

# Development

## POPULATION CLOCK AND CENSUS '91

### Ticking Falsehood and Manipulating Numbers

by Farida Akhter

**E**VERYDAY, in the television we are watching the horror of "population explosion", which starts by asking, "do you know what is the population of the country until today?" It ticks several times and then starts computing figures by minutes and by days to show how many more people are added. A huge number of people float in the background of the screen.

In the radio, the same message is transmitted for the ear. Horrifying sounds are created to attract the attention of the listeners before giving information on the additional number of people. This is the population clock, the machine to produce the "truth" of numbers. It is a primitive counting machine but posed as a superb technological hardware in the age of electronic gadgets and information flows. This machine clock has become the authority to say what is happening in the real world, how many children are born every minute and every day. No evidence is necessary, no real counting of the real births is required. The machine, a calculator-clock, does not know anything else but keeps on adding numbers according to a prefixed rate, that is, 4 per minute.

Despite the fact that no one is challenging the population clock's false figures, the population census of 1991 is a big embarrassment for the population control establishment. Because the census does not tally with the clock's calculation. The clock has been proved wrong by the results of the census '91.

The final report of the census 1991 has been released by the State Minister of Planning, Dr. Abdul Moynen Khan, at a press conference at National Economic Council (NEC) on 23rd December 1993. The present figure of country's total population is 11,14,55,185 or more than 111 million with an annual growth rate of 2.17. This latest presentation of the results of the census is an upward adjustment to the original results of the census of 1991. The state minister mentioned that enumerated census population in 1991 was 10,63,14,992 and growth rate

was 2.01. "But it was found that somehow or other 4.61 per cent people remained outside enumeration". Therefore they had to be adjusted in the new figures, the minister said. For two years of census we are given a figure of 111 million population.

Two levels of adjustments were made in the census results. One was called post enumeration sample adjustment and the other final adjustment. In these phases of adjustments about 51,10,857 people have been added to the preliminary findings of 1991 census. In one of the documents by the ministry of environment and forest, GOB and UNDP, it has been stated that "there could be an underestimate of five per cent or more."

Upward adjustments in the preliminary findings of the population census is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The first population census of the independent nation, Bangladesh was carried out in 1974. On July 5, 1974 an agreement was signed between the government of Bangladesh and the UNFPA regarding a

enumeration sample adjustment and the other final adjustment. In these phases of adjustments about 51,10,857 people have been added to the preliminary findings of 1991 census. In one of the documents by the ministry of environment and forest, GOB and UNDP, it has been stated that "there could be an underestimate of five per cent or more."

Results	Male	Female	Total
Preliminary Result	53918319	50847824	104766143
Post Enumeration Sample Adjustment	55579003	52413937	107992940
Final Sample Adjustment	56500000	53377000	109877000

showed in 1991 the figure of 11,89,95,552 i.e. more than 118 million, a difference of one crore and forty lakhs people or 14 million people.

The preliminary results of the census was later adjusted in a post enumeration census sample adjustment and the final sample adjustment stood at 10,98,77,000 or more than 109 million. Even the post enumeration sample adjustment result was much lower than what the population clock was showing in 1991. In December 1993, after more than

1991 still differ considerably. The latest figures of population according to census '91 is 11,14,55,185 and that of the population clock is 11,89,95,552 showing a difference of 75,40,367. That means the population clock had such an exaggerated figure which could not be adjusted even with several upward adjustments. The population clock was not right from the beginning. Its projections are false and baseless. UNFPA projects these figures without any correspondence with reality.

The falsehood is also revealed when the State Minister referred to three specific cases of "discrepancies" such as the estimation of the number of tribal people, the floating population of the country and the number of people on the basis of religion. The allegations are interesting in these cases. It is being pointed out that the figures with such specific breakdown do not match according to the new adjusted figures. These have remained the same as the primary census and did not change after the post enumeration check. If the discrepancies have to remain, then why the adjustments were done?

The question is why is there the upward adjustment of population census? It is exclusively to justify that the country is overpopulated and consequently population control programmes and associated international conditionalities are legitimised with these false statistics.

Census may be an extremely important tool for planning. Population controllers, specifically the UNFPA, is systematically destroying the possibility of a fairly reliable census on the basis of which a proper planning can be approached. The whole exercise is used to legitimise certain policies which are highly questionable and has nothing to do with the interest of the people in countries like Bangladesh.

Will UNFPA please explain this systematic falsehood through population clock and the manipulation of census figures?

The writer is Executive Director, UBINIG, a leading NGO in Bangladesh.

## Planned Parenthood and Human Development

by Syed Naquib Muslim

**I**T is observed that new developments are occurring in the development theory today. The concept of Human Development puts people at the hub of the development process. People need to be provided with basic necessities, opportunities and climate so that they can live a productive and healthy life. Thus the spectrum of this concept is broader than that of Human Resource Development which simply considers people as the means rather than the end.

The major indicators of human development are life expectancy, health and sanitation, food and nutrition, education, income distribution and poverty, status of children and women, human security and environment. The latest report of UNDP testifies that Bangladesh scores low in human development in comparison to other developing countries of the world.

Today human development is being perceived as an alternative strategy for development in the developing countries. Human development presupposes investment of effort and money to develop human capabilities so that these capabilities are utilised for the welfare of all. From the experience of the past few decades, it is evident that development policies and programmes have created

little change in the quality of lives of the poor. In Bangladesh the benefits of development efforts have not fully reached the poorer section of the people. Still a major segment of our population lives below the poverty line; they do not have access to primary goods and services. Children and women in the rural areas are the worst victims of poverty which in turn causes incidence of malnutrition, disease, morbidity and premature mortality.

In view of the importance of children and women in development, the declaration and plan of action adopted at the World Summit for Children of 1990 incorporated agenda for improving the conditions of children and women by the year 2000. In the Second International Conference of Mayors, held in 1993 in Mexico, mayors have been assigned the task of defending the

In fact, a planned parenthood can facilitate the process of achieving human development of children who promise to be "the father of man." Planned parenthood calls for preparation, planning, and organisation for upbringing the children into ideal citizens.



Only ethical mothers can take care of balanced physical, intellectual and emotional development of their children.

human development? Is it not necessary to go beyond the formal plans, programmes, or strategies of the government?

One would definitely acknowledge that those who are the victims of human maldevelopment can hardly contribute to the government or to the society. Providing nutritious foods, creating healthy environment for children, providing them aptitude-based education, raising their life expectancy cannot be the responsibilities of the state alone. Parents have to share the responsibility and the accountability. In fact, a planned parenthood can facilitate the process of achieving human development of children who promise to be "the father of man." Planned parenthood calls for preparation, planning, and organisation for upbringing the children into ideal citizens. Only organised parents can organise their children. Time has now struck to remind ourselves that family is the primary and ideal training ground and the relationship of children with parents is the primary relationship which ultimately shapes their value system that lingers.

The most important requirement of planned parenthood is education. In fact, education is the panacea of all ills. Educated parents grow capabilities to solve the problems of children; uneducated parents are not only incapable of rearing their children, they are also the liabilities to children. Today education of mother is being emphasised by the development experts. Experience suggests that when mothers are educated, children tend to be educated. Only educated mothers can take care of health, education of children for their balanced physical, intellectual and emotional development.

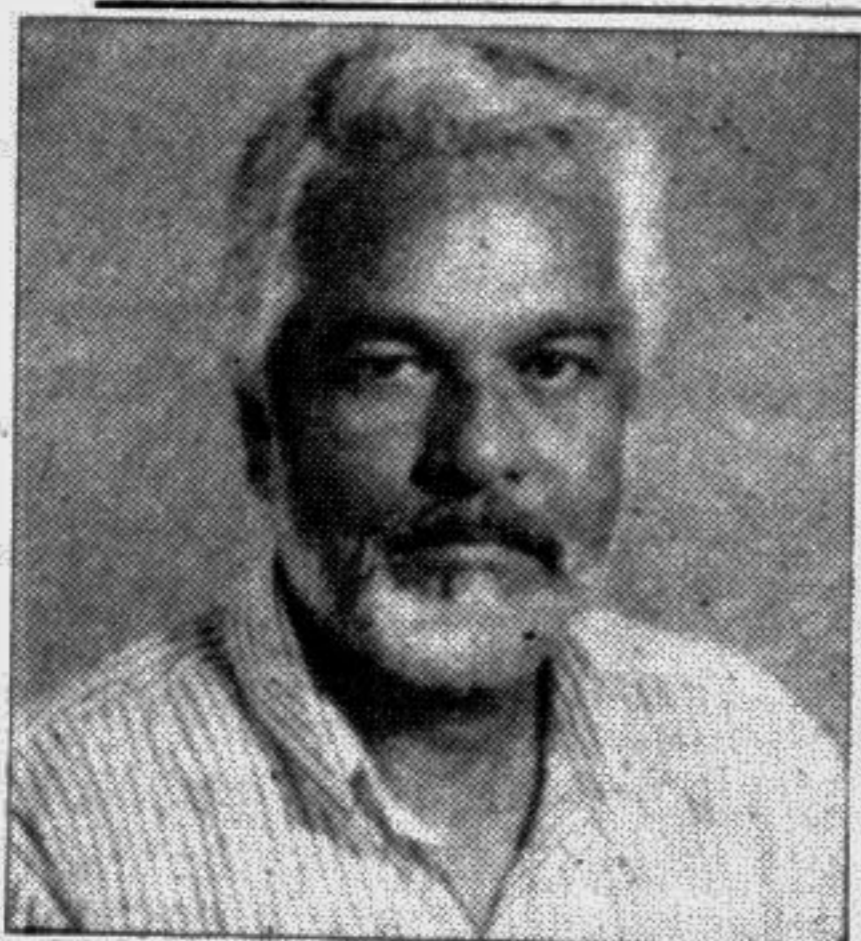
Persons working on the curriculum committee under the Ministry of Education may consider incorporation of a chapter on planned parenthood and human development in the primary school text books. But what is more important is the induction of the proper persons in the curriculum committee.

The writer is Deputy Director, BPATC, Swara, Dhaka.

## Bangladesh Faces Daunting Task of Energy Exploration

by Rashed Mahmud Titumir

There are many different paths that might be followed in coping with our short-term and long-term energy problems. In surveying the lines of attack to alleviate our current reliance on imports of foreign fuel and burgeoning need after 2010, when our recoverable gas reserve will finish unless new horizons are explored, Ahmedul Ameen, a member of Southeast Asia Petroleum Exploration Society and consultant to major oil companies, explain why and how conservation and increasing domestic oil and gas production can help meet both types of our needs.



discovery of gas or oil in the western part will greatly help the economy. I think six wells have been drilled in the western part of Bangladesh and about 40 wells in the adjacent West Bengal, a state of India. All of these were dry wells and except one or two gas shows in West Bengal.

Whereas in Surma basin, the discovery ratio is practically one for every two to three wells. So, if I am to advise on betting on exploration in Bangladesh, my advice is bet on Surma basin.

DS: For the last few years, we have been hearing that international oil companies are showing keen interest in exploring oil and gas and also in production sharing contracts. But till now, nobody has signed a contract. Please comment.

AA: With World Bank money in late '80s, Petrobangla launched petroleum exploration project to attract foreign oil companies. Foreign companies were engaged to carry out seismic survey and consultants were engaged to prepare reports, docket and model production sharing contracts, as well as to make presentation of the same by holding seminars in the USA and Japan. Attendance in the seminars was not bad. Post-response were poor.

The documents prepared by the consultants failed to impress the professionals in oil companies. And

whoever prepared the model production sharing contracts, probably had no clue as to how an international company work. It was not a production sharing contract. What the management of Petrobangla did not realise is that it is one thing to prepare documents for presentation to Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance or to Cabinet Committee or for approval of a project; but it is a totally different thing when dealing with an oil company. They forgot that oil companies are neither charitable organisations nor donor agencies. Oil companies are run by professionals, they will drive a hard bargain to avail of the best exploration opportunities on the best prospects.

Bangladesh is not yet rated by the international oil companies as the best geological prospect for exploration nor for negotiation of any contract, which takes years to be finalised.

Bangladesh being an Asian country with poor track record has to offer something better than its neighbours or other Asian countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc. The fact that a closed country like Burma signed nine production-sharing contracts in a year and that Vietnam has become the favourite investment spot for major oil companies, should have been opened the eyes of Bangladesh authorities.

Formulating the petroleum policy is a step in the right direction by the present government. But the govt should bring changes in the model production-sharing contracts before it sits for negotiation with any oil companies.

Secondly, Petrobangla has the responsibility to negotiate PSC. Then they should be given parameters and authority to negotiate and finalise contracts within these parameters without running back and forth to ministries for approval.

DS: It is predicted that our gas reserve would be exhausted by the year 2010, unless new discoveries are made, what do suggest to avert the crisis?

AA: Private sector, both foreign and local, are being allowed to play every active role in oil and gas sector in India and Pakistan in recent years. Bangladesh should follow their examples. If the government wants local private sector participation, it must give them preferential treatment, as it has been done in India and Pakistan. Government should also give tax shelter and financial incentives to attract the idle money.

Government should reserve small structure for exploration or development by the private sector in conjunction with Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (BAPEX), a subsidiary of Petrobangla, as well as promote "built operate transfer" concept for surface facilities, power plants, etc.

To attract foreign direct investment, they should start giving preferential treatment to countries like Taiwan, Korea, Brunei, etc through bilateral agreements instead of looking at traditional countries or donor agencies.

## Death by the River

by Sameera Khan

KESHUBHAI Dhedia lives in Manbeli and Bhulabhai Motibhai in Vadgam, two hamlets in two separate Indian states, on either side of the Narmada river in central India.

The Narmada once brought them life. But a gigantic dam is being built there, and now the mighty river may bring death instead. Thousands of villagers say they will rather drown in the rising waters than move to another location.

The Sardar Sarovar dam, India's biggest multi-purpose project, a few kilometres downstream from Manbeli in Maharashtra state and Vadgam in Gujarat, will swallow their villages this monsoon season as

given rocky land and others land with tree stumps. Twenty two of the 145 families have not been allotted any land, he adds. The only consolation is Manbeli Parveta has a concrete toilet block and a water tank, unlike the nearby resettlement village of Gadher, where 54 families from Gujarat have been living for the last seven years.

Most villagers talk excitedly about the World Bank's departure from the project. India decided to forgo bank aid in April because it could not meet tough stipulations on resettlement and environment. "Finally the world listened to us after being deaf for years," says 70-year-old Gaganram Baba who came to Manbeli more than a year ago

be scared of the waters?"

Until April, the US\$3.5 billion project had had the support of the World Bank. But now the Indian government will go at it alone, displacing some 150,000 villagers, and turning 130,000 hectares of land into reservoir beds.

United under the banner of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), the villagers, most of them indigenous people whose families have lived along the river for generations, have decided to die on their land rather than face a strange and uncertain future.

The Sardar Sarovar will



submerge an estimated 245 villages in the adjoining states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

The 61-metre high dam will also drown temples on the Narmada. One of India's most sacred, apart of the sixteenth century Shoolpaneeshwar temple in Manbeli with an idol that is more than 5,000 years old will be underwater once the rains come.

The authorities are planning to shift the idol before the waters rise, but the 60 families who have firmly resisted all attempts to move them to a rehabilitation site 35-kms from Manbeli in Parveta say they will not budge.

Keshubhai says his neighbour and many others who left now wish they had stayed. According to Parunbhai Tadvai, headman of Manbeli Parveta as the new settlement is called, many villagers have been

to join the sacrifice squads.

But most of the villagers believe the government will never be more determined than ever to push through the project. Narayanbhai's first reaction on being told the World Bank loan was off was, "Ab bahut marengi (now the government will beat us more)."

Indeed, a 42-year-old tribal woman from Antras, a village in the Gujarat's submerged zone was recently beaten and raped by two policemen and another man for refusing to leave her village and move to a rehabilitation site.

But most villagers say they will not be intimidated into leaving.

Says Manojbhai Tadvai: "Our struggle has just begun. This is a revolution we are initiating. If not today, then tomorrow our demands for a just future will be met."

— IPS

**Wheat aid**

Top 5 donors \*Metric tons: wheat equivalent

US	7,357,451
EC	2,052,972
Canada	1,221,825
Japan	382,130
Australia	380,545

Top 5 receivers

Egypt	1,922,303
Bangladesh	1,245,651
Ethiopia	664,873
Sudan	546,280
Mozambique	491,852

Source: International Wheat Council