

# Stronger Family Means more Stability

by Janet Jagan

Attitudes and behaviour patterns are important aspects in examining some of the problems facing our country and its development. For some reason, which I believe requires scientific analysis – sociological, psychological or some other part of the modern forms of analysis – there has been a profound change in the way Guyanese behave. I've live here for over six decades and it would take a blind and deaf person not to notice the changes.

Where to begin? Maybe school is a good place to start. In earlier periods, it was a privilege to attend school and one appreciated by both parents and children. Maybe that was so because not every child could afford to attend school due to many factors – money, geography and the relative lack of school space, no room for every child.

Those who attended school, I believe, did so with much greater regularity than

now. Now, we also have many drop-outs. Maybe I'm wrong, but my impression is that children paid more attention to their school work and the various responsibilities of attending school in an earlier period. It was rare to

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hear of fights in school, students injuring one another, use of drugs, liquor and cigarettes as well as sex in the schools.

Maybe the laxity and lack of responsibility that has developed over the years stem from the change in attitude towards education.

Almost everyday one reads in the press about road accidents. For the past 6 months, 59 deaths are reported. More people die on the roads than through seri-

ous medical problems, doctors will tell you. In one week, in our under-a-million-inhabitants, more than a dozen may die or be seriously injured – sometimes for life. Basically, the reason for the massive road accident

rate is due to just plain carelessness, speeding, driving under the influence of liquor, or just an absence of concern for the lives of others. This, of course, is an indication that sections of our society are deteriorating as regards their concern for the lives of others.

Anywhere one walks, drives or cycles, one can see the destruction of the environment. Bottles and trash are willfully thrown into canals and trenches

which are there for drainage purposes. Thus, the environment is not only fouled up and nasty, but outlets for heavy rains are blocked. It is pitiful to see the results of this spoilage of our environment in the urban and rural

areas. The cause? Extreme carelessness and total lack of concern for the damage done are the only conclusions one can come to. This, too, shows a deterioration in people's behaviour and values. Did it exist decades ago? I don't think so. It might be said that the proliferation of plastic bottles and containers is the reason, but I think it is more a human problem of not caring, a lack of self discipline, a fundamental fault of the family and



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school system.

Take another look at the thefts of items which harm life in general, like stealing electricity and water, copper that is used by telephones and electricity companies – which, when stolen, affect the communities by loss of services such as telephone, electricity and water. Besides, there is a serious waste in two valuable components to living – water and electricity. Genuine efforts should be made to conserve!

Why do people do these destructive acts which hurt whole communities and create waste and even increases in the

rates for these services?

Of course, these anti-people behaviour patterns that seem to be more prevalent, are just the tip of the problems we faced, with growing violence, theft and vicious crimes that cause so much grief and pain.

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Much more attention has to be paid to these problems which affect our way of life, our living standards and our goals of attaining peace, happiness and a better life for our children. Our family system, the bedrock of stability, must be strengthened and this is not an easy task in a world of changing values.