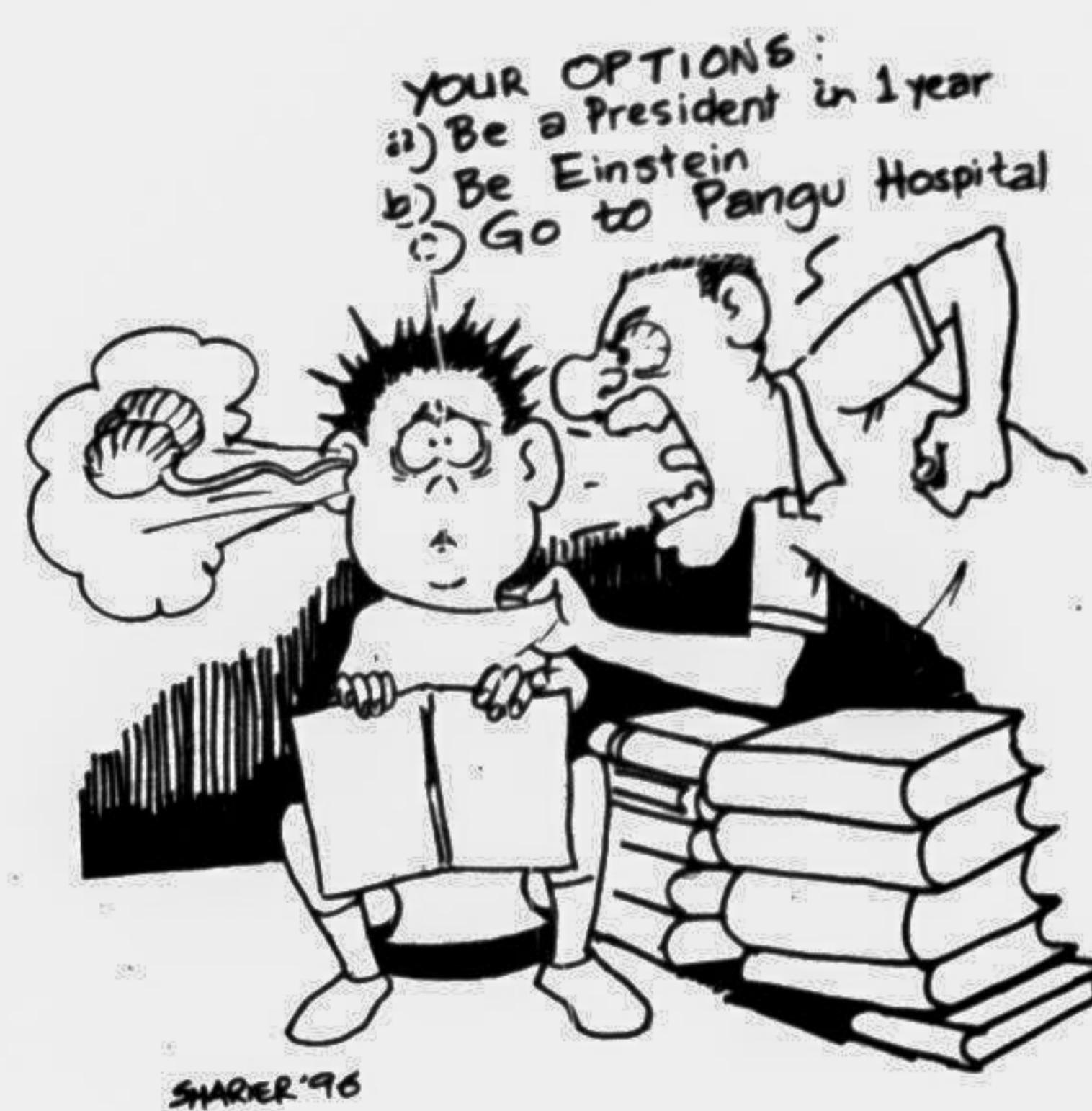


TEENS and TWENTIES

ABUSE

It is Your Turn to Straighten

by Trishna



SHARER '96

PARENTS typically resort to harsh and arbitrary physical punishment that reflects their own moods more than anything else. It's not rare for my ears to get riled by the high-pitched screaming of the lady upstairs at her six or seven year old son, a year and a half old turn daughters and of course the servants. That is followed by the brutal sounds of slaps, kicks and what not!

Then commences the pathetic cries — the sole way for children to reveal their agony. But those teardrops fail to wash away the bestiality from her and instead, she screams even louder, telling the victim to keep shut, inspite of having been beaten to almost unconsciousness. Any sane person would melt at the sight of those children. The boy has the innocent face of an angel, never bullying, or acting over smart or breaking things, as done by children of that age, and there's no need to say how well behaved the twins are. After all, what intentional crimes can the infants, who are a year old, commit? Yet they seem to have taken birth in an affluent family plagued by demons that must have lurked in dark crooks of the family tree for generations.

But they are not the only ones whose childhood will be a relentless horror, indeed they are only a few of the millions. Such parents who shatter their children's childhood are proud to declare themselves as 'strict' and not 'abusive'. They are unaware of the fact that abusive parents are those who have a pattern of punishing their children by hurting or humiliating them, either mentally or physically. They vent their own frustrations of life on children and take it personally when an infant cries or a toddler misbehaves. They feel bound to administer severe punishment to help their child 'straighten up'.

Many such parents have impossibly high expectations of their children and interpret a child's 'cannot' as 'will not'. When talking to such a 'strict' father, who requested his name to be changed as the rest, I gathered that he feels rather fatherly (or masterly) by battering his five-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter, which one do I write about?

Fragments of horror from the childhood litter their minds forever. Reba, an eighteen year old, still recalls spending days with the fear of getting battered by her mother at every step. I don't remember when it all began but I still

night was that he doesn't get beaten the next day. For a normal person, it's nearly impossible to understand how a parent can beat a child", he said. Omar has never been on drugs smoked for a couple of years only. It was forbidden for him to stay out after dusk. But I'm not what I am because of his beatings. I started smoking at the age of 15 and got caught doing so one day. A terrifying incident followed but it worked the other way round; I became determined to smoke more. There has been days when I even smoked over 30 cigarettes. I stopped because I gradually realised how hazardous it was.

On the other hand, there are many parents who have 'straight' children without abusing them. If you love your child, your child loves you back. By hitting a child, a parent only teaches him/her to hatred. It is the most sadistic form of treating another being, said the mother of a ten-year-old girl.

Mr Ahmed the father of two teenage sons said, 'I've noticed that fair and meaningful ways always are more effective. Beating lowers you in the eyes of your children. You beat them today, they beat their own children and others tomorrow. Hence, at the point of every problem, hitting will be considered as the way out. Your child may still love you but they never respect you. And I believe, love, without respect, is worthless.'

Among physical, sexual and emotional abuse, the last is the hardest to spot. In its most obvious form, it can involve a parent who constantly shouts and curses at a child, or who is simply cold and unloving, or who calmly says very scary things such as, 'I wish you had never been born, or you are a good-for-nothing'. So after having read about the physical abuse above, if you have felt proud to be not one of them, then think twice!

The children who are abused today are infected with a monstrous violence as destructive as any genetic disease. When I went to talk to such abusers, many of them simply replied, 'I beat my child, that's my problem'. Yes it is a problem and now it's YOUR turn to 'straighten up' yourself.

This Mr X informed, 'It is my responsibility to show my children the right way. Sometimes when their mischieves go out of control, beating is necessary in order to prevent repetition'. When asked if that really worked, he grinned and replied, 'Well... they are kids now; when they grow older, they won't make the same mistakes. So I want them to remember that such mistakes are followed by severe punishment.'

I tuition a girl, nine years of age. The other day, I asked her to write an essay on 'The Saddest Day of My Life'. She requested me to help her out and so I suggested that it could be about a disappointment, a mishap or a day when her parents had hurt her intensely. At this she responded: 'Miss, there have been so many days when my parents scolded and hit me, which one do I write about?'

Mr Y, mother of Reba's, hesitated to talk about it at first but later she revealed, although very little. 'She's not obedient. Sometimes you have to do this to make your children respect you and fear you; Otherwise, they don't listen to you!'

Omar's father died when he was nineteen. The twenty-two year old still turns lugubrious when looking back at his childhood, 'every memory I have of my early childhood is gripped by overwhelming fear of my father. Omar confessed of being beaten practically everyday. His prayer to God every

For Their Love Of Us..... And Mine For Them

by Muneera Parbeen

ing there way into your house? We don't even have to ask but someone makes SURE that they get there for us. Life is just made far too easy for us at times. We ultimately get so used to living with all these things at our eternal SERVICE that we don't even spare a second thought for them. Yeah, ultimately at a certain time in our lives we do understand & appreciate their efforts a bit. But that's never on time. Our parents do the world for their kids — that is US. Only we never even bother to notice & appreciate it because we are so preoccupied with so many other things.

These days when I see tired old men carrying a bag full of pineapples, standing at some crowded bus stand, I feel this over whelming love (& respect) for them. Elderly women picking up trinkets, hairpins & other things at stalls in Gausia also hold a new meaning for me. I want to love them all and at least show my appreciation to them. I want to open doors for them and half a rickshaw for them perhaps, if they are waiting in the scorching sun, or simply let them ahead of me in a que anywhere. I want them to know that we, as a younger generation are not really too bad. We too love them, if only in our own individual ways.

So many of us complain about our parents.... 'on my mum — she's so OLD FASHIONED', we confide to an apparent best friend. 'My dad, he is just a dead bore....' we relate so easily.

Yeah, we ARE so blind to it all. A 'but' (house made) man go hungry for a meal to instead feed her starving child, another father may buy a CD player to

make up with his moody teenage daughter but the mean-

ing is all the same. In fact, there

is nothing that our parents

wouldn't do if in their capacity,

to make us happy.

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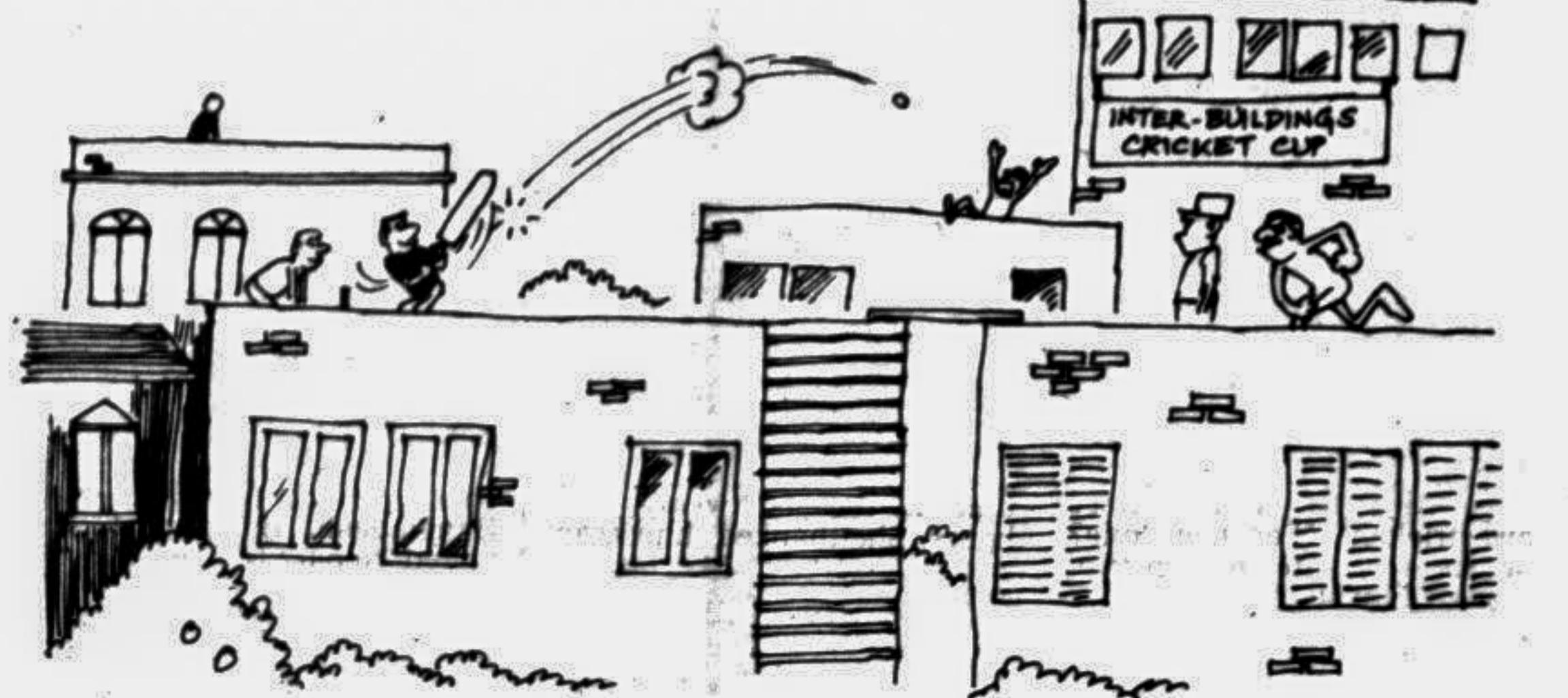
open our eyes too. With — little

effort and understanding, don't

you think WE CAN?

Get A Life

by Shenaz Rahim



the Dutch Club. However, not many people have access to these clubs.

Weddings and those wild parties they have down in Gulshan on the weekends, those are the only two places we can go to have fun and meet new people," claims Shoroni Ahmed, 17. "But parties don't come around very often. I'm not exaggerating when I complain, because we really do need a hangout. There are so many rich businessmen. How come they don't do anything about it?"

Rich businessmen take note! Entertainment is a huge industry, one not fully taken advantage of here. Some braver entrepreneurs started Wonderland, which consists of a few rides and a lot of arcade games, much to the disappointment of

many. "I went to WonderLand. It sucks," complains Nazir Khan, 18. "Sometimes the parties at Panda Garden and the RAOWA Club are okay, but those are expensive to go to. Thank God I'm going away to college next year. I can't wait to leave and go back to the real world!"

The less fortunate of us will stay here and suffer until someone comes up with something better. "At least you're allowed to go to those parties," Tammi Shahid smirks as she hears Nazir's comment. "Bengali young men generally do whatever they want. My brother comes home at 3:00 am and my mom doesn't even care! Guys can go out at night without ten other people, and not have to worry about being attacked. Be-

sides the fact the culture gives them all the freedom in the world." Her sister Hawa agrees.

"It really ticks me off. But it's not like I can do anything about it."

"That is not true," says Muhammad Rahman when I tell him how most girls feel about how much more independence men (actually, boys) get. "My parents don't let me do anything. They are so strict. The only time I can go out, no questions asked, is to play football. Anyway, where would I go?"

Everyone has the same complaint on his/her lips. The message is clear. We all need to get a life. So next time the phone rings at five at night from a lonely sounding teenager, don't judge him too harshly.

Before Her Sickness

by Bikash Singh Sutradhar



to serve others.

Q. Mother, why did you choose Calcutta as your permanent residence?

Ans. We must have a centre.

You have a family to live with, this is just like that. We have 557 places all over the world. And this is our centre. This is our mother house. I have been here from 1928. But there is no



I often said about Mother Teresa that 'The most extraordinary thing about the Mother is that she is an ordinary woman.'

And my first impression was not different when I first saw Mother Teresa at the Head Quarter of the Missionaries of Charity of Calcutta. A little lady of 85, wearing a blue bordered white saree a cross on the right bosom, depicting Jesus Christ she didn't look so amazing at first.

Just about a year ago, Mother Teresa visited Bangladesh. So I jumped at the opportunity and took this tiny interview.

Q. Please say something about your last visit to Bangladesh?

Ans. Yes we went to Dhaka and four or five other places. Our sisters are serving all the poor people there. children are very beautiful. The people are very kind to us and helping us

such reason to choose Calcutta. Q. Some people protest your view on abortion?

Ans. Abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace and of unity. Anybody who does not want a child, please give it to me. I want a child.

Q. Mother, what should be the single aim of a man?

Ans. A clean heart and love for each other. Clean heart can speak to God. And prayer gives a clean heart.

Q. What is your message for the people of Bangladesh?

Ans. Love one another as God loves each one of you and learn to pray, because the fruit of prayer is the greeting of faith and the fruit of love is service and the fruit of service is peace. So, the family that pray together stay together. If we stay together we will love each other as God loves each one of us. So we are all to pray.

Q. Mother, there are some people who want to join your work. What should they do?

Ans. They should come and open themselves where ever they want to work. We have about 50 homes in Bangladesh, we have children's home, we have medical work. Let them go in and talk to the sisters and save the dying people.

Then I wished mother happy birthday, for her coming 86th birthday and requested her to say something in Bengali. She, offering an innocent smile said a 'happy birthday to you also' and then coming closer to my tape recorder uttered in one part of her message in clear Bengali.

Bikash Singh Sutradhar

Always pray together. With your family members. Those who offer their prayers together, will always stay together. If you stay together, then you should love one another. Like God loves every individual. God bless you all!

Her voice will be my live long companion.

THE society in which we live at present is the result of a systematic process of evolution. Through this process our society has shaped over the decades. It's social structure has undergone tremendous change over the last hundred years or so. Needless to say that this changing structure reflects upon the development, advancement and progress of this moving society. Changes in society and variations in social structure can be portrayed through numerous mediums, which highlight various aspects.

One such medium is literature. Literature to be frank is a powerful instrument which presents detailed information about a particular time or any era that society has passed by.

What was it like hundred years ago? What was the social behaviour of the people in early 20th century? What were the social trends of that period? What kind of social restrictions existed then? These questions have troubled many of us.

The answers lie in the pages of the Bengali literary works. Bengali literary works past and present are reliable records of the systematic evolution of the Bengali society and social structure. To be precise a particular literary work is a mirror for a particular period of time. For instance a well known Bengali literary work, 'Abdullah' in a very perspicuous manner describes the social condition of the late 19th century.

The novel also captures the social customs, behaviour, social stratification of that period. Abdullah opens the door to the late 19th century society plagued by illiteracy, superstition. The novel portrays gender distinction, child marriage, kulinism, restrictions on western education and other abominable customs of that specific period. Bankim Chandra's novels inform us of the Bengali renaissance that swept through this part of the subcontinent in the latter part of the 19th century. His immortal works — Durgeshmandi, Kapalkundala, Anandamandir aroused a feeling of nationalism, unity among the people of divided Bengal. Influenced by his works Bengalees were encouraged to educate themselves and to break away from the cobwebs of illiteracy. The influence of

The Path Of Life

Fardeen Ahmed Firoze

We are traveling always,
The thing which everyone says,

We are always traveling,
Only one thing —

The path of life,
Where we have to survive,
All throughout the time.

The valuable thing God has presented,
It is 'Life' which is said.

We have to take care of it,
There is only one way to quit.
The path is long enough,
Not so easy but tough.
It is tougher than you can think,
Any second you can sink.

The path is long but short the time is,
You don't have a chance to miss.

If you want to be prosperous,
Don't see the life as a circus,
Try to take it seriously,
You will be happy.

In the wrong path the Devil leads,
The Devils are nothing but some weeds,
In the right path you have to stay,
The path to prosperity, you can say.

vivid description of the social ethos of their respective days. Rabi Tagore's works reflects upon the pre-independent days of the thirties and forties. Nazrul Islam — these two gems of Bengali literary arena through their works not only entertained us but also gives

the Bengal society in the forties and fifties is portrayed best, in Sharat Chandra's works. Sharat Babu's literary pieces highlight the subtle complexities of the then Bengali society. His literary masterpieces clearly depicts the social ethos of the middle 20th century Bengali society. Sharat Babu's works also capture the social awareness towards education that flourished in the pre-liberation days.

Zahir Raibhan's works amply depict and characterise the social condition of