T is a dream of every

cardiac surgeon in the

images of the inside organs.

the great advancement in the

endoscopic surgery was done

by Baxter Corporation of USA

in designing a three-chip

camera. Similarly the John-

son & Johnson Corporation

developed and modified sur-

suturing inside the body cav-

ity. Utilising these high tech-

nological devices we devel-

oped a technique to close a

hole in the heart with an in-

cision of one and half inch

This operation was done

on a 19-year old girl, suffer-

ing from a hole in the heart

called Atrial Septal Defect. A

traditional operation on this

girl would have resulted in a

10 inches long scar in the

middle of the chest starting

from the neck down to the

abdomen. Typically in major-

ity of the Indian young ladies,

this scar can become a keloid

which can be very ugly, and

traditional Indian dress can-

not cover this scar. So we

decided to perform the oper-

ation by can alternative

technique which will leave

behind a very very small scar

on the right side of the chest

by the skin fold. The opera-

tion was done by inserting

three cannulaes into the

heart, one from the neck and

two from the groin. Once

which can be easly covered

# Video Assisted Thoracic Surgical Technique to

Close the Hole in the Heart world to perform major heart surgeries through a key hole. However, this remained For the First Time in the World at the an illusion because of lack of fine micro chip cameras and BM Birla Heart Research Centre, Calcutta modified surgical instruments. But in the recent past a great development in the endoscopic surgery in the On 30th of December 1995 we operated on a 19-year old girl from field of abdominal and urol-Bangladesh suffering from a hole in the heart, The entire operation was ogy surgery created marvelous microchip cameras which can be inserted through a very small hole in the body to give magnified

done through a key hole. The greatest advantage of this operation is a small scar which should not have any of the stigma attached to a heart operation. We are driven by the social problem of unmarried girls having to undergo heart operation with a long scar in the middle of the chest. We feet this technique would help these girls to have the operations without the social

Dr Devi Shetty

Clinical Director and Chief Cardiac Surgeon BM Birla Heart Research Centre, Calcutta

with their Ethicon division these cannulaes are in position, heart was connected to gical instruments for precise the heart-lung machine to take over the circulation. Then a small incision was made on right side of the chest under the natural breast fold and a three-chip camera was inserted inside the chest long, for the first time in the cavity to visualise the heart.

This gave a magnified image of the heart on the TV screen which was mounted in front of the patient. Looking at the heart on the TV screen. modified surgical instruments were inserted into the chest through this small incision and the operation was done to close the hole in the heart. Once the procedure was over the patent was gradually weaned from the heart-lung machine. The subsequent recovery was very smooth.

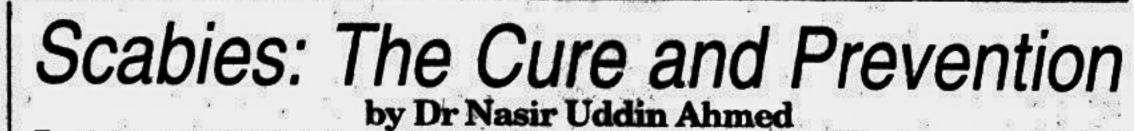
The greatest advantage of this technique is that these young ladies are left behind with a very small scar which is so small that after 4-5 months, there will be hardly any evidence of heart operation. And because there is only one cut on the heart instead of 4 or 5 cuts in the

traditional operation, the patient's recovery from the operation is very smooth. Due to this reason, the patient's stay in the hospital is shortened thereby reducing the over all

cost of operation.

At the moment we, at the BM Birla Heart Research Centre, are using this technique only for closing a sintple hole in the heart called

Atrial Septal Defect. However, we are optimistic that this technique can be eventually used for performing complex heart operations. This experience of ours, was presented by displaying the video cassette of this operation at the International Conference in Madras recently, which was well attended by renowned cardiac surgeons from all over the world with similar interest. This was the first time in the world our surgical team has been successful in performing open heart surgery through a key hole. A large number of centres in Western countries have shown keen interest in repeating the same procedure in their Institutes. Like laproscopic gall bladder surgery revolutionised the abdominal operations, we feel that this technique of Video Assisted Thoracic Operation would revolutionise heart operations.



in our daily life to see a poor woman with a baby in her lap begging for some food or money. The baby is having papules, vesicles. pastules and purulent ulcers in different parts of the body like head, neck, palm, sole or sometimes all over the body.

Besides these, the woman may be scratching her web of finger, wrist, breast, axilla, lower abdomen due to intense itching. Even she may scratch over her genitalia and buttocks subconsciously while talking to others. All the above conditions are due to a very contagious skin disease called scables'.

Scables is more common in an overcrowded area with poor hygienic condition, but may involve individuals of all socio-economic groups. Children under 15 years have the highest prevalence of scabies.

It is caused by female mite of sarcoptes scabele, which burrows in the skin and lav their eggs. The mite may survive only two or three days in beds, clothes and house dust whereas in the human body the mite survives up to

T is a very usual picture 30 to 60 days. So it can be transmitted from person to person by close physical contact, particularly among the family members and between husband and wife. Those who spend night with friends or exchange dresses with others are at increased risk. Institutional outbreaks in hospitals, nursing homes, mental institutions also have

> been reported. The itching may persist most of the time but tends to be more marked at night or after a hot bath as warmth is stimulating for the mite to remain mobile. Sensitisation to the mites and their product begins about four to six weeks after infection and individuals develop highly irritant excoriated and often secondary infected folliculopapular eruption with the

effect of scratching. Secondary eczematous charge may be marked or impetigo may be present specially in case of children. Occasionally, somebody may suffer from acute glomerulonephritis, a serious Kidney disease, due to infection with nephritogenic strains of streptococci.

All living groups should be treated simultaneously with the patient to prevent the occurrence of infection. The treatment of scables are applied to the whole skin surface apart from the head and neck is a lotion or cream such as 25 per cent, Benzylenz benzoate, one per cent. Lindane. Permethrin or Crotamiton etc. Antihistamins or Salicylates are helpful to prevent the itching. If bacterial superinfection is significant. we may use antibiotics.

We may think that scabies is a negligible disease. But we should all bear in our minds that scabies may be a leading cause to kidney damage. So. it must be treated as soon as possible. We know that prevention is better than cure. Scabies can be prevented by maintaining a good

hygienic habit. Cleanliness of the body, clothings, beds and surroundings are essential. Personal hygiene is very important to maintain specially in an institutional

The writer is lecturer at Dinajpur Medical College.

# Giving the World's Cities the Transport They Need

by Rupert Butler

TITH forecasts of major growth in population, ▼ towns and cities worldwide must develop fast, effective, environment-friendly transport systems. Neglect will mean declining health standards, increased road accidents and severe environmental damage.

As for central and eastern Europe, lack of transport policy and unchecked growth of the car was leading to an overall 'disaster area'.

These warnings were sounded recently at Transport in the sustainable City', a seminar of transportation and environmental specialists held at the University of

London. It was organised by the UK Committee of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNED-UK) — an organisation backed by a mix of public funds, private trusts, British industry, the voluntary sector and trade

High on the agenda of the seminar were British proposals and measures on transport congestion. These included the continuing revival of trams for public transport either inside cities or on main approach arteries and the total removal of cars altogether from city centres.

A widespread of the issues that emerged from the con-

ference will figure prominently at a forthcoming international UN conference. the city summit, to be held in Istanbul in June. Attended by representatives from 185 countries, it will be the second United Nations conference on human settlements (habitat II). Main preoccupation will be looming problems on urban population growth.

The main speaker at the London seminar was Dr John Whitelegg, a specialist on transport and environmental issues. He pinpointed the evils of the unrestricted use of motor and air transport -'large lumps of metal rushing around on the ground and visible in the sky.

As well as good public transport. Dr Whitelegg called for cities providing facilities for walkers and cyclists and the end of car use for short journeys.

London Press Service

Concrete Steps. to

Eradicate Poverty in

our World

steps which the United Na-

tions system and Govern-

ment, along with NGOs, the

private sector and civil soci-

ety, are undertaking in a

concerted effort to eliminate

Through sustainable agricul-

tural development, enhanced

food distribution and storage,

improved access to food for

dard of living: Through na-

tional action to combat the

root causes of poverty in the

areas of basic education, pri-

mary and reproductive health

care, and basic social ser-

vices, including such specific

pectancy of 60 years by the

or control of diseases posing

global health problems by the

education by the year 2000

eracy rate to at least half its

1990 level, with emphasis on

grammes for women, includ-

ing employment schemes, af-

fordable housing and access

cupational opportunities,

creating jobs and promoting

the goal of full employment:

Through private-sector initia-

tives to encourage en-

trepreneurship, maximize job

creation and labour-intensive

industries, and address the

challenge of unemployment

other vulnerable groups :

\* Empowering women and

\* Fostering productive oc-

Eradication, elimination

Universal access to basic

\* Reducing the adult illit-

Anti-poverty pro-

Minimum life ex-

goals as :

vear 2000

year 2000

female literacy

to land and credit.

and unpaid work:

\* Providing a basic stan-

low-income populations;

Eliminated hunger:

Below are some concrete

## 1996: International Year for the Eradication of Poverty of the community.

Amid plenty the number of poor people is growing. Today one in every five people suffers from debilitating poverty. Reaffirming the fact that the eradication of poverty is fundamental to reinforcing peace and achieving sustainable development the General Assembly of the United Nations, through its resolution 48/183 of 21 December 1993, proclaimed 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

Poverty Perspectives

The half-century since the creation of the United Nations in 1945 has witnessed an unprecedented growth in prosperity, with global GNP loutput in goods and services) increasing sevenfold and per capita income more than tripling. During this period, great strides have also been made in alleviating poverty worldwide :

Despite a growing world population, the proportion of poor has actually declined. from 32 per cent in 1985 to about 25 per cent in 1995. according to World Bank fig-

Developing countries' growth rates - averaging 4.5 per cent in 1995 - will generally continue to outstrip those of findustrialized countries, at 2.5 per cent;

\* Two of the world's most populous countries are enjoying economic expansion China's economy has been growing at an annual rate of about 12 per cent since the late 1980s, while India has recorded nearly 5 per cent annual economic growth for the past decade.

Yet these gains have not been spread equally. Even amid plenty, the number of poor people is growing. Today one in every five people suffers from debilitating poverty. The gap between rich and poor is widening, both within countries and between developed countries and many developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs).

## A Complex Problem

Poverty is a complex mul-tidimensional problem with origins in both the national and international domains. There is no simple or uniform answer. Rather, country-specific programmes to tackle poverty, as well as the this problem.

The eradication of poverty and hunger, greater equity in income distribution and human resource development remain major challenges everywhere. They are the shared responsibility of all countries.

Poverty has traditionally the income or expenditure mum standard of living. Most countries have adopted national "poverty lines" in terms of house-hold income. and monitor the number of people who fall below that threshold.

"Absolute Poverty" on a global scale was estimated in 1990 by the World Bank, using a criterion of \$370 per person per year. Using this standard, it estimated that there were about 1.1 billion in developing countries living in absolute poverty. Today that number is estimated at 1.5 billion and includes the poor in developed countries

"Relative Poverty" recognizes that poverty is not just

parallel process of creating a supportive international environment, are crucial to solve

Measuring Poverty

been measured in terms of level that can sustain a mini-

a matter of bare survival but also constitutes a minimal standard of living as measured by the community in which one lives. In some European countries, for example, the poverty threshold is set at one half the average national income.

. The Human Development Approach goes a step further, acknowledging that eradicating poverty is more than a matter of increasing income to purchase market goods and services. It uses additional criteria, including infant mortality, life expectancy, nutrition and health, access to clean water and sanitation, literacy and other aspects of human existence that affect the overall quality of life.

Conquest of Poverty

Poverty is not a "given" Rather it is a blight on humanity, its existence jeopardizes that most basic of human rights — the right to

Poverty is inseparably linked to lack of control over resources, including land. skills, knowledge, capital and social connections. It imprisons individuals and, in a wider context, poses one of the gravest threats to society undermining political stability, social cohesion and the environmental health of the

Poverty and peaceful development are incompatible. Taking up the challenge to eradicate extreme poverty is

an expression of growing confidence on the part of Governments and the international community that it can and should be done.

### Facts about Poverty

Despite growing abundance, the last three decades have also been characterized by increasing poverty. For ex-

\* Every minute of every day, approximately 50 babies are born into poverty:

\* Of the 5.7 billion people in the world, 1.5 billion are desperately poor and the number is increasing by approximately 25 million a year. According to UNICEF, it will quadruple within a single lifetime if current economic and demographic trends con-

 Whereas the income ratio between the richest 20 per cent and the poorest 20 per cent of the world's population was 30:1 in 1960, it had increased to 61:1 by

Twenty per cent of the world's population survive on a daily income of less than

 Today one billion of the world's poor live in rural areas, but by the year 2005 every second person will live in cities or towns, bringing about a growing "urbanization of poverty";

The majority of the world's poor are women. Children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as indigenous peoples, the disabled, the

elderly, refugees, migrants and the long-term unemployed, are most susceptible to poverty:

In developing countries. over 95 million children under the age of 15 are estimated to be working to help their poverty-plagued families, while an equal number are estimated to be homeless, destitute "street children":

 Over 120 million people are officially unemployed and many more are underemployed. Many young people. even those with formal education, have little hope of finding productive work.

Perimeters of Poverty

Pockets of poverty exist even in the most affluent countries. However, entire countries can also be shacked by poverty. The most acute problems are in developing countries, in which more than a third of the entire population lives below the poverty threshold.

\* Least Developed Countries (LDCs) : Many of the world's poor live in the 48 least developed countries (LDCs). The UN's original 1971 list of 25 LDCs has now swelled to 48.

 South Asia: The largest concentration of severely impoverished people - about half the world's total - lives in South Asia ( i e. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Nepal), which is home to 21 per cent of the world's overall popula-

 Africa: Fully half of all Africans are impoverished. As a continent. Africa has 16 per cent of the world's poor, most of them (60 per cent) in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa.

**Economies in Transition** Countries in transition to a market economy (e.g., former Soviet Union Republics and Central and Eastern European countries) have experienced grave, inflation-aggravated economic problems. Especially hard hit are people formerly protected by comprehensive social safety nets that no longer exist (e.g. the elderly, women and children).

OECD Countries:

Although in World Bank terms OECD countries have only 1 per cent of the world's poorest people, over 15 per cent of the population 'now lives below the national poverty line in both the United States and Western Europe. With joblessness increasing since 1960, there are some 34 million unemployed in developed countries today; in European Union countries alone, there are an estimated 52 million poor. 17 million unemployed and 3 million homeless.

#### A Growing Awareness

more than expanding GNP: it

struggle against poverty is simultaneously a struggle for human dignity. sustainable development and peace.

#### From a Day... \* International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: 17 October

On 17 October 1987. 100,000 defenders of human rights from all walks of life employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies, and to enabling all men and women to attain secure and sustainable liveli-

Commitment 3

"We commit ourselves to

promoting the goal of full

hoods through freely chosen productive employment and Extreme poverty: "a condition so limited by

malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency".

- Robert S Mc Namara Former President, World Bank

joined together on the Plaza of liberties and Human Rights. Trocadero, Paris the site of the 1948 signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - to "pay homage to the victims of hunger, ignorance and violence... [and to] affirm their conviction that human misery

is not inevitable.

From the Declaration of the **World Summit for Social** Development Copenhagen Denmark, March 1995

To National Targets... The Social Summit Declaration commits Governments to put in place policies geared to eradicating abso-

Extreme poverty is far from inevitable : it is an unacceptable scourge'

- Boutros Boutros-Ghali **UN Secretary-General** 

1993 marked the first worldwide observance of this day after it was proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 47/196 of 22 December

To a Year... \* International Year for the Eradication of Poverty:

In 1994 the General Assembly proclaimed 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

lute poverty by a target date to be specified by each country in its national context. At the end of 1996, the General Assembly will evaluate progress made by Governments in meeting their commitments to establish national targets and policies to eradicated poverty.

To a Decade Decade for the Eradication of Poverty: 1997-2006 It is expected that, follow-

"Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated." - Father Joseph Wresinski International Movement ATD Fourth World

Its objective is to create "a greater awareness of the fact that the eradication of poverty is ... fundamental to reinforcing peace and achieving sustainable development" and to catalyze concrete actions resulting in a "distinct and significant contribution to the efforts to eradicate poverty" (General Assembly resolution 49/110, 1994).

### To Solemn Commitments...

'The World Summit for Social Development : In 1995 leaders of 117 nations pledged that their countries would eradicate poverty, promote full employment and foster stable, safe and just societies.

Commitment 2 We commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind."

ing the International Year, the General Assembly will proclaim 1997-2006 as the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

Throughout the 1990s, the United Nations has been bolding a series of international conferences on global development issues. Taken together, this conference continuum, with its interlinking themes, has emphasized the need for peoplecentred, sustainable development, with the eradication of poverty as a

The World Summit for Social Development expanded the context of poverty cradication to encompass such factors as access to basic services and amenities, productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, a sense of human security, the reduction of inequalities, the elimination of discrimination and participation in the life

Through measures to ensure equal employment opportunities in both the formal and informal sectors; elimination of bias and discrimination: inclusion in decision-making Cultivating a stable eco-

nomically enabling environment: Through greater international financial stability and non-inflationary growth, effective use of resources and promotion of a socially responsible private sector: Financing development

and relieving external debt : Through increased multilateral resources and formulation of an effective, durable. development-oriented solution to the external debt problem: achievement of the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNP, the 20/20 initiative, increased foreign direct investment in developing countries; and the use of resources from reduced military expenditures.

 Promoting international trade using Uruguay Round guidelines: Through integration of all countries into an open, equitable, secure, nondiscriminatory and predictable international trading system; enhanced South-South cooperation: commodity diversification, improved access for exports and an end to protectionism.











# Eradicating poverty entails

is a complex process embracing economic factors like creating jobs, as well as noneconomic factors such as meeting basic needs, respect for human rights and popular participation in the development process itself. The

#### Focus on Poverty **Eradication**

crucial cornerstone.