

Feature

Development

Garment Industry in Bangladesh

Raging against the Dying of the Light

by Hans Rolloos

OVER the past fifteen years the garment industry has become the most successful industrial activity in Bangladesh.

Increasing production volume and product quality, more participation and investment of local entrepreneurs the situation gradually changed.

Friesian and Bangladeshi people have a lot in common. For centuries the Friesians have fought against the incoming seawater.

In spite of its continuing growth, international competition becomes stronger by the day.

The main problems Best Ap-



The country's garment factories provide employment to some 500,000 workers, 80 percent of whom are women.

Chamber of Commerce. Together they employ an estimated 500,000 people of which eighty per cent are women.

Enamul Chowdhury is the owner of Best Apparel, a middle size garment factory in Mirpur.

many problems his country is facing. On the second floor the T-shirts are ironed and packed in plastic covers.

The garment industry is a blessing for the women in Bangladesh," says Chowdhury when we go down the stairs to the second floor of the factory.

Is there a future for the Bangladesh garments industry?

parcel is presently facing are the irregular supply of electricity, the relatively high prices of the local textile products and the high lending interest rates.

It is clear that the textile factories suffer from the same problems as the garment industries.

Being a born optimist Chowdhury is not pessimistic about the future of his country.

The writer works for a EC sponsored project in Bangladesh.

The Rural Youth

Development, Destiny and Destination

by ABM Nurul Anwar

THE world youth population was 738 million in 1975. By 2000 AD additional 1.18 billion young people will struggle for space, jobs, education and amusement on the planet.

Table with 4 columns: Year, Total population (In thousands), Youth (15-29) (In thousands), and Proportion 15-29 (Percent). It contains data for years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000, with sub-columns for Male and Female.

ance in both the rural and urban areas. Their migration means rural areas are left with the less educated and less progressive people who lack leadership capability in development programmes.

The youth are burdened with double poverty: (a) limited access to gainful employment and (b) as a member of a poverty stricken family.

1985. The predictive power of these assumptions is contingent upon many factors involving socio-economic, demographic and psychological variables.

The importance of migration as a component of population change has significance beyond its impact on altering population size and its composition both at the sending and receiving areas.

The rural-urban migration of the youth affects the socio-economic and demographic bal-

Despite such an acute situation of the vast majority of the population the major extension organizations in Bangladesh which work upto village level (Department of Agriculture Extension the Directorate of Livestock Services, the Directorate of Fisheries and Bangladesh Rural Development Board) have not yet included youth extension programmes.

The Ministry of Youth Development (now redesignated as Ministry of Youth and Sports) was created in December 1978 to provide unified direction and coordinate all youth development programmes.

UN General Assembly in 1979 adopted a specific programme recommended by the 24 nation Advisory Committee for International Youth Year (IYY) in 1985 calling for a local and national focus for the youth.

Now the country is on the threshold of launching a long awaited rural youth programme all over the rural areas. Poverty is taking away all the potentials in the youth.

The author is an Associate Professor, Agriculture Extension Education, BAU and PhD researcher on the rural youth.

For Minimising Losses in Fishing



In a world of rapidly increasing human populations, the opportunities for producing greater quantities of food have gradually become more and more limited.

Sine Qua non for Family Size

by Saleem Samad

HIGH infant and child mortality and morbidity in Bangladesh are the main hurdles to bringing about a change in the quality of life of the people.

underway to distribute antibiotic medicine through the immunization outreach for controlling pneumonia deaths.

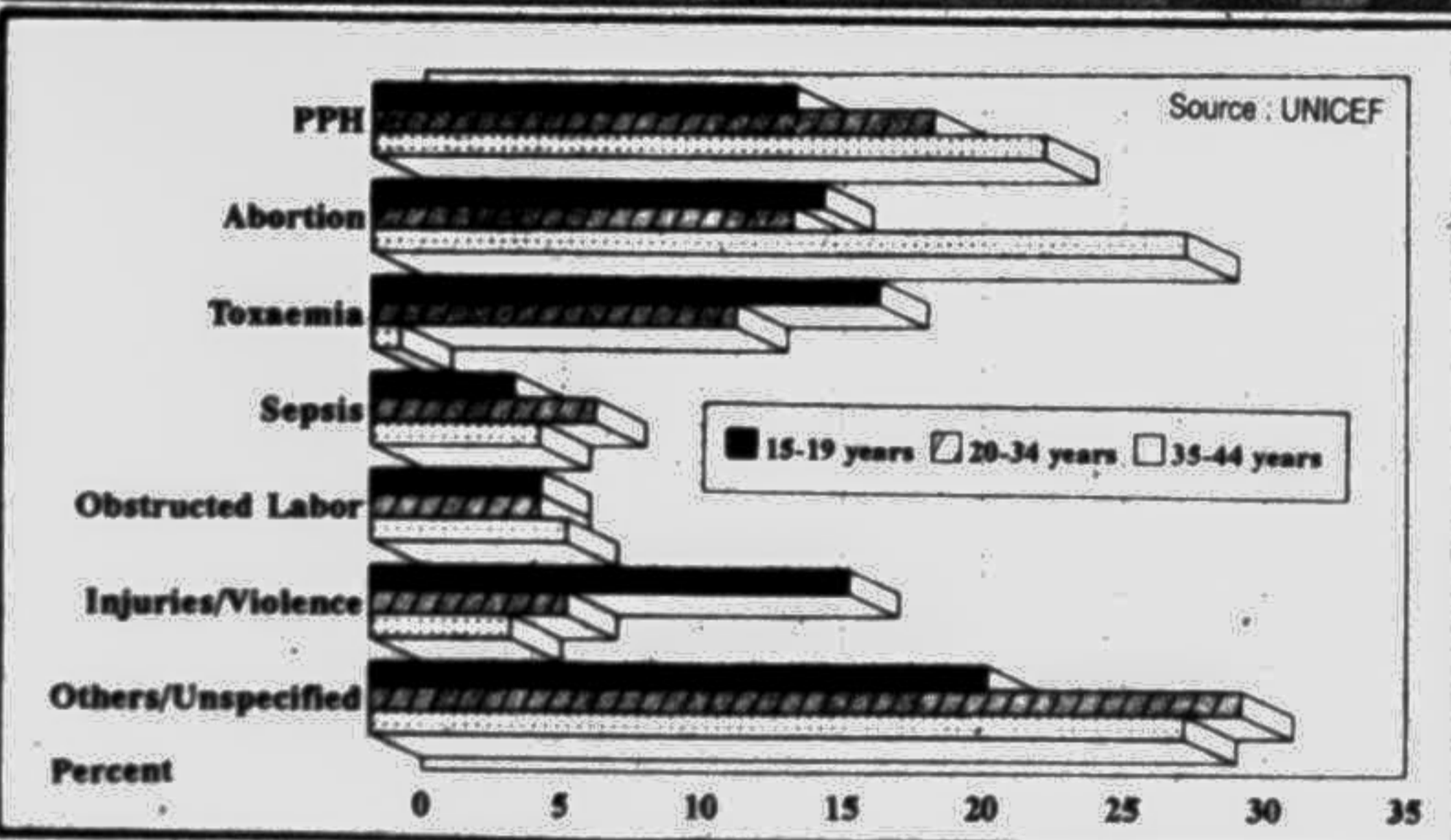
Demographers have linked

reduction in child deaths could now be achieved. Infants born closer together than 24 months, for example, are approximately twice as likely to die in an early

literate mothers are less vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition.

Social investment from female literacy means reduced fertility, reduced infant mortality, lower school dropouts, im-

Lesser birth, lesser death



between lesser deaths with lesser births. Which means with the reduction of child deaths, the birth rate will decrease at an equal rate.

childhood as babies born than two years apart. Promotion of birth-timing — as a method of child protection — would also obviously drive birth-rates downward.

proved family nutrition and less vulnerability to dowry related violence and early marriages.

Asia is Where the Action is

Abby Tan writes from Manila

THE Asia-Pacific economies are expected to grow by an annual average of seven per cent through to 1995.

"Asia is where the action is," says Malcolm Dowling, assistant chief economist of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

At a World Bank/IMF seminar in Manila, Dowling cautioned that poverty remains the most pressing issue in developing Asia.

cerns in several countries might limit development.

The ADB forecasts China's growth rate for 1993 at 13 per cent, but because of overheating and corrective measures, this should slow to 10 per cent next year and nine per cent in 1995 — still well above the regional average.

Dowling said that unlike 1989, when the Chinese economy suddenly dipped after a period of overheated growth, he expected a "soft landing" this time for Beijing.

A Bank report said that despite the credit restrictions in July to cool China's economy, the booming investment sector combined with robust consumer demand suggests that inflation in the next two years will be at least as high as in 1993.

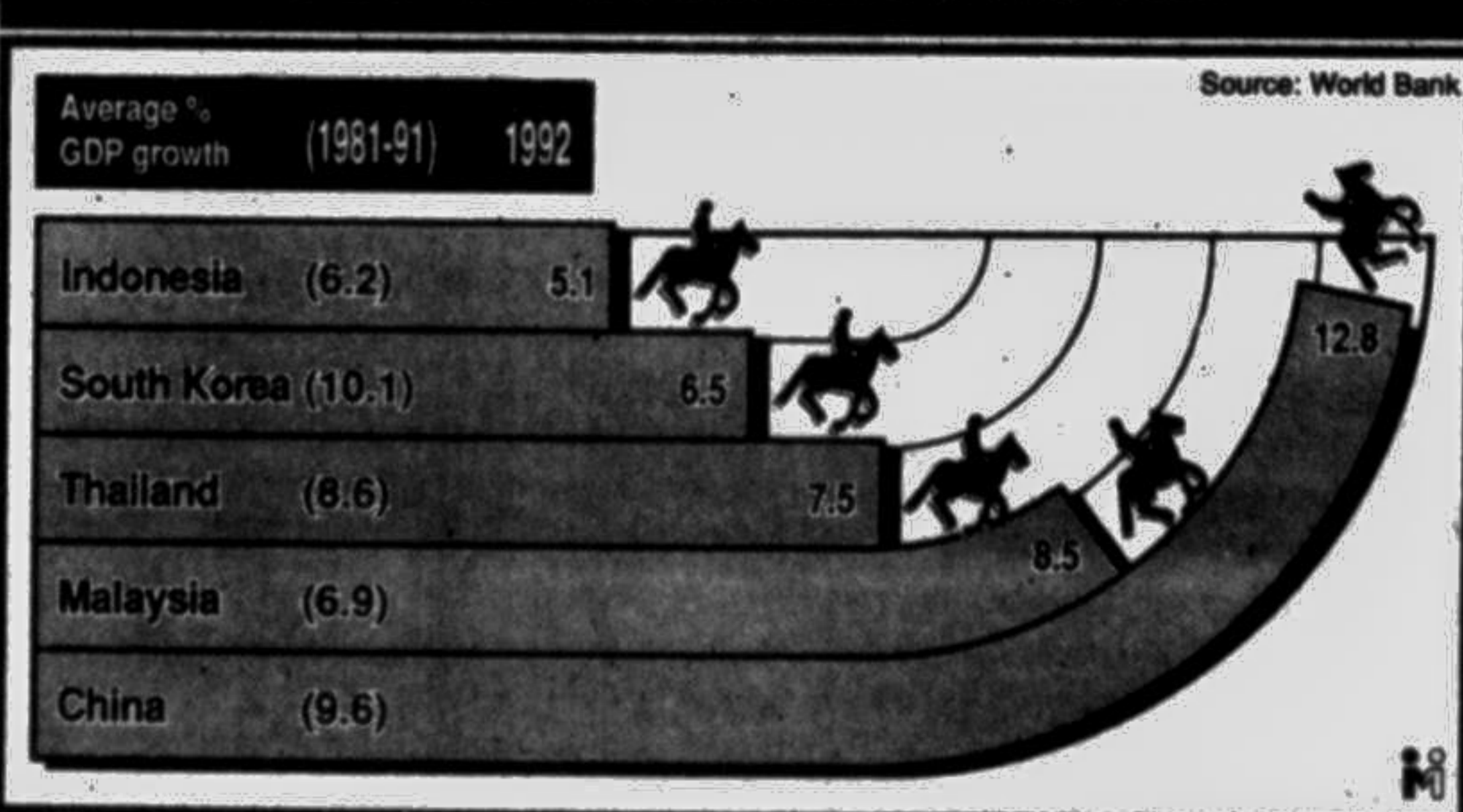
this year.

Slower export growth resulted in a current account deficit. The trade and current account deficits are anticipated to continue in 1994 and 1995.

Asia's so-called tiger economies should show at least five per cent growth in the next two years, with Hong Kong and Singapore performing well but South Korea and Taiwan struggling with structural adjustments.

The ADB said the export performance of the four newly industrialising economies (NIEs) should continue to improve next year as the world economy finally begins to recover.

Asia rides an economic boom



Industrialising economies (NIEs) should continue to improve next year as the world economy finally begins to recover.

Dowling said "strong growth in the range of seven to eight per cent is feasible" for Singapore. In South Korea, growth is expected to slump in 1993 for the second year running because of high wages, anaemic investment and sluggish exports.

In Taiwan, the scaling down of an ambitious government development plan and slow export growth restrained overall growth this year.

Singapore will combine a growing offshore relationship with the Malaysia-Indonesia-Singapore growth triangle and development of selected hi-tech products, including computer disc drives and financial services, it said.

Malaysia, which has shown the way in the past two years, will slow because of infrastructure bottlenecks, while the region's laggard, the Philippines, will grow by 3.5 per cent next year and five per cent in 1995.

Vietnam and Laos are also predicted to perform strongly with forecasts of 6-8 per cent growth as they undertake further political and economic reforms.

In Indonesia, favourable conditions in the export and financial markets, coupled with a more relaxed monetary policy are expected to propel Jakarta's economy in the next two years.

Dowling pointed to the major structural reforms in India. Indochina and India could turn into the new "growth nodes" for Asia.

The writer is a Singaporean journalist based in Manila. She writes on environmental and developmental issues.