

Flood Protection Agenda

To say that a flood alarm bell has been set ringing by an extra bit to the seasonal rains would be uttering only a part of the truth. As a matter of fact what is precipitating the flooding is the condition of the various flood protection embankments along the river basins which also face the erosion problem exacerbating the overall sweep of inundation. The Gumti embankment in Comilla and Khowai embankment in Habiganj have been the first to burst while those along Selonia and Kohua rivers have had cracks. The rapidly swelling Padma endangers the Rajshahi protection embankment. The eastern portion of DND remains vulnerable as an unaddressed fall-out of the last floods with fearsome implications for Dhaka.

We may not have unlearned all the lessons of the century's worst flood experienced only last year but we have been a slow learner. The World Bank had duly assessed our financial requirements to repair the embankments damaged by last floods at Tk 700 crore. But according to the Water Resource Minister, the money has been late in coming with Tk 592 crore being firm up to-date. Could not there be a contingency plan to arrange funds and start the work in good time for the flood season in anticipation of the WB funding which was promised in principle anyhow?

At any rate, it is too late for that debate now. What we want to see is immediate action along the following lines: first, a thorough review of the vulnerable points of all our embankments in the light of the developing flood situation and with a conditioning of the mind prepared for the worst. During the last floods we took a mental detour before realising we were being engulfed that badly and for that long. Preparedness is not panicking. On the contrary, it is a timely antidote to it. Simultaneously with the appraisal exercise, the emergency repair work must get underway not merely by way of plugging the holes where visible but also where they might gape in the near future. The armed forces have already been pressed into service to strengthen some embankments with sandbags and other reinforcing materials. They have also been put on alert for other embankments. Like in the past year, they can do a wonderful job this time around with the local people lending them a hand. The whole exercise needs to be carried out planfully from this point on, so that a last minute desperation to survive the onslaught is replaced by an unruffled preventive approach at the right time. At all events, public cooperation should be enlisted by sharing information with them.

Evicting the Settlers

Police clashed with the 'illegal' settlers at Baridhara J Block for about ten hours on Monday beginning from the morning. The trouble started when a police contingent marched into Baridhara along with a magistrate to evict them from government land. About 50 people were injured including 20 policemen. The settlers put up barricades on the Biswa Road and pelted stones and hurled bombs at the cops who retaliated by throwing tear gas canisters and arresting about 26 people from the spot.

This vast area, about 80 acres of acquired land in Nutun Bazar and Noorer Chala areas, went under the illegal occupation with the government neither being able to take possession of these nor allot them to people. As a result, a huge illegal settlement grew in this area over time. And now suddenly the authorities realised that the land should be freed from the 'illegal' occupants by force. In a bulging city like Dhaka the pressure of population is very high from rural migration triggered largely by economic reasons. In a city bursting at the seams, keeping shanties all over have become a lucrative business for mastaans, land grabbers and their godfathers. They have organised themselves into gangs having liaison with political leaders and people in the administration. Why did the authorities, in the first place, allow such illegal occupation of the khas or acquired lands to take place? If nipped in the bud, the unpleasant job of eviction could be easily avoided. A sudden action by them with the help of policemen, and that too in this season of monsoon, can hardly be supported when they have failed in their basic duty to keep the land under their charge. Why can't the government do it in a more civilised manner and arrange alternative shelter for these people before they are evicted. We urge the authorities concerned to go about this eviction business with a human heart.

Road Safety Scheme

That the rate of traffic accidents in Bangladesh—out of every 10,000 vehicles 70 meet with fatal accidents compared to 35 in India and one in Europe—is one of the highest in South Asia is hardly surprising. Almost everyday a substantial section of the leading news dailies carries reports on road mishaps across the country. Nevertheless, the revelation made by the former Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) chairman at Monday's meeting between the World Bank and the FBCCI that more than 5,000 people got killed last year underscores the acute need for a comprehensive road safety scheme. Fortunately, the World Bank has already thought of that, thereby outlining the Community Safety Initiative Project (CSIP) as part of the global drive against road mishaps.

Input from local community is certainly of immense importance because it gives the planners an insight into potential factors, both positive and negative, at the grassroots level that might influence implementation of any such safety scheme. So far, the planners seem to have failed to recognise the need for community participation in such matters. The initiative certainly opens up the passage for a greater participation from the private sector. It must take a leading role in this regard, primarily because road communication does play an important role in trade and commerce. Bulk of the one thousand crore taka the country loses due to traffic malfunctioning is for the private entrepreneurs to endure.

The systemic inadequacy we have in terms of road safety and surface transport management needs immediate attention. The WB project augurs well in that direction.

TOO much of partisanship in Bangladesh has undermined the consensual arrangement of parliamentary democracy, while the people are still disengaged on the questions of national identity whose bifurcated history still haunts them. Around us, the political world is going through a re-centering of forces, emerging center-left coalitions, and search for a "Third Way" in politics. Globally, we are moving away from the high profile dominating parties led by populist leaders and entering into a millennium of fragmented politics. New forms of political expression are rising on the horizon, and the old idioms and concepts are gaining new meaning and alternative perspectives. The veering to less structured fluid coalitions has generated a paradigm shift in political management—an eclectic preference for what some political scientists described as "negotiated polity" with more of accommodation, bargaining, coalitions and compromises. This piece is more an extension of the seminal "social contract" precepts highlighting both negotiation and re-negotiation in a polity, which is not a tantalizing prelude to an intellectual rupture. Can we imagine Bangladesh to be a polity based on peaceful compromises and reconciliation of differences? Possibly, yes! But how?

So far, the opposition and the ruling party have avoided mutual confidence building and two-sided dialogues although they have postured for it more than once. Surely, but disturbingly, the traditional government versus opposition rivalry has also become an uncompromisingly personal hostility between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia. For

any dialogue and for any negotiated way out, we have to recapitulate all that is valued in the old-fashioned mutual respect failing which rival groups or individuals would be reluctant to come to a negotiating table, and the deadlocked governance would suffer beyond repair. Bangladesh has been suffering from the folly of its politicized history, and the divisive rhetoric, smolders through all spheres of political and intellectual life. We have to recognize that history is not a mere cataloguing of memories, nor a vantage ground for some to decry their rivals. Indeed, it's a negotiation and renegotiations with the past. It is also a process of imagining and re-imagining of the days of the yore. An offspring of the climate of personal and partisan suspicion and hostility, the selectively written Bangladesh history cannot inspire a negotiated understanding between the two sides, and until that happens the unbending partisanship will not soften.

Hartal, a vehicle of opposition empowerment, becomes a disaster when it is used as a routine form of dissent and a medium of political bargaining, but ironically, a party or an alliance of parties is not taken seriously without the capacity to impose a shutdown. Whoever is in the government discourages hartal, but whoever is on the opposition wants to retain it as a political weapon—it has been used as a short cut to power and even to incite a near-rebellion impinging upon the development of democracy. Much has been said and written on

the subject but without the give and take between the major parties, the unstoppable hartal will polarize opinion, and defy the institutional norms and constitutional practices.

The parliamentary system, without a workable mechanism for an understanding and cooperation is an empty vessel. For a negotiation-based political fabric that I imagine, the following reconfigurations of governance and re-imagining of values, institutional rearrangements and political behavior modifications are the essential starting points:

(a) It is nearly impossible to determine who is a "real" patriot and who is not. After 28 years of independence, it is a dangerous political enterprise to divide the nation between the "patriots" and "non-patriots", and between the so-called "pro-liberation" and "anti-liberation" forces. Around the country, temporary nation-states, the sharp nationalistic edge is yielding to diversity. Bangladesh can learn from such developments and refrain from using patriotism as a political capital to claim recognition, privileges and power by scorning the competitors and excluding the rivals from the political arena.

(b) Let us realize that something is terribly wrong when a group and their leaders consider themselves as the "sole inheritors" of power because of what they accomplished in the past. It is the Bangladeshi equivalent of what Fareed Zakaria calls "illiberal democracy". Such an attitude creates a vested interest, exudes

a cult-spirit and more dangerously, it encourages particular leaders or groups to seek totalization of power as we have seen it in the past.

(c) In a working democracy, it is very important for the ruling party not to stifle or marginalize its non-violent antagonists. The opposition cannot capitulate to the ruling regime's dictum but the government and its detractors can iron out differences by dialogues. It is also imperative for the opposition not to resort to extra-constitutional measures except for the most unusual circumstances. The test for opposition statesmanship lies in its ability to work through compromise, not by confrontation.

(d) Ideally, the leaders of the party in power and the opposition leaders should meet and cultivate personal friendship and exchange mutual courtesies with each other in their social interactions. The extended family in general and the elegant dinner circuits in particular do provide such opportunities for the political rivals to meet socially and mutually exchange views, unlike the tossing of insults on the floor of the national parliament.

(e) Political parties need a democratic process within their respective organizations, and each party can benefit by allowing their "Young Turks" to speak, and dissent, without making a spectacle of it. More importantly, a personality-dominated party is incompatible with the bargaining and cooperation-based polity as an alternative mode of politics.

(f) Absolute victory for a

party is not absolutely necessary to form a government after the elections; coalition cabinets are showing up in both Western and non-Western democracies.

(g) A post-election "hung parliament" is not an incorrigible political impairment because with some efforts, coalition governments can be forged through negotiation with the smaller groups and independent elected lawmakers. To put up with the uncertainty of a coalition is an acceptable political cost considering the explosive fall out from the big parties winning fiercely competitive but fraudulent elections.

(h) To achieve the goals of political understanding, the parties must abjure the *Mastanif* elected election campaign.

(i) It is worth considering replacing the existing majoritarian mode of election by a Proportional Representation (PR) that allows representation in the legislature in proportion to the respective parties' voting strengths. Despite the complexities of the PR system and the fear of extreme fragmentation caused by the proportional arrangement, it is gaining popularity in democracies that offer the smaller groups a greater political voice and opportunities of participation.

Some of those anticipated steps, desired electoral reforms and a re-configuration of competitive values would dramatically reshape the political climate in the country. Surely, the composition of the *Jatiya Sangshad* would also change in an unprecedented manner. Smaller groups would then be taken more seriously. Every

vote counts in the Proportional Representation (PR) system since the number of lawmakers that a party wins measures up to the number of votes it gets. It's a gigantic challenge to re-order Bangladesh polity delineated by a complex interplay between politics, history, religion and ethnicity. In several countries including Bangladesh and India, the political parties have used vote-banks and they have informally but mutually swapped the legislative seats, which bear some resemblance to the underlying principles of the Proportional Representation. Vote-banks give the minorities a greater stake in the election and the political process, and the parliamentary seat-sharing activities stimulate negotiation among different groups.

There is a growing realization that having a democratic constitution without a lasting coexistence between the ruling and the opposition parties is not enough. Disappointingly, the pervading fear of a continuing unrest is itself a political destabilization. The inability to work together in a cooperative manner, the intransigence of the leaders of the larger parties, and the lack of mutual trust that had created the political impasse would possibly ignore such a framework of "negotiated polity" that I presented here. Still, governance by bargaining and negotiation between rival leaders, parties, groups, regions, NGOs and even with the districts in the absence of overpowering political institutions and charismatic leaders is possibly the best option for Bangladesh to remain viable in the future. Surely, we need a continuing discourse on this subject.

The author teaches Political Science at Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey, USA

Between Inheritance and the New Millennium

Imagining a "Negotiated Polity" for Bangladesh

by M. Rashiduzzaman

There is a growing realization that having a democratic constitution without a lasting coexistence between the ruling and the opposition parties is not enough. Disappointingly, the pervading fear of a continuing unrest is itself a political destabilization.

Lesson Learnt?

Ardeshir Cowasjee writes from Karachi

Neither India nor Pakistan is concerned about the desire of the seven million Kashmiris. Neither country talks of allowing them to decide their fate for themselves. China for its own good reason is not keen on Kashmiri self-determination as it has its own problems with the fundamentalists in a large track in the south-west of the country, and in Tibet.

THE wise are instructed by reason; men of lesser understanding by observation; fools by mistakes; and beasts by nature." Thus wrote Marcus Fabius of Rome, otherwise known as Cicero, some 2000 years ago.

Under the present circumstances and in the larger national interest we must presume that Nawaz Sharif (no democrat he) and his coterie fall into the first category. Having so said, we must examine their attitude, their concept of what the world owes this country, and their concern for the poor and deprived millions over whom they hold sway. Sadly, the closer a citizen is to the rulers, and their ways and their thinking, the greater his fears.

In early May, I happened to be in Islamabad. The voice of the government, Mushahid Hussain, rang to cancel an appointment we had made as he had to rush to a cabinet meeting urgently called by the prime minister to decide how the first anniversary of the testing of the nuclear bomb was to be fittingly celebrated. Likeable Mushahid revolves in his own orbit, taking along with him those he guides in his capacity as minister of propaganda and national mores. Some maintain that it is Nawaz Sharif who influences Mushahid and not the other way around—an equally calamitous scenario.

Mushahid asked what I thought of the idea of having a postage stamp printed showing the Chaghi hill, the first issue to be on May 28. You can't be serious, was my reaction. Then how do you think the day should be celebrated? he asked. Well, I said, to show the world how sober and caring he is, I suggest that the prime minister indulge in a photo-opportunity that would go down well internationally. Let him lead his men to the Faisal mosque to pray for God's forgiveness for having been forced to go nuclear for the defence of the country and the safety of its people. Let him further pray that circumstances never arise which will

force him to use the bomb. No good, mooted Mushahid—that would be negative internal publicity for our government, what with the lack of education and the general unenlightenment that prevails.

Does the cabinet understand what sort of weapons of destruction we possess? I asked him. Do they know Einstein's reaction after seeing the newsreels of the bombing of Hiroshima? Had he known, lamented Einstein, what the bomb could do he would have chosen to be a simple shoemaker of Switzerland rather than play any part in its creation? Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki lived the remainder of their lives wishing they had been killed outright in the bombing, the dying envied the dead—such was their suffering. Mushahid rightly pointed out that all this would fall on deaf ears.

One must give him the benefit of the doubt. What he does and says may not stem from his genuine beliefs and feelings. It may all merely be an exercise undertaken to massage the ego of his boss.

Now to his boss, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who, despite his heavy mandate, is an insecure man. He may not realize this and therefore cannot admit to it. But as a reasonable human being, he must know how he and his family and camp-followers have deprived this nation of the money they have milked from its banks and financial institutions.

In order to thrive and flourish in this democratic land, he does what he has to do. He amends laws, he amends the Constitution, he subjugates the judiciary. He and his men disregard the fact that they are unable to hold four provinces together, that they cannot

control Sindh without resorting to discredited men such as Ghous Ali Shah. They forget that Jam Sadiq Ali, similarly sent in, was ultimately unable to deliver Sindh to his patrons and left a legacy that to this day undermines the province.

Nawaz Sharif believes that he will be better remembered for his motorways than for the misery and the thirst he has caused the people. His motorways, he believes, will last long after the thirst has been quenched. On an almost weekly basis, he and his administration raise the cost of utilities, find means to levy more taxes on the one million that pay taxes, letting off the hook those who can strike and protest and those who have grown fat and rich by not paying taxes. The burden on the taxpayers and on those who have nothing to tax grows heavier by the day.

Does our head of government know that the only new investment his government has been able to generate has come solely from hamburger makers, chicken-fryers, and the likes of them? Meanwhile, he and his fellow big spenders never fail to miss a chance to fly out and off on a spending spree, which they have just done using the grave and dire circumstances of the Kashmir-Kargil issue, their excuse being to 'internationalize' it by using the Bomb as a threat—the annihilation of one fourth of mankind, inhabitants of this subcontinent. They feel that the world owes a debt to them and the country that the onus of solving the Kashmir problem lies squarely on the shoulders of the major world powers. Thus was engineered the Kargil misadventure. The Line of Control was crossed by some 500 men. By sending in 30,000 men, artillery, and military

planes to dislodge them, Pakistan claims that India escalated the situation. The world has failed to see the logic of this argument.

Pakistan's line is that the uprising in Kashmir is "popular, spontaneous and indigenous". Its line, as voiced by its foreign minister on the BBC, is that all that it provides to the freedom fighters is "moral, political and diplomatic" support. Does he know that the BBC news, just after his 'Hard Talk', showed the Islamabad correspondent talking to freedom fighters who had just descended from the hills of Kargil to their base depot at Muzaffarabad to rearm, regroup and return? Why do our men mock us, and make a laughing-stock of us in the eyes of the world?

The mission to China failed. A statement from the G-8 was frosty. With the intent of avert-

ing a major conflict, Nawaz Sharif sought help from the president of the United States, rushed to Washington to meet him on America's Independence Day. Clinton met him, not in the White House, but in Blair House. During the meetings, Clinton, not wishing to antagonize India, broke to ring Vajpayee and apprise him of the progress. A sop of sorts was thrown at us. We accepted. Sharif and his family went shopping, then on their way home stopped over in London, where he shook Tony Blair's apprehensive hand.

Though the prime minister has pledged that hostilities will cease, noises are being made that the government is not sure that the popular, spontaneous, indigenous freedom fighters will abide by the terms of Nawaz Sharif's pledge. We know that the present localized hostilities will cease once the shot

and shell stop raining from the skies. We have heard the Indian prime minister boast over the airways that India will give us no quarter and will 'kick us out'.

Neither India nor Pakistan is concerned about the desire of the seven million Kashmiris. Neither country talks of allowing them to decide their fate for themselves. China for its own good reason is not keen on Kashmiri self-determination as it has its own problems with the fundamentalists in a large track in the south-west of the country, and in Tibet. Pakistan is unconcerned about the plight of the 150 million Muslims of India. It does not realize that such times have embarked on a Kargil-type misadventure, these Muslims have to work overtime trying to prove their loyalty to their country.

India, with its size and weight, can afford to be, and is, intransigent. To get India to talk and see things our way, we do need global support and sympathy. Does the government comprehend that so far all we have achieved and established, relatively cheaply, is that we are globally isolated? Has a lesson been learnt?

To the Editor...

BCL out of control

Sir, BCL, the student faction of the ruling Awami League, is totally out of control. This fact has surfaced most clearly in Chittagong. The local newspapers of Chittagong should be thanked as they have bluntly written that the 07-July hartal in Chittagong called by the BCL is the result of the AL losing control. It was, as if, the BCL is revolting against the AL!

Can the ruling AL really escape the responsibility of this hartal? Are there more of such hartals in store??

An Anxious Observer Chittagong

DCC budget and city problems

Sir, Dhaka City Corporation mayor has announced DCC budget for the financial year 1999-2000 amounting Taka 521.27 crore and the revised budget for the last financial year 1998-1999 amounting Taka 449.03 crore.

For the last several years DCC is spending crores of Taka for repairing, recarpeting and maintenance of public roads and streets. But where does all the money go? The repair and maintenance works are of poor quality. These so-called development works are being repeated again

and again wasting public money. Moreover those public thoroughfares and pavements are not meant for the use and welfare of the people but those are being encroached upon and illegally occupied by hawkers, vendors and unscrupulous elements for various establishments, shops, workshops, godowns and open air garages for buses, trucks and rickshaws at the cost of untold sufferings of the city dwellers.

Tons of garbage are piled up on different roads, streets, lanes and by-lanes for days together creating pollution and health hazard. Neither the garbage is removed regularly nor the municipal drains cleaned properly.

Mosquito menace is a scourge for eight million people of Dhaka and day by day it is becoming more and more acute problem due to unwholesome, tainted and polluted garbage and drains.

Traffic jam is a permanent phenomenon and a cancer for Dhaka. Neither the DCC nor the DMP has taken any concrete and practical step to do away with this nuisance and hazard. The DCC has constructed several costly foot over-bridges in the city but the pedestrians hardly use those. We also wonder while hundreds of rickshaws are illegally plying the city roads openly using the rickshaw number plates other than those issued by DCC but

the DCC and DMP are simply sitting idle.

O.H. Kabir 6, Hare Street Wari, Dhaka-1203

Beware of dioxin!

Sir, Reports and articles have so far been published in different newspapers and periodicals cautioning the incidence of dioxin contamination are worth paying attention to. Dioxin is a compound which is considered to be carcinogenic i.e. capable of causing cancer. In Belgium, a higher concentration of dioxin has been detected in the poultry feed which has already contaminated chickens and eggs. Consumption of dioxin contaminated chickens and eggs can cause cancer and other physical disorder. The children could be the worst victims of dioxin contamination.

Many countries have already imposed ban on the import of poultry feeds and poultry products from Belgium. Bangladesh also imports poultry feed and other products from some European countries. Hence our government should also think about stopping dioxin-contaminated products. At the same time, it should also adopt necessary measures so that already imported dioxin contaminated poultry feed and food items may not be used, and be destroyed immediately.

M. Zahidul Haque BAI, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207.

For the Sake of Healthy Homes

Abu Imran

Women are normally considered to be productive only when they are gainfully employed outside their homes. But the salutary effects of the service they render at home in many cases far outweigh the rewards of working away from home.

At home, a woman works around 14-16 hours a day. She takes care of the purchase, preparation and service of food and clothing for the family, proper nutrition of children, interior design and household economics among numerous other household chores—things that spell the difference between a shabby house and an adorable home.

We must not forget about the vital importance of the net social welfare when computing our national income. The social value of good housekeeping cannot be computed in economic terms. This is such a thing that money cannot buy. And perhaps for this reason a good number of modern educated ladies are turning to their homes leaving behind prestigious jobs and enviable pay packages.

One such lady of international repute was Ms. Audrey Hepburn, the late Oscar winning actress, widely known for her outstanding performance in her film career. She left her career for the sake of her children in order to give better attention and care to them. She was a unique example to prove that the overall outcome of good home management was far more beneficial than the conventional economic gain from incomes earned from outside jobs.

This view may appear somewhat debatable. But if we analyse and consider the overall costs and benefits, we see that women's prolonged absence from the family tells heavily upon its well being. This often leads to its breakdown and the money earned, however much it may be, proves to be too meagre to repair the broken homes.

In this connection, it may be worthwhile to note how outside jobs interfere with good housekeeping. This scenario is especially striking in the context of the western world. A study carried out on the behavioural pattern of working women in

the west found that in the UK alone a shocking 40 per cent of the total number of marriages ended up in separation or divorce. The rate of separation in Europe as a whole was about 22 per cent. Spain however fared much better than most of its European counterparts with a separation rate of about 11 per cent. The cause of higher separation rate was attributed to increased economic independence (meaning females being increasingly engaged in outside professions) and that of a lower separation rate was said to be due to religiosity.

The social justification of a wife staying at home is that any hired keeper can never fill the void caused by her absence. They cannot give the love, affection and care of a mother to the children. At the early stage of learning, children need proper care, training and incentive from a patient and loving mother who would stoically inculcate in them the virtues of patience, duty, responsibility and patriotism.

In monetary terms, the long hour absence of the mother from home is not too advantageous either. An educated lady can teach her children herself and thereby save a lot of money. She would otherwise have to spend on expensive private tutors or day care centers. Money spent on the wages of housemaids could also be partially saved, as she'd require less helping hands.

If the mother is too much preoccupied with her job outside home, it becomes rather very difficult for the husband to manage alone. Children's safety is a major concern for parents because of the high incidence of cases of kidnapping. Mother's take their children to school, even wait outside the school compounds until classes are over, braving the sun and the rain.

The importance of a good housewife could perhaps be better appreciated from a small historical note. When Abraham Lincoln's mother died at a young age leaving the children behind, the family suffered a terrible blow. The situation inside their log cabin was horrible—uncared-for, half-fed dirty

children, dirty floors etc. Then Lincoln's father asked a lady (Sarah) whom he had known for a long time for her hand in marriage. Incidentally, Sarah had also been widowed with children of her own to take care of. Sarah was a prudent lady and realized that it would be in the interest of both the families that they got married. So the marriage took place and she soon moved into Lincoln's log cabin along with her children. As she was a good and patient woman, she was not dismayed by the awful situation inside the log cabin. She put in a lot of hard work to turn it into a beautiful home. She treated Abe (Abraham Lincoln) and his sister so affectionately that his son they became fond of their step-mother. Sarah was probably also instrumental in shaping the character of Abraham Lincoln, the most honoured and epoch-making President of the USA.

In her words, "Abe was a good boy... never gave me a cross word or look... he was kind to everybody and everything... His mind and mine, what little I had, seemed to run together—move in the same channel."

If the situation so demands that women must work beyond their homes, then they should be provided with the right kind of jobs. Most women are best suited for nursing and teaching jobs. This is not to say that they cannot be doctors or lawyers or engineers, in fact, there are a lot of women in the world today who are excelling in these demanding professions. But the main thrust of this write-up is that women's primary place is at home. If the home is neglected, then all the hard work for increased productivity and all the attempts to achieve the gender equality will end up being counter productive in the long run. That most criminals and drug addicts come from broken homes is a known fact today. This needs to be realized by both the spouses and they should exercise caution in this regard and do their best to work out arrangements keeping foremost in view the well being of their children. Healthy homes are essential for producing responsible and productive citizens.