# Deconstructing the Savage Indian Myth

by Chaklader Mahboob-ul Alam

Hollywood's role in the construction of this myth has, indeed been very significant. Motion picture producers,

of a later period would have envied."

VER since the Declaration of Independence in 1776, most of the Americans have lived under the spell of a kind of narcism, utterly convinced of the carefully constructed version of their historical uniqueness—that they were a Chosen People with a manifest destiny, who lived on a Holy Land, which in Jefferson's words, was "the only monument of human rights and the depository of the sacred fire of freedom and selfgovernment, from which was to be lighted up .....other regions of the earth."

If Jefferson's words were true, how could one justify the ruthless efficiency with which the Euro-Americans confined. incarcerated and slaughtered the original inhabitants of the land—the so-called American Indians? What were the philosophical and moral foundations of this policy which resulted into such "wholesale dispossession of a people" and their virtual annihilation?

The answer was simple. God had commanded them--these Christian Americans, "to subdue the wild and hold dominion over the beasts of the earth". In order to quieten the rumblings of the puritan conscience and allay the fears of purgatory, the Indians had to be depicted as wild savages not as human beings. In this manner, destroying them could be considered as good a way as any to hold dominion over the wild. And who was going to do that? The media , of course.

In the first part of this article we shall examine briefly how the media contributed decisively to the creation of the popular image of the North American Indians as being savages and in the second part we shall try to "deconstruct" this myth. The purpose of this paper is not to portray the Indians as saints. The only intention is to demonstrate that they (especially those who lived on the Great American Plains) were human beings with an authentic lifestyle and a standard of culture which was probably more in harmony with the natural environment that surrounded them than that of the invaders.

The media did a good job. This self-motivated malicious propaganda was so effective that it ,not only convinced successive generations of settlers from Europe that the Indians were savages but also negatively influenced most of the ordinary

people around the world as far as their knowledge of the American Indian was concerned. In this connection, let me mention an anecdote from my own life. If I remember correctly, it happened sometime in the early fifties. My friends and I in Dhaka had gone to watch a movie of the western genre and enjoy an evening of entertatainment. I remember John Wayne, dressed impeccably in U.S. cavalry uniform, fighting desperately to save women and children from the raiding Indians. At the end of the movie, the impression that remained in my mind was that on one side there was civilization and on the other there were a bunch of half-naked savages on horseback with bows and arrows trying to obstruct the manifest destiny of the chosen people. So when the inevitable happened i.e., the savages were completely routed, none of us felt bad about it. On the contrary, we felt that good had triumphed over the evil, civilization over barbar-Hollywood's role in the con-

struction of this myth has, indeed been very significant. Mo-tion picture producers, directors and script writers played a major role in shaping Indian stereotypes on film. John Ford once commented that he alone had killed more Indians than Custer, Beecher and Chivingdon put together. He also confessed, "Let's face it, we have treated them badly.....it is a blot on our shield, we have cheated, robbed, killed, murdered, massacred and everything else." Moviemakers basically focussed on the Plains tribes of the Sioux, Chevenne and Apache, "who then became the white man's Indians, molded and cast in the white man's mind as he wanted them to be, but projected before the viewer's eye as convincingly authentic. Indians from all tribes were cast in the image of a prearranged reality". (The role of American Indians in Motion Pictures by Rita Keshena).

Long before television and films, early printed sources like dime novels, tent show posters, printed etchings, newspapers and pamphlets contributed massively to foster inaccurate images of Indians. According to Elmo Scott Watson, many correspondents were more gifted in imagination than in accurate reporting. "They spread before their readers the kind of highly coloured accounts of Indian raids and massacres that the

directors and script writers played a major role in shaping Indian stereotypes on film. . . Long before television and films, early printed sources like dime novels, tent show posters, printed etchings, newspapers and pamphlets contributed massively to foster inaccurate images of Indians. . . "They spread before their readers the kind of highly coloured accounts of Indian raids and massacres that the most sensational yellow journalism most sensational yellow journalism of a later period would have envied." For example, in 1876, when the Ogala Sioux and Northern Chevennes fought successfully against Colonel

Custer and his cavalry to defend the women and children, the BISMARK and the TRIBUNE described the Indians as savages who massacred the "gallant defenders", without ever mentioning that Custer's attack, unprovoked by the Indians, was planned to satisfy the settlers' never ending lust for land. Again, when Chief Big Foot's followers were massacred by

the cavalry at Wounded Knee.

the establishment media put

out the story that the soldiers were merely responding to Indian treachery. Besides the newspapers, the history text books have been equally guilty of portraying Indians in a false and negative light. In his carefully annotated study of the books frequenly used as authoritative sources of information about Indians, the Indian journalist Rupert Costo pointed out that one learnt pat-

terns of perception from teach-

ers, parents, text books and en-

vironmental elements and

those patterns tended to persist beyond one's school days. The popular image of the Indians ignores the geographical, tribal and chronological differences. Even the term "Indian" is colonial invention which plays a further role in blurring the distinctions among a variety of native American cultures. Again, to depict all Indians as savages is an over generalisation because it does not take into consideration the fact that the tribes had different degrees of culture with all its implications—some good and noble, others vicious and cruel. Some of them were expert fishermen, others were agriculturists and depending on various factors, they had developed different types of art, political institutions, agricultural or hunting devices and methods of warfare. In this paper, we are going

to a fairly homogeneous group of tribes who lived on the Great Plains- a basin of awesome bulk which covers the full distance between Canada and Mexico in a band of nearly 750 kms

Thousands of years ago, the ancestors of the Indians came from Asia and possessed general mongoloid features. While the Northerners were tall and slim, the Southereners were stockily built. Contrary to the popular image of the Indian, their complexion was pale, not red. As Thomas Mailes pointed out, "the title "red" came from the earth red and vermillion paints worn by almost all of the people as a sacred colour." Some of them also used this make-up to protect their skin from the rays of the scorching

The Great Plains of North America were populated by hundreds of independent tribes, who were primarily nomadic and earned their livelihood by hunting buffalos. This animal was not only their primary source of food but also of clothing, shelter (the tipis) and

The tribes were composed of semi- autonomous sub-units i.e., bands or clans. While bands were composed of unrelated families, clans were made up of blood relatives or families. Each band consisted of a number of people who wondered about in search of food. By and large, marriages were arranged between the families and mating between close relatives was prohibited or discouraged. Most marriages were monogamous. While virginity was rewarded, adultery could be dangerous-especially for the women, because as William Camus in his book Mis Abuelos los Indios Pieles Rojas, pointed out " their noses could be cut off". The bands were not supposed to fight each other but in reality, were not always friendly to one another. In general, the Indian code of conduct was based on ethical principles.

worship of the Great Spirit, tradition, responsibility, bravery self respect, respect for parents

and group spirit. The bands were guided by their own internal rules and regulations. Each band had a Chief and each tribe had a Council of Chiefs who could only maintain position through wisdom in peace and distinction in war. Thus, war was considered as part of their culture as through the acquisition of war honours, one could rise through the ranks. While some tribes like the Mandan and the Crow had matrilineal clan system, others like the lowa, Omaha and Osage had patrilineal clan system.

The Indians did not have a hereditary class system, although there was ranking of individuals on the basis of prowess at war. There were religious and military societies in each tribe. In many cases, the military societies were ranked in ordered series and often acted as police. The privileges of the older people could be acgired by some members of the next generation collectively at a price. Membership of these associtions was not barred to the

One of the principal characteristics of the Plains Indians was their love for children. Great emphasis was placed on their training and education which would often start at a very early age with bows and arrows. As the child grew stronger, he would get heavier bows. He would learn by starting to shoot at fixed targets and then at moving ones. A father or uncle would teach him how to stalk an animal. Little girls learnt domestic skills from their mothers. The idea of physical punishment was abhored. Instead, praise and reward were used as incentives to teach them how to live gracefully and how to die bravely.

The relationship between the natural environment and the Indians was based on the principles of natural respect

and non-exploitation. They would only kill enough buffalos to cover their immediate needs or the needs for the coming winter. It is ironical that of the 3,700,000 buffalo destroyed between 1872 and 1874, only 150,000 were killed by "the savage Indians", for survival, while the rest was destroyed by "the civilized Euro-Americans" basically for fun. The Indian accepted the natural environment as it was and tried to adapt himself to it The European settler wanted to dominate and change the natural setting. According to Indian tradi-

mortal. Although among the nomads, there was hardly any intra-tribal trade in material goods, knowledge of war medicine and curing were given in exchange of other knowledge or horses. Inter-tribal barter trade was quite common among the nomads and the sedentary tribes . Materials such as skin robes, blankets, grains, horses were bartered quite frequently.

tion, land came from the Great

Spirit, was their mother and as

such could not belong to any

Religion, like the rest of the culture was related to the ecological conditions of the plains. Hence the quest for the Great Spirit who pervaded the vast expanse of the sky and was superior to all other spirits. Most of the tribes believed in this Superior Being, who was wiser than everybody else. In smoking ceremonies, the first offering of the pipe was always made to him. Religion and magic were intertwinwed. They were sustained by dances and rituals.

One of the important ceremonies was the Sun Dance. which was always held in Summer when the whole tribe gathered. The dancrs would normally purify themselves by fasting and self torture in the form of thongs being placed on their skin, which were then tied to the sun pole by means of a rope. The actual dancing would continue for several days, when they prayed to the spirits for

power. The medicine man or the priest was usually the individual who was in charge of giving instructions as regards the proper conduct of the ceremonies. The whole objective was to affirm the insignificance of the individual before the community. Although the medicine man or the Chaman was supposed to have supernatural powers, in reality for healing purposes, together with his ritual he would also use many

drugs made of herbs. One of the most important characteristics of the Plains Indian culture was that it was pre-literate. "Thus knowledge and mores were inculcated through the spoken word and teaching of youth by the elders". (Marden/ Mayer, Minorities in American Society) Gathered around a fire, during long winter nights, the trickster or the soryteller who carried the cultural legacy of the group would narrate folk tales and stories often spicing them with gestures and songs to impress his

audiences. Another interesting feature of this culture was the development of a very effective sign language. Since these tribes belonged to so many different language groups, this sign language was absolutely essential for inter-tribal communication. According to Thomas E. Mails "Indians who were total strangers and from differen tribes could converse freely and fluently with it on any subject, secular or religious. It may be the only universal language man has ever produced".( The Mystic Warriors of the Plains)

Music played an important role in the lives of the Plains Indians. Singing and dancing were common practices in religious ceremonies and rituals of all nature. The main objective was to invoke the magic to cure illnesses or to help in the production of food, hunting and war. Drums and rattles were the main musical instruments. Vocal instrumental pulsation used to guide the dancers. Duple drumbeat was used in war dances while triple beat featured prominently in round dances.

The Plains Indians were an artistic people and produced beautiful works of art, which often represented the essence or the being of the subject. Every work of art or decoration had a meaning and a purpose. This can be said to be the beginning of abstract or symbolic art. Since they were continuously on the move, and depended on hunting for their livelihood. the mediums normally used were the skins, feathers and bones of the animals. The costumes, the war bonnets, the porcupine quill decorations. the painted shields, the colourfully designed blankets and the mocassins- all came from the same source. Mineral pigments or vegetable dyes were used for colouring. Exquisite abstract designs consisting of geometrical patterns such as squares. triangles etc. were painted or embroidered on the blankets and the tipis. The contact with the Euro-

pean invaders was disastrous

for the Plains Indians. Al-

though during their first con-

tact with the fur traders, the relationship was not intensely hostile, by the late 1820s it had worsened considerably. With the coming of the wagon trains, building of railroad tracks ,and the discovery of gold in California, occassional clashes turned into open hostilities. The intruders violated their hunting grounds, killed the game and virtually destroyed the buffalo on which the Indians subsisted. The lack of a central authority, the feuds between the tribes, the fierce individualism of the Indians and above all, superior technological and organizational skills of the invaders--all contributed to the collapse of their resistance. The U.S. government signed treaties with individual tribes taking away the land on which the Indians had hunted and lived for thousands of years. They were asked to take up farming and forcibly removed to reservations where land was so poor that virtually nothing could be grown. Yet whenever gold or oil was found on any of these reservations or whenever it suited the interests of the colonisers, these treaties were broken by the government and even this otherwise worthless land was expropriated and the Indians were evicted. During the final years of the 19th century, the federal policy was to force all the survivors to isolated reservations and to continue with the process of acculturation, which inevitably resulted into the destruction tribal ties and structure. The Indian lost his self respect and resorted to drinking and gambling. So, this is how "the savage Indian" was finally subdued. But was he really a sav-

## Containing Frauds and Forgeries in Banks

ANKS and Financial Institutions act as financial Dintermediaries between the surplus unit and the deficit unit of an economy. Banking business is very sensitive in nature. It involves not only banks' own money but also that of customers. This puts on it even more responsibility to assure that customers' money is withdrawn only as per his wishes and under his order. Often bank officials, in connivance with outsiders are found to have committed forgeries and malpractices which is the outcome of dishonesty and bad characteristics within a man Frauds are direct attack on the system and procedures of banks. There is a need to generate a sense of consciousness to instill realisation and develop awareness in bankers and customers, as well as police and other related administrative machinery in general to take appropriate measures to prevent occurrence of fraud and forgeries. As bankers we can't get any statutory protection if

forged signature. Why do people commit

we honour a cheque under

frauds and forgeries It is broad question. It is also an universal problem. When people know that commitment of fraud, if detected and the man committing is caught, he would attract punishment then why do they attempt it? The fact is that nobody wishes to commit fraud unless his circumstances compel him to do so i.e. when he/they face the following:

Poverty 2. Bad economic condition 3. Non-availability of bare

food, clothing, shelter. These ultimately compel them to think of certain unfair acts to acquire money and fraud is one of the easiest outcome of their thinking. There are other problems which add to their thinking, such as —

 Unemployment Bad company

Defective or negative edu-

4. Non attendance of parents/guardians 5. Poor pay Types of fraud Fraud by negligence: Negli-

gence is not fraud but it may be an evidence of fraud. It is so gross as to be incompatible with the idea of honesty. Fraud implies some degree of real moral blame, viz: fraud by misrepresentation, fraud by mistake. fraud by estoppel, fraud by dishonest attitude

Types of forgery

Forgery is perhaps the easiest way for cheaters to commit fraud. Bankers deal in signatures all the time in course of their banking business. Forgery of signature is committed in many ways. Some of these are: simulated signatures, traced signatures, intended tracing, carbon tracing, transmitted light tracing, protection tracing, transplanted signatures. disguised signatures, signatures by trickery, non-altered signa-

Area of frauds and forge-

To look at the fraud prone areas we will have to look to the functions of banking and the types of activity a bank can

legally conduct. The fraud prone areas are:

> Advance Pledge accounts

The banks may be cheated in one or more of the following manners

 Pledge of spurious goods. 2. Inflating the value of goods. 3. Pledging the goods to more

than one bank by using various

entrances to the godowns. 4. Fraudulent removal of goods with the connivance/due to the negligence of the bank's

Pledge of goods belonging to a third party. Advances against hypothe-

cation of goods Since the goods always remain in the physical possession of the borrower, there remains much risk for the bank. Its measure of control over them is very limited. Some of the ingenious ways employed to cheat the banks in this case are

described below: 1. The borrowers may declare wrong the capacity of the

storing place. 2. The borrower may mix inferior quality liquids or water with goods liquid and commit fraud. The device is generally adopted by parties dealing in chemicals or oils.

the bank by showing the sold or non-existent stocks in the stock statements. 4. The borrower may cheat

3. The borrower may cheat

the bank by keeping the goods in unaccountable manner. 5. Plant and machinery charged to the bank as security

may be removed and disposed of without the bank's knowledge. Frauds are committed also due to carelessness and negligence of bank officials and these are mainly as under:

1. The banks' prescribed rules and procedures are not strictly followed in the matter of control of security represented by hypothecation charge.

2. Hypothecation charge created by a joint stock company requires compulsory registration with the Registrar of Companies. There have been instances where such charges were not duly registered and, in the process, the banks were made to suffer.

3. Prescribed margins are not kept while calculating the drawing power. Preventive measures:

Some suggested preventive measure can be: 1. Proper inspection and

regular review of the accounts. 2. Control over delivery and receipt of stocks. 3. Controlling authorities can intelligently scrutinise the

returns and ensure prompt follow-up actions where required. 4. Intelligent scrutiny by controllers of performance reports to detect unusual positive variances in business figures.

Frauds and forgeries that are committed in general banking and foreign exchange transactions in banks and financial institutions can be in the areas

Deposit accounts Generally, frauds is deposit accounts can be / are committed by a) outsiders who are aware of

### by Md Ahsanullah

to make continuous references

the systems prevalent in banks; and b) staff member with or without the connivance of others. The modus operandi are found to be:

 Opening of bogus accounts by forging the signature of the introducer. 2. Withdrawals through

cheques/withdrawal slips carrying forged signature of account holder. 3. Alterations in the entries

and balances in the ledgers after they are checked and making subsequent withdrawals. This may be done by employees Replacement of specimen

signature card with a forged one, followed by subsequent withdrawals on forged signature, and then placing the genuine specimen signature card in its original place.

5. Tampering with the bank's records like ledger folios and by including some unauthorised names.

The list is not exhaustive. but it represents the general phenomenon in the matter of bank frauds committed through deposit accounts.

Remittances There have been cases of numerous frauds in this area The modus-operandi is generally found to be as the follow

Fictitious accounts are first opened at different places. Loose leaves of mail transfers are stolen and issued by forging signatures of the authorised persons for credit to the lictitious accounts.

2. Similarly in case of telegraphic transfers either keys of T T book i.e. codes are stolen or whenever opportunity is available the same are noted. Then telegraphic transfer using correct codes is transmitted for credit to fictitious accounts already opened

To protect frauds in the area of 'Remittances' caution against the ills pointed out above should be taken. Inter-Branch Suspense Ac-

counts

This is an area where employees and not the customers commit frauds. The reconciliation work of inter-branch entries, despite computer aided systems in a few banks, remain in heavy arrears. This is more or less a universal phenomenon in all schedule bank. Such a bad position is known to staffmembers and the unscrupulous

ones take advantage of it. Such

staff-members cheat the bank

by fraudulently debiting the

amounts to branches and then

crediting the same to fictitious

personal accounts opened for this purpose. Nominal Accounts Frauds, under this head are committed by: Passing fraudulent entries through these accounts; Opening fictitious nominal accounts; Utilising the interest provision for personal use; and Allowing facilities against cheques in clearing or under collection.

Foreign Exchange Transac-Some vulnerable aspects in the area of Foreign Exchange transaction are:

1. Encashment of counterfeit

currency notes and stolen travellers' cheques: quite often, forged passports are tendered along with such documents. Once the cheater takes money he never looks back. As a result. the recovery is nearly impossi-

2. Crediting the proceeds of inward remittances to fictitious

accounts opened in advance. 3. Purchasing bills of exchange with fake documents of

title to goods. 4. Buying and selling foreign exchange in the market without corresponding merchant transactions to be covered.

The remedies lie in: 1. Imparting proper training to the personnel conducting the functions.

2. Rotation of duties of staff at frequent intervals. 3. Establishing internal con-

4. Keeping constant vigil on the staff and in the case of connivance or involvement, especially of senior persons, taking punitive measures against

them. Boardly speaking there are two categories of preventive measures, namely:

Systems-aspects: a) Manual of instructions, b) Control over books of accounts, c) Delegation of powers, d) Fixation of responsibility/accountability, e) Management information system and balancing of books. f) Inspection of branches, g) At tending to complaints of customers.

Human aspects: a) Watching private life style of the employees, b) Training, c) Rotation of duties, d) Unscrupulous customers-training, puni-

#### Computer Frauds in

Banks Computer is a high speed electronic machine used to input data, process data as per instruction given to it and give result accurately to printer or other media. Generally computer is used in banks in the following areas: 1) all types of banking transactions 2) fund transfer through ATM, POST, EFT, etc. Now the question is how computer fraud occurs. Computer fraud is a growing area of fraud in the banking world. The source of computer fraud is unauthorised persons accessing and abusing bank's computer system for 'alienating' bank's funds. This they do by issuing instructions for making wrong payments or wrong deliveries of assets and so forth. Thus putting the bank into loss. Computer crime pertains to any crime committed with the aid of a computer in any manner; this can include theft or damage to a computer.

of computer Types crime/fraud Embezzlement of funds: It can be done through EFT Systems i.e. Electronic Fund Transfer. With the necessary

codes little effort is required to illegally transfer funds from a legitimate bank account to a bogus account. For example, in 1979, a man named Stanley Rifkin embezzled \$10.2 million from a Security Pacific National Bank, using the bank's computer access code, which he learned by the bank's wire

transfer room. Rilkin simply telephoned the bank and electronically transferred money. first to a New York account then to Swiss bank account. Use of computer for personal

gain: There are may ways an individual can use computers for personal gain, such as — 1) Unauthorised altering of computer records: Generating

Falsified collection statement: Fraudulent input record. 2) Theft of computer data and services i.e. the theft of

services 3) Software piracy is also considered to be a computer-related crime e.g. copies of a copyprotected software; privacy vio-

software from a time-sharing

3) Physical destruction of computer equipment: The deliberate physical destruction of computer equipment could practically ruin a bank. This is

also called vandalism.

Some examples of computer crimes may be cited here: Phony MICR deposit: A depositor at a Washington, DC. bank removed the bank deposit slips in the customer area and replaced them with his own slips, magnetically coded to deposit into his account. He stole \$100,000.00.

Data crimes: Theft from population registry: Two employees of a Swedish business stole two Govt. population tapes and made illegal copies. They sold these to their company's customers. The following types of per-

sonnel could be involved in computer fraud: 1. Technical person: i) System Developer/Manager, ii)

Computer Programmer, iii) Computer Operator. 2. Non-technical person: i)

User, ii) Auditor, iii) Other per-Detection and prevention of

computer fraud: Satisfactory control standard is complied as follows 1. Application Controls

2. General Controls: Com-

puter center controls; Application Development Controls. The above controls are and can be measured with the help of following internal and external layers of protection:

Identification: This

stands for personnel security of the computer. b) Access control/security: The way is to use encoded card system with a log keeping capability.

c) Encryption: Encryption is a process by which sensitive data is translated into a secret d) Password: It is most com-

monly used means for authenticating of people. e) System integrity: It is another type of defence that concentrates on the functioning of hardware, database, supporting

operating procedures. f) Religious development of people: Anyone who fears Allah will bear the responsibility for the security of the information entrusted to him.

The writer is Principal Offi-

cer, Prime Bank Ltd., Mo-

g) Segregation of duties.

hakhali Branch, Dhaka

software, physical security and

Moving with Mobile Phone In Bangladesh mobile phone is no more a monopoly of the rich. Even poor

village women have now access to a cellphone. Tajin Ahmed, Swarup Sohan, Anjelica Luna and Rafia Akhter wrote this feature during a training on feature writing sponsored by News Network.

AMIL Ahmed, a retired government official, goes out J every morning for a walk through the Ramna Park. While jogging one morning he felt a sharp pain in his left chest and he immediately searched his pocket for his engina tablet. It was not there. As he started collapsing he remembered the mobile phone he was carrying and sent a SOS to his family. Not long after an ambulance rushed to him and ferried him

to a hospital. The old man survived Thanks to the mobile phone, says his family.

"Thank God, my father was carrying his mobile phone, says one of his daughters pointing to the small equipment lying on a table at Jamil's Maghbazar house. Mobile phone, the new gen-

eration communication magic. is now anything but a luxury. It helps promote business, speedy communication and on more occasions than not saves one's Mobile phone was conceived in 1947, more than 70 years af-

ter telephone came into being. The use of mobile phone, however, started much later in 1978. In Bangladesh mobile phone made its first formal entry in 1989 when Citycell was given license for cellular phones

For some years this company held a monopoly in the business that kept the price quite high. That monopoly ended only in late 1996 when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government permitted three more companies — Aktel, Grameen Phone, and Sheba Telcom — into the business.

The mobile phone sector is now one of the fastest growing sectors in Bangladesh. According to official estimate more than 50,000 people are now using mobile phones in Bangladesh.

The arrival of mobile phone has also eased the pressure on the state-owned T&T, which had until then the monopoly of telephone service. The T&T has currently

nearly five lakh (500,000) subscribers, up from 65,000 in 1971, the year of Bangladesh independence. Yet the authorities are swamped with hundreds of thousands of applications seeking telephone lines. Those who can afford up to Tk 15,000 are now opting for mobile phones. No wait for the T&T phones.

Even the rural poor have now access to bile phone. Thanks to (; een Bank. which has earn anternational reputation for providing small loans to the poor women in villages. A subscriber is given loan to buy a pay phone which is then used by other villagers on payment. A person living in a village is now able to make long-distance calls from the

pay phones. Grameen phone says it has such pay phones in at least 50 villages and the demand is increasing every day.

Mobile phone works through cellulite. When a call is made from one mobile phone to another it first goes to the cellulite tower which send the frequency to the switching room. From here it travels to the nearby cell tower to connect the called number. In case of a T&T phone the process is easier. The T&T give direct link between its switching office to the mobile phone. Mobile phones can also make international calls.

With competition set in motion mobile phones are now cheaper than before. When the first company, Citycell started its operation in 1989 a mobile phone link used to cost more than Tk 50,000. Today the con-

nection cost has come down to Tk 15,000, which is likely to drop further in near future. In addition to the connection fees a customer has to procure a mobile set of his/her choice. Here the price ranges from as low as

Tk 10,000 to Tk 50,000 The companies are also competing in call charges bringing them down.

Grameen Phone recently triggered a controversy while it introduced charge for incoming calls. Faced with protests from its customers the plan has now been withdrawn. Grameen Phone started its operation promising its customers that there will be no charge for in-

coming calls. Grameen prides in providing mobile phone facilities to the rural people. Jamila Khatoon, a poor woman in Manikganj, now owns and operates a Grameen pay phone facility.

phone. Today, I have a phone which earns me money too. Jamila says. Like all good things mobile phone has its downside too.

"I've never before seen a

Mobile phone has made life easy for terrorists too. "They call it yellow mobile," a police official says referring to the use of mobile phones by

underground Mafia. Mobile phone has produced a good number of humour too. One television magazine show has shown a beggar doing his business with mobile phone. It is not rare to find young boys who borrow fathers' phones to impress others, especially girls. Yet, mobile has brought out a

communication revolution in Bangladesh where three out of 1,000 people have telephones. "We are still lagging behind countries like Pakistan and Bhutan in the use of telephones," says a government of-

ficial, "that's why we need more

been tortured mentally," says

S.C. Acharya, a 'well-wisher' of

fessed battered husband who

goes about brandishing plac-

ards proclaiming "I am a tor-

the law, Mallick told IANS: "In

cases of dowry-death, shouldn't

the parents of the girl also be

punished because, under law,

Citing another loophole in

tured husband. Help me".

the organisation and a self-con-

mobile phones.

# 'Men are Sacrificial Lambs'

### Ranjita Biswas writes from Calcutta

AR from being beasts, as Hthey have often been referred to by women, men are actually sacrificial lambs. This is the radical message a young author has sought to convey in a book released recently in Calcutta.

Radhanath Mallick, the au-

thor of the Bengali book, has

taken it upon himself to voice the grievances of men tormented by the 'weaker sex'. The book Bolir Pantha Manush', literally 'Men who are sacrificial goats', highlights

how women torture helpless men, husbands in particular. The author is the foundersecretary of an organisation called 'Pirito Purush Pati Parishad' which roughly translates to Organisation for

support among men - and even

women.

According to Mallick, the organisation has 100 members whom he prefers to call "wellwishers" as he feels that they are not people to be pit. The organisation cautions men against feminists and in newspapers articles has even named prominent women activists as examples of women they are talking about.

Mallick, a political science student, feels that existing laws of the land flaunt gender bias'. violate Article 15 of the Constitution which proclaims right to equality' and are full of loopholes. He cites Article 498 (a) of the

Indian Penal Code that empowers a woman to bring charges against her husband and inlaws on grounds of physical and Battered Husbands. Formed in mental torture. "Can there be any proof of 1992, it claims to enjoy wide

mental torture? Any woman

can go to court and say she has

giving and taking dowry are cognisable offences? But only the husband is punished. According to Mallick, men

who come for help to the organisation are counselled and many of these counsellors are women. He adds that well-wishers of the organisation meet every month. Mallick strongly opposes the custom of men staying on at their wives' parental homes as they ultimately become "servants"

- India Abroad News Service