

Why is there so much Crime?

by Janet Jagan

Crime today is one of, or perhaps is, the biggest problem in Guyana. And I think it applies to most countries in the world. Was it always such a problem? I don't think so. Looking back on the history of many countries, there have been times, when crime was pretty much uncontrollable and then there were declines. I suppose historians can find understandable reasons for what happened and why and how changes took place.

However, in this particular moment in history, there are several factors that have come together which have brought about serious crime, with a prognosis for the growth of this source of fear in too many societies.

Generally, the easy availability of all types of weapons, particularly small lethal weapons, has led to a situation wherein too many people actually own such weapons. There's not much difficulty in using them or in obtaining whatever amount of ammunition is needed.

People have been stealing since human beings occupied this earth, so it's nothing new. What's new is that the thieves now carry weapons and use them with-

out much provocation. I give an example of Guyana some 50 years ago. When we lived on Laluni Street, Georgetown, we were robbed, at night, twice. But the thief didn't carry a gun either time. One time a mad-

and more deadly crimes hitting us so hard here in Guyana, and; yes, in many other countries.

I put the emergence of new forms of communications as one major factor, particularly television. TV

son is like putting a piece of candy in one's mouth. Without parental and school influence on the right and wrong of things, a child can grow up totally immune to what killing means. This helps formulate the killers in

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man forced his entry to our house, but he didn't have a gun; if he did I wouldn't be here writing this tale, because I was alone at the time and had to run for my life. I'm sure many others in that period and up to relatively closer times had various experiences of this type, but none so cruel as the young man who just two weeks ago went to his mother's assistance when she was being robbed and was shot to death. So there are different factors prevailing in the new

has become so "out of hand" that its influence is almost total. Most children grow up glued to the TV screen, most without any parental restrictions. What I see is frequently absolutely revolting as regards killing, sex, general behaviour, etc., but a child cannot discriminate so easily what is good from what is bad. Men and women, with guns, shoot and shoot and shoot; it goes on every day, all day and night on TV. After a while, firing a shot at another per-

our society and it also emphasizes the responsibility of family and teachers in the lives of all of us as we and our children grow up.

Every person with the minimal education and experience knows that children growing up need guidance and control to prevent wrong tendencies. Lots of children get involved in gangs in most urban societies. So far, we've been lucky, but in Jamaica, for example, Brazil and New York, gangs of youths be-



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come criminals and killers and a menace to society. We don't see that development here, but it might be coming because we are seeing more juveniles being caught in criminal activity, including, now, murders.

The growth of drug trafficking, a relatively new phenomenon, is at the root of a great percentage of our robberies and murders. Guyana has joined the fraternity of executions, I suppose for cheating in money transactions related to drugs.

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The ultimate type of criminality, the ruthless killings of Sash Sawh and siblings, the killings at Kaieteur News and the slaughters of Lusignan and Bartica are beyond comprehension as was the terrorist attack in New York - 9/11. While those unsympathetic with the problems the Guyana police face in finding the killers, carry on, let them not forget that the richest and most powerful nation in the world has been trying for 5 years with tens of thousands of soldiers and the latest equipment mankind has ever invented and is still to fulfill its pledge to bring Osama bin Laden to justice!

What is the answer to all these problems of security which frighten and baffle us all? Certainly the first step is to see that the generation growing up is guided to steer clear of criminal activities. That is something all of us can engage in, and hopefully, we will see a decline in the awful rise in crime that has swept through this world in which we live.