

Some social ills that need correcting

by Janet Jagan

It is time for a national self-examination of some of the ills of our society, which could hamper the looked-for, hoped-for and much-needed betterment of the nation.

Yes, we can look for material gains and moral guidance from the representatives we elect to the highest forum in the land—our Parliament. All, including both government and opposition members, have an important role to play in guiding the nation forward. In reality, one cannot do without the other. In the system of democracy, there must be the group (s) that govern and the group (s) that seek to govern. That is, the balance necessary to keep a democracy alive and kicking. It is in the nature of democracy that those who win the majority of seats in the Parliament or Congress or whatever it is named, try to hold what they have won for as long as they can, mainly by satisfying the needs and de-

mands of the people and that those who have not won, will work assiduously to gain the majority of seats.

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certain obligations. Firstly, they must not abuse any of their rights, and they are bound to protect the nation's bounty and its people, like children who must be cared for.

That is one of the reasons for the rising concern about violence against women and children. Such violence appears to be increasing, unless we are deceived by the fact that more

evidence of its prevalence is coming to our attention. It has been reported that violence against women and children is highest in the Caribbean, which includes Guyana. Sexual abuse of children seems more prevalent. Incest, probably the most heinous of all sexual crimes, ap-

pears to be growing. In some of the reports one reads of incest, it seems that mothers of the abused do nothing to protect their children, out of fear.

The Guyana Women's Development Organization (GUYWID) recently declared that "violence against women in Guyana has reached new proportions, both in ghastliness and number of cases." This

reflects the recent number of murders of women due to domestic conflicts that have flooded our media. The rising rate of violence against children and women also reflects on the quality of life and the respect or lack of respect of a nation's female population.

Recent media reports



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large numbers of persons and entities are illegally involved in obtaining international telephone calls free or below cost. This type of theft affects the revenue of the country, thus reducing funds for health care, education, etc. Before the economic crisis that began in the USA, scrap metal was a big business here, with many stealing from the electricity, telephone and other essential services, expensive and much-needed equipment.

We see all around us the ugliness caused by those who throw their litter everywhere, making our beautiful Guyana into a dirty Guyana.

Again, the behaviour of some is far from accept-

able. Only recently, there was the fiasco with the Guyana Teachers Union (GTU) nullifying the results of the sports championship held at the Mackenzie Sports Club because of the behaviour of some participants. Look at a report in the print media about the closure of washroom facilities in a restaurant because it was "vandalized and abused," with washroom attendants also being abused. We read of students being stabbed in schools in Jamaica and remember that in Guyana, too, there have been problems of violence in schools and violent behaviour by youths.

These are but a few examples of anti-social behaviour which can greatly harm a nation as it moves upwards in its improvements to the social and economic structure of the society. These social ills have to be cured. It is through strong family structures and educational institutions with well-trained staff that improvements can be expected.