of their students' success.

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