

Picture shows W. Ph. Billy Barnaart and Dr. Delwar Hossain Khan assessing a teenaged girl with Down's syndrome.

Rehabilitating the Mentally Impaired by Nancy Wong

RIME Minister Khaleda Zia declared her government's commitment to improving the lot of the country's disabled citizens in a proclamation last August, in welcoming ESCAP's adoption of 1993-2002 as the decade for the region's Disabled Persons.

W. Ph. Billy Barnaart, a Dutch physiotherapist and specialist for mentally handicapped children, is heartened by such vocal government support. Having been attached to the Society for the Care and Education of the Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMRB) for the past five years and visited its 25 branches scattered throughout the country, he feels however, that much more needs to be done to bring this group of disabled people into the stream of normal life.

According to WHO estimates, there are more than three million such disadvantaged people in Bangladesh. (SCEMRB, started by a few parents in 1977, has grown into a full fledged national organisation caring for its wards). Mental retardation is more often than not accompanied by physical disabilities such as the lack of co-ordination. This is where physiotherapy enters the picture. Games and music have proved successful in stimulating interest and helping children co-ordinate their movements.

Very often these children cannot stand, walk or have poor balance and muscle power According to Barnaart, early detection and intervention can help a great deal towards normal movement. Dr Delwar Hossain Khan, a homeopathic practitioner, who has been working closely with him for the past five years, affirms that "in some cases, physiotherapy is the only treatment".

While lauding the government's efforts to provide primary education for all by the year 2000, Barnaart strongly feels that this should include slow learners, physically and mentally handicapped as well. He laments the number of instances where physically handicapped children who are as bright as others are denied places in normal schools because of the lack of certain facilities. Or feelings on the part of school principals and teachers that they may not be able to integrate fully with normal students. Thus the weak in society are cruelly marginalised

He recalls the fact that when the building for SCEMRB was in the process of construction in 1989, he had recommended that ramps be built at the entrance to accommodate wheelehairs. His plea fell on deaf ears and even if the authorities concerned have a change of heart today, the cost of construction would be much higher as it would involve much more trouble, labour and raw materials. Above all, Barnaart comments, "society's attitude to disabled people needs to be changed from one of indifference and heartless curiosity to that of caring and compassion. After all, their rights must also be taken care of".

Sometimes societal callousness together with bureaucratic bungling produces bizarre incidents. Around July '92, a mentally retarded girl of about 14 years of age, found roaming the streets of Faridpur, was picked up by the patrol police; who sent her to jail. After a while, the warden (a well intentioned man) came to realise that she was not normal. He thus packed her off to the institute catering for mental illnesses in Pabna.

There again, the poor unfortunate was a misfit as hers was a case of mental retardation and not psychiatric disorder. Whereupon the authorities in Pabna, seeing that they could not do anything for her, returned her to the jail in Faridpur. The warden this time, approached the SCCMRB branch as well as the relevant social welfare branch to look into the matter: but "nothing has happened to rectify the situation and she's still in jail; as a legal guardian is required to claim her and no one has come forth" recounts Barnaart. In the process of criss-crossing the country visiting SCEMRB branches, he has come across a number of mentally retarded and psychiatric patients languishing in jails for lack of a more humane solution. "It is high time that these disadvantaged (through no fault of heir own) are brought into the fold of normal life", he asserts.

No Headway yet for Slum Dwellers

T was the Monday, January 24, 1994. The slumdwellers at Agargaon squatter settlements in the suddenly received a notice DMCC area alone (covering from the Department of about 60 sq. miles). On the Housing and Settlement (DHS) other hand, Qaolition for the under Ministry of Works. The Urban Poor (QUP) recently renotice stated that as the Prime vealed a different figure identi-Minister was going to fying 2156 slum dwellers and squatters in DMCC. About 20 inaugurate the 17th National Science and Technology Week lakh people live in these slums. In the period from at the Science and Technology Museum, all the structures, 1990-1993, as the QUP shows, . permanent or temporary, 21 slums were evicted by the dwelling houses or shops. city authority. erected illegally, on the either side of the thoroughfare of the museum should be removed by 30th January. Otherwise DHS will ask the police force to

take necessary actions. Clearly, the implication of the notice was that the ramshackle picture of slums should not be exposed to the PM and the vista kept clean at any cost. This attempt at evicting the Agargaon slum dwellers was severely criticised by the press and different social organisations. In the face of their vehement protests, DHS finally had to withdraw the notice.

The above incident is only a recent one preceded by a series of such incidents. In every case 'the slum-dwellers were pushed into a miserable situation. Neither the government nor opposition care to bother about the future of the people who live in the slums of Dhaka City and other municipal areas. People continue to demand cheap labour. But that demand ironically works against the planned urban growth process because labour can only come from the slums. Can this contradiction be removed. The concerned authority or Ministry is not stop the migration from villages to towns which is obviously a resultant effect of landlessness and unemployment. They are not interested either in preparing any rehabilitation programme for the migrant unfortunate and helpless slumdwellers.

This article focuses on slum problem in general. It covers trends in migration process and worsening conditions of the slums population in Dhaka City up to the end of 1993 from 1990. Discussion of the causes and consequences of the migration process takes the socio-economic impacts on the whole urban structure into account. The analysis is mainly based on the published sources including newspaper reports.

A CUS study shows that there are over 1125 slum and

by Imtiar Shamim

to absorb the new labour.

Admittedly, the cause of emergence and expansion of slum is the massive rural-urban migration during the last two or three decades. Migration of people, caused by rural push and urban pull factors, continued to increase and was con-

demographic mismatch: The natural growth of rural popula tion contributes to the increasing size of labour force; as a consequence land-man ratio goes down to an alarming level; the rate of unemployment soars as the agricultural sector is already exhausted not

The so-called polarisation does not take place in the rural societies because of absence of any external or internal supportive activities in favour of the peasant-labourers' own organisation. The only option open to them is to run to the cities. Chances of uprising against the inequality are thus partially eliminated. Natural

Dhaka city.

There has been a surprising lack of systematic urban planning to support demand for the quality of the urban environment. Apart from the urban-rural harmonised linkage. for which rapid but unplanned urban expansion have occurred, the utility services have been given a less systematic attention. Sometimes access to utility services has been monopolized by the posh residential areas and the downtown. Utility services in urban slums have been in a miserable condition and hazardous for both slum-dwellers and other citizens. This suggests that unhealthy environ-

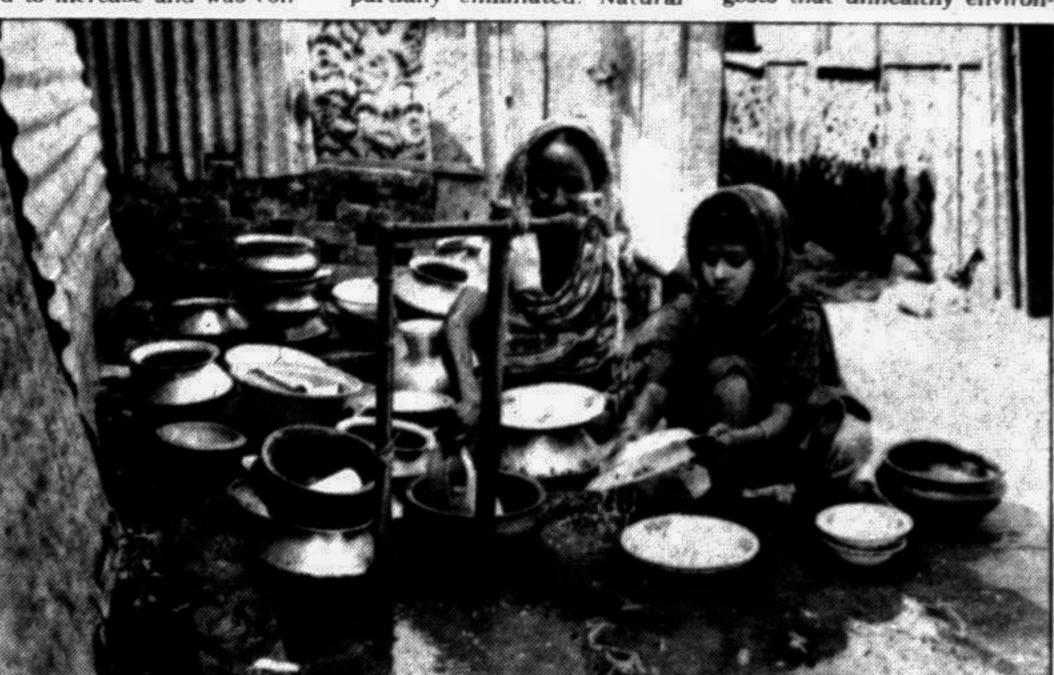
mental hostilities. Does it mean that these all pervasive urban (slum) problems can be overcome by demolishing the slums by the bulldozer? Considering the Bangladeshi context, lets not forget the humanitarian cause - the shortest answer is. NO. In the context of social underdevelopment, the slums deserve sympathy of the Bhaddorlok citizens and attention of the planning and maintenance authorities. But in practice, there had been a tendency to ignore the importance of this sociopolitical attitude. As the slums are evicted from one area it drives the dwellers to find a new area which implies that destruction of one slum may give birth to another slum or squatter settlement. The city authority keeps this destructive process alive as it is under pressure to display that the neighbourhoods are clean and beautiful to the PARENTS of the city. At the same time these evil places are the the source of cheap labour force.

The underlying argument of the above discussion rests on the premise that the government and its policies are unable to stop the process of sluming which is a consequence of rural-urban migration. The one way traffic can be reduced to a tolerable limit provided the urban-rural disparity in resource allocation is bridged. Concentration of population and the growth and spatial expansion of slums in Dhaka reflect the absence of rural-urban mutual link. Uneven pattern of development of urban centres determines the rural-urban linkage. Furthermore, inter-urban and urban-rural communication network play an important role in this linkage. Disparities like inter-urban and intra-urban factors are also visible in Bangladesh and inspire the village people to rush to the metropolis'.

The beautification of Dhaka can not be maranteed by slums eviction. Rather we have to look into the fundamental question of where does it originate. The urban biased development policy cannot obviously reverse the process.

The policy planners, however, should be sincere enough to evolve the mechanism to reduce the migration rate. Otherwise the very existence of the city life is very likely to come under threat letalone the beautification.

The writer is associated



Where even running water is luxury.

centrated, especially in the Dhaka city. The urban bias in macro policies helps allocation the major portion of national resources to the metropolis. It is the only place where people from the periphery dream to go to earn their bread.

According to available statistics, the most general and common causes of rural-urban migration and subsequent expansion of slums in DCC area. It is seen that among others, poverty in general and landlessness in particular are the most influential factors. Side by side river bank erosion is no less significant in pushing people out of their ancestral

This trend is conspicuously influenced by the social and

hazards like erosion, cyclone, flood and drought only speed up the process.

On the other hand employment opportunities, relative security, educational and other social developments in urban areas act as urban pull factors. Unevenness in urbanisation and relative accessibility from other parts of the country for diversified economic or employment bases ensured all the major pull advantages for DMCC.A CUS study shows that the largest proportion tends to migrate in DMCC from Faridpur, Dhaka, Comilla, Barisal, Noakhali, Mymensingh and Patuakhali. All these are densely populated, povertystriken and adjacent to the north, south and south-east of

— Photo: Shehzad Noorani ment is a common feature of

urban life. The city flood pro-

tection embankment causes waterlogging and disrupts the existing drainage system. These embankments provide spaces for the emergence of slums which cause further environmental hazards. For example. to unplanned urban development terrible flood has been

affecting mainly the slums. Newspaper reports and some urban studies support the observation that the level

of availability and the quality of water supply and sanitation are quite an unacceptable state which threatens urban health. In any consideration, the slums smart under a constant socio-political and environ-

with GSS, an NGO.

MARKETING

Today's Tool for Success in Business

ECURING a market share for one's product or service depends on one's operational territory and the particular customer segment. Asia, for instance, is a marketing opportunity. China and India alone account for millions of possible customers Average income-wise Indonesia does not appear to be lucrative. But the discerning marketer will note: the richest Indonesians though 10% of the population, number about 19 million. The steps on organisation may adopt is demonstrated by Honda. It follows a strategy of first making, marketing and supplying motor bikes. Then it goes into automobiles production. This system has many benefits: Local conditions shape such important elements as labourmanagement efficiency and relationship, manufacturing technology, experience in responding to the wants of the host government and through knowledge of that region's market. Honda the world's largest producer of motor bikes with half the world's market, is now in Asia after successes in USA and Europe.

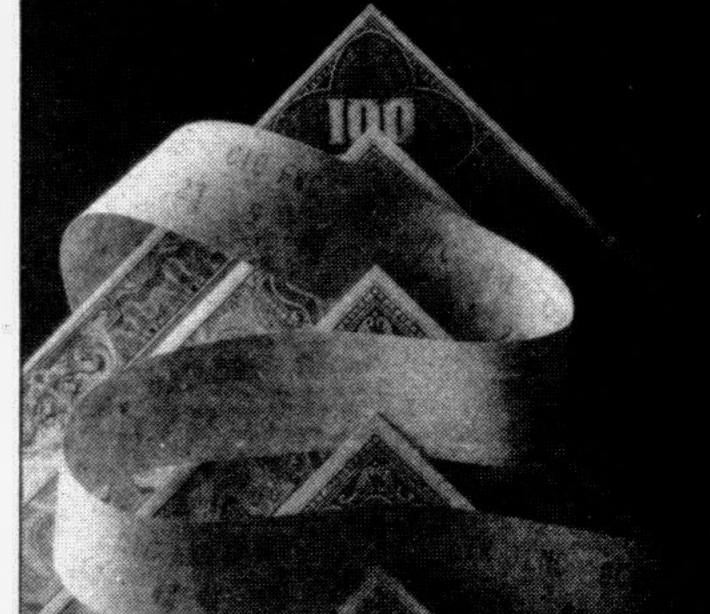
Owning One's Market

Smaller industries seem to do best if they own their market: by identifying their range of customers and producing or offering a service in response to their demands. At times the product services may be broad based, at other times narrow. Apple computer first went for small computers, specially personal computers; then desktop publishing with technology alliances. Rich profit is generated if one owns the market. Japanese companies have used this strategy to win markets, combat rivals in such industries as autos, electronics, semi-conductors and computers.

Interactive Market

Today's marketing is a dialogue, whether it is advertising or supplying the primary batch to potential users for feedback. Apple's Macintosh was originally black and white, with limited memory, practically no software - but captivatingly easy to use. Profiting from feedback, the Macintosh became open, adaptable and in colour. For achieving similar results Xerox established 25

by Jamal Arsalan



test centres 7 months before marketing its Docutech system. Conventional procedure might have taken more than twice the time and four times the number of test centres!

Adaptive Market

Adaptive marketing is sensitive to customer's needs, flexible and resilient in production. Though the National Bicycle Industrial Company in Kokobu, Japan charges 10% more for its made to order cycles, the demand and profit is immense. Deliveries are made in 2 weeks; 11,231,862 choices are offered! The US newspaper 'The Los Angeles Times has 7 separate editions for the city's readers; that is, each edition besides certain common items, had its won news, ads, sports, editorial and other features. US-based Caterpillar Tractor Ltd, has major production centres located all over the globe. Basic parts are made there centrally. But local variations using indigenous materials satisfy the users and boost that country's economy.

Formal/Informal Market

Survey Benefit from market surveys can be very useful by targeting potential users. The marketer should also have personal contact with dealers, suppliers and customers. Final decision about the product/service may

be intuitive to cover exceptional cases because consumers may say one thing when questioned but react differently when faced with the product in the 'flesh' as happened to Akio Morita's Sony Walkman. The survey was negative but the outcome: rich profit and fame for a truly world product!

USA's Cooper Tire and Rubber makes its own version of tires, originally designed and produced by other firms that have succeeded in the market. Focussing on quality the executives and staff, committed by incentive pay tied to performance, run the factories at 100% capacity where similar firms operate at 80%. The company does no build new plants, it buys old ones more cheaply and escalates them to meet Cooper's standards. Industries facing fund constraints will find this method

useful. Product Life-Cycle

USA's General Mills has reaped huge profits by attractively and competitively marketing old products of high standard. The firms is not interested in diversifying too much by buying up new industries or constantly making many new products at astronomical costs. The firm adheres to a number of core products on the basis that a

product does not have a life cycle, all its needs is to grow or vary over time in response to the consumer's need Instead of \$20,000 and 2 months of questioning customers in 8 sample cities, the various divisional leaders "go more by what we feel." The company stays competitive by rewarding all employees for their ideas. The top dozen executives of each independent operating division are offered stock options.

Sales Strategy

While some products parts, tools — are sold direct or to suppliers, others are sold through stores. Sales assistants need to feel the customer is their source of bread and butter. In Japan once beautiful packaging of purchases counted, now it is being able to spend less time in queues and more economical products. Shiseido, cosmetic manufacturers, sells in Japan through a network of independent stores which have Shiseido trained salespersons with shelf space reserved exclusively for the company's products!

Market Knowledge

Knowledge of local market is necessary for sales: as true in Japan as for the Japanese in overseas markets! Shiseido in USA had no success or impact for 10 years. When they appointed a US cosmetic executive instead of the usual manager from Japan they learnt: cosmetics to be a success in USA have to be introduced first to the top grade New York city stores!!

Reaching the Customer

Countries without adequate roads cannot market goods or services. Mexico's current highway construction is being conducted by private firms. Collecting tolls from the users until the capital and the necessary profit is recovered, the firms will return the roads to the government. The US is considering using this strategy and so can other nations lacking development capital.

Marketing involves the whole enterprise, not just one person or section. With a marketing and sales outlook customers can be met and dealt with satisfactorily.

The writer is associated with

Jute Producers Hitch a Ride on the Green Trend

ANY had thought that competition from synthetic fibres had killed the jute industry, but the versatile and durable cash crop of Asia's poorest nations is ready to stage a comeback.

The reason for this is a new anti-synthetic green wave sweeping Western Europe. North America and Japan. And poised to reap the benefits are producers in countries like Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

Across South Asia, jute factories that had shut down are once more looking at a bright future for the industry.

Suddenly, jute is in — not only for its original use to make gunny bags and sacks. but also refined jute fibre to craft fine yarn, rugs and carpets.In Germany, they are even using jute for car interiors, and even as a lining for asphalt road surfaces.

Many developing countries in Asia depend heavily on jute for foreign exchange income. India is the world's largest producer, with an estimated crop of about six to 6.5 million bales this season. (One bale weighs 180kg).

Jute and jute products are Bangladesh's main foreign exchange earners, accounting for 28 per cent of annual export income. The crop is also grown in China and Nepal while Thailand grows kenaf, a jute-like fibre.

Jute plantations supply the plant to refineries that strip of its bark, soften it and use it for producing yarn and fibre which are woven into the fab-

But while the biodegradable jute is more environmentfriendly than synthetic substitutes, doubts have risen over its carcinogenic attributes because petroleum products are often used to soften it.

This problem has been solved by many producers keen to keep the product green by using non-edible castor oil to soften the fibre instead of petroleum. Pleased hazelnut growers in

Turkey are now using hydrocarbon-free jute bags. Jute producers are hopeful coffee and cocoa producers will follow suit soon.

To promote their case, producers turned out in full force at a four-day international meeting organised by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on jute and the environment

by Andi Spicer

held in The Hague in October. "We brought together a cations." wide spectrum of people in the jut sector, and came up with a productive exchange of ideas," says FAO senior commodities specialist Sat

Malhotra. "Close attention needs to continue to strengthen demand for traditional products which occupy a predominant position in the product mix of all major supplying countries. said the FAO in a report on the

But Malhotra adds. "Jute will continue to be used in traditional products, but its future lies in other diversified appli-

Among the less traditional uses for jute is for lining car doors. German luxury carmaker BMW is considering this use in its new models.

More bizarre is for jute to be used in road surfaces and in building materials for wall par-

The FAO is also considering using jute blended with other agro-fibres, such as cotton, silk and sisal for fabrics. Explains Malhotra: "The basic objective is to commercialise what is found in research and bring it

to the market, particularly outside India. Different products are now evolving."

But while the FAO encour-

ages jute producers to maintain the products' green quality, it warns that the fibre "should not be promoted solely on the basis of (its) environ ment-friendly attributes". Said the UN agency in its report: "Technical and economic attributes, as well as other advantages are significant and could assume greater importance in the future".

Already, an international jute and kenaf task force in being set up to promote and concentrate resources on stimulating demand for the commodity. At the same time, it is also trying to entice former jute farmers back to

growing the plant.

Before the present price hikes, poor returns were forcing farmers to move into more profitable crops. Those in Thailand, for instance, were moving out of jute and into cassava, the completing crop, according to the Dhaka-based International Jute Organisation

Even Bangladesh's smaller than expected 1993-94 jute crop is mainly because of a changeover from jute to rice production, which gives a better return to farmers. More than 10 per cent of the 525,000 hectares under jute last year was diverted to rice.

Local trade officials report that more than 75 per cent of the crop will be tossa jute, a variety increasingly favoured by mills in Bangladesh and abroad. Top jute exporter India is now importing high quality raw jute from Bangladesh for re-export.

The combination of higher prices and a lower Indian crop has hit the Indian jute industry badly. Mills are facing problems finding, not just highquality jute at the right price. but the whole range of qualities, which it must now import from Bangladesh.

Raw jute accounts for about 45 per cent of the cost of producing jute goods. India imports high quality jute from Bangladesh for re export, much of this smuggled Thus even with farmers switching to other crops. Bangladesh still expects to earn about US\$430 million from raw jute and goods exports this year in 1991-92, it earned US\$387-63

million

What is biodiversity? Biological diversity is made up of all species of plants and animals, their genetic material and the ecosystems of which they

are a part: Genetic diversity refers to the variation of genes and geno-

types between and within species. It is the sum total of varied genetic information contained in the genes of individual plants, animals and microorganisms that inhabit the earth. Diversity within a species gives the ability to adapt to change whether in environment, climate and agricultural methods or the presence of new pests and diseases. Species diversity refers to the variety of species within a given

Ecosystems consist of interdependent communities of species (complex mixes of diversity between and within species) and their physical environment. The extent of an ecosystem or habitat is imprecise; a single ecosystem may cover thousands of hectares or just a few. They include major natural systems such as grasslands, mangroves, coral reefs, wetlands and tropical forests as well as agricultural ecosystems that, while depending upon human activity for their existence and maintenance, have characteristic assemblages of plants and animals.