

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID
Tajuk : MAJLIS PERASMIAN SEMINAR "INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE ON ETHICS AND MORALITY"
Lokasi : AWANA GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, GENTING HIGHLANDS
Tarikh : 28-06-1993

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with morality. It may be defined as "a systematic inquiry into the beliefs we have and the judgements we make about what is morally right and wrong and morally good and evil. It is an enquiry that attempts to answer the questions, 'what kinds of conduct are morally right or wrong?' and 'what things are good and what are evil?'" Banyak lagi definasi etika dan moraliti telah di utarakan. Oxford English Dictionary mengtakrifkan etika sebagai "the science of morals. 'Morals' itself is defined as concerned with goodness or badness of character or disposition or with the distinction between right and wrong". Dari segi Islam, ianya ialah, "a study of certain religious beliefs, and of rightness and wrongness of action for the purpose of practice, and not for the sake of knowledge". Namun demikian, definasi etika yang lazim digunakan ialah "...the code of conduct or the rules by which one should behave ... based on beliefs about what is morally right and wrong and morally good and evil." The importance of ethics and morality in determining human intentions and actions cannot be underestimated. It is ethics and morality that build human character, which can be defined as "an established state of the soul from which actions proceed easily, without any need for reflection and deliberation. If this state is such that good actions - i.e. those which are praised by reason and good moral principles - proceed from it, it is called good character.

If the actions which proceed the state are evil, the state from which they derive, is called bad character". It is the moulding of good character, characterised by the love for virtuous actions and hatred for vices, that is the real aim of ethics and morality.

There are four types of morality which require our attention namely business morality, democratic morality, popular morality dan individual morality. Business morality comprises four elements, namely:

- (i) normal good business practices such as honesty and trust;
- (ii) economic practice such as the creation of efficient markets and creation of maximum wealth;
- (iii) enlightened self-interest such as an emphasis on social responsibility; and
- (iv) a code of Conduct which binds employees to a set of ethical standards. Such codes and practices of business morality should be a normal part of an organisation's survival, adaptation and monitoring of its environment. In this context, our efforts at improving the civil service through such programmes as quality and productivity management, Client's Charter and the Twelve Pillars are examples of business morality in action in the government.

Democratic morality comprises two elements namely:

- (i) compliance of the law to ensure legal accountability; and
- (ii) quasi-legal compliance to supplement and complement the moral standards of existing rules and procedures. Government departments and public officials as upholder, enforcer and implementor of the law are obviously expected to abide by the demands of democratic morality.

Popular morality includes practices to ensure the acceptance, respect, continued faith and trust by society. For organisations, including government departments, popular morality could be attained by such actions as good public relations, responsiveness to the media, being transparent and a sense of social responsibility. Individual morality relates to the value systems, principles and religious belief of the individual.

There are two important areas of ethical concern in the civil service : the discretion civil servants have in

implementing the law, when of course laws, regulations and orders cannot cover every variation in circumstances. The public should have the right of access to all matters relevant to administrative decisions and a more effective means of redress through the public complaints bureau. That is only part of the story. There cannot be appeals against every decision depending on a civil servant's discretionary judgement, so taking proper care over decisions of this kind and balancing the interests of the individual against the national interest; these are an important part of any civil service ethic.

The standards applied to the civil service have increasingly been confined to judging its efficiency, economy and effectiveness. Although public services have to be delivered efficiently and economically, judging them solely in those terms may overlook other qualities of the proper delivery of services. Efficiency refers to the extent to which maximum output is achieved in relation to given costs or inputs; effectiveness has to do with the extent to which the overall goals of the policy in question is achieved. Distinguishing between effectiveness and efficiency is important from the point of view of the ethics of the profession, since the two aims can pull in opposite directions. Civil servants are motivated to achieve the efficiency goals by performance targets and salary increments. Plainly, the management has to exercise care in determining the content of efficiency goals so that these do not conflict with the overall aim of effective public services. Equally, the individual civil servant must face a choice between efficiency and effectiveness from time to time and must make an ethical choice.

How do we tackle the question of civil service ethics? Merely having a code and referring to it is not enough; that will not make civil servants behave more ethically in their work. Teaching ethics, that is, discussing the sort of problems civil servants may encounter as part of their training, may make a code much more a reality; neither a code nor teaching can ensure ethical behaviour. The mere existence of a code, however, enhances one's sensitivity and will assist civil servants, as trustees of the public, to maintain a high standard of performance and to commit themselves to uphold the public good. But the code of ethics for the general body of the civil service must be balanced by integrity on the part of those above them.

There is a series of moral rules or principles which we acquire through our professional experience. For better or worse they provide rules of thumbs for appraising a situation and deciding what might be done -for example "loyalty to your clients comes first"; "honesty is the best policy" etc. It is easier to resolve ethical issues if there is some agreement about basic principles. There must be standards of behaviour appropriate to a particular group, organization or circumstance. For example, two detectives may have dramatically different views about how to treat criminals, but if there is agreement on the basic goal of fighting crime, whatever differences between the two will be reconciled.

An organization must develop a clear statement of values to guide individual behaviour. That statement should include moral guidelines. It should also articulate a vision of the organization's mission - what it stands for, what it seeks to achieve, and how it plans to go about its business. Developing such statement should involve members of the organization and have the full support of the top management. After assessing values and adopting statements to express the desired values, training programs and other devices must be developed for communicating these ideals within the organization. Managing ethics involve more than having statements espousing a particular set of values and more than selecting staff with good moral character.

Managing ethics also involves careful analysis of the organizational culture, working to develop a cultural environment that places high value on ethical integrity, and developing policies and procedures and systems that enable the organization members to act with ethical integrity. In other words, organizations must undertake active program to promote ethics. This will dispel the feeling of the staff that in the absence of ethics program, they will be under pressure to compromise personal standards to achieve organizational goals, and that their superiors are interested only in results not how they were obtained.

Heads of departments should not neglect the fact that their actions will be taken as "model" of appropriate behaviour.

The example that they set will be one of the most important devices to members of the organization. If we

want them to take the moral "high road", they must demonstrate by example that ethics is a substantial concern and that unethical conduct will not be tolerated. This seminar should also discuss the whole question of how civil servants should act when confronted with a crisis of conscience. At times, they may face a dilemma when confronted with possibly illegal, inscrutable or even simple controversial instruction from their superiors. What should be the appropriate procedure designed to resolve the dilemma facing an official with a crisis of conscience?