



BRIEF COMMUNICATION

RECOGNIZING CHILD MALTREATMENT IN BANGLADESH

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INTRODUCTION

WITHIN BANGLADESH THERE is a growing concern over the extent of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Cases are being recognized by individuals and within a variety of services and projects concerned with the welfare of children and families. There is an acknowledgement that abuse and neglect can occur both within and outside the family and is not restricted to any one socioeconomic group. There is a consensus among concerned professionals that ways must be found to protect children both from the immediate effects of maltreatment and from its consequences on long term development.

This preliminary paper highlights the range of cases of child abuse and neglect already being identified by professionals in Bangladesh, and goes on to discuss some of the larger paradoxes revolving around child protection related to sociocultural practices and economic factors within the country. These include early marriage of the girl child, domestic child workers, and child labor within export orientated factories.

This paper is based on a workshop presented at the 11th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect, Dublin, Ireland, 1996, and uses ideas generated in a workshop held in Dhaka in 1995.

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Table 1. A Range of Cases Recognized Between 1994 to 1996

Case Number	Gender	Age	Problem
1	Girl	2 years	Skull fracture and intracranial bleeding. Two admissions. "Fell from bed."
2	Boy	6 years	Epilepsy precipitated by domestic violence.
3	Girl	7 years	Selective mutism. Recurrent non-penetrative sexual abuse by male home tutor.
4	Boy	11 years	Behavioural problems. School drop-out. Sexual abuse by construction workers. Now possible HIV infection.
5	Girl	11 years	Learning difficulties, aggressive-regressive behaviour. Sexual abuse by females in jail.
6	Boy	6 years	Inappropriately sexualized. Distressed parents. Physical (drugged) and sexual abuse by aunt for first 3 years of life.
7	Girl	3.5 years	First presentation with severe congenital heart disease (recognizable <1 year). "Medical neglect".
8	Girl	5 years	Learning difficulties, frightened, hyperactive. Beaten by uncle. Suspected sexual abuse. Disempowered mother living with in-laws.
9	Girl	11 years	Sibling of 'failure to thrive' child. Kidnapped and raped by landlord. Now mentally ill prostitute.

RECOGNITION BY PROFESSIONALS

The staff at the Child Development Center of Dhaka Shishu Hospital have recently started to recognize abuse and neglect as a reason for some of the neurodevelopmental problems of children presenting to them. Children are referred from a diverse range of services that transcend social and economic boundaries and demonstrate the wide range of professionals and organizations recognizing child abuse and neglect. Sources of referral include the Child Development Center's own community-based programs within a slum population, the hospital's general outpatient department, human rights organizations, and projects working with children and families. The assessment team usually involves a pediatrician, a psychologist, and a social worker. For the individual child and family, intervention seeks to provide therapeutic support and practical advice. Where appropriate, cases are discussed with or referred to other organizations or projects including those concerned with legal protection and community action.

Table 1 highlights a range of presentations of cases that have been identified showing the effects of different forms of child abuse and neglect. Many of the concerns raised are very similar to those in the more industrialized countries. These range from nonaccidental injury (child 1) and the effects of domestic violence (child 2) through sexual abuse by a variety of perpetrators (child 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9). There is also a growing concern regarding HIV infection (child 4). Perhaps more typical of a developing country is the medical neglect of the girl child (child 7), and the extreme distress and helplessness of a mother living in a joint family system where the child was forced to sleep with the unmarried uncle (child 8). The rape of girl children in poor and disempowered families by local landlords (mastaans) and eventual enforced prostitution demonstrates another typical form of abuse in Bangladesh (child 9).

SOME CHILD PROTECTION PARADOXES

Early Marriage

While sexuality is rarely discussed, sexual harassment is commonplace. Young girls are "protected" either by keeping them at home or marrying them off. The latter is seen as an "honorable" option for the family that also gives the girl social recognition. Some of the stories in Bengali literature from the early part of this century seem to describe symptoms that could now be

interpreted as reflections of child sexual abuse. Tagore, in a short story, describes the distress observed in a child bride: "Mrinmayee paced the room like a caged bird. Marriage, to her, was a nightmare. She felt that a life imprisonment had been given to her." (Shomapti, Collected works of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. 23).

The reactions of young brides often seem to echo those experienced by sexually abused children (Finkelhor, 1988). In some the state induced is akin to that described by Terr (1991) as a post-traumatic one with feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and severe depression.

Paradoxically the practice of early marriage eventually means girls are abandoned and then led into prostitution. This is illustrated by a family known to the Child Development Center:

A 10-year-old girl was living with her only parent, a single mother, in a slum. The mother would leave her to go to work in a factory. Meanwhile local men started to sexually harass the girl. In fear of the consequences she was "married off" to a 17-year-old boy. 6 months later she was abandoned. At the age of 13 years she was seen by the social worker of the Child Development Center, dressed as a prostitute. Her speech was disjointed and she seemed mentally ill.

Such practices are occurring against the backdrop of a society where there is little acknowledgement of the transitional development stage of adolescence for a girl. The onset of puberty immediately transforms her into a woman. Even pediatric services will be denied.

Child Domestic Workers

The use of child domestic labor is widespread and socially accepted. Predominantly girls aged 8 to 16, these children are live-in servants with little or no contact with their own families. Employers often view themselves as "benefactors" who have rescued the child from poverty and given them food, clothing, and shelter. Work hours can be irregular and round the clock. Use of physical violence is commonplace and there is the risk of sexual abuse by the employer or other servants. More importantly, their emotional development is often severely distorted by inconsistent interactions, inappropriate expectations, and mis-socialization (Rahman, 1995). For example, the employer might seem kind and generous one instant, and abusive and demanding the next. These behavioral dimensions are similar to those described by Glaser (1993) as potentially abusive and damaging. Few child domestic workers go on to experience stable adult lives.

Garments Workers

In contrast, work in a garment factory can provide girls and young women a relatively safe place to socialize and experience some independence. It helps them to escape from extreme poverty, domestic service, and early marriage. However, this opportunity has come under threat from outside pressures condemning the use of "child labor." This has to be put into the context of Bangladeshi society. Girls thrown out of factories will not go into education; but are likely to be quickly married off or even forced into prostitution (Boyden & Myers, 1994). This is not to deny that work in a garment factory can be exploitative with low wages and long hours. What is needed is an approach that will encourage employers to combine educational and welfare facilities for all employees, including teenage girls.

DISCUSSION

The work of the Child Development Center has focussed on the recognition of interpersonal abuse and neglect (WHO, 1994) and has identified a wide range of intra- and extrafamilial forms of abuse. This must inevitably be seen against a background of social and cultural attitudes, including the attitude towards the girl child and the condoning of early marriage. There is a need to explore the extent and depth of the problems. It is important to differentiate between appropriate

concerns within Bangladesh and those generated by the imposition of selective values by international campaigns.

There is also a need to raise both professional and public awareness of the issues. The discrepancies that exist between the laws of the land and cultural practices has to be brought to public attention. For example, the legal age of marriage is 18 years for a girl and 21 years for a boy (Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Ordinance, 1974, Government of Bangladesh), but such laws are often ignored or bypassed by the traditional system. The median age of first marriage for girls still remains much below 18, and was 13.9 years among todays 35–39 year old women, and 15.3 years among those aged 20–24 years (Mitra, 1994). This increase in the age of marriage may well be one result of the national campaign to positively encourage school enrollment for girls which itself is reflected in the increasing literacy rate among women (UNICEF, 1996). There is also an active women's movement in Bangladesh which in addition to campaigning for women's rights is drawing public attention to the abuse and neglect of girl children.

Not all forms of abuse found in Bangladesh have been explored in this paper and some remain largely unacknowledged. Typical examples are young boys working in the traditional weaving industries in rural areas, and transport workers ("tempo boys") in the cities. Another form of exploitation is the trafficking of children to other countries as camel jockeys and for prostitution. There are indications that the media are beginning to see exposure of some of these examples or organized abuse as news worthy. Women's organizations and human rights organizations are working with their regional counterparts to repatriate and rescue children trafficked out to neighboring countries such as India.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This could be used as an important advocacy and public educational tool. Further work needs to be done to encourage media interactions and debate on issues relating to children's rights. The considerable expertise within the country needs to be acknowledged and coordinated through a supportive network of individuals and organizations working towards the prevention of all forms of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and thereby having a positive effect on the lives of millions of children in **Bangladesh.**

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HASTAKSHEP
MISPLACED PRIORITIES

RASHTRIYA

SAHARA

JULY 1995 Rs. 15

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STOICAL SHOWMAN

**Displaying a rare survival
instinct, Narasimha Rao has managed to govern
even in the face of wildest storms**

By B Shekar

- Since a couple of days my brother has started touching particular parts of my body whenever he passes by. It is quite embarrassing. I have tried to stop him, but of no help. How can I resist his advances?
- When I was an eight year old girl, I was raped by my cousin. Although I am married now, my problem is I am unable to enjoy marital life. Whenever my husband wants to have sex with me, I just move away from him. He has been insisting that I see a doctor. But I do not want to, as I don't want anyone to know of my past life. Please help me. Will I be able to bear children?

These are but a few of the glaring letters that appeared in a glossy magazine.

A sample survey conducted by a Bangalore-based group on the issue of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) throws shocking revelations. It not only points that CSA is very much in prevalence but also growing in proportion. 15 per cent of the respondents had experienced serious forms of sexual abuse including rape out of which 31 per cent were less than ten years of age. 83 per cent said that they had experienced physical eve teasing and 13 per cent of them had gone through the trauma when they were less than ten years of age.

Can one assume that CSA is a relatively recent phenomenon in India? Social scientists contend that the malaise has been in existence since ages in India.

Research into CSA in India is in its infancy. This is largely due to the secrecy and stigma factors attached to it and the lack of a language for enquiry. Anita Ganesh who was part of the survey team substantiates by saying "we live in a society where molestation and rape are shrouded under a veil of secrecy. The stigma that you are spoilt or somebody has used you, bothers you a lot. So the child who has been abused has to face the stigma, that she has lost her virginity. She starts feeling that she is not pure anymore and nobody will marry her". However, Dr.

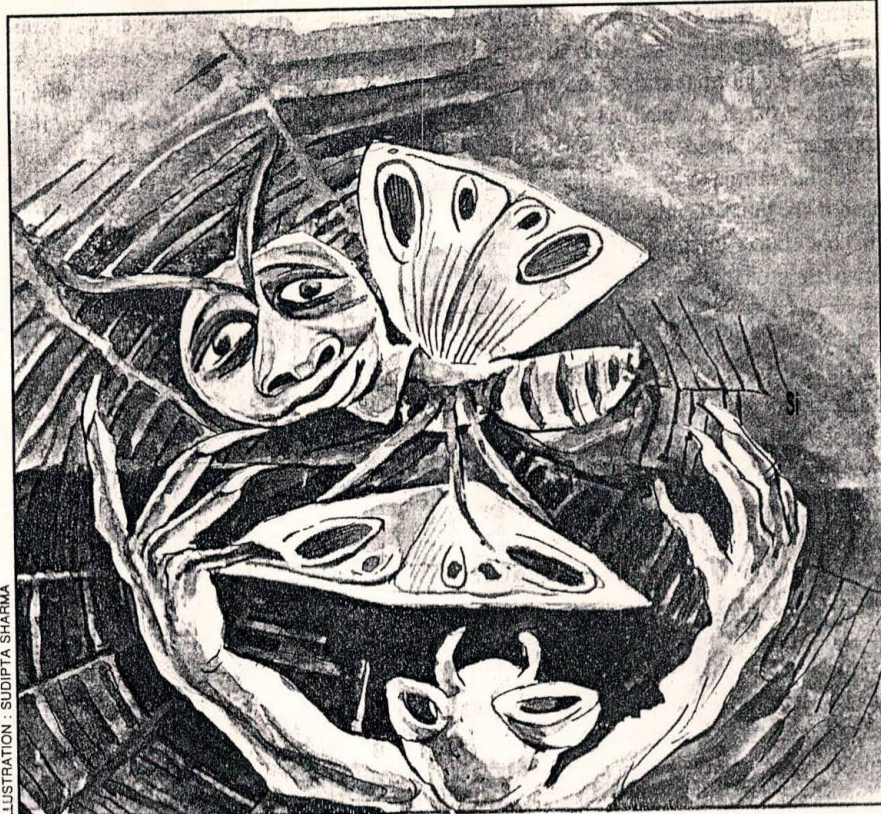


ILLUSTRATION : SUDIPTA SHARMA

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Curse of Mankind

The malaise can't be dismissed merely as the work of a perverted mind

Shekar Sheshadri, Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Mental Health And Neuro Surgery (NIMHANS) and a part of the survey team feels otherwise considering the current changing societal mores, "virtue should be considered as an internal feeling, virginity to be a choice and vagina only an anatomical part of the body".

In most of the cases, the abuse is by family members. With girls, the malefactors are usually uncles, fathers, brothers, cousins and close relatives, while for boys the offenders are often outside the home - teachers, coaches, older friends etc., There is no specific age group of children who are safe from abuse. Children even 11

months old have also been sexually assaulted. A survey done in the US by the Federal government in 1992 showed that 30 per cent of rape victims had not yet reached their tenth birthday. In Delhi, 54 per cent of the rape victims (from police records 1992) were found to be below 15 years and in 80 per cent of these cases, the rapist was known to the child.

Educationists and parents however fail to subscribe to the notion that CSA exists in our society in general. They have even gone to the extent of saying that it is the creation of some intellectuals, academicians and others. It is a known fact that only a small section of them are paedophiles (sexually attracted to

children). Anita Ganesh says that the people indulging in such heinous activities are normal and sound in mind. Says she "it is only a matter of how opportunistic they are".

The trauma of a sexually abused person is hard to describe. Saroj an eminent counsellor says that it can have a devastating effect on all the three aspects — physical, behavioural and as well as emotional. The victimised child could become withdrawn (introvert) from the family members, turn listless with lack of energy and even lose appetite. Emotionally, the child could lose sense of trust and love if something of this sort happens. Sometimes the child may enter into prolonged bouts of depression, perpetual anxiety, panic stricken, powerless, with recurring bouts of suicidal tendencies. They may also develop a sense of low self esteem, feeling alienated and withdrawn. All these can really have a devastating effect at the later phases of life. Things could come to such a sorry pass that the child may even start feeling that the family is a dangerous place to live in.

It is very important to note that it does not necessarily mean that anyone showing any one or all of these symptoms have been sexually abused. These symptoms occur even in normal people who are not abused. One has to be very clear and careful in diagnosing deformities.

Some studies have been done into the short and long term effects of CSA which manifest themselves differently. However, the findings are still rather scant and uncertain. In the short run, sexually abused children have been found to be prone to a variety of psychological and behavioural disturbances caused by the trauma of abuse. These could include bedwetting, nightmares, sleep disorders, depression, anxiety, running away from home, multiple personality disorders, precocious sexual behaviour or its inverse, extreme inhibition and low self esteem caused by a sense of guilt and shame. The long term effects are dependent on several variables like the age at onset of abuse, relationship with the offender, duration and frequency of abuse, the use of force, penetration or invasiveness of the abuse

and family functioning. However, the main variable is the individual's response which depends on whether child blames itself for the abuse, her general demeanour and outlook to life, socialization and the level of awareness about what has happened. Dr Shekar also adds that genital or non-genital contact, intra-familial aspects, coercion, aggression and pain factor, determine the

seriousness of the abuse.

Sexual behavior is quite often discussed, even in psychiatric practice. Dr Shekar Sheshadri, "even when it comes to psychiatry, the prior training to handle such sensitive cases is practically non-existent, so as the medicos can do a comprehensive probe on their patients. The basic hindrance is how to as-

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INCLUDES...

- An adult exposing his/her genitals to a child or persuading the latter to do the same.
- An adult touching a child's genitals or making the child touch the adult's genital
- An adult involving a child in pornography (which includes exposing a child to pornographic material)
- Any verbal or other sexual suggestions made to a child by an adult
- An adult having oral, vaginal or anal intercourse with a child. ♦

SOURCE : SAKSHI

EASY ACCESS TO CHILDREN

CSA being a contentious and tricky issue, it is premature to build up a consensus **Dr. Shekar Sheshadri**, Assistant Professor at the National Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Surgery (NIMHANS), Bangalore. spoke to **B Shekar** on some of the complexities that are involved in CSA. Excerpts...

What sort of a person is a sexual abuser ?

We have very little information about abusers. Very few of them are brought into a context where we can evaluate. We have only gathered trends and information from theories and literature that already are available, which state that abusers are people who have an inclination to abuse. They have access to children and their behaviour is not modulated either by internal or external controls. On the other hand, there are a group of abusers who probably have some kind of disorder. But, not all people who are abusers have disorders. Some derive sexual gratification out of an encounter with somebody who is young.

What are the factors which lead to sexual abuse ?

A lot of them have a history of being abused in childhood themselves. It

would appear that if a man has mental sexual (or both) incompatibility in marital situation, it is quite inconvenient to seek sexual gratification in an extra marital context with an adult because it involves so many things like deception, seduction, fear of discovery and social implications. It is much more convenient to do so with a child within a family who will never talk because of the power and gender structures.

What are the psychological and behavioural changes that take place in the victim in the later phases of the life.


It is not necessary that every child who is abused has to have long or short term psychological impact. The impact actually depends on a host of factors which include abuse within the family and outside, age difference between the child and the perpetrator, genital or non-genital contact, coercion, aggression, and so on.

How does a victim cope with after being subjected to abuse?

Initiation into sexuality generates intense trauma. It gives a distorted image of sex. The child gets confused. A sense of powerlessness prevails. Associated with these are the factors of stigmatisation and betrayal. ♦

SAVE THE GIRL

Recently in a workshop conducted in Bangalore on Sexual Abuse (with the focus being on child) in which psychiatrists, counsellors, educationists, social activists and parents participated, there was a distress call from one of the participants to save a being abused by her participant informed had informed her abused by the father. gathering as to how saved from the none of the with a positive one psychiatrist said context, while the personal experience as to “stay out of internal suggested that the



A black and white illustration of a young girl sitting on a checkered floor, looking distressed with her head buried in her hands. She is wearing a striped shirt and shorts. The background is dark and indistinct.

girl child who was father. The that a social activist about a child being When she asked the the child can be clutches of the father, participants came up solution. Instead, that there was no other narrated a to how he was asked matters”. A counsellor social activist has to



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take up the issue and as if it was not enough, a journalist suggested that the mother of the child has to take the initiative. The participant walked out of the workshop midway with sheer disgust. The participant possibly came to the workshop hoping that something could be done to the suffering child. This reveals that even if one happens to get a live case, one can do nothing in reality. ♦

ANXIETY NEUROSIS

A, a 17-year-old engineering student, was brought to the hospital for refusing to go to college, and feeling extremely anxious and fearful. The clinical diagnosis was anxiety neurosis with panic. During therapy, it was revealed that she had been raped by her uncle when she was 11 years old. She had also been threatened with dire consequences if she let anybody else know about this. The person continued to be a frequent visitor to the household. She began wondering if all men would do the same to her if an opportunity arose and became reserved in her interactions with men and even with her father and brother. These feelings became markedly exaggerated when she left her school to join college where she had to interact with people of the opposite sex. She would become extremely fearful, develop panic attacks, and had a pervasive attitude of anger towards her fellow male students. Eventually, she stopped going to college altogether. Therapy consisted mainly of counselling, and supportive psychotherapy as her symptoms were vocal, while in other areas she was functioning adequately. ♦

question. The issues are too complex and it is too difficult to interview the children on sexual abuse".

But the vital aspect is will the child disclose and convey the complex nature of the issue? Usually a child in its own innocuous way discloses that something is wrong. It is for the parents to analyze as to what the child is trying to convey and not to just shy the issue away as false or fabricated.

Saroj says that the basic knowledge of

human anatomy is a must to understand sexuality and this has to be thought to the children in a normal way.

In comparison with women not having a history of CSA, those who have experienced CSA show evidence of adult sexual disturbance or dysfunction, anxiety, depression, fear of re-victimisation and sometimes suicidal behaviour. Some have also reported homosexual experiences in adolescence or adulthood.

In a culture which places too much importance on female virginity and equates it with purity, virtue and honour, the sorrow, bewilderment, anger and trauma of an abused person is aggravated by a sense of shame and self contempt. This could lead to attempts at suicide and self destruction. Saroj says, "sometimes the child can even cause intentional self injury, which can even go to the extent of disfiguring the face (if the girl is beautiful) " Fear of being maligned, forces victims to keep quiet and the secret pain and shame is a tremendous burden on a young mind.

Support systems like counselling facilities, legal action, sex education, public awareness campaign, sensitive law making and enforcing bodies need to be built up taking into account the context of abuse and the stigma attached to the victim in our society. Anita Ganesh feels "as long as women are looked as sex objects, sexual abuse will always be there. If a father looks at the mother as a sex object, no sex education in the school or anywhere will help positively". So what is the way out? A mother feels "if sons are sensitized to respect women early in their lives, things will change on its own".

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that CSA cuts across families from all sections of society irrespective of class, caste, ethnicity and religion. The question then is: Is sexual abuse purely sexual? Or is it an aggression associated with power and contempt?

The research group (comprising Anita Ganesh, Dr Shekar Sheshadri, Lucy, Arun Kotenkar and others) has concluded by saying, "given the magnitude of the problem it can no longer be dismissed as confined to pathological families or individuals. Surely there is something basically wrong in the power relations between men and women, between adults and children. The sanctity of family as a nurturing haven, as the bosom of love and security can no longer be taken for granted. The innocence of children can no longer be romanticized or eulogized as cuteness. And we can no longer say that what goes on in the family — whether wife battering, marital rape or child sexual abuse — is none of society's business". ■

By Deepika Dhar

* Nine-year-old Sunil alongwith a few other children are asked by their caretaker, Ramnath, to massage him. After sometime he asks the boys except Sunil to leave. He gives Sunil a 'bidi to smoke, switches off the light and abuses him. Sunil often falls into bouts of depression since then.

* Two months ago, 10-year-old Raju Bihari was forcibly bolted into the toilet by an employee and sodomised. A month later, Raju alongwith six other boys managed to break the window ceiling and run away. Out of these seven, Mehboob was caught and beaten black and blue.

These are few of the many incidents that have taken place at the juvenile home in Alipur in outer Delhi. Meant to provide a 'home' to destitutes and be a reform centre to delinquents, this Home is more like a jail and no less than a concentration camp. Here children are sexually exploited, brutally beaten and subjected to all sorts of intimidation. As a result, many children run away and those who are unable to do so either become hardened criminals or become deranged.

Run by Delhi Administration, the juvenile Home has two branches — Boys-I for children from 12 to 18 years of age, and boys-II for 6 to 12 years old.

In the Boys-II Home, the children are living in constant fear and threat of the employees. Kept locked in rooms, they are not allowed to venture out in the open. They are taken out of the rooms only on two occasions — once for a roll call which is done a number of times in a day, and another for punishment, when they are asked to remain standing in sweltering heat. Punishments are very common and include battering with rods and chains, so much so that children often get seriously injured. 11-year-old Rakesh, living in the Jawahar *kutir* (cell), had his middle finger and right hand broken by Virender, the caretaker of the *kutir*. Seven-year-old Vijay got several stitches on his abdomen after he was mercilessly whacked by a chain. A 10-year-old Muslim boy has permanent



Out for punishment or roll call?

Wretched existence

For destitutes in Alipur Juvenile Home, it is a dead end

marks on the upper portion of his back as a result of thrashing by hot iron rod. Several boys have swollen and bruised legs due to regular and rampant thrashing. Virender is the most dreaded caretaker whom the children fear most. He beats violently and even abuses children sexually.

The children are lodged in four *kutirs* (cells) which lacks even the bare necessities. Most of the boys sleep on the floor with no bed sheets. Fans do not work, windows are broken and the boys are left to sweat in the scorching weather. Three out of the four *kutir's* go dark during nights, because there are no electric bulbs.

The boys are given only two sets of clothes for the whole year. Some of the children who go to a nearby government school are chided by other children and beaten by teachers for not wearing proper uniform. These school-going children are also not given lunch packs and during lunch time they eat the left-overs of the peers coming from families.

Children in the Home complain that they are given substandard food which has

often dead cockroaches and insects in it. As a result, they suffer from perennial stomach ailments.

The boys also are not given proper medical attention. Says nine-year-old Mahesh of Shastri *kutir*, "the doctor is never available, and if he comes, he will give the same brick-coloured tablet to everybody irrespective of what the disease is".

Besides stomach disorders, several children are suffering from skin diseases. The diseases are transmitted through soaps and towels. One soap is used by 36 children and one towel is used by 14-15 children at a time. They are also not given tooth brushes either. Munna is suffering from jaundice and needs immediate medical attention which he is deprived of. Vijay has asthma but is not getting any medicine.

The children are made to slog for long hours doing menial work. They have to clean the whole premises including the toilets. On refusal rods and chains are always ready. They are not given any sports or recreational facilities either. The only TV in the Home has not

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

Is it possible for a juvenile centre to deny the existence of a boy, who as per press photographs, was very much present there at the time of clicking?

*This is the question puzzling the parents of a boy Rampyare Chavan who have been running from pillar to post with the photograph which appeared in the July, 1995, issue of **Rashtriya Sabara** English Magazine. The father of the boy Ram Singhasan Chavan, has lost all hopes and is angry at the system which he thinks has gobbled up his child.*

While he contends that the child in the said photograph is his son, the officials deny that the boy ever lived there. The Director Social Welfare, H A Arfi denying the presence of the boy, says, "as per our records there is no mention of the boy. The boy was never in the Home."

In absolute contrast to the statement, the photograph clearly shows the boy standing behind iron bars in the observation home at Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi. And giving credence to this assertion are the statements of several boys present in the Home during that period. They say that the particular boy was living with them. 11-year-old Jeetendra, who has since been transferred to the juvenile boys Home at Alipur (outer Delhi), in a written statement made before the superintendent G D Kapil and deputy superintendent J C Sahni, clearly mentions the presence of the boy. Writes he, "the boy was living in the observation home at Feroz Shah. I got to know him there. He fled from the Home before *Raksha Bandhan* festival day last year. He couldn't stand the tortuous atmosphere of the Home."

If the boy lived in the Home for sometime then why are the officials negating his presence? Are they covering up something? Why isn't the boy's name existing in the records?

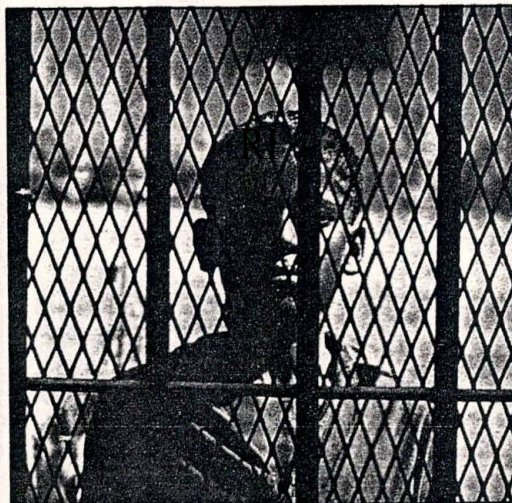
These questions are haunting the parents of the boy who apprehend that something terrible must have happened

with their son.

Rampyare, was a 10th standard student at the time he left his home in village Kasunder (district Ballia) Uttar Pradesh in 1993 for sight-seeing in Delhi with a family acquaintance.

Rampyare duly communicated with his family through letters. The last he wrote was in November 1994, in which he had mentioned his plans to return. Since then, there has been no news from him. His father, Ram Singhasan Chavan is an illiterate labourer in the Raniganj coalfields in Bihar. Thinking that his son was safe with his distant relatives in Delhi, he gave little thought to the welfare of his eldest son.

The truth was revealed a year later, when the acquaintance with whom



Rampyare had left the village, returned and made enquires about him. It was only then that the family got alarmed. Relatives were informed in Delhi but they couldn't trace out the boy. Says Ram Charan, "I felt so helpless. I am a poor illiterate man. I couldn't afford to go to a big and unknown city like Delhi. Besides, my friends and relatives in my village dissuaded me from coming to this place saying that the police might arrest me. I could only pray to God for the safety of my son." Ram Charan could not even afford to lodge a complaint in his village because that required a lot of money.

The family had given up any hope of tracing their son, when a relative of theirs

in Delhi send them the copy of **Rashtriya Sabara** magazine in which his son's photograph had appeared in 1994 issue in April this year. Ram Charan was informed in Bihar and he came rushing down to his village. Believing that he will get his child back, he alongwith a few villagers, including the headmaster of the village school, Bhagwan Singh, decided to go to Delhi.

Brimming with confidence, Ram Charan alongwith some villagers reached Delhi and went to the observation Home. Says Bhagwan Singh, "since it was a holiday, we couldn't talk to the superintendent but other employees recognised the photographs and admitted that the boy was there. But the next day, they retracted on their statement issued by them the previous day."

Disheartened by this apathetic attitude, they met this correspondent, who had written the earlier report. Enquires revealed that Rampyare was in the Home in May 1994 when the photograph was clicked. Why the officials are denying continues to remain a mystery. Did Rampyare run away from the Home? If so, then what forced him to flee?

Perhaps, the answer lies in the Homes' atmosphere which is too rosy for the children to pull along. Rather than being a home, these are more like jails where children are treated as inmates.

As this reporter was talking to a child who had a broken arm, the superintendent, L D Trikha forced the boy back and refused further interviews. On being protested, Trikha joined by several other employees forced the reporter out of the premises. The chairman of the juvenile welfare board, S R Nigam too ignored the pleas of this reporter saying, "you, journalists only highlight the negative points." Further, the Superintendent refused to give any information about Rampyare Chavan. ■

Deepika Dhar



Home's hospital : treatment or (mis) treatment?



Children of lessor lot

been functioning properly for several months.

Most of the children are depressed. Several want to be sent to their parents. Says Rakesh, "many of us want to go back to our homes but these people are not sending us". Most of the children long to go out of the building which they believe is more like a jail. Beaten and bruised, their world is limited within the corridors.

Munna has only one leg and one hand. But being a handicap evokes no sympathy from the staff and authorities. Munna is forced to clean toilets daily, and,

if he does not, he is beaten black and blue.

Like Home II, Boys in Home-I also present a picture of disgust and apathy. Though, it is mandatory to provide the boys educational, sports and medical facilities in this cell but hardly anything of the sort is being given.

Very few boys are allowed to go to school while the rest are unable to read and write properly. The Home has provisions for vocational training but has no instructor to teach. The boys believe that after leaving Home, it is the skill that helps them to survive. They are not given any sports materials for recreation.

12-year-old Ram Samit is suffering from tuberculosis (TB). Reduced to near skeleton, he has been lying on the bed for over two months now and is unable to move. His other mates carry him to the toilet. Though declared TB patient, Ram Samit has not been isolated and other boys are equally exposed to the risk. 14-year-old Raju of Shivaji kutir has been ill for three months now. Says he, "I feel sick in the evenings but I don't get any medicine and nor any doctor visits me."

The boy alleged that the authorities do not help them to find jobs or shelter after they are required to leave the premises. Says Lakhan, "they just turn us away. If it is so, then why do they keep us here? It is a cruel punishment meted out to us."

Even after leaving the Home, the boys have nowhere to go and they are most likely to fall into evil hands. In order to avoid this, the boys demand that after learning a skill, they should be allowed to take up jobs outside, and once established they be turned out of the premises. 14-year-old Rajesh has mastered quite a few skills and wants to go out, but because of the rules he is not allowed. "I cannot sit like this. They say that I can go out at the age of 16 only," says he. The children in the Boys-II Home openly stated before the authorities that they were told to talk only good things.

The Home superintendent, G D Sibal at first refused to reply to any question but later when insisted upon feigned ignorance of the prevailing scenario even though, the children made written statements about abuse and beatings before him.

Children of both branches are a depressed lot. Many have not seen the outside world for years together. They feel imprisoned. Their only source of respite is an outsider who comes to visit the Home on rare occasions and these hapless children are probably filled with a ray of hope. But even these chance meetings are rare and bring no respite for they are constantly under the glare of the authorities and are threatened beforehand not to spill the beans. ■

By Dinesh Kumar

After four streams of medicine, — allopathy, homeopathy, unani and ayurveda—a fifth stream called, electropathy, is gaining ground in India. Electropathic medicine is said to be faster in effect than the irritatingly slow homeopathic. It is not as outrageous as allopathic and certainly not as musty as ayurvedic.

This new branch of medicine is based on the philosophy that in every human being all the tissues and organs contain lymph and blood. Both are active substances of the human body. If there is any impurity in any of the two, it will certainly result in a malady. So the 'lymph' and 'blood' of a person remain in pure form so as to remain healthy.

Thus electropathy is based on the premise that disease is essentially the result of disorder brought about by the organism having admitted substances or energies which resist the assimilation process in general in the body and irritate or burden the system. According to Count Ceaser Mattie, the father of electropathy, the digestive or formative process may be disturbed because of the conversion of foodstuff into lymphatic humour and blood is afflicted with anomalies in the chemical process of decomposition. And faulty digesting may burden the organs with morbid or inflamed blood, in other words with heterogeneous matter acting as poison and damaging the system.

Electropathic medicine is prepared by non-poisonous medicinal plants and mixed in proper proportion for the treatment of any disease. In other modes of treatment like allopathy, ayurved, unani and homeopathy, poisonous, non-poisonous metals, chemicals and salt and so on are used for the preparation of drugs as a result of which chances of side effects always lurk.

One vital point of difference between homeopathy and electropathy is that while in the former drugs are prepared from different plants while mixing them together, in homeopathy only one drug is obtained from one



Dr N K Awasthi (extreme right), the pioneer of electropathy in India in conversation with Dr Fabio Ambrosi (extreme left)

ELECTROPATHY

Wonder Therapy

Mode of treatment where lymph and blood forms the basis

plant at a time.

All the electropathic-related activities are coordinated by the apex body named Naturo Electro-Homeo Medicos of India (NEHM). Nearly 90 medical colleges and hospitals are presently being run by the NEHM. The students who are given the degree after four years of study and six months of in-house training are admitted after the completion of their senior secondary education. The secretary of NEHM, Dr N K Awasthi claimed that each medical college has around 90-100 students. At some places, medicines are provided free of cost to propagate the concept of electropathy.

The students studying in the various medical colleges of electropathy have no immediate avenues of employment to look forward to. They have only one way to eke out a living — private practice. In the absence of an employment opportunity, talented students are not joining this field. This was also admitted by N K Awasthi. "Most of the students who wanted to take up electropathy could not get an opportunity to translate their dreams into reality. But we have no option unless our branch is duly recognised by the government", blurts out Awasthi who has been fighting for a long time to get this discipline recognised by the government. ■

At what cost?

The contribution of the tobacco industry to the government exchequer may be immense but the casualty is public health



An innocuous drag... a further step towards end

By Prabha

If you want to kill a person just give him a pack of cigarette daily. If he succumbs to the temptation and turns into an addict, the pack will become his passport to death, though the end may be misleadingly slow.

According to a survey, the use of tobacco products like cigarette, *bidi* and *vaan masala* is responsible for the death of over 13 lakh people in India every year. Being the third largest tobacco producing country in the world, India produces 519 million kgs of tobacco per year. Out of it, 425 million kgs are consumed in India itself and the rest is exported. Despite much-publicised anti-smoking campaigns, about 5500 new tobacco users emerge every year.

Dr (Col) K L Chopra, chairman, Heart Care Foundation of India and Dr K K Aggarwal, the vice chairman, explain that, smokers are more prone to silent ischaemia (local anaemia produced by local obstacles to the arterial flow) which goes undetected for many years and in such cases the patient might suffer heart attack and even sudden death.

Dr Chopra says that sudden death among the smokers occurs because the

normal electrical stimulus that induces heart attack in a synchronised manner gets disorganised, causing erratic and ineffective contraction. Due to this, heart is unable to pump blood into the vital organs of the body.

This leads to cardiac arrest unless effective resuscitative

measures are undertaken.

High incidence of coronary artery disease leading to angina and heart attack is also on account of smoking habits.

Though the advertisements of cigarettes, other tobacco products, alcohol, etc are banned on Doordarshan and AIR, the manufacturers of these products have no reason to worry as the doors of foreign satellite channels are open for them. Then the print media too has no moral scruples in boosting the sale of tobacco products by way of pompous and alluring advertisements.

Last year, the Union Health Ministry proposed a legislation to ban tobacco product's advertisements but it could not see the light of the day because tobacco products yield rich revenue receipts to the exchequer, which the government would never like to lose.

Any legislation without effective implementation can only be termed as an exercise in futility. The Cigarette (Regulation, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1975 had made mandatory the statutory warning, 'cigarette smoking is injurious to health' on every cigarette pack. But has it been of any use?

Studies by medical professionals have also suggested that tobacco

Dr Rajesh Chawla, an eminent chest physician at the National Chest Institute, New Delhi, and also vice president, Delhi Medical Association, talks to Vishal Duggal on the tobacco menace. Excerpts:

Why is smoking harmful?

Cancer of the lung is 8.6 times more common in smokers than in non-smokers in India. Heart diseases are twice as common, cancer of the mouth, throat and upper air passages and food pipe is ten times more common amongst smokers. Cigarette smoke contains more than 4000 chemical compounds, some of which are radioactive, that have been experimentally proven to be antigenic, cytotoxic and carcinogenic (cancer producing). The more dangerous of these products are tar, hydrocarbons, benzopyrenes, nitrosamines, formaldehyde, hydrocyanic acid, phenol, carbon monoxide and polonium — 210 (radioactive). These chemicals have been conclusively implicated by careful, planned studies in causing irritation, deficiencies in the dust removing mechanism of the lung and lung cancer, the greatest of all menaces.

Do you agree that tobacco advertising should be banned to discourage people from consuming tobacco in any form?

Of course, it should be banned. It

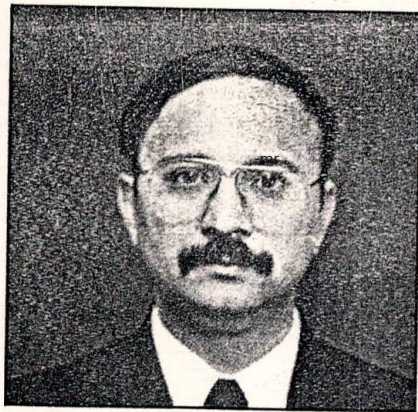
imbibed in any form — inhaled or chewed — is harmful. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has stated clearly that the use of tobacco is a major cause of death and diseases. Similar warnings have been issued by the voluntary Health Association of India and World Health Organisation (WHO). However, there is no tangible evidence to prove the relation between the consumption of tobacco and diseases.

The most unfortunate thing about smoking is that it not only harms the smokers but also those who are in close

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"ADS SHOW SMOKING AS A STATUS SYMBOL"



should be a part of an overall strategy to reduce tobacco consumption in India. Advertisements show smoking as a status symbol and equate smoking to virility, masculinity and glamorous qualities which are sought by the present day young generation. All this drives a person towards smoking. Tobacco advertisements whether in the media or through hoardings and banners should be completely banned by the government.

Do you think there is lack of will on the part of the government to check people from consuming tobacco?

Tax revenues have made government so dependent that there is reluctance to take anti-tobacco measures. Then intense lobbying by multi-million tobacco companies, whose contribution is important to fill the coffers of political parties, does the trick.

proximity of the smoker. It is for this reason that the spouses and children of smokers also contract various tobacco-related diseases. Passive smoking has also been identified as an independent risk factor for heart attack. Despite the repeated pleas by the doctors, urging the Government to frame and enforce laws against passive smoking, nothing concrete has come out.

Smoking reduces a man's life span by over six years. People who smoke nearly 20 cigarettes a day are twice likely to have heart attack as compared to non-smokers,

Are the government priorities right in preferring revenues to public health?

Not at all. It is the duty of the government to protect and promote public health. The enormous amount of health hazards associated with smoking places an obligation upon the Government to act for the sake of public health and not be so dependent on revenues from tobacco products. Instead of garnering more revenues through taxes on tobacco products the government should try to reduce non-plan expenditure.

Is the consumption of the products like snuff, chewing tobacco and bidis in any way less injurious to health?

No. All of them are equally harmful to health. *Bidis* consist of 0.5 gm of sun-dried and cured tobacco flakes rolled in dry leaf of temburni. *Bidis* contain more tar, a substance causally linked to cancer. Tobacco which is chewed or left in the mouth overnight or snuffed, contains not only carcinogens, but also nicotine, which make it as habit forming as cigarettes. Cancer of the mouth or pharynx is the commonest cancer in India because tobacco is usually kept in mouth or taken with pan.

Any personal contribution, you might have made in curbing the consumption of tobacco products.

I have been involved in many fora which have taken up the issue against

passive smoking. My interest in this matter is more urgent as I am a chest physician and deal mainly with smoking-related illnesses.

The Royal College of Physicians has found that the people in small and close spaces such as railway compartments or government offices in which there are many smokers inhale as much smoke as an average smoker inhales directly from one cigarette in one hour. If such a person were to be exposed to such an unhealthy cigarette smoke filled environment for several hours a day, then he will be running the same risk of lung cancer and other diseases as a smoker who directly and out of his own choice smokes about ten cigarettes a day.

In pursuance of the objective of making Delhi smoke free, I filed a public interest petition in Delhi High Court on 26th May, 1995 demanding a ban on smoking in public places. On hearing this, the Delhi High Court has issued show cause notices to the Delhi and the Central Government asking why smoking should not be banned in public places. This petition has been filed to protect non-smokers from the ill-effects of passive smoking for no fault of theirs. Every citizen has a right to breathe clean air and live his life in clean and unpolluted environment and this right is being violated due to smoking at public places. ♦

every year, warns the WHO.

It is estimated that more than 30 lakh people are killed every year because of the use of tobacco. "Surprisingly, the graph of consumption of tobacco in developed countries is decreasing compared to developing countries," says a WHO report. Nevertheless, the government of India is sitting mum because it nets crores of rupees in the form of taxes.

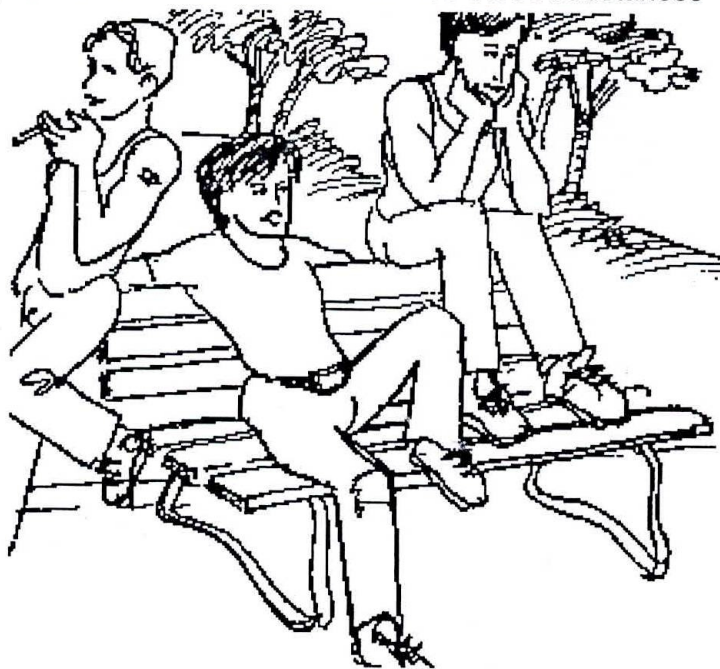
The fact that the use of tobacco is injurious to health, is known to every one, whether educated or uneducated. But who bothers? ■

Raja

Sixteen years old Raja is a member of a group of young, male sex workers. He has lived away from home for five years. He currently lives in a single room with three other sex workers. Raja's father drinks alcohol regularly. When he is drunk, he often beats his wife and children. Raja loves his mother and siblings and sees them when he can. They are always happy when he visits. Raja gives his mother whatever money he can spare. He hopes that some of the money can be used for the education of his younger siblings.

During his time on the streets, Raja has been beaten and raped by other street children and some of his clients. Some of the other sex workers are good friends, but some harass him by calling him 'gay' and by telling him "you have AIDS and you are going to die". Raja does not know if he is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, but he is afraid to go to the health clinic to be **tested**.

Raja likes some of the street educators who work in his neighbourhood and he occasionally goes to a centre where he participates in activities such as games, drama, music and literacy classes. When he was about 11, Raja began smoking tobacco and, by the age of 14, he started sniffing solvents. A year later he was smoking cannabis. Most of his friends use these substances as well as other kinds which they inject. The substances are usually very easy to obtain. Raja's friends have recently persuaded him to try amphetamine tablets. He likes the rush he experiences when he uses amphetamines because the effect takes his mind off his troubles. He believes that amphetamines also make him more adventurous in his sex work.



He has now begun to use more often and has started to think of injecting. Lately, Raja's life has become more difficult. He misses his mother and siblings more and the harassment by the other sex workers has become worse. He has been asked by his roommates to find another place to live.

Example of using the Modified Social Stress Model Model

Stress

Father unavailable, abusive
Worried about family and HIV
Harassment and Violence
Needs new place to live

Normalization

Alcohol normalized at home
Peers use substances
Substances affordable and
available for him

Substance Experience

Enjoys feeling of intoxication
Forgets problems
Improves his work

Attachments

Mothers, brothers and sisters
Street Educator
Other children

Skills

Able to save money
Sex work
Some reading and drama skills

Resources

Mother
Access to drop-in centres
Proven resilience for 5 years
Motivated to survive

Seriousness of Current Use: N/A ☐ Low ☐ Medium ☒ High ☐

Potential for Future Use: Nil ☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☒

Other comments and Plan for Action.

History of persistent and increasing substance use
Level of stress is high and increasing
Might not increase use if he could have more contact with his mother and could find a place to live.
Encourage him to move into the local youth shelter. Ask his permission to contact mother.



WEB

INDONESIA

ABUBAKAR BA'ASYIR, 64, is a cleric and the head of the Mujahidin Council of Indonesia, a pro-Islam organization. Authorities say he also leads the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group, which they say has cells across Southeast Asia and possible links to al-Qaeda. Abubakar denies it, though he describes Osama bin Laden as a "true Islamic warrior" for taking on the West. He was questioned last week and then released.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ED WRAY—AP; DILLON—AP; REUTERS; MALAYSIA POLICE DEPT—AP

SINGAPORE

Thirteen alleged members of the **JEMAAH ISLAMIAH** group were arrested in December after authorities uncovered a plot by the group to bomb the U.S. embassy and other targets in the city-state. The government says eight of the men trained in camps in Afghanistan; a video found in the home of one of the suspects, officials say, was proof of an al-Qaeda connection.

lowed to return home. He denies he preaches terrorism and says he has no links with al-Qaeda, although he told reporters that he "praises the struggle of Osama bin Laden ... in fighting the arrogance of the terrorist United States." His lawyers say he may have taught some of the suspects being held in Malaysia, but bristle at the suggestion that he instructed them in the ways of jihad. "If every teacher had to be responsible for his students," says Ahmad Mihdan, Abubakar's head attorney, "no

one would ever become a teacher."

Indonesian military sources say privately that they believe Abubakar is a key link in the network of regional terrorist cells that has come to light this year. And, although a direct tie to al-Qaeda has yet to be established, "we are very sure that he is not acting alone," says one military intelligence officer. In public, however, Indonesian police insist that the allegations against Abubakar in Singapore and Malaysia aren't substantive enough for detention or extradition. "We do not believe that he was recruiting or training anyone for a jihad operation," says national police spokesman Brigadier General Saleh Saaf. "So far we have no proof."

The kid glove treatment Abubakar is receiving, along with an apparent reluctance to pursue other possible suspects such as Abubakar deputy Hambali Nurjaman, can probably be explained by Indonesia's complicated and unstable politics. First, Indonesia has enough turmoil to deal with, from separatist movements to communal massacres. President Megawati Sukarnoputri rules atop an unwieldy coalition of interests, and the last thing she wants to be known for is a reckless crackdown on Islamic groups. "Megawati's government is afraid of arousing Muslim sentiment if anyone is taken in without enough proof," says Hamid Basyaib, a researcher at the Akasara Foundation think tank. And many of those Islamic groups have friends or even founders in high places in the government and the army.

The men in uniform have another reason not to go along with the U.S. in its war on terrorism. In 1999, responding to the Indonesian military's brutality in East Timor, the U.S. Congress passed a law that banned U.S. training and education for Indonesian soldiers, which officials complain has hamstrung the military's ability to service its fleet of U.S.-made warplanes.

If Indonesia continues to ignore a region-wide crackdown on terrorists, it could become an inviting haven for bad guys on the run—and a launch site for future attacks. Evidence uncovered in the past few weeks proves that the groups have the means to cause terrible devastation. After interrogating Fathur, Philippine authorities were able to collect what National Police Chief Leandro Mendoza called the "biggest haul of explosives in the country's history." Police recovered more than a ton of TNT—enough to level a city block, according to police—as well as 500 detonators and 17 M-16 rifles. Police say they are still tracking down friends

and allies of Fathur.

IN MALAYSIA, MEANWHILE, POLICE SAY THEY are attempting to trace as many as 200 more members of KMM terrorist cells. That number could be low if you believe Abdul Rahman, a former KMM foot soldier, who quit the organization two years ago after disagreeing with its plans to wage a violent campaign to install an Islamic government in Malaysia. Short, muscular and terrified of arrest, Abdul Rahman smokes constantly as he describes how he was recruited through a martial arts group and later sent for six months' paramilitary training in Thailand. "There were 45 in my group alone, and there were many, many gro sent for training," he relates. "So if the police say there are 200 more KMM members out there I think they must mean only the leaders." Rahman advises that the world take the terrorists of Southeast Asia seriously. "They will not hesitate," he says, the strain of being on the run vibrating in his voice, "to kill or be killed for Islam."

That would be worrying anywhere, but it has a particular chill in Malaysia, where four tons of ammonium nitrate has gone missing. The fertilizer, which can be used to make truck bombs, was ordered by Yazid Sufaat, a former Malaysian army captain now under detention in Kuala Lumpur for alleged links to the al-Qaeda. (On Abubakar's orders, Malaysian police say, the 37-year-old allowed two of the hijackers on the plane that crashed into the Pentagon on Sept. 11 to stay at his apartment in Kuala Lumpur in 2000.) Yazid, who was arrested in December on his return from fighting against the coalition in Afghanistan, had ordered the ammonium nitrate in late 2000 through a company he owned called Green Laboratory Medicine. Sources close to the investigation say someone accepted delivery of the fertilizer, though it's not clear exactly when. What happened after that remains a mystery. Malaysian police concede the ammonium nitrate disappeared but are also adamant it left the country. The haul totals four times the amount of ammonium nitrate used to destroy the federal office building in Oklahoma City, one foreign analyst points out. With such a huge stash of bomb-making material unaccounted for and hundreds of KMM members still at large, Yazid will be facing some pointed questions from his Malaysian interrogators. —With reporting by Zamira Loebis/Solo, Mageswary Ramakrishnan/Kuala Lumpur, Nelly Sindayen/Manila and Jason Tedjasukmana/Jakarta

THE SHAME

As the gap between rich and poor grows wider, destitute Asians are increasingly selling their most valuable property: their children

By ALEX PERRY MAE SAI

MAMA SAN WON'T BUDGE from \$1,000. There's the food, the clothes, the makeup, the perfume and the condoms, not to mention the fees of the middlemen. At \$1,000, she's making nothing, she says. She taps out the figure in baht on a calculator and holds it up: 43,650. You won't get a pair of 14-year-old Burmese girls for less in this town.

"Thirty thousand," I suggest.

"Forty-three," counters Mama San. She tells Tip (whose name means "heavenly light") and Lek (meaning "small") to fetch their chips. The two tiny figures squatting at her feet jump up, dart under the two pink strips that provide the only light in the bar, run upstairs and return breathlessly clutching gambling counters. "What the customers paid," explains Mama San. In the three months since she was brought to this backstreet brothel in the northern Thai town of Mae Sai, Lek has collected eight white chips and four blues—a total of \$59.50. Tip has done better: 20 whites, 10 blues and four reds make \$163. "Not a bad little earner," says Mama San.

"Thirty-five thousand?" I venture.

With her scarlet fingernails, Mama San pinches her plunging black V-neck sweater by the shoulder pads, hitches up her matronly bosom and smooths the sweater over her belly. "Forty-two thousand, five hundred, and I'll be losing money," she sighs. "I sent 5,000 home to Lek's

parents and 10,000 to Tip's." Conveniently ignoring the silver Mercedes parked in the forecourt outside, she repeats she makes nothing from prostitution. She's in it because she cares. She takes the girls in, puts a roof over their heads. "What can I do? I feel sorry for them. Somebody has to protect them."

Tip, like many of the girls in Mae Sai, is from Kentung in Burma's eastern Shan state. Mama San is also from the Shan region and grew up with some of the girls' mothers. As a 20-year Mae Sai resident who graduated from working the brothels to owning one, she is regarded as a success and a valuable contact on the other, richer side of the border. It's a responsibility, she says. Her conscience won't let the two girls go for anything less than 41,500.

"Forty-one thousand?"

Done. We shake hands.

On the floor where they have been lis-



SOLD: Tip, left, and Lek, crying in a friend's arms, have just been purchased. Lek bows in gratitude to Mama San, right



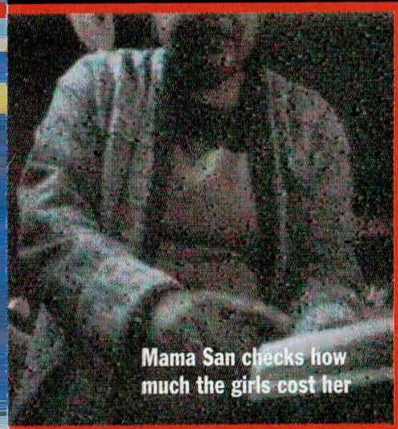
tening in wide-eyed silence, Tip and Lek embrace. Lek claps, hoarsely barks something in slang at the 15 other girls lined up on a bench in front of the bar and runs, shrieking and giggling into the street, with her waist-length black hair trailing. The teenagers ignore her, locked into a Thai adventure-romance on the television overhead. For a moment, Tip stays where she is, her childlike hands clasped in front, bony elbows between her knees. Then she shuffles over to join the row of moon faces turned up toward the screen. She and Lek have been sold. Again.

This time to Jonathan, the photographer working on this story, and me.

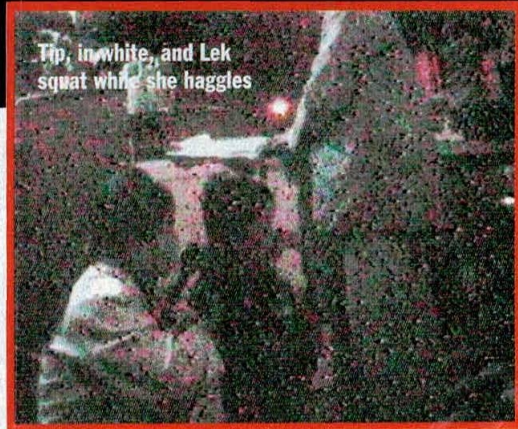
Fifteen minutes later, facing an unknown future with just a pink plastic basket holding a few clothes and a bottle of shampoo, Lek starts to cry. Suddenly sensing a need to do everything properly, she runs into the bar, kneels in front of Mama San and begins to bow and chant, a good Buddhist girl in smudged makeup giving thanks for her freedom. Mama San laughs, flattered by the display of supplication. She isn't worried about finding replacements. "Their mothers or the middlemen bring them to me," she says. "There are always fresh ones."

Mama San is right: there is no shortage of kids for sale. Across Asia, tens of thousands of children are peddled into slavery each year. Some toil with their families as bonded laborers on farms. Others are sold by their parents—or tricked by agents—into servitude as camel jockeys, fisher boys or beggars. In Burma, some are kidnapped by the state and forced to become soldiers. And, according to the International Labor Organization, at least 1 million children are prostitutes, with the greatest numbers in Thailand, India, Taiwan and the Philippines. It's a growing problem, fueled by the Asian economic boom and the subsequent bust, which has fostered an increasingly yawning gap between rich and poor, countryside and city, isolated hinterlands and wealthy coasts. On the continent, alongside the millionaires of Bangkok and Hong Kong, live two-thirds of the world's extreme poor—790 million people earning less than \$1 a day. In the race to escape their deprivation, whole villages are sometimes complicit in the sale of their children. The procurers, says Sompop Janttra-

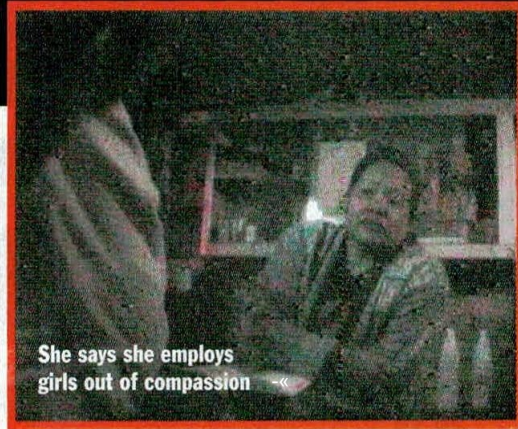
SHADOW LIFE: This child prostitute, like many on the Thai border, hails from eastern Burma, a region awash in drugs and AIDS



Mama San checks how much the girls cost her



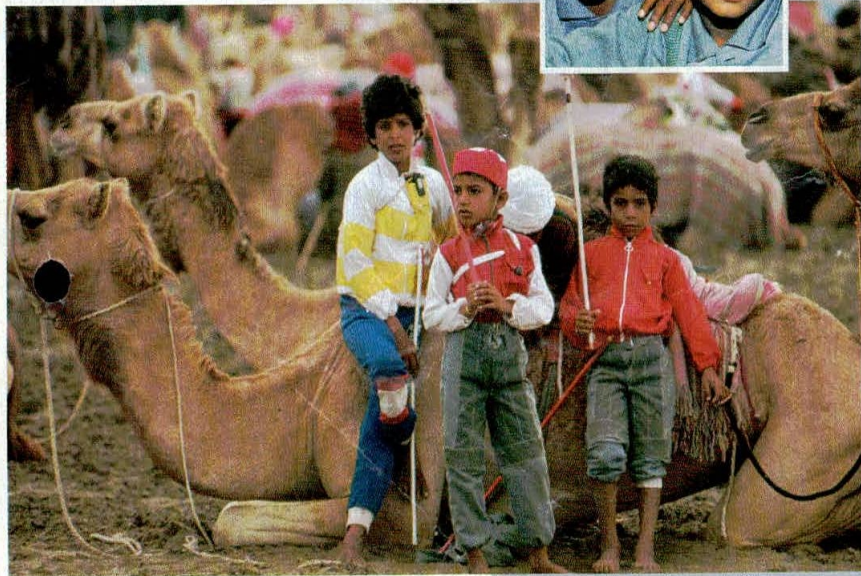
Tip, in white, and Lek squat while she haggles



She says she employs girls out of compassion

ka, a leading Thai activist who has saved thousands of girls from being sold into brothels, might be the wives of village heads. Teachers know which children are vulnerable, and some alert procurers for a fee. He has seen pickup trucks full of girls sc to brothels leaving from schools in what is called *tok keow*, or the green harvest. A police officer is often at the wheel. "This is a war," Sompop says. "A war for our children."

The sordid traffic touches nearly every part of Asia. But Thailand and India in particular serve as hubs of the flesh trade: exporters and importers of children and adults on a massive scale. An estimated 7,000 Nepalese children are smuggled into India each year to join the sex industry. In the age of AIDS, children increasingly earn the biggest profits. With a girl's



CORBIS; INSET: GHULAM HASNAIN FOR TIME

virginity selling for as much as \$3,500 in Bangkok, recurring recessions have ensured a ready supply of daughters sold by poverty-stricken families. The number of child prostitutes in Thailand is at least 60,000, though estimates go as high as 200,000. Almost all are working under duress: 21st century slaves.

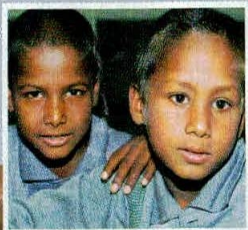
The numbers are wrenching, but to comprehend the problem, one need only watch the sordid hour-by-hour lives of girls like Lek and Tip. As we talked with them over a few days, our sense of being impar-

CAMEL JOCKEYS

Sold for a Rich Man's Sport

TWO YEARS AGO YOUSUF SADIQ, THEN EIGHT YEARS OLD, AND HIS BROTHER Suleman, 7, were sold by their father for the sporting fun of a wealthy Gulf sheik. An agent who scours the poor villages and nomad camps of southern Pakistan bought the diminutive brothers to race camels in the United Arab Emirates. They fit the agents' ideal: aged between five and eight and weighing less than 17 kilos apiece.

Smuggled on false documents to Dubai from Karachi airport, the brothers were put on a regimen of white beans, and beaten regularly. They joined many other boys: the camel jockeys are kept in desert houses in groups of 20. Barefoot and sleeping together on mattresses on the floor, they exercised and grazed the camels 18 hours a day. During races, falls are frequent and the boys are often injured or even trampled to death. Yousuf, who has racing scars on his hands, ankles and chin, describes the routine:



"The sheiks would drive along with the camels and give us instructions: 'Beat, beat, beat. You are slow. Beat, beat. Otherwise I will beat you.' And we used to beat [the camels] severely."

The Pakistani government has tried to clamp down on the trafficking. In 2000, authorities stopped 74 children en route to Dubai. But families willingly go along. The going rate—\$500-\$1,000 a child plus \$120 a month for the two to three years a boy usually races—can propel a family out of poverty in a country where the average annual income is \$470.

Yousuf and Suleman were rescued after 16 months. When their father abandoned the family, their mother was free to protest their sale to Pakistani officials. Although joyous at the boys' return, the family, which had received a total of \$240 for their labors, remains too poor to give the children an education, their one hope for a better future. Says their grandfather: "They will become laborers like me and their father."

FREED: Brothers Yousuf and Suleman, top, are now home

In the face of few options, the sad trade continues. Every six months or so, according to Karachi airport immigration officer Haji Abdul Razzak, the broken and twisted body of a child jockey arrives back from the Gulf. Haji can't act without a complaint from a relative, and the \$25,000 that accompanies a corpse buys many a family's silence. "They take the money and bury their child," says the official. Child smuggler Mohammed Aslam, 26, who was arrested in Karachi last spring, puts it this way: "We get money, the parents get money, the children get money. When everybody gets money, why be sorry?"

—A.P. Reported by Ghulam Hasnain/Karachi

FISHER BOYS

Lured Out on the Water

WHAT EXACTLY IS SLAVERY? DOES IT HAVE TO LAST A LIFETIME, OR IS A child who is sold for a set period of time also enslaved? If parents are promised money for the child's labor, is that a salary or a purchase price? Lured by an agent with promises of money, 14-year-old Andy Irawan's parents forced him to join a group of eight other boys living on a *jermal*, a tennis-court-sized platform of rotting wood and leaky, rusted roofs 10 km off the north coast of Sumatra in the Malacca Strait. The boys are promised pay—around \$30 at the end of a three-month stint. But after deductions are made for food, the agent's cut and other fees and expenses, the boys are left with little or nothing. They are captives on the jerry-built island. Syahman Purba, who runs a school for former *jermal* workers, has no doubt the employment is modern slavery: "These kids aren't treated like human beings. They're given just enough food so they can work and won't die."

There are an estimated 250 million child laborers in the world. No one knows how many are in forced labor like Andy, sold by their parents for weeks or years to agents who promise salaries that turn out to be inflated, are whittled away by fictitious expenses or are nonexistent. But for mind-numbing work like netting fish on a *jermal*, children are the ideal employees—cheap, docile and easily cowed. "They said I could go home after three months," Andy recalls, clutching his right hand still swollen from a sea snake bite. "But there was no replacement so they said I had to stay."

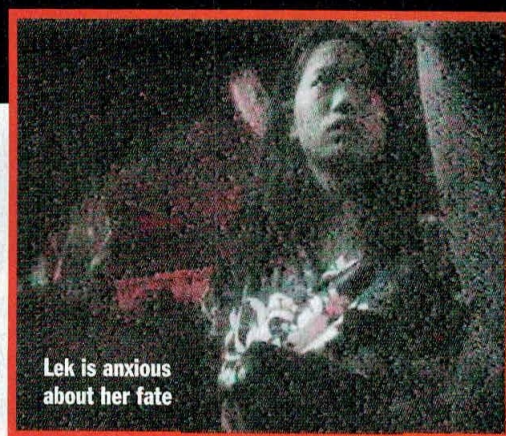
A working day on a *jermal* lasts 18 hours and the boys are isolated; their only contact with the outside world is when operators pick up the catch and drop off water, rice and instant noodles. Flattened cardboard boxes serve as mattresses. Mangy dogs defecate on the platform surface where fish are sorted from the sea snakes and jellyfish. In the past five years, six boys have died at sea, the victims of accidents and failed escapes. Andy was rescued last July, one of scores of boys who have been removed from the *jermals* since the International Labor Organization began an anti-child-labor program in Indonesia a year ago. Despite the increased monitoring, employers continue to lie about children's ages, and working conditions are worsening. Overfishing is causing stocks of squid and fish to dwindle, which means, says one foreman, a *jermal* veteran of 18 years: "We have to work the kids twice as hard as we used to."

—By Jason Tedjasukmana/North Sumatra coast

TANTYO BANGUN FOR TIME



AT SEA: Two young boys bring in the day's catch on the Lumba Lumba *jermal* fishing platform in North Sumatra



Lek is anxious about her fate

tial observers gave way to a feeling of being uncomfortable voyeurs and then grew to a gnawing sense that just by watching the children's degradation we were somehow implicated. I'm not sure at what point we decided that, although we couldn't guarantee their futures, we could buy their freedom. We could help them escape.

Lek had already tried. On her second day, after instruction from Mama San on how to apply makeup and satisfy a client, a drunken Bangkok businessman beat her when she complained he was being too rough. She fled when she was released from the hospital. "I went to the temple," she says, pointing to the golden stupas on a hill high above the eastern outskirts of Mae Sai. "Mama San paid the police to come and arrest me. They held me there with only bread and water for three days. After that I was too afraid to run away. Mama San knows people everywhere, on both sides of the border. She could arrange for me to be taken back to her anytime. Tip knew this: she told me

not to go."

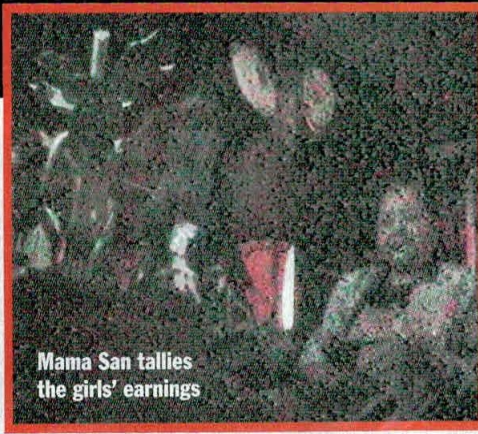
Although Lek and Tip have been in Mae Sai for only a few months when we meet them, they have already learned to hide their inner thoughts. "We don't have feelings anymore," says Tip. "We cleared them out." But they can still dream of freedom, can still tell us they want out. They talk about how hard they would hug their mothers if they ever get home, so tightly no one could ever separate them again. "My mother would be really upset if she knew what I was doing and I desperately want to tell her," says Lek. "But I can't because it would break her heart. Every time I speak to her, she pleads with me to come home."

That's how Jonathan and I found ourselves driving to the ATM, withdrawing \$930—41,000 baht—and buying Lek and Tip. It wasn't merely the prospect of these

She silently follows
the bargaining



Mama San tallies
the girls' earnings



two children steadily building up their collection of chips over the next decade that compelled us. It was partially witnessing the despair of the other girls who had buried all hope with their childhoods. Girls like Pim, who works in a brothel a few meters up the road.

When we ask, Pim insists she is 19. She's probably closer to 12. Less than 1.5 m tall, her platform heels only highlight how short her legs are. Her tissue-stuffed

bra emphasizes her flat chest. And the bright green eye shadow and heavy rouge she wears give her all the vampishness of a seventh-grader playing the clown in a school play. The most popular of the girls in her brothel, picked out by up to three customers a day, she insists she has never been happier. But sitting in a restaurant by the Nam Ruak River, the 10-m-wide watery frontier at Mae Sai's northern end, Pim can't stop gazing at her homeland on

the opposite bank. For a few moments, the mask drops. "No one is here because they want to be here," she murmurs. "Everyone's here because they have to be." Looking away, she starts quietly weeping. Without a good command of Thai or the right documents allowing her to return to her village in Burma, Pim has given up all hope of leaving. Besides, her Mama San insists Pim owes her \$2,000, her purchase price. And how could she get money to pay? When asked if she wants to go home, she looks away at something far off in the distance. Staying, on the other hand, carries its own paralyzing fear. "My regular customers are Thai, the visitors are Japanese," she says. "When they're drunk, none of them want to wear condoms. You can't force them."

Like Tip, Pim comes from eastern Burma. A member of the Akha minority, one of

DOMESTICS

A Target of Fury

AS A SEPARATED MOTHER IN MIDDLE-CLASS NEW DELHI, Shobha Batra struggled to make ends meet. She worked as a nurse, helped run the family's kindergarten and spent hours cleaning, cooking and looking after her six-year-old. She needed someone to help out, but worried that a man in the house could be dangerous and a woman might bring home boyfriends. Far better, and cheaper, she decided, to buy a child.

Finding one wasn't difficult. She met Babita through a friend who had employed the child's mother. Babita's father, Parikshit, was happy to let her leave the family of eight's slum home for a few dollars and the offer of free clothes, food and board. The 10-year-old's mother, Janaki, was glad she would be going to school. "Batra said she would love my daughter like her own," says Janaki.

Hundreds of young girls are brought from distant villages in rural India—or taken from nearby slums—to work as maids in private homes each year. The children see no money: what little there is, their families claim. Walled off from the outside world, they are especially vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

Three months after Babita's departure, her 14-year-old brother, Shekhar, watched Batra pull up outside the house in an auto-rickshaw, walk Babita to a bench, sit her down and leave.

"I thought Babita had come home for a visit," says Shekhar. But when he walked over, he found Babita slumped, barely conscious. The right side of her head was so swollen it hung over her ear. Her body was covered in nail scratches and bruises. Her thumb was broken. Shekhar ran to fetch his mother, and they rushed Babita to a hospital, where a doctor diagnosed a severe concussion. Then, gathering a furious crowd of neighbors, the family went to the police. Faced with an angry mob, Batra and her brother were arrested after eyewitnesses confirmed that the child was abused and overworked, forced to do the cleaning for

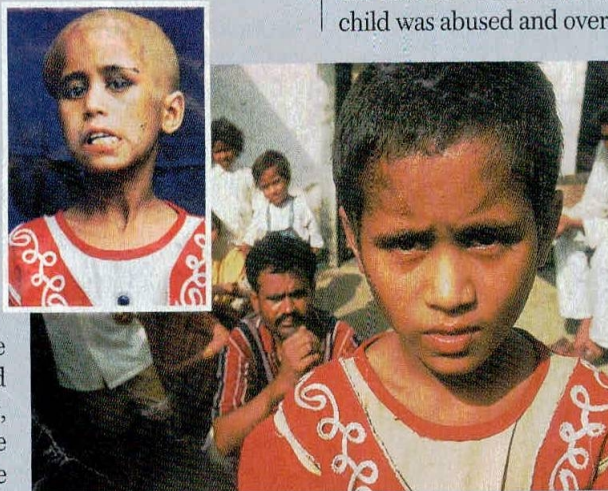
the household and kindergarten. If the little girl complained, she got a thrashing.

Out on bail after two weeks in prison and awaiting trial, Batra is distressed by her position, insisting she is innocent and that she was framed by jealous neighbors. "My life is over," she sobs. "People will always know I have been to jail. Now my husband will definitely ask for a divorce. Who could have thought these poor people, living in a slum, would have dared to file charges against us?" The accusations against her, of violent fits of fury directed against Babita,

have ignited a controversy over the use of child servants. "This is modern slavery," says Kailash Satyarthi of the Save Childhood Movement. "It's a fallout of the expanding middle class where working couples need reliable servants." Too many of whom view children—in their powerlessness—as the no-risk option. All the risk is taken by the children. Parikshit, meanwhile, is looking for another employer for his daughter.

—A.P.

Reported by Meenakshi Ganguly/New Delhi



BEATEN UP: Babita, above, suffered severe head injuries, inset, at the hands of the woman who had bought her

PRAASHANT PANJARI FOR TIME; INSET: COURTESY OF BABITA'S FAMILY

the hill tribes that populate that region, she was born in a settlement outside Kentung, an area of wild jungle mountains that doubles as rebel country and forms the heart of the Golden Triangle opium and amphetamine production zone. Pim remembers a tough but happy childhood raising chickens and working the rice fields on her parents' land, which clings to a steep ridge above a clear rushing stream.

One day a trader came to the village. He spoke of riches beyond a poor farming family's dreams: \$2,000 now and more to follow when Pim sent money home from Thailand. Her mother told her she would be working as a *mae bai*, a maid. Pim, who had no reason to doubt her, found herself being packed off. The trader, keen to make a trip so far up-country pay, had hired a minivan: Pim describes how her first day in captivity was spent driving from village to village as the man picked up a total of 12 girls. Bribing his way past the many Burmese road checkpoints and buying forged visitor papers allowing the



COMPLICIT: A couple from Kentung in Burma's Shan region come to collect more cash from their daughter's labors

girls to work in Mae Sai proved to be routine. The rebel threat and drug running give even honest Burmese security forces in the area other priorities.

Selling an 11-year-old virgin turned out to be even easier. At the first place they came to in Thailand, less than a kilometer from the bridge over the Nam Ruak, a

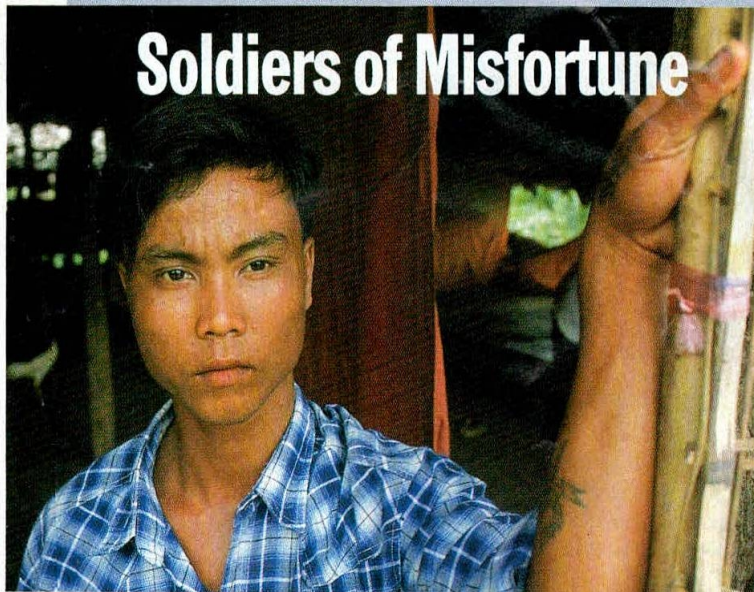
brothel owner bought Pim.

Pim now suspects her mother knew her true destiny. Lek and Tip, on the other hand, appear unaware, or unable to admit, that their mothers sold them into sexual slavery. Lek says she came to Mae Sai because she wanted to earn money to help her widow mother buy their rented house. A friend approached her in a market near her house in Rangoon, she says, and asked simply whether she wanted to make money in Thailand. She jumped at the chance. Tip, like Pim, was recruited by an agent but insists her mother thought she was going to be cleaning houses. Both girls say they can never tell their families they are prostitutes. They would be too ashamed.

The price that Kentung's daughters pay for their parents' poverty can be found in its graveyards. The idyllic-looking hillside hamlet of traditional wooden houses and carved balconies brimming with mountain flowers is four hours north of the Thai bor-

CONSCRIPTS

Soldiers of Misfortune



YOUNG GUN: Sein Win was dragooned at 12

Burma has long been a pariah state—a target of human rights activists worldwide after the military junta slaughtered democracy protesters in 1988 and voided the 1990 election. Increasingly isolated economically, the regime has dramatically expanded its reliance on forced civilian labor for infrastructure and revenue-generating projects. By 1996 an estimated 3% of Burma's GDP was the fruit of conscripted gangs. In an additional, cruel twist, many of the soldiers themselves—part of a mobilization that expanded the army from 185,000 troops to nearly half a million today—were little more than child slaves. Sein Win was press-ganged into service at age 12. He wasn't allowed to contact his family and never once was granted leave. When he initially tried to escape, he was roughed up. "Soldiers in my battalion were beaten every day," he says.

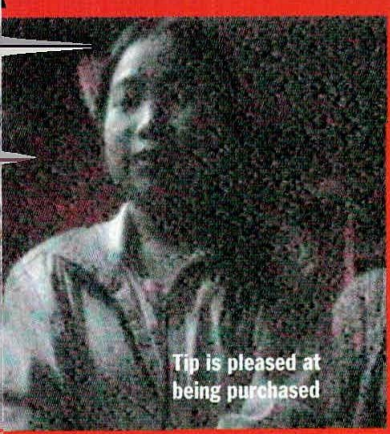
Kyaw Aung, who was kidnapped by the military at age 14, says his company once tied a Karen elder suspected of being a rebel sympathizer to a post. His sergeant ordered Kyaw Aung to gut the prisoner from neck to groin. "I had no choice," says Kyaw Aung, another recent deserter. "If I hadn't done it, the sergeant would have had the other soldiers tie me up and cut me open."

Such abuses continue to haunt the lives of both victims and those forced to persecute them. Says Sein Win: "I have nightmares about what we have done."

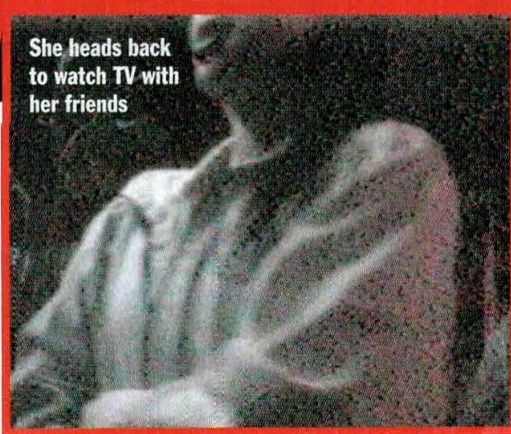
—A.P.

Reported by Robert Horn/Karen state, Burma

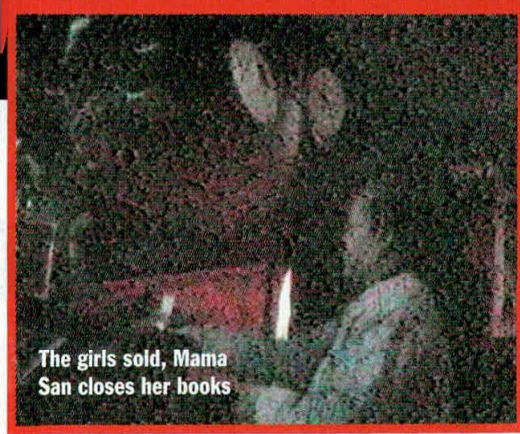
FOR YEARS, SEIN WIN'S JOB IN THE BURMESE ARMY WAS TO guard citizens who had been forced into hard labor, building the nation's roads, railways, helipads and barracks. "We threatened them with guns to make them work," says Sein Win, now 20, who recently deserted from the military. "No soldier would dare be kind to the villagers because the officers would beat us if we showed them any mercy."



Tip is pleased at being purchased



She heads back to watch TV with her friends



The girls sold, Mama San closes her books

der by car. In a town of perhaps 5,000 people, the AIDS epidemic imported from over the frontier reached the point in the late 1990s where someone died every day, according to one Western aid worker. The rate has since fallen, but it's not a sign of improvement. Rather, it's a reflection of the earlier devastation. World Vision is one of the few nongovernmental organizations to brave international condemnation for working under, and inevitably sometimes with, Burma's military junta to try to counter trafficking and its effects in the area. One of its workers says that since 1997, out of 400 AIDS patients it registered in the nine village districts around Kentung, 380 have died. The government tries to hide the reality, but even where deaths are counted, the embarrassed Burmese authorities fudge the true total—listing complications brought on by AIDS as the cause of death. "No one will ever know how many people have really died around here from AIDS," the aid worker says.

But even though the terrible price of prostitution has become evident by the sheer force of numbers, the flow of girls has not slowed. The economic imperative is such that for most families, sending daughters illegally to Thailand is a must, says Cherry Waing of World Vision's Kentung office. And with no education or training, girls have little earning power outside the flesh trade. "Every village has a broker for sex workers," says Waing.

Little thought is given to the girls' return. Many simply don't. But for those who survive with their health intact, the

journey home can be fraught. Most lack the requisite identity cards, which are issued solely in the district of residence and only to people aged 18 or older. "Either the girls have to bribe their way home, if they have enough money, or more usually they

early last year, World Vision has managed to bring only three girls back from Mae Sai.

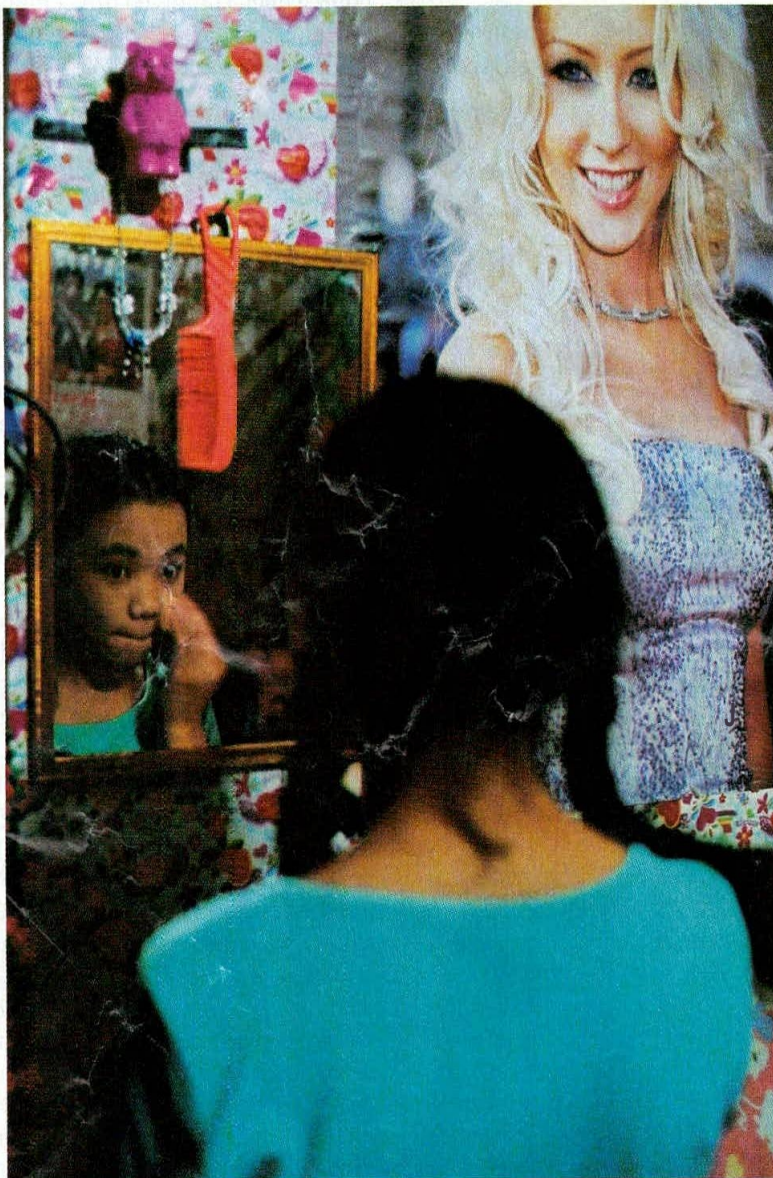
Taking Lek and Tip over the border turns out to be easy. Both girls insist they want to go to Kentung to live with Tip's family. They would feel safest there.

With trepidation, we agree. While we arrange visas for ourselves, they pick up a pass to Tachileik, the Burmese border town opposite Mae Sai. With the heavy traffic across the bridge, the four of us cross unnoticed. Fearing problems with checkpoints if we go by road, we buy the two girls flights to Kentung. It is with relief that we watch the plane take off.

Only later do we learn that Lek and Tip never made it past the departure lounge. Minutes before the aircraft is to take off, as we wait obliviously outside in the parking lot, the airport authorities throw them out. By the time we hear of their missed flight, we have discovered something even more wrenching: the mothers of both girls have been receiving regular payments from Mama San.

Lek and Tip are still in Tachileik, where they have taken shelter with an older friend. Perhaps it's better that they didn't return home. Their mothers sold them once; would they have tried again? It's not a happy ending. And many could argue that we did the

wrong thing, that by paying money for the girls we were only perpetuating the trade, that helping them take only one step toward freedom was not enough. But unlike Pim, Lek and Tip might, at least, have some choices this time.



CHILDHOOD LOST: Many young prostitutes refuse to believe their parents have sold them. But this hill-tribe girl knows her mother received \$500

need to be sponsored by their parents or the village head," says Waing. Such arrangements, she adds, are extremely rare. "Generally these are the very people who sent them away in the first place." Since starting up a repatriation program

Doris Kearns Goodwin

How I Caused That Story

A historian explains why someone else's writing wound up in her book

I AM A HISTORIAN. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BEING A WIFE and mother, it is who I am. And there is nothing I take more seriously.

In recent days, questions have been raised about how historians go about crediting their sources, and I have been caught up in the swirl. Ironically, the more intensive and far-reaching a historian's research, the greater the difficulty of citation. As the mountain of material grows, so does the possibility of error.

Fourteen years ago, not long after the publication of my book *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, I received a communication from author Lynne McTaggart pointing out that material from her book on Kathleen Kennedy had not been properly attributed. I realized that she was right. Though my footnotes repeatedly cited Ms. McTaggart's work, I failed to provide quotation marks for phrases that I had taken verbatim, having assumed that these phrases, drawn from my notes, were my words, not hers. I made the corrections she requested, and the matter was completely laid to rest—until last week, when the *Weekly Standard* published an article reviving the issue. The larger question for those of us who write history is to understand how citation mistakes can happen.

The research and writing for this 900-page book, with its 3,500 footnotes, took place over 10 years. At that time, I wrote my books and took my notes in longhand, believing I could not think well on a keyboard. Most of my sources were drawn from a multitude of primary materials: manuscript collections, private letters, diaries, oral histories, newspapers, periodicals, personal interviews. After three years of research, I discovered more than 150 cartons of materials that had been previously stored in the attic of Joe Kennedy's Hyannis Port house. These materials were a treasure trove for a historian—old report cards, thousands of family letters, movie stubs and diaries, which allowed me to cross the boundaries of time and space. It took me two additional years to read, categorize and take notes on these documents.

During this same period, I took handwritten notes on perhaps 300 books. Passages I wanted to quote directly were noted along with general notes on the ideas and story lines of each book. Notes on all these sources were then arranged chronologically and kept in dozens of folders in 25

banker's boxes. Immersed in a flood of papers, I began to write the book. After each section and each chapter was completed, I returned the notes to the boxes along with notations for future footnoting. When the manuscript was finished, I went back to all these sources to check the accuracy of attributions. As a final protection, I revisited the 300 books themselves. Somehow in this process, a few of the books were not fully rechecked. I relied instead on my notes, which combined direct quotes and paraphrased sentences. If I had had the books in front of me, rather than my notes, I would have caught mistakes in the first place and placed any borrowed phrases in direct quotes.

What made this incident particularly hard for me was the fact that I take great pride in the depth of my research and the extensiveness of my citations. The writing of history is a rich process of building on the work of the past with the hope that others will build on what you have done. Through footnotes you point the way to future historians.

The only protection as a historian is to institute a process of research and writing that minimizes the possibility of error. And that I have tried to do, aided by modern technology, which enables me, having long since moved beyond longhand, to use a computer for both organizing and taking notes.

I now rely on a scanner, which reproduces the passages I want to cite, and then I keep my own comments on those books in a separate file so that I will never confuse the two again. But the real miracle occurred when my college-age son taught me how to use the mysterious footnote key on the computer, which makes it possible to insert the citations directly into the text while the sources are still in front of me, instead of shuffling through hundreds of folders four or five years down the line, trying desperately to remember from where I derived a particular statistic or quote. Still, there is no guarantee against error. Should one occur, all I can do, as I did 14 years ago, is to correct it as soon as I possibly can, for my own sake and the sake of history. In the end, I am still the same fallible person I was before I made the transition to the computer, and the process of building a lengthy work of history remains a complicated but honorable task.

Doris Kearns Goodwin, a Pulitzer prizewinning author, is currently at work on a book about Lincoln's White House

