

## Feature

## Development

## Nari Maitree Working for Women's Well-being

MARCH 8 was the International Women's Day. This year one could almost feel the presence of the Women's Day because of different programmes and propaganda carried out by different groups. One such organization is Nari Maitree (Unity among women). Nari Maitree started its work in 1983 at Ghoran area of Dhaka. The initiative was taken by some local residents to establish an organization which will work for the welfare of women particularly living in slums in the locality. With that intention, Nari Maitree came into being and got registered with the Women's Directorate in 1984. Nari Maitree works particularly in the locality of Ghoran (Municipal ward No 56). Ms Shaheen Akhter Dolly is the Director and member secretary of a nine-member executive committee and looks after the administration of the organization.

The main programmes of Nari Maitree include MCH, family planning, slums family development, skill training housekeeper training, group saving etc. The organization spend almost 80 per cent its

total budget on health programmes. MCH and family planning together are one of the major programmes. It is mainly for slum dwellers who are scattered around the locality. The clinic is situated on the ground floor of the building. There are 16 primary health visitors and 16 TBA besides one qualified doctor. Each patient is registered with a fee of Taka two. There are facilities for neo-natal and post natal care immu-

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nization etc. At times, TBAs attend patients during childbirth. The organization also supplies medicine for which they charge half of the market price. The organization provides vit A capsules to prevent blindness among children. Health education is also provided and the organization gives assistance in purifying water.

General treatment is also carried out. The clinic is open six days a week. Every Tuesday the medical team moves to

by Fedai Mawla

Dhakhinga, Demra where they run a similar clinic in a house provided by a wealthy gentleman. They call it 'satellite clinic'. The organization owns a three wheeler which in emergency serves as an ambulance.

Slums family development is an effort to improve the condition of slum dwellers of the locality. There are in fact a number of slums in an around

the organization used to procure women and train them on different household affairs. First aid etc which are needed in day-to-day housekeeping. Nowadays different organizations send women for training. These women are generally provided with employment in house of working women. Before that a bank account is opened for each individual and their names are recorded with the local police station. After saving a good amount of

money, these women invest their money somewhere else which adds to their earning. Besides, Nari Maitree has got sixteen saving groups in the locality. Each saving group has five to 10 female members. The organization gives group formation training and helps in forming groups.

Nari Maitree has got a tailoring shop which is an income-generating source. It takes order from local people and in the process generates fund. Women also get training

in this tailoring shop.

Nari Maitree with four other organizations rented a shop named 'Srijoni' on Kamal Ataturk Road to display and sell their own products.

It is evident that there is a substantial financial involvement. Nari Maitree has got different donors for different programmes — like Bangladesh Population and Health Consortium provides funds for MCH, South Asian Party and Te Royal Danish Embassy for slum development, the Netherlands Embassy for education of the slum children while Bangladesh Association for Community Education provides assistance for group formation training.

Nari Maitree wants to work for adolescent girls in future. There is also suggestion from the local people to have a delivery unit as there is no facility nearby. Nari Maitree also arranges meetings with the local people several times a year to discuss various problems and future programmes. With a small beginning, Nari Maitree promises to come out of local barriers and work for the upliftment of greater number of women.

## Where Women Walk the Night in Search of Water

As the great drought tightens its grip on Southern Africa, the aid agencies in Zambia are embarking on a programme of rehabilitation of the country's water supply structures.

At a time when traditional sources are running dry about 75 per cent of government-built water sources are doing the same.

On-and-off supplies are so unpredictable women in some areas are having to give up

by Anyal Dalo

task force to mobilise funds, equipment and materials.

Some 3,900 wells, 1,100 boreholes and more than 100 dams will be repaired and 900 new boreholes built. Germany will have completed 295 wells and boreholes under a project ending in December.

Another 346 will be funded by Germany and Japan between now and 1996. NORAD and Japan have together con-

partment, is the Southern Province, which has the largest number of livestock.

It borders Zimbabwe and Botswana which are also drought-affected. Most of its water sources are faulty or have dried up. Animals are dying.

Equipment for a Japanese-aided water project is being diverted to dig new dams and repair old ones.

The key to a new water policy is to persuade the con-



Once a raging torrent: The dried up bed of the river Luanga on the Zambian Mozambique border.

their sleep to go searching for water at two in the morning.

Part of the problem is that the water structures, like so much else, have suffered from the malaise that has permeated Zambian society in recent years — neglect, thieving or perfunctory maintenance.

In several cases the water has gone down, rendering the wells and boreholes useless unless they are deepened or de-silted.

Alfeyo Hambayi, Energy and Water Minister in the new government led by President Frederick Chiluba, told a meeting of donor agencies in July that 'the situation is worsening day by day. In order to save life the drought emergency programme has to be carried out within the next five months.'

There is still a chance that a water crisis can be averted. Officials from several embassies as well as non-governmental organisations such as Africare, the World Lutheran Federation, Oxfam, and the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), and from the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) and are setting up a

tributed \$3 million for hand-pumps and spare parts.

The situation in the Eastern Province is precarious because it has no donor-aided water project. The province, which borders drought-stricken Malawi, has a high number of broken down water sources.

**In much of southern Africa all eyes will be on the skies in the coming weeks as the rainy season approaches. Normally rains come in Zambia and Zimbabwe in late October. The drought in some regions is reaching disastrous proportions.**

and needs new ones.

The British charity Oxfam, which runs community projects in the province, is taking part in the overall drought relief programme and has begun de-silting some wells. Hardest hit, according to a report by Lewis Mbumwae, Director of the Water Affairs De-

sumers to become permanently responsible for care of the sources.

Mbumwae says: 'We need to involve the local population. Government provides the materials and the community water committees should maintain the equipment.'

Rural political and traditional leaders are being asked to mobilise the people to take part in repairs and new construction. Some will be trained by water experts to maintain simple technology water equipment and structures.

At present a \$15 million drought relief programme is being seriously endangered by the Water Department's inability to repair and build the urgently needed water sources. The department in understaffed and has little drilling equipment and materials.

The government also finds it cannot hire local and foreign drilling companies to begin work in the most affected areas because it cannot afford to make the initial payments they demand.

— Gemini News

## Is High-Growth Approach Best?

COUNTRIES that embraced 'high-growth, free-market, outward-oriented' economic strategies have been most successful in reducing poverty, according to the Asian Development Outlook 1992, an annual publication of the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The report debunks some long cherished development notions. For instance, it says land reform and subsidised social services, supposedly potent antidotes to poverty, may be ineffective, or even make matters worse.

In the 1960s and 1970s, high-growth economic strategies were hit for favouring the rich and worsening social inequalities. Rather than wealth 'trickling down' and benefiting the poor, the poor became poorer and the rich richer.

But many centrally-planned, government-directed economies failed. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, free markets acquired renewed respectability and development thinking has embraced high-growth strategies.

The latest ADB analysis echoes that of the World Bank's 1991 World Development Report, which says coun-

tries can best achieve sustained economic growth through a 'market-friendly' approach.

This means governments should let the economy work freely and take on only those functions — like defence, education and other essential services — that only the state can properly perform.

ADB adds this economic approach beats all others in taming poverty, which in Asia

**Based on the experience of Asian developing countries in the past three decades, the Asian Development Bank argues the so-called 'trickle-down' theory of development really works. Ramon Isberto of IPS reports.**

is mainly a rural crisis. It says rural poverty in Asia has fallen significantly in the region's developing countries over the past quarter century.

China, Indonesia and Korea lead the pack. In China, the number of poor people has declined by nearly 15 per cent yearly. Indonesia has averaged about eight per cent and Korea 7.5 per cent yearly.

Some economic analysts have long argued there are trade-offs between measures to combat poverty and push economic growth but the record shows the two objectives go together, the ADB reports says.

Every one per cent rise in the overall per capita rate of economic growth seems to be associated with a 1.1 per cent decrease in the poverty head count, it added.

Asia has an enormous stake in global efforts to alleviate poverty since it is home to two-thirds of the world's 630 million 'extremely poor' and three-fourths of its 1.1 billion 'poor' people. About two-thirds of these are in South Asia and

profound impact on poverty.

While various types of 'safety net' social programmes like subsidised health have been found to be very effective in alleviating situations of extreme poverty, these are quite expensive and can only be sustained if the economy attains rapid growth, the report says.

The ADB cautions some programmes long thought to be good at reducing poverty may cause more harm than

good. Land reform programmes in India and the Philippines, for example, may have in their different ways 'reduced equity and efficiency,' the report says.

Restrictions on tenancy arrangements in both countries have prodded landowners to avoid tenancy altogether, turning many erstwhile tenants to landless casual workers.

The ADB report also argues Asian governments should re-examine subsidies for social services and key agricultural inputs like fertilisers and pesticides.

Many of these social service like health and housing dis-

proportionately benefit the 'non-poor'.

Benefits from the agricultural subsidies meanwhile also tend to be cornered by the better off, often leaving the poor squeezed out, the report said.

The ADB survey on Asian poverty reflects the rise of neo-liberal economic thinking worldwide as evidenced by the increased acceptance of market-oriented economic reforms by many Third World governments, including socialist regimes.

But many Asian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) remain deeply critical of such economic approaches and say much of their work consists of cleaning up the mess left by behind by governments pursuing free markets.

That NGO's point out Thailand's remarkable economic success in recent years actually illustrates the fundamental flaws of high-growth economic strategies.

They say the boom has enriched Bangkok, but impoverished the north and northeastern regions of the country and created social and environmental crises that will plague Thailand in the coming years.

—IPS

## Children's Bodies and Souls for Sale

IN 1987, a 13-year-old Philippine girl was killed by a European tourist when an electric vibrator broke inside her body and she bled to death. The tourist was acquitted on a technicality.

In the raid of a Bangkok brothel, Thai police rescued 18 girls between the ages of 14 and 19. Seventeen tested HIV-positive. According to a health worker who interviewed the girls, fewer than half the customers wore condoms, and each girl was servicing 17 men a night and receiving the equivalent of US\$80.80 per customer.

The parents of an 11-year-old girl from the Taiwan mountain provinces were paid by a policeman's wife to allow their daughter to go to the city. Lured to the house of a 'cousin', she was forcibly injected with hormones to trigger menstruation and the next day began receiving customers. Her family wanted to buy her back but could not find her until the young girl had been sold many times to different brothels.

These are but three of the thousands of documented cases of children as young as age five in many developing countries who are lured, abducted, 'adopted' or sold by their families into brothels for prostitution and pornography, to serve the increasing demands of tourists and organised sex tours from industrialised countries.

Since the growth of tourism during the 1970s, child advocates have noted with alarm the explosion of child prostitution into a multi-million-dollar international industry. As field workers have observed, whole villages are bereft of young girls, with children taken from their homes by force or under false promises and illegally transported across many borders to prison-like brothels in dozens of Asian cities and 'adopted homes' in the industrialised countries of Europe and North America. The worsening situation affecting younger and younger victims has prompted a new international campaign, and several governments, including Germany and Thailand, plan to take stronger action against

those who trade in the bodies and souls of children.

A new campaign

Joint NGO activity, spearheaded by an international

**The problem of child prostitution in developing countries has reached alarming proportions, as a result of the increasing demands of tourists and organised sex tours from industrialised countries.**

campaign and coalition, End Child Prostitution in Tourism (ECPAT), is calling for the end of tourism-related prostitution in four Asian countries — Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and

by Sara Ann Friedman

Taiwan — by 1993. The time has come, says Ron O'Grady, New Zealand clergyman and coordinator of ECPAT, 'for concerted action among NGOs, churches and the rest of the

NGOs working in the field have pointed to deepening economic and social problems that make solutions to the problem both more elusive and more urgent. Increasing urban-

isation, accompanied by the breakdown of family support systems and rising family violence, wider economic divisions between north and south and links among poverty, debt service and tourism, are some of the complex forces conspiring to thrust these children into a world they cannot cope with, a world eager to exploit and abuse them.

But the problem is not confined to tourism, or to Asia. It is a problem of immense proportions, involving local men on many levels, touching every sector of the world — urban and rural, North and South.

In November 1991, an African regional conference, 'Culture, Sex and Money: Its Effects on Women and Children,' was held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, sponsored by the International Abolitionist Federation (IAF), the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB) and Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA).

The Conference stressed the human rights aspect of child prostitution, with participants urging governments that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child to implement their commitments, and those that have not ratified it to be pressured to do so.

A report published in 1989 by Redd Barna (Norwegian Save the Children). The Sexual Exploitation of Young Children in Developing Countries, describes child prostitution as 'the worst form of exploitation... an outright attack on the most fundamental rights of a human being, the right to decide over his/her own body, own health, own mind.'

The problem has been most recently exacerbated by AIDS, as men seek younger and younger girls, especially vir-

gins. Paradoxically, it may also be the AIDS crisis — already devastating Africa — now on the doorstep of Asia that has prompted some governments to acknowledge the huge scope of the problem. The Thai Government has just passed legislation to stiffen penalties for perpetrators and actively participated in ECPAT's first international conference, held in April in Bangkok.

Many observers are sceptical about law enforcement — present of future. Illegal under almost every national law, and outlawed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, sexual exploitation of children is denied by officials and winked at by local enforcement officers.

Researchers are threatened by organised crime elements, reluctant to relinquish their hold over such a profitable enterprise. Many governments, anxious to develop tourism, are unwilling to touch foreigners, including military personnel, who commit crimes in their country.

In 1988, the United States Investigative Services mounted an undercover investigation of reported child prostitution rings in Olangapo City, the Philippines. The official report was never released, but a copy found its way to the PREDA Foundation, where Father Shay Allen reported that agents were offered children as young as four and five.

ECPAT has offices in 13 countries, including several 'sender' countries where the primary demand for children originates: Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the USA.

Germany, a major source of European tourism to Southeast Asia, has taken the lead in cracking down on the worst excesses of sex tourism. The Government has recently passed legislation that will make punishable in Germany the abuse by any German citizen in any country of a child of any nationality. — Third World Network Features

Sara Ann Friedman is editor of NGO Action for Children, produced by the NGO Committee on UNICEF.



Child prostitution and pornography in developing countries serve the demands of tourists and organised sex tours from industrialised countries.

## Pakistani Peasants to Raise Income from Milking Cows

by Javed Malik

THOUSANDS of poor Pakistanis are hoping to improve their lives by relying on milking cows — literally.

Poor peasants in Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, are trying to raise their incomes through increased milk production under a new project assisted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Expected to cost a total of US\$226 million by its completion seven years from now, the project intends to introduce peasants who are small dairy producers, to technologies which will raise the yield of their milking cows.

The project's main beneficiaries are landless peasants and small landholders in 120 villages in the Gujranwala Division. They are among the 30 per cent of Pakistan's population who live below the poverty line and who own one or two buffaloes or cows. But thousands of other poor people are also expected to benefit indirectly from the milk production project.

The project primarily aims to increase milk production. Cows raised for dairy give a very low yield. Previous efforts to import and introduce high yielding cows have not been very successful.

The new programme will use modern scientific techniques for increasing milk production rather than raising the number of milking cows. 'Promoting productivity per animal rather than increasing numbers, encouraging livestock holders to adopt improved methods of animal husbandry, increasing the quantity and nutritional quality of animal feeds, modernising marketing channels for livestock and animal products, and elim-

inating government interference in the market are the immediate goals, says Teuvo VA Siirtola, who is in charge of the project.

Participating peasants will be taught techniques for higher fodder production, improved nutrition, disease control and reduction of calving interval. Technicians will bring to villages, the technologies required. Mass media campaigns in some areas will complement the extension work. At the same time, the government will improve inputs and

bulk delivery of milk from these centres to the plants is being developed.

Farmers groups and village livestock associations will be encouraged to get involved in the marketing process as well. Pakistan's federal government is putting up US\$4.8 million out of the total project cost of US\$22.6 million as its share. IFAD is providing US\$16.2 million and UNDP US\$1.6 million. Some 54 per cent of the fund will be used to improve facilities for the provision of inputs, and services while the rest will be loaned out to participants.

The Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan will provide loans to villagers for setting up milk collection, the construction of chilling centres, and the purchase of bulk milk tankers. Loans will also be made for fodder production inputs, better tillage equipment and tubewells.

Rates of interest and other conditions which apply to regular agricultural loans will also cover these disbursements.

Under the project, funds will be provided as grants for the construction and improvement of about 80 kilometres of roads to provide all-weather access to more remote villages.

Throughout its duration, the project will also serve as research programme which hopes to provide the government with answers on how to increase the quality and quantity of milk production in other parts of Pakistan.

'The project, after its completion, will provide a base for the government to launch similar projects in other parts of the country,' a government official said. — Depthnews Asia

Milk chilling centres will be set up while a system for the