

RISING STARS

All Children are Created Equal, Only Opportunities Make the Difference

IDRIS, a student of class I, loves playing with colours which at his age, is of course more fun than playing with alphabets and numbers. Unlike many other eight year olds, his paintings were recently displayed at an exhibition of paintings by the children from the Ganoshahajjo Sangstha (GSS) primary schools, at the La Galerie.

Actually this is not the only difference between him and other first graders, Idris has the added responsibility of supporting himself. In the afternoons, he sells *cheena badam* (peanuts) at the local parks. He is the second son in a family of six members, his father is a rickshaw puller and his mother is an ayah (helping maid) in a hospital. Idris, however, is lucky enough to be able to go to school.

This is possible because of Ananda Niketan Primary Schools a Network of GSS's educational programmes. This programme addresses two fundamental problems common to most primary education systems in the Third World, outdated teaching methods and the discouraging of creativity or analytical ability that is so important for a child's development.

Creative writings, a brain storm introduced by this NGO has allowed their students to express themselves in a simple way. This remarkable opportunity has allowed their students to colour their thoughts in a paper. Mahmud Hassan, Director GSS has explained that these slum children, whose future is either tied to the rickshaw or the pull cart, given the proper guidance are no less intelligent than the others. In a simple expression they explain the most difficult and inhuman circumstances they pass each day.

Amader Galpo (Our Stories) is a booklet published by the GSS. Here the stories explaining the children's paintings are



printed. Salma Aktar Suraiya, aged 11 in class V of one of GSS's urban schools wrote this story explaining her painting.

Once upon a time there was a farmer who lived in a village. He was landless. He survived by farming other people's land. He had three sons and one daughter. His eldest son would go to the market before sunrise to sell yoghurt. From this he earned a small amount of money. His second son looked after the village headman's cows. For this he got 1 kg of rice every day. With this income the family managed to get by. The farmer's daughter and youngest son went to school. They were both in class II.

The farmer loved his children very much. He used to say that because he could not send his two sons to school he wanted his daughter and youngest son to become doctors. But his daughter didn't want to become a doctor. His father asked her why. The daughter replied because she didn't want to cut open people's tummies. On hearing this, they all laughed.

This innovative teaching method of GSS also enables the child to grow culturally — which they are usually never allowed. More over, a publication

of their writings, and exhibition of their paintings is attractive enough for any kid to stay in school.

The painting show in La Galerie was in one word extremely encouraging. In fact this unique celebration of the talents of poor children, where the painters were themselves present was a definite boost to their social status. The show was such success that within hours time 10 paintings were sold.

Displays depicting paddy fields, children gathering flowers, sunsets, *bastis* (slums) were all for sale. The price tag was between Tk. 500 to Tk. 700 and two were for Tk 1000 as well. The proceeds from the sale was entirely used by GSS primary schools and the participants. There were also cards of Tk. 20, which were painted by these children.

The exhibition had a festive look, especially the presence of the children in their best shirts and lungis drinking coke or 7up, talking to foreigners or signing autographs on their paintings was a sight to remember forever. The sparkle in their eyes, the dimple in their cheeks show only how much they were enjoying being in the limelight.

GSS's adaptation of current western primary educational



practice has resulted in an outstandingly efficient teaching system which not only produces independent readers and writers in a short time but also teaches children to think for themselves and to express their thoughts in writing.

The group teaching method adopted by GSS schools allow teachers to devote more attention to each child and also maximize the child's individual learning potential. The schools promote initiative, creative thinking, problem solving aptitudes and a community spirit among the students.

There are about 98 GSS primary schools which help educate 18,875 slum children approximately. The school, collects a fee of Tk 1 from every child, has a ratio of 55:45, boys to girls. Mostly the teachers are female and only 9 of them are males. The teachers in the urban areas are all graduates and in the rural areas they have all passed their SSC.

The schools are of two shifts in the village and three shifts in the cities, which gives the working students a chance to continue.

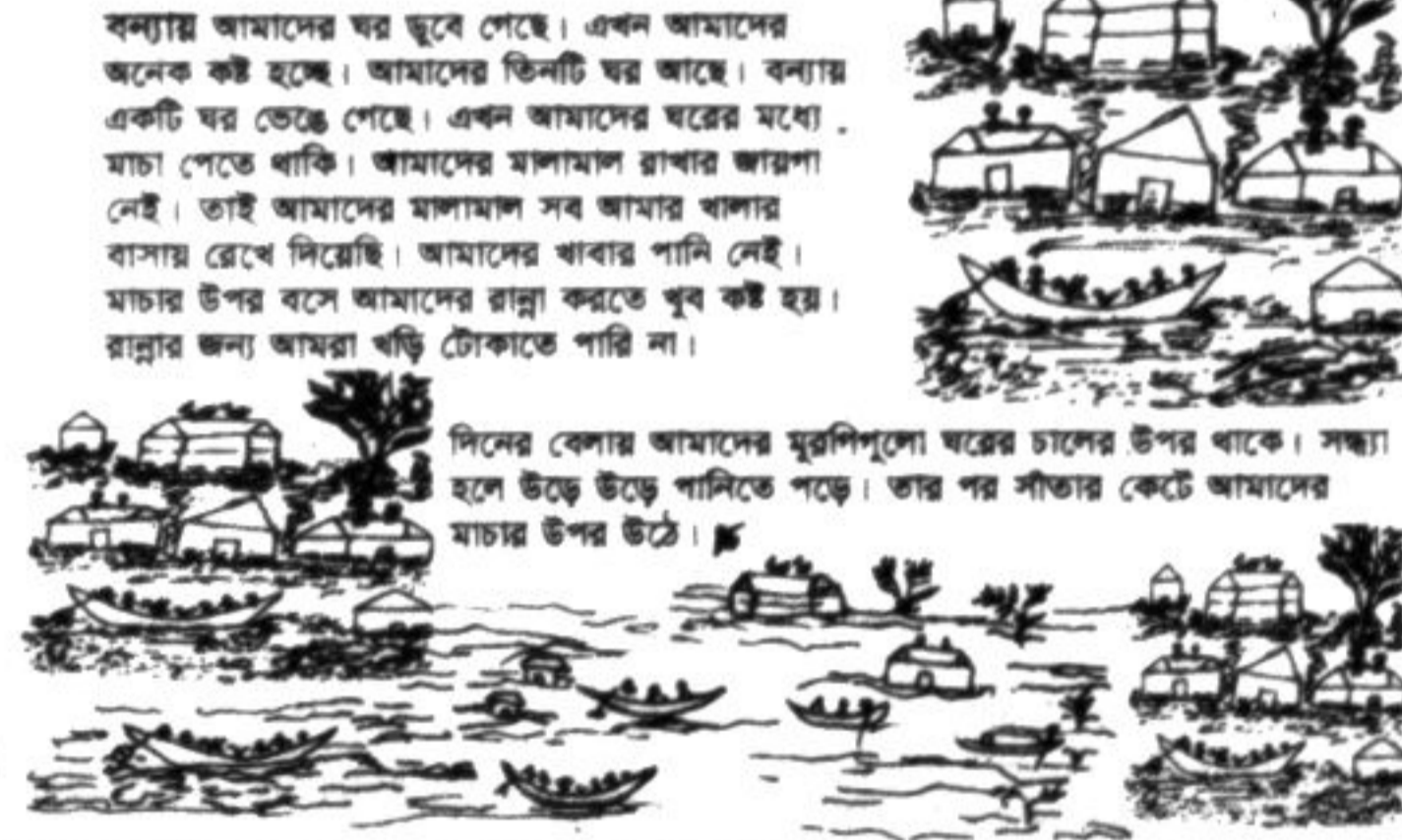
Rekha Kibria, a GSS official said that their students are all exceptional. "We participated in all the yearly painting competitions held on 16th Dec or organised by Shishu Academy and got the first prizes," she said proudly. "our children are also wanted by the garment factories and paid more because of their educational background," she informed.

Along with her, every one is proud to help and guide these kids. By giving them a chance, the future of the nation is also being assured, we are hopeful. As Idris sees his future, while explaining his drawing. "The *bastis*," who knows, may be one day I'll be a well know painter and every one worldwide would know me."

This is not just his wish but ours too.

Aims of the programme

- To enable children up to the age of 12, who have never been to school or who have dropped out, to enter/re-enter the education system at their age level.
- To develop learner-centred schools with multiple entry points, flexible school hours and holidays which will offer these children the opportunity to attend school.
- To emphasize the importance of the role of the teacher in the learning as well as the socialization processes of the child.
- To involve the community in the development of a child-centred environment.
- To work as an incentive to the community to influence the existing primary school system to run more effectively and efficiently.
- To provide a system which is replicable because it is educationally efficient, providing demonstrable returns in terms of learner competencies at low unit costs.



'The Fascinating World of Dreams'

EACH night, after the lights go out, the head rests on the comfortable, soft pillow and the eyes close down, we open our minds towards dreams. We replay fragments of the days' events as well as experiences of long ago and emotions.

Dreams range from the mundane to the marvelous to the macabre. No matter how extreme they are, our sleeping minds accept these hallucinations as normal. When we dream we inhabit a subjective, internal world, where reason and reality no longer dominate. But some of these dreams are forgotten just after we wake up from sleep. Part of the reason dreams are hard to remember is may be that many dreams are not that memorable. Much of the dreaming we do every night involves very uninteresting and dull stuff.

It may also be that the brain is programmed to forget dreams. This intriguing theory starts with the fact that in some

respects the brain is very much aware while we stay busy dreaming. However, while some brain functions remain switched on during sleep, others are switched off. If memory is also a of the brain functions that rests during dreaming, this could account for our difficulty remembering dreams.

Can you control your dreams? Yes! some dream researchers have discovered that the power of suggestion can alter the content of dreams. Either self-coaching or suggestions from someone else any work. Such methods are said to have helped people suffering from recurrent and frightening nightmares or even from occasional scary dreams.

Keep a dream diary beside your pillow, very night. Why? Because a dream journal helps you to remember your dreams and to explore the messages your unconscious mind is sending

to your conscious mind. Keep a pad and a pencil by your bed. Even if you are awoken in the middle of the night, take a moment to jot down what your remember, at the greatest speed. With a little practice, believe it or not, you will be able to scrawl fuitte legible notes in the dark!

In the morning, refer to your notes and write out your dreams. You will be astonished how, with the aid of just a few key words, the dreams of the night before, will come to your mind.

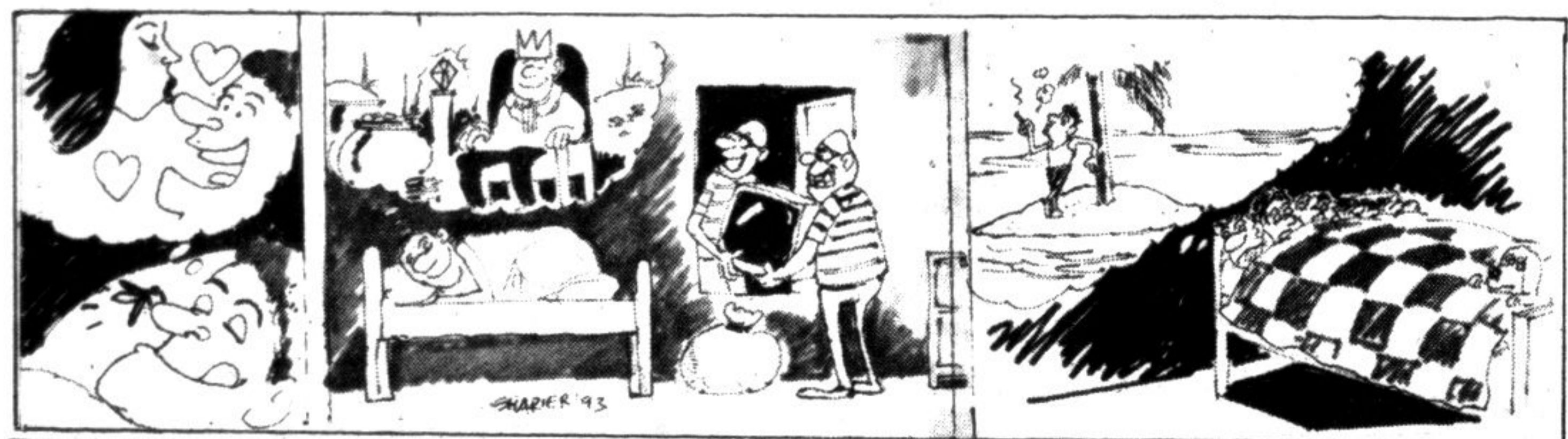
Can dreams really produce great ideas and inspired solutions? The answer is positive and true incidents of long ago have proved it. Elias Howe had worked laboriously for years on a machine to mechanize sewing but failed. Then one night he had a dream in which he was attacked by savages. They gave him an ultimatum: make a ma-

chine that sews or die! As the dream warriors raised their spears, how noticed holes through the tips of the weapons. And that was the solution: a needle with a hole at the point instead of the shank!

Artists too have give credit to dreams with inspiring some of their best work. Samuel Taylor coleridge claimed the entire poem 'Kubla Khan' came to him in a dream. It was a dream that supplied Robart Laws Stevenson with a plot twist for 'The strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Myde'. Dream solutions are best arrived at after a liberal amount of good, old-fashioned, wide-awake work.

All of us have experienced the kinds of stresses in which the most comfortable thing to do upon awakening would be to duck under the covers and escape reality by sleeping some more....

Source: The Family Answer Book



THE most difficult stage of our journey did not last too long two and a quarter hours later our path suddenly became easier and broader Rubabq said, "We'll soon be off the mountain now."

We came round a bend in the path and there to our surprise was Nasreen she was sitting at the side of a fast stream of water which was pouring over the track and had obviously held her up. She was joining some lengths of monkey ropes together.

The strange dream

by Gazala Yasmin Hoque —

looked at the stream. Nasreen appeared to have chosen correctly. The stream was swollen but did not really look dangerous at that point, particularly with a good rope.

"I tell you, what, Nasreen," I said. "Let's take all our ropes, you knot them together really tight and then I'll go across since I am stronger than you." "I don't think that it is necessary," She said. "I can manage and with a rope like this it will be easy." After joining the ropes and testing it by pulling it and leaning on it which seemed quite light and strong, we took Nasreen's rack-sack straps and added them to the end just in case. I then tied it round Nasreen's chest with a knot that would not slip. Nasreen waded in the water came about to her novel. She went steadily on for

some distance. Then to my bewilderment, she turned back slightly on the stream. It was the first change from the plan.

She took another step or two, stopped, suddenly threw her stick to the stream and yelled to us to let the rope out. It was the second change from the plan. I was horrified! What on earth was she up to? Before we had even properly grasped her, she had thrown herself on the stream and was swimming a breast-stroke. The stream at once caught her and quickly swept her to where it foamed and bubbled like a water fall over the edge of the track. The unexpected speed with which all of this had happened was the most terrifying think about it. Even so Nasreen got to within a foot of the far bank, and and was on the verge of reaching it

when the water swept her over the edge and she completely disappeared from our view.

At that moment, someone was trying to wake me up when I did wake up. I thought I was in Switzerland near that beautiful stream but when I saw my brothers scowling face I knew where I was! What a strange dream I had, don't you think so?

Notice
Dear Sumna,
Congratulations! Your answer to the Fun Competition was very encouraging indeed. Keep it up! Please come to The Daily Star office and collect your prize on Thursday 25.11.93.
Thank You!
RS, Editor

Fun Competition

The Magic Stick

by Sumna Shamum Khan

KARIM was a very simple man. He believed everything people told him. He used to think that everyone always spoke the truth with him as he himself was always truthful. Karim was married to a woman who was very fat. Her name was Jorina. Mrs Karim knew what kind of person Mr Karim was unfortunately, Karim did not have any job and so it was very difficult for them to make a living. As Karim was a bit foolish, he never passed in his interviews. Day by day, Mrs Karim got angrier and angrier with her husband and started to treat him very badly.

One day Mrs Karim's young brother came to visit his sister. He was the top hijacker of Dhanmondi. His name was Bakir. Jorina was happy to see her brother and gave a warm welcome to him. Then Bakir asked her, "How are you, sis?" Jorina did not know what to say. She told him all her problems. Jorina also requested Bakir to find a good job for his husband. Bakir was glad to hear that Karim could not find any job and quickly offered a one to Karim. He told Jorina that he had a perfect job for her husband. He said that he would give a job in his club in Dhanmondi and make his husband one of them. Jorina was glad to hear that, as she did not know that his brother had become a hijacker. Then Bakir said good-bye to his sister and reminded her to bring her husband to his club the next day.

Jorina told her husband everything. Mr Karim trusted her and agreed to do the job. Next day, Jorina and her husband went to Bakir's club. A lot of noise was coming out of the club. As they entered the club everyone became quiet. The place was very old and dirty. There were no chair or anything to sit on except a small stool. There were four men dressed in a very odd way. Bakir was glad to see them and introduced Jorina and his husband to his partners. Then Bakir gave Karim a pair of pants and a T-shirt just like the one they were wearing. Bakir then said that he did not have to come during day time but only at night. Karim wondered what kind of job it was. But he was not that worried because he trusted Bakir as well as his wife.

At night Karim began to get ready for his first night at the club. When he reached the club he saw everyone waiting for him. Three of them was in one motor-bike and Bakir was in another bike. Bakir ordered Mr Karim to sit on his bike at the back. Karim did what he was told to do. Then they went to a place with no streetlight and very few cars or rickshaws passing. Karim did not know what they were waiting for. He was also afraid to ask them. So like a wise man he kept quiet. After sometime they attacked a woman who was wearing a gold chain. Karim got afraid when he saw them acting so roughly with the woman. So he closed his eyes and shut his ears and sat down on the street. Bakir got angry but did not say anything to treat him very badly.

The next day, Bakir, told Jorina that his husband got promotion. Jorina was happy but Karim could not find any reason for his promotion. He was given another uniform but it was quite different from the previous one. It was a lungi and a vest. He was given a particular time to come to night.

When Karim came to the club at night with his wife, Bakir told him to steal the goods of the big house rear his club. Mr Karim was afraid of Bakir an agreed to do what he told.

Karim entered through the gate as it was opened. He looked through the window and saw a boy and a girl doing something. They were talking about a magic stick which belonged to an old woman and with which she could turn anything into a beautiful thing. Then the boy took a stick in his hand and told the girl that this was the stick that they one going to use for playing the fairy tale Cinderella. But at that time their parents called them to eat dinner and so they left the stick beside the window. Mr Karim quickly took the stick thinking that it was really a magic stick and ran to the club of Bakir. There his wife was waiting outside for him. As soon as he reached the club he told his wife that there was a surprise for everyone. He opened the door of the club with great pride, swinging a chair like Bakir and was about to tell what he had found from the house.

Tommy the Terrier

by Majhabeen Hassan

IT was my birthday and I was day dreaming of a puppy as usual. Mom and Dad had gone out to buy burgers for a long time and hadn't returned yet. I got dressed hurriedly because it was already 5:30 and the guests would arrive in half an hour. I



took a shower, put on my blue satin dress and was all set for the party.

After a while the guests arrived. Mom and Dad had come too, but hadn't brought me any presents. Any way, when the guests had gone I went upstairs to my room and fell asleep.

Suddenly, I woke up by a barking sound downstairs. I quickly put on my dressing gown and went downstairs. You wouldn't believe what I saw there. "Wow!" It was the first word I could utter. It was a puppy; a little English Terrier. "It's for you, Romal" Mom said. Mom and Dad had given me the present that I have always wished for! I thanked and hugged them. They told me that it was specially flown over from England by DHL. I named my little puppy Tommy.

The next morning I saw Tommy was in his kennel. Dad had bought a kennel for him. I gave him some food and took him for a walk. In this way a week passed by.

It was Sunday and I was asleep. As I was spending my summer holiday I didn't have any school. Suddenly Tommy came and dragged me out of my bed. I quickly slipped into a T-Shirt and slacks. I followed him to my neighbour's house. Then I knew why he was behaving like that. It was a daytime burglar who had been robbing my neighbour, Mrs. Rahim. I quickly telephoned the nearest police Station.

In a few seconds Police came and arrested the burglar. I was very happy and proud of Tommy that day. I love my puppy very much. He is like a friend to me.

