

Handling Customers' Complaints in Bank

by Tarek Rashid

A farmer from Sonargaon Upazila of Munshiganj sent his son to Saudi Arabia, selling majority portion of his landed property, the son, before leaving opened an account with a bank in Dhaka and eventually, after six months, remitted some money to the account through an exchange house in Saudi Arabia under advice to this father and his nominee. Upon receipt the above letter; the old and ailing father had to travel five times to Dhaka for getting the fund. On query it was found that since the correspondent of the above Saudi exchange house was another bank, so, it took 30 days to ensure the above remittance.

An exporter in Narayanganj exported some handicraft items to Korea; eventually the Korean importer settled the payment through his banker in Korea, but the fund was erroneously credited to a wrong account of the correspondent bank. Since his bank did not receive the fund in its regular account the exporter had to wait for two months to receive the payment.

A Bangladeshi national residing in Basel, Switzerland remitted one thousand pounds to his brother in Bangladesh who maintains a savings account with a bank in Bangladesh. The remitter's bank in Switzerland remitted the fund through its correspondent in London for credit to the account of the Bangladeshi bank with another bank in London. Correspondent bank due to insufficient information held that payment instead of crediting to the specific bank account. Since the cover fund was not received at its account the bank in Bangladesh withheld the payment for one month.

An entrepreneur arranged for importing some capital goods from Japan, since he received the permission late from the concerned ministry and central bank, he was at the end of the financial year. After one day his permission for import would be nullified. He approached his bank, but due to its time and manpower constraints, could not get the

ECA registered with Bangladesh bank and manage the required foreign currency in local market and eventually could not open the letter of credit for import of the goods.

A person wanted to withdraw 10 lakh taka from his account. It took one and a half an hour since he had 10 persons before him withdrawing Tk 500 to 1000 and even then he gets 10-Taka, 50-Taka notes for all his 10 lakhs.

A business firm remitted a substantial amount of Taka from Chittagong to Dhaka for immediate payment to its representative in Dhaka but due to wrong testing, payment was withheld for two days and on

ensure payment on a certain date.

The banker in Narayanganj through its office in Dhaka could send a telex to Korea informing non-receipt of the fund in New York at the cost of the exporter. Korean bank would, of course, enquire into it and settle the payment. On the other hand the banker's office in Dhaka could enquire about any such payment with any other account of them and on receipt could pay the customer. Even if the beneficiary does not receive any remittance advice, the banker can pay him on receipt of the cover fund with his account overseas upon due identifica-

tion of the beneficiary and receipt of indemnity from the customer.

The Banker in Bangladesh could write to its Banker/Correspondent in London, giving details of the remittance and ask it to enquire and credit the fund to their account with a copy to the remitter's bank. On receipt it could credit the beneficiary's account. Considering the problems, the banker could prioritise his activities for registration as well as buy the required funds from local market. He could utilise his relationship rapport in this regard and satisfy the customer.

The bank could classify its depositors or withdrawers by allocating specific window at the cash counter of the bank say, for withdrawing taka 1 to 1000/- it could have one window for 1001 to 20000/-, one window for Taka 20001 to 100000, and another for any amount above that. In this way it could also re-allocate its manpower in the cash counter. And regarding the denomination of notes the banker could satisfy the customer with big notes and even if it was not possible, he should have tried to convince him (the customer) with the problem of

regulation problem and ensures profit, he should always try to honour the person. A banker should always bear in mind that the customer is doing him a favour banking with him and therefore be ready to satisfy him by all means. Your service efficiency and standard depends on how you handle and satisfy a small customer. You should always handle customer's complaint carefully. Regardless of the pressure you are under, you should listen carefully to the complaint. Give the customer a chance to vent his feelings and try to find a clue to the nature of his problem. If his complaint turns into an emotional outburst and you are unable to handle, call your superior.

Whether the complaint is trivial or serious, you should let the customer feel it is all right to be upset. If you criticise feelings or tell him he has no right to feel the way he does, he may be faced with far worse feelings. If you accept your feelings, they tend to diminish. Look for the feelings you can agree with, if the customer says something untrue or that you disagree, avoid a contradiction you are dealing primarily with feelings in a complex situation and factually.

getting big notes from the central bank.

Considering the urgency, the banker could telex/phone his Chittagong office about the correct test and honour the customer's problem.

A banker should never take a complaint as a personal allegation. Even if the customer blames him, he should just keep doing the best job he can. He has no idea what might really be irritating the customer. He may be upset over a strictly personal matter. If the banker is actually at fault, it could be a good idea to apologise.

A banker by instinct is profit-minded. If this sort of transaction does not create

If you contradict the customer he feels you are challenging him. To clarify the complaint you must find out what the customer wants you to do. When you promise a customer something, follow through as soon as you can. Do not promise what you cannot do. Customers satisfaction is the key to handling complaints. You support the customer's right to express his feelings, you help him decide what he wants you to do and then you see that it is done.

If a customer has a problem which you cannot solve, then refer to some one who can help. This is also true if it is impossible for you to take immediate action on the complaint. Don't let a complaining customer leave without getting some kind of satisfaction. It will of course give you sublime pleasure, if you really count for efficiency and performance. Remember to look for something in what the customer says that you can agree with. Deal with his problem not your own. Apprise him of any recent changes in the banking or exchange control and help him in finding out the best possible way.

Always remember that the customer is not concerned about your operational guide or internal manual system requirement. The customer's need must be matched with your manual requirement in such a way as the requirements are met as far as possible. If you have to say no or have to delay, then way you go about it is important. Please remember there is an art of saying no also. A smile and an enthusiastic manner can and often does prevent disappointment/anger/complaint.

You should be in your most cheerful and gracious self when a customer is complaining to you. Serve quickly and with humility give the customer what he wants as quickly as possible no matter what effort it costs you. The proper goodwill for the organization. Remember, the customer is always right and a satisfied customer is eighty per cent of a bank.

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receipt of correct testing the money was paid but by this time there was no necessity for funds.

A saving bank customer was delayed by seven days as he complained to the higher authority for delaying his pass-book updation.

A person with Taka 1000,000 cash wanted to remit the fund to his brother in Khulna but he could not do so since he did not maintain any account with them.

One hopes one has not exaggerated the very problems faced by the customers in various banks. Now question may arise what could be done by a banker since he has to work under certain specific guideline he has to safeguard against any possible fraud and moreover he has to work under severe pressure.

Even then it can be said, on receipt of the query from the ailing farmer from Sonargaon the banker, considering his problem, could enquire with the remitter's exchange houses correspondent in Bangladesh and expedite the payment from the correspondent to his bank and settle the payment. At least he could convince the old person with the nature of the problem and

Positive Signals from Germany Now Predominate

Of late there have been increasing signs that in important economic sectors in eastern Germany the decline is gradually ending and an upswing is imminent.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl said before the first anniversary of German unity on 3 October. Previously Economics Minister Jurgen Mollemann had expressed his conviction that next year at the latest the new Lander will be experiencing an upward trend and achieving substantial growth rates.

Finance Minister Theo Waigel likewise saw positive signs in the new Lander. In an interim review of the effects of Bonn's start-up aid for the

Research drew a similar conclusion: "In the second quarter overall economic production in eastern Germany did not drop for the first time since spring 1990. Although it will not pick up strongly in the months ahead, it is likely to fall only on account of seasonal factors."

Signs of an improvement are detectable above all in the building industry. The Ifo-Institut admitted that this industry has not yet assumed the hoped-for and urgently sought role of pacemaker for recovery in eastern Germany, but emphasized "that the building business is looking up."

It pointed out that to a growing extent building is be-

organised. The Agency's proceeds this year are expected to reach DM 184 billion, the operating losses DM 9.5 billion, and investments DM 15 billion.

The situation on the eastern German labour market is far from satisfactory, even though the development after the expiry of dismissal protection agreements and of retraining schemes in the public sector (combined with additional government support for redundant public employees) was not quite as dramatic as originally feared. Economics Minister Mollemann forecasts that up to 1.5 million will be jobless in eastern Germany by the end of the year.

The annual average is likely to be one million. Unemployment is mitigated by retraining and job creation schemes.

According to the Labour Ministry, 262,000 people have participated in job creation schemes thus far, and the 400,000 mark will be reached by the end of the year. In addition, 536,000 have taken part in retraining programmes since January 1991. In the new Lander there are a total of 38 labour exchanges with 159 branch offices, which provide more than 24,000 jobs, for assisting the unemployed.

It is not yet clear when the labour market will reach a turning point and unemployment figures will drop. The Economics Ministry assumes that "for a while" the number of workers having to be laid off will exceed the new jobs created, even if the economy soon picks up.

Many difficulties have to be overcome until the gradually emerging recovery in the east turns into the economic miracle hoped for. A wage policy geared to the economic constraints, i.e. the productivity trend, is essential.

But this is difficult because, on the one hand, the comparatively high wages in western Germany are an enticement and, on the other, the release of prices that were artificially kept down in the past (e.g. rents, electricity charges, transport fares) leads to an above-average rate of price increases.

AS already mentioned, there are also administrative problems in the new Lander. In addition, property matters have to be resolved. Most of the land registries and other relevant offices are overburdened. Delays are also still occurring in the authorisation of building projects and industrial plants.

Yet despite these and other problems confidence is spreading among businesses in eastern Germany, too. A survey conducted by the Institute of the German Economy among 600 eastern German firms (which have roughly 600 employees on average) revealed the following: 43% of them feel that there are good or very good prospects for their development in the next twelve months.

Only one out of five is still very worried. A third of them have taken on new skilled workers during the last few months.

Against this background the German Savings Banks and Clearing Association arrived at this conclusion in its assessment of economic trends in the new Lander: "We anticipate a strong economic upturn in eastern Germany in the course of 1992."

(IN-Press)



eastern German economy, he stated: "The programme 'Economic upswing in eastern Germany' will be a success."

This programme encompasses all the German government's projects for the economic recovery of eastern Germany with a total volume of DM 12 billion both this and next year. The Finance Minister pointed out that the DM 5 billion made available to local authorities in eastern Germany for investment purposes have already largely been appropriated. The same applies to the other areas of expenditure. This means that reconstruction is making progress.

The Bonn government bases its optimistic assessment of eastern Germany's economic prospects on various statistics and opinion polls. The Chancellor referred to the Ifo-Institut in Munich, which arrived at the following conclusion in an economic analysis: "The decline in industrial production will probably bottom out now."

Setting out from the present low level, there is likely to be an upturn in the second half of 1991, which would continue next year. Given steeply rising business activity, an increase in the service sector and a slight recovery of industrial output, overall economic production will also pick up again.

The Berlin-based German Institute for Economic

ing stimulated by the steep rise in national financial aid, the increasing involvement of western German investors and the initiation of major construction projects in the telecommunications and energy supply sectors.

However, the upward trend is occurring at a modest pace this year, the institute added and referred to numerous obstacles, such as unsettled ownership matters and administrative problems. But for 1992 the outlook is very bright, it being forecast that the upswing will gain momentum and the building industry become a driving force of economic activity.

This forecast is supported by the German government's announcement that transport investments for 1992-1995 will be raised by DM 30 billion over the existing amounts envisaged. Half of them are intended for the new Lander. According to the government, investments in transport facilities totalled DM 10 billion in the period from 1 July 1990 to 31 July 1991.

The Trust Agency in Berlin, which has the task of privatising and restructuring eastern German enterprises, also appears to be making headway. Of almost 10,000 firms, no fewer than 3,378 had been sold by the end of August.

The president of the Trust Agency, Birgit Breuel, declared that about 70% of eastern German companies can be re-

Cashing in on Cashew Nuts

by R Malathy

In Tamil Nadu, any person who meddles in another's affairs without reason is called "mundarikai". The reference is to the nut that inconspicuously protrudes out of the cashew fruit. However, the sobriquet loses much of its sting if it is realised how enormously useful the cashew is — both commercially and nutritionally.

Described as the "tree of commerce", the cashew tree in unique in the sense that all its parts are useful in one way or another. The raw cashewnut and the apple are both edible with high nutritional value. The apple is also used in the preparation of fermented and non-fermented beverages. The residual liquid gathered during the processing of cashew kernels finds use in the manufacture of paints, varnishes and resins.

The bark of the cashew tree contains an acidic sap which is used in the manufacture of indelible ink while the gummy exudate has good binding property and is used in book-binding extensively. The hard

wood of the tree provides fuel of high calorific value.

Further, the cashew tree has the ability to penetrate moderately hard layered soil. This quality makes it possible for the tree to be grown on otherwise barren land.

India produces about 300,000 tonnes of cashew each year on approximately 350 hectares of land spread

4,400 million (about 100 million pounds sterling) as compared to Rs 3,900 million in the previous year. Export revenue from this crop is among the highest in the agricultural sector.

The cashew industry is highly labour intensive. At present there are 677 processing plants in the country employing half a million workers, including 200,000 farmers. Yet, studies have revealed that cashew production in India has not reached its optimum level. The average output per tree is barely three kg at present. This can be boosted to eight kg according to the Directorate of Cashew Development of Tamil Nadu.

Significantly plantations on the western coast of the Indian peninsula have higher productivity than those on the eastern

coast. The soil and the evenly distributed rainfall in the former region have contributed to this high productivity.

The unit area productivity of cashew has been restricted by certain other factors. For instance, seedlings of high variability are being used, but inadequate attention is paid to the plantations. Besides, small

and marginal farmers do not have the means to adopt required production technologies and management. These have led to large tracts of land being rendered unproductive.

Although research has led to the development of several high-yielding varieties of seeds, lack of extension services has left many farmers unaware of its advantages. The BPP-5 and the BPP-6 varieties are known to yield as much as

42 kg per tree with a nut weight of 5.2 grams. The Ana-a variety can yield 35 kg per tree with a nut weight of 6 grams. About 30 such varieties have been developed under the Cashew Improvement Project of the Central Plantations Crops Research Institute.

As regards cashew kernels, research has shown that yield can be stepped up to 14 kg per tree within nine years with the shelling ratio of 30 to 32 per cent as against the present 22-25 per cent kernel recovery. International demand is mostly confined to premium quality kernels.

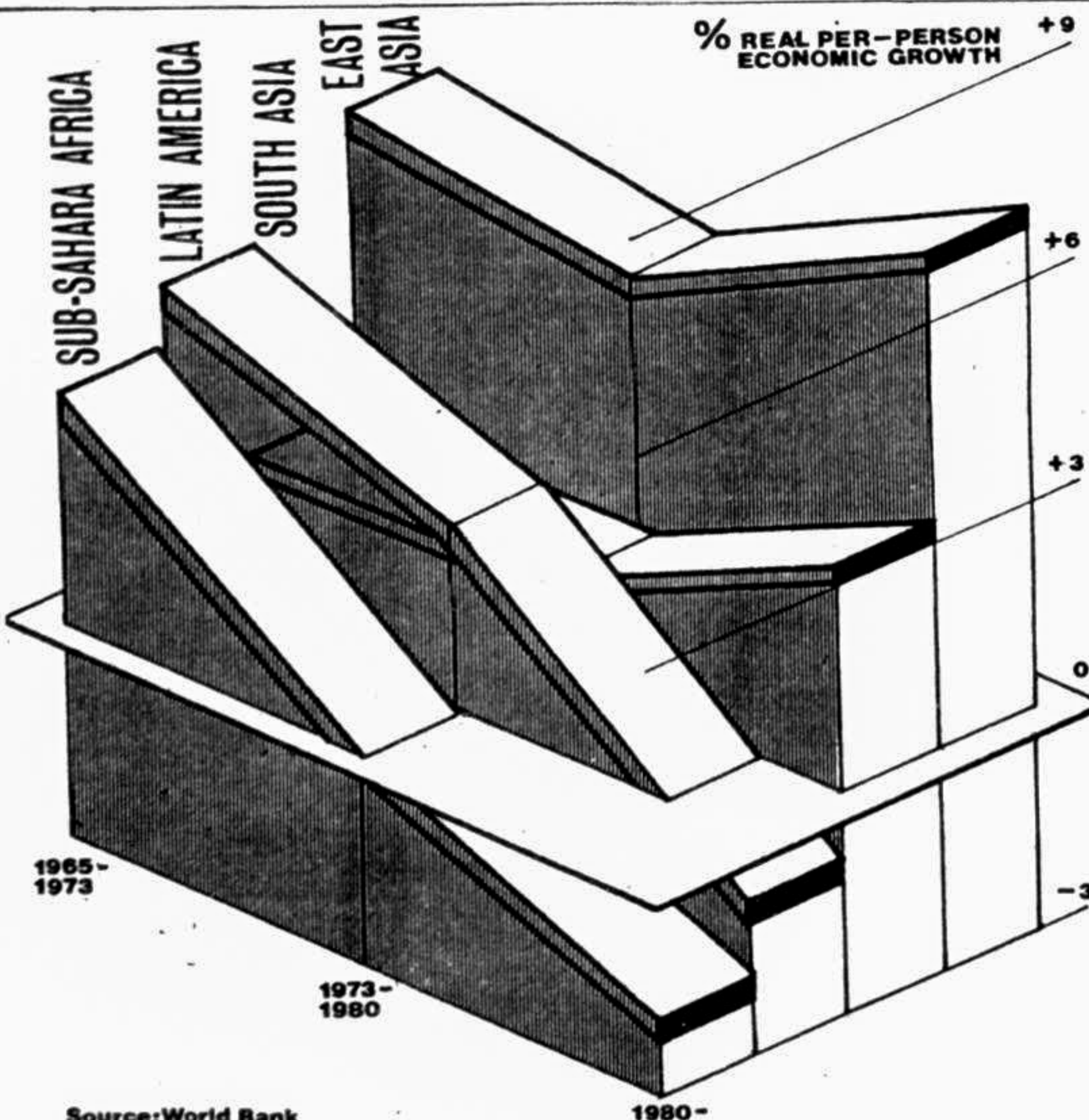
The Eight Five Year Plan now under formulation, envisages an "integrated approach" to cashew development which should raise per hectare output of nuts to nearly 2,000 kg from the present level of 634 kg in the country. In effect, a projected output of 600,000 tonnes can well be met by the end of the century.

— (PTI Feature)

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over ten states. In 1990-91 the production stood at 294,489 tonnes on 531,849 hectares. With an average production ratio of 634 kilos per hectare. The largest producers are the four southern states of Kerala (152,000 tonnes), Karnataka (25,000 tonnes), Andhra Pradesh (37,000 tonnes) and Tamil Nadu (12,000 tonnes).

One sixth of this crop is exported. In 1990-91, revenue from cashew exports peaked at



Source: World Bank

If trade goes where the customers are, then Asia is where trade looks good. East Asia has led the global growth tables now for nearly 30 years, and especially in the last decade, but South Asia, too, has fared better recently. The basket-case countries are in Latin America and Africa.

Social Marketing Promotes Contraceptives

by A Special Correspondent

UNTIL late 1990, Pakistan blocked all mass-media condom advertising for its Social Marketing of Contraceptives Project. Four years after the project started, extensive point-of-purchase advertising and public relations were introduced.

Sales rose from 20 million to almost 74 million — the third largest condom sales among social marketing programmes, after India and Bangladesh.

Social marketing operate in about 40 developing countries and sell over 500 million condoms a year. In a few countries, especially in South Asia, social marketing has helped make condoms a major family planning method.

Sales outlets are placed where people with high risks of getting sexually-transmitted diseases live, work, shop and travel. Outlets include pharmacies, general stores, social clubs, bars, guesthouses, taxis and riverboats, red-light districts, military installations, universities and high schools, resorts, airports, bus and truck stops and train stations.

Typically, social marketing outlets receive contraceptives free of charge from donor agencies, along with a subsidy for advertising and operations. In Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya and the Philippines, outlets buy them directly from South Korea, British and American manufacturers.

Most social marketing programmes set prices at roughly 1 per cent of average per capita income for an annual supply of 100 condoms. In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, the cheapest condoms cost about one US cent (in Pakistan, it costs one-sixth as much as commercial brands and outsells all of them combined).

Today in a few developing countries, condoms are among the most widely used family planning methods. In India,

More than half the world's condoms are now made in developing countries, mostly in Asia.

about 6 per cent of married couples rely on condoms. In Bangladesh and most Caribbean nations, condoms rank second after oral contraceptives.

Party in response to the AIDS epidemic, condom use has been growing in developing countries. But overall, only 4 per cent of married couples of reproductive age in developing countries use condoms for family planning. Only Singapore, Hong Kong, Costa Rica and several Caribbean countries report rates of condom use over 10 per cent. Elsewhere, rates are between 2 per cent and 7 per cent in about half of developing countries.

In 1990, about 45 million married couples were using condoms, presumably for family planning. Condoms are a major contraceptive method in Japan, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

In Japan where hormonal contraceptives are not readily available, 45 per cent of all couples (or 69 per cent of all family planning users) rely on condoms.

Still, compared with other widely available contraceptives, condoms rank near the bottom

in terms of worldwide use. Only female barrier methods (like spermicides and diaphragms) have fewer users. Roughly the same number of people rely on voluntary female sterilisation and condoms. But more rely on voluntary female sterilisation, intrauterine devices and oral contraceptives.

According to Population Reports, the number of condoms that people should be using to prevent pregnancy and/or sexually-transmitted diseases is twice the level of current consumption. In contrast to the 6,000 to 6,500 million condoms produced in 1989, at least 12,300 million should have been used.

The figures assume that

every man, single or married, needs a condom for every act of intercourse outside marriage — for disease prevention as well as for contraception. The World Health Organisation estimated that about 8,000 million condoms are currently needed for AIDS prevention programmes alone.

There are many ways to popularise condom use besides increased distribution: decrease the costs and increase production.

Relative to most people's

incomes, commercial condoms are expensive in developing countries. In Asia, where a number of countries manufacture their own condoms, prices are generally lower, ranging from 10-15 US cent each. Prices could decrease more if governments eliminate import duties, taxes on condoms and licensing fees.

Local manufacture of condoms might eventually help reduce costs. But a local manufacturer must sell at least 50 to 70 million condoms a year to be profitable. Another simpler option or developing countries is to package condoms that are made elsewhere and imported in bulk.

In 1981, worldwide capacity for condom production was about 4,900 million pieces a year; today it is about 8,500 million annually. While only 6,500 million condoms were actually produced in 1989, much of the growth took place in the late 1980s as condom makers in Japan, South Korea and the United States increased production because of the AIDS epidemic.

At the same time, India increased its capacity to meet growing demands from its family planning programme. South Korea has become the world's largest condom producer, manufacturing nearly 1,500 million per year, more than a four-fold increase since the early 1980s.

More than half the world's condoms are now made in developing countries, mostly in Asia. In China, production increased from about 700 million in 1982 to 1,200 million in 1990. In India, condom production rose from about 360 million in 1982 to about 1,250 million in 1990.

In Malaysia, Japanese and South Korean firms doubled production to more than 300 million in 1989. Private firms in Thailand and government projects in Indonesia and Vietnam began producing condoms in the 1980s.

— Depthnews Asia