

## Mentally Retarded Children

The truism that children are the future hope of a nation has inspired our programmes for their proper education, health care and the development of their potential qualities and personality. In other words, efforts are being made to bring up our children as responsible citizens to shoulder the future responsibilities of the nation. And since the overwhelming majority of our children live in the villages, child welfare activities are also being spread to these areas to encompass them. Results produced in this direction appear to be bright. Yet there is a vital problem in the process that has been created by the mentally retarded children. These children, unlike the fast-learners, do not show mental growth in conformity to their age, thus creating problems for their families. And as observed, such a situation is bound to adversely effect the society in the long run as they fail to become its useful members.

It is indeed a subject for the experts on children's health and psychology to find the root-causes of their mental retardation, so that they can be treated in accordance with the individual needs. But the aggravation of the condition of these unfortunates in our society generally results from ignorance about suffering from ailments of the mind. Consequently, the ignorant elders in

most cases fail to tackle the problem relating to these children. There, however, appears a bright sign of change in people's thinking that human life—healthy or mentally sick—revolves round strivings and is always pointed in the direction of future possibilities. And attention is being paid to solve the problems of mentally retarded children, so that they may be trained up and rehabilitated in society without being dependent on others.

The services rendered by the Bangladesh Society for the Care and Welfare of the Mentally Retarded Children within the short span of one year of its establishment are noteworthy. Apart from opening special education classes, it has organised three workshops recently on the causes, prevention and rehabilitation of these children and drawn up a programme to set up a vocational training centre to train these unfortunates to become useful members of society. Activities of this Society should be spread throughout the country to remove this social curse. In this context, we would expect mental health organisations to create an awakening in the ignorant minds to accept the existence of neuroses in society and the people to supplement the efforts actively to save these children from the chains of mental ailments.