

**Support Husband During Critical Times, Says Tun Siti Hasmah
Bernama
March 27, 2012
by Erda Khursyah Basir**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 27 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali today advised the wives of leaders to remain calm and fully support their husbands during critical periods.

Siti Hasmah, 86, wife of the longest serving prime minister in Malaysian history, emphasised that this was crucial to ensure any crises faced by their husbands could be handled without adding more pressure.

Recalling her experience during the monetary and political crisis in 1998 while Tun Mahathir Mohamad was Prime Minister, Dr Siti Hasmah said she remained calm and never questioned him about the matter.

"Do not add to the situation, just keep to yourself and listen to your husband if he needs to talk. He has many things on his mind," she said in a 30-minute exclusive interview with TRAXXfm, Radio Televisyen Malaysia at Wisma Radio Angkasapuri here, Tuesday.

Dr Siti Hasmah, who retired when she was 53 from the government medical service, cited other examples of critical periods in her family such as Dr Mahathir being expelled from Umno in 1969 and announcing his retirement from politics and post of Prime Minister in 2002.

The family managed to handle the crises because everyone supported each other, she added.

Siti Hasmah, who has seven children, stressed the need for parents to spend more time with their children, especially those in Kuala Lumpur.

"Make sure they don't go beyond the limits as nowadays people tend to imitate the western style of living, like the internet and computers and we have no control. We must be very brave parents to calmly teach them what's right and what's wrong," she said.

She remarked that religion also played an important role, for children to have faith in God.

On married career women, Dr Siti Hasmah who was one of the few female doctors in the 1950s said they must be well organised to avoid neglecting the family.

However as grandmothers, she said women should not pamper their grandchildren too much to prevent them from becoming irresponsible.

Commenting on being a prime minister's wife, she expressed being glad, grateful and blessed to have experienced such a privilege.

Dr Siti Hasmah who loves playing badminton and was a tomboy during her childhood, also shared her passion in the medical field as the first female Malay doctor in the country, and her valuable experiences while practicing in Selangor and Kedah.

"Being in a rural area you learn a lot on how to be nice to people, and about the hardships these people faced, with no transport or money for their medical fee," she said of her early years in Kedah.

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