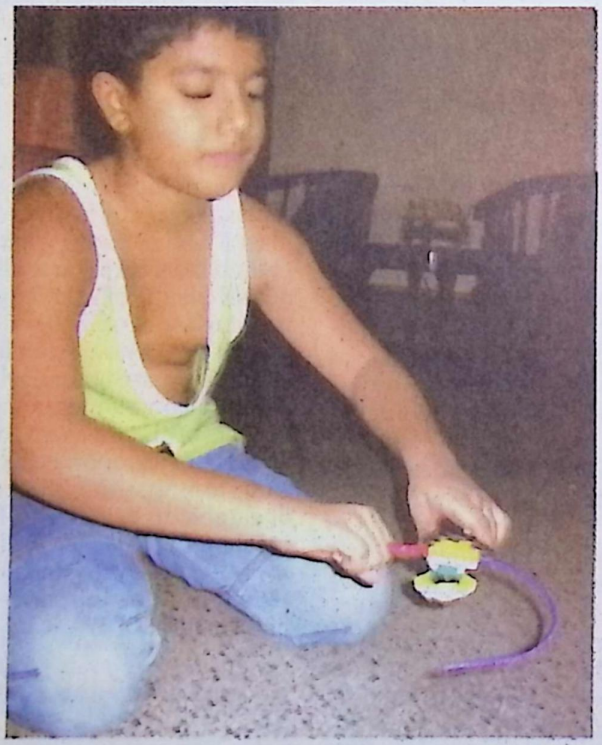
Future Contenders for World Domination

FARAH GHUZNAVI

Becoming a world leader can be a challenging task. It helps, of course, if you have rich parents, or famous family members (like a brother who holds elected office in a strategic location e.g. Florida). But not everyone can rely on having such advantages. Some may have to do it the hard way, using intelligence and personality, and even (horror of horrors!) some degree of hard work...

These capacities often manifest themselves early in life. Sometimes, looking at the kids of today, it's not hard to spot the leaders of tomorrow! Though I must admit that in general, many of my friends' children today display levels of confidence and canniness that would in an earlier age have been referred to as "pakami" - and frowned upon. Now, of course, we are far more enlightened, and simply recognise these as the early signs of promise (or in the case of particularly doting parents, the signs of undoubted genius...).

Early indications that a child might go far come in many forms. Nor, may I hasten to add, are such indicators always infallible. For example, particularly unimaginative parents - or particularly strict ones - can usually take the bounce out of most children (though there are always the exceptional and unsquashable who will survive anything, even parents like that!)



Children have their best chance of developing in a nurturing, encouraging environment.

But in the hands of reasonably intelligent and encouraging parents, promising children have their best chance of developing their talents naturally. Please note, I do not believe that overly pushy or obsessive parents are much good at drawing out natural talents in their children (since their methods are by definition far from natural, and tend to destroy the chance of anything developing naturally...)

Personally, I think that two of the key characteristics of children who might be destined for world domination include the capacity to manipulate, or at least modify the behavior of the adults around them, coupled with a fairly stern refusal to allow the aforementioned adults to influence their own behavior (to too great degree). You might feel that most children seek to influence relevant adults - through pleading, persuasion, coercion, and if all else fails, throwing a fit, preferably in a public place! But the fact is, some are undoubtedly more subtle, and indisputably more successful, than others.

For example, one such attempt by an acquaintance's son had unexpected side effects. This boy is two and a half years old, and decided one evening that he wanted *machh-bhat* (rice with fish). Despite his mother's best efforts, he refused to be satisfied with *dudh-bhat* (rice and milk) or anything else. His father came home later that evening, to see his son sitting quietly on the bed, watching television. For the rest of the evening, he gave his parents the silent treatment; and, of course, he had nothing to eat for dinner.

But in this case, his father (who is used to his son, an only child, frequently demanding his own way - that too, at a high volume!) was pleasantly surprised to have an evening of peace and quiet. So, little Hasan's determination to show his parents who was boss backfired quite badly...