PETALING JAYA: A "get-rich-quick" culture evolving in the country has damaged society's moral and ethical values, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

This culture must be contained and this could be done through education, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

"It must be done away with and replaced with one that gives priority to long-term gains," he said when opening the Sunway College and a waterpark.

He said the alternative culture should also take into consideration society's interests over the individual's.

While education would help, he said, emphasis must be given to instilling moral and ethical values in people's pursuit for higher education.

Dr Mahathir added that the country did not want to produce people without values as when they gained knowledge, they could turn out to be "educated criminals."

"With the increasing rate of white-collar crime, we must instil good values through education. No matter how progressive a society is, it may not be able to sustain itself if such values are not part of education," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that not all parents and the public knew what was good or bad for society. Thus, the belief that parents would naturally inculcate moral and ethical values in children was not true.

He also cautioned the people against being too contented with the peace and harmony among the country's multiracial society.

"Malaysia is now an example to other multiracial countries on how peace and harmony can be achieved.

"However, we must not be too contented as the price of peace is eternal vigilance," he said.

On the education policy, Dr Mahathir said it was the Government's intention to set up sufficient institutions of higher education to cater to the various races.

Present at the ceremony were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Datin Seri Ena Ling, Education Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud and college chairman Datuk Musa Hitam.