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## Down to Earth

### Day Care Centres for Children

By A S M Nurunnabi

The concept of day care centres for children is comparatively new in our society. This new development has emerged, particularly in urban areas, because of the steadily growing number of women working in various occupations. Such women need to work outside their homes under economic compulsions. But on the other hand, no satisfactory facility has developed to look after their children. In this context, the need for setting up children's day care centres has arisen. This need is sought to be met by efforts both in the public sector under government initiative and in the private sector.

In recent years, the government has taken steps for setting up daycare centres in various parts of the city to help working mothers. At present, there are eight day care centres in Dhaka city. They are located at Azimpur, Kalyanpur, Mohammadpur, Maghbazar, Rampura, Jatrabari, Faridabad and the Bangladesh Secretariat.

The capacity of each centre is 80 children except the one at the Secretariat where the capacity is 50. Children aged six months to six years are allowed in these centres. The average cost of running each centre ranges from Tk 40,000 to Tk 45,000. In addition, the government grants a subsidy of Tk 800 for each child per month.

The services offered by the day care centres include pre-

school education, primary health care, provision for balanced food and arrangement for indoor games. The centres are kept open from 8 am to 5 pm while the centre at the Secretariat remains open from 9 am to 5:30 pm. The female officers and employees whose children are looked after at the Secretariat centre pay a monthly charge of Tk 300 per child, whereas the working mothers at other centres pay a charge of Tk 30 for each child. There are also proposals for setting up five more centres including one at Azimpur Colony and another at AGB Colony.

This is the overall picture of the operation of the city's day-care centres under government management. It is the general opinion of observers that these centres represent quite limited government endeavour to provide welfare measures for children. It is, however, said that these limited efforts at present cost government an outlay which is seven times more than in the past.

Lately, private initiatives to provide day care facilities have become evident, though on a small scale. In the city, there are at present five to six daycare centre set up under private initiative, which are considered too inadequate for meeting the demands of working mothers.

A different picture may be seen in many foreign countries, where, as a result of the widely

#### Roundtable

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He expressed the hope that the Bangladeshi government would be able to solve all the problems of the repatriated tribal refugees and restore permanent peace in the area.

The district administration also organised a cultural function, where the artists from various tribes cultural institutions and the local Shilpkala Academy performed.

PTI from Agartala adds: Chakma problem came to an end today with all the remaining refugees lodged in the Talmbari camp in Tripura's south district repatriated to their ancestral homeland in Bangladesh.

Official sources said the last batch of Chakma refugees was received by the Bangladeshi authorities at Tabalchhari on the Bangladesh border in a simple meeting.

The Bangladeshi government had made arrangements for providing shelter and other benefits to the returning Chakmas in temporary camps at Tabalchhari areas in CHT, sources said.

The government also has taken steps to implement the 20-point economic and rehabilitation package, signed by the Bangladeshi authorities and the refugees on March 9 last year at Agartala.

Tripura government expressed satisfaction over the problem coming to an end today and wished the Bangladeshi tribals to lead happy and peaceful life in their own ancestral land in CHT, sources said.

Addressing the meeting, Kalpa Ranjan Chakma said a new horizon was created with the repatriation of the Chakma refugees.

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