

# FOCUS

## World Population Day

### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING Time to Target Men

by Dr Yasmin H Ahmed

ing both to government and NGO sectors. They are services mostly by women. Obviously these centres are neither accessible nor friendly to men.

In the backdrop of this scenario, the Marie Stopes Clinic Society, a local NGO affiliated to Marie Stopes

International, London, first undertook to address the issue of men's needs squarely. A programme was designed in 1993 to render family planning advice and counselling and deliver of contraceptive methods to male workers in jute and textile mills, within the premises of the mills. This

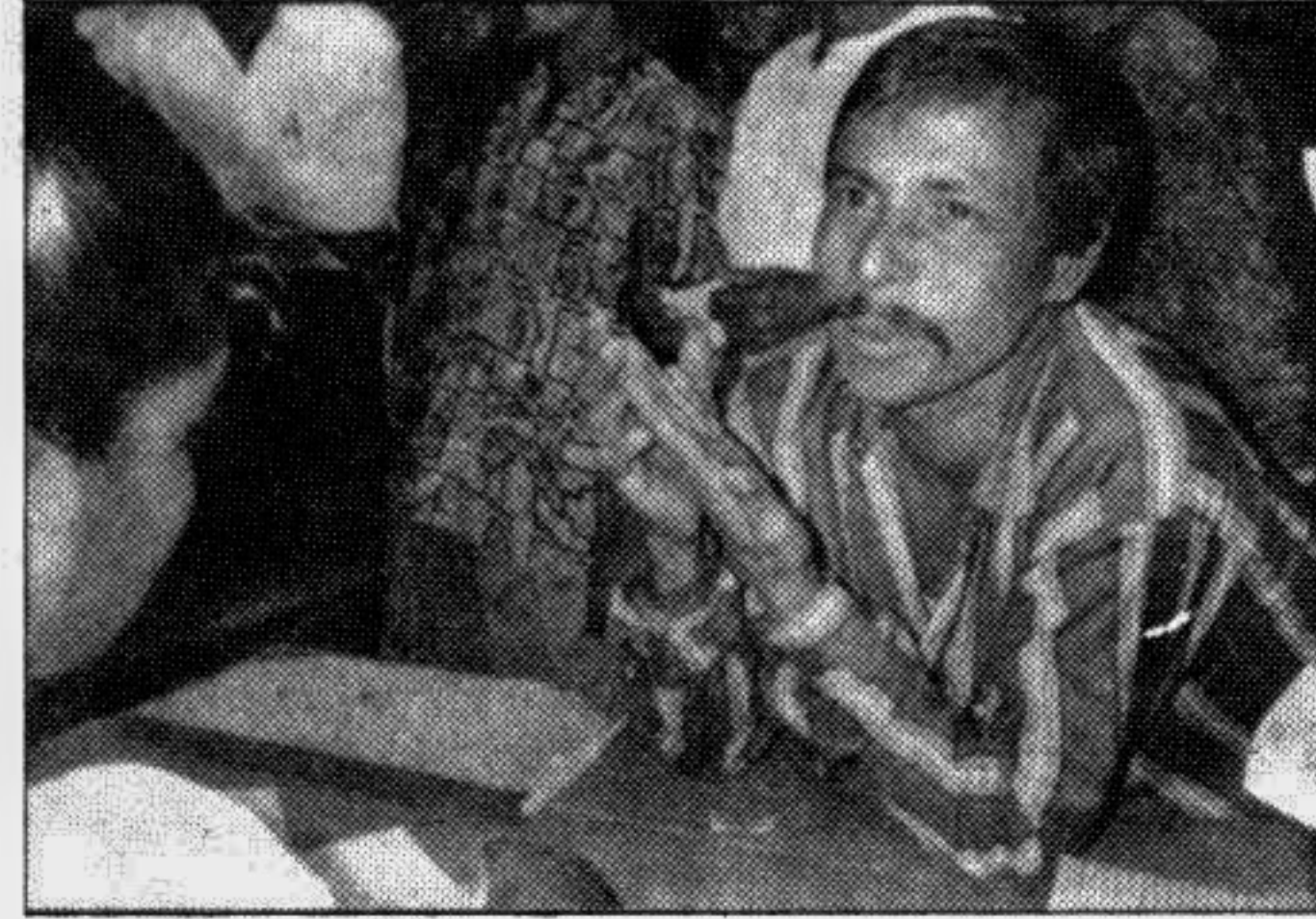
particular group was chosen since the male workers, due to extended duty hours and peri-urban residence are more remote from service sources, than others. Since its inception, the programme, which now encompasses 12 mills in the Chittagong industrial belt has provided services to more

than 42,000 men and to about 20,000 members of their households through evening clinics in the colonies.

Besides rendering family planning services directly, the programme is also serving the purpose of increasing awareness and involvement of the sector in family planning. The man-



Enthusiasm among men: Sign of responsibility



The author is the Country Director of Marie Stopes Clinic Society.

Today, on the occasion of the World Population Day, we look behind, with some pride, at our achievements in the field of family planning and reproductive choice. While Bangladesh is cited as an example of success in making family planning widely available and used, like most other countries, Bangladesh too, depends almost entirely on women for practice of family planning. Of 4.5 per cent eligible couples using a family planning method, only 4 per cent use a male method. Globally, out of 1.1 billion eligible couples in developing countries, only 6 per cent men take responsibility for contraception: a pathetic 2.2 per cent use condoms and 3.5 per cent have had vasectomies.

In Bangladesh where women are already enmeshed in the perpetual cycles of poverty, ill-health, child bearing and rearing, and of late, income generation, isn't it time for men to come forward to share reproductive responsibility? In order to generate that sense of responsibility however, programmes also, must recognize men's roles, and must be designed specially targeting their issues and concerns. Only then can we look forward to a sustainable, expanding programme.

Traditionally, the Bangladesh population programme has been reticent in addressing the needs of men. This is apparent from the infrastructure of this massive programme which employs a huge female workforce to promote distribution of various methods. The family planning service centres are at various levels, belong-

## 'Betrayal' as the Boycotters Go by the Book

Like the rest of Iraq's population, the country's professionals are reeling from four years of economic sanctions. And they are particularly hurt, reports Gemini News Service, by the impossibility of obtaining books and journals and by what they regard as betrayal by their Western counterparts.

by Barbara Nimri Aziz writes from Baghdad

YOUNG Iraqis can watch Jurassic Park and The Lion King on home videos, but doctors cannot get medical journals.

The country's professionals are incensed by the shortage of foreign books and scientific literature as a result of the United Nations embargo, and point out that the ban is decimating human infrastructure, which, unlike bridges and electricity grids, cannot easily be rebuilt.

"We are outside history now," exclaims sculptor Mohammad Ghani who studied in Rome in the 1950s and regularly exhibited in galleries in Europe, Asia and Arab states.

"We have always had contact with others — with Greece and India in the ancient past, and in modern times with Europe, India and the US," he explains. "Now no-one knows about us, and we don't know what is

historians, translators, English literature specialists, biologists and even musicians from the Western colleges.

Coronary specialist Dr Karim Naffi and other doctors complain that their paid subscriptions to journals were never fulfilled. The same discrimination is reported by professors about literary magazines.

This is unethical," says surgeon, Dr Ali, who trained at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London. "My teachers would never allow the medicine I must practice because of inadequate supplies."

The passiveness of the international medical community shocks these doctors. Deputy Health Minister Dr Showki Marcus, who trained in Holland, describes the boycott of information as a violation of human rights.



going on in the world."

The fate of Iraq's intellectual community is overlooked in the current concern over starving children.

Since the 1991 Gulf War, news of hardships suffered by Iraqis have focused on health, price rises and shortages — though some goods, including United States videos and luxury foods, find their way into the country, legally and illegally.

Up to a million people may have perished from infectious diseases and malnutrition exacerbated by lack of medicines and other effects of sanctions.

In addition, specialists report increased cancer rates and rises in child leukemia and the incidence of malformed fetuses, perhaps due to the use of radioactive weapons against Iraq in the 1991 war.

The ban on export of books and journals to Iraq is a little-known feature of the embargo, and Iraqi educationalists and scientists also accuse Western professionals — people who were their colleagues and teachers — of betrayal.

They say foreign academics are colluding with the military policy of the US and Britain.

"I am not a military man, I am an artist. Why should they boycott me?" asks a confused teacher.

Iraq's extensive imports of English-language educational materials for the many university departments operating in English ceased in 1991, the result of shortage of funds and UN sanctions. Iraqis say that foreign post offices limit mail to Iraq to 10 ounces. Anything heavier is not sent on.

The effect is to cut off more than 6,000 university teachers, 8,000 doctors, as well as architects, journalists,

Another foreign-trained scholar bewildered by the cut-off is Dr Huda Ammash, Dean of Baghdad University Women's College and an environmental biologist. Ammash is researching the toxic effects of war radiation and is anxious to report her findings abroad. But, she notes, "I cannot secure invitations to academic conferences to report or publish my research."

The ban is not limited to information about the suffering of Iraqis. Dr Sabah al-Obeidi, Dean of Medicine at Baghdad's Mustansiriya University, explains that professors of medicine are handicapped in their careers by the effective ban on publishing and peer review.

"Not only do we not have access to essential journals, but research articles we send to foreign professors for evaluation are denied," he says.

Dr Sabri Dawood agrees: "I can understand if a paper is refused on scientific grounds — that is reasonable," says the US-trained mathematician. "But they reject our work because of the UN sanctions."

Iraqi professionals are generally pro-Western in outlook, and in the past some took risks to report human rights abuses inside their country. They sometimes died for their efforts. These women and men say they are the moderates who could strengthen international ties and help move Iraq towards democracy.

They conclude that the tough UN sanctions are not aimed at their leader or his military ambitions but at the skills, intelligence and pride represented by this modern and moderate community.

BARBARA NIMRI AZIZ is a US-based writer and broadcaster.

## What About Our Human Resources?

by Sabrina Shahab

The private sector suffers from similar problems. Most businessmen are wary of investing in the manufacturing sector because of labour management dispute, low productivity etc. In order to compete and grow in the market economy private sector needs to adopt new management tools such as market research training, financial management etc. But they have not been able to do so because they lack individuals who have the expertise to carry out these reforms.

BANGLADESH has achieved macro-economic stability. This is the opinion of economists, business men and all those who deal with finance and economic issues. But why is achieving macro-economic stability so important? According to economists, macro-economic stability creates the ideal environment for increasing investment. Finance Minister Saifur Rahman also hopes that increased investment and export will lead to poverty alleviation.

But in the case of Bangladesh what do we see? Investment has increased, but not greatly. Export has increased, but mainly due to the increase of one commodity garments. The disadvantage of our export economy is that the majority of goods exported from Bangladesh include raw materials or semi-raw materials.

Although export of non traditional items such as footwear, electronics, toys, ceramic is growing fast, we still need to concentrate more on exporting other finished products.

Another important point should not be forgotten though the developed world is moving toward the service oriented economy, Bangladesh still remains stagnated in the Agriculture based economy.

Contribution to GDP by the manufacturing sector is only 8 per cent. In order to accelerate economic growth and compete with other major economies Bangladesh needs to place emphasis on both the service and manufacturing sector simultaneously. Ideal situation would be the manufacturing sector working as backward linkage to service sector while agricultural sector working as backward linkage to manufacturing sector.

Therefore we see that Bangladesh has failed to move toward either service oriented or export oriented economy despite achieving macro-economic stability. But why?

The on-going debate between the Government and the business community may throw some light on the subject. The government argues that it has met most of the demands made by the business community and created a pro investment environment. They also say that the business community is not fully utilizing the unique opportunity given to them. According to them most business men are risk averse and are more interested in indenting rather than in investment. They also point out the business community has behaved irresponsibly by not paying back their loans. On the other hand the business community argues that the reality is far different from what the Government says.

How can the Government call the environment business oriented when there are: constant power failures, no systematic and safe transport system (roads are terrible too), bureaucratic stone walling, bungling especially at the financial institutions, customs and shipping points. They also say that the Government only talks about

their loan-default but does nothing about the huge losses made by the public sector which is placing a heavy burden on the monetary system. They also urge the Government to privatise the public sector as soon as possible. About this, the Government's statement is: The business community speaks about privatisation but refuses to by the loss making enterprises or wishes to buy them at a

banking sector. Similarly the Government allocates funds and makes plans for carrying out infrastructure development (building, bridges, roads, increasing the capacity of ports etc). These plans won't be carried out unless the Government officials stop creating delays bottlenecks and other obstacles.

The private sector suffers from similar problems. Most businessmen

be achieved through (i) Education (ii) Establishment of organisation structure and management style which complement the labour force instead of hindering it.

First let's take a look at the education we are getting today. The curriculum at the primary, secondary and university level is so outdated that it cannot be compared to the rest of the world. It does not even prepare

educational system to a standstill. Our educational system can only be described as being stagnant, primitive and self destructive. Instead of creating lots of productive, bright individuals it does the exact opposite. Its products mostly consists of people whose chief enduring quality is their ability to note which they gain at the expense of their thinking, creative abilities.



Investment in human resources — the best way to boost our economy.

price which is far below their real value.

All these arguments make one point quite clear. We desperately need reform in the banking sector and bureaucratic structure. We also need infrastructure development, willingness of the private sector to take more risks and act in a responsible manner.

But why aren't these reforms being carried out? Here are a few possible reasons.

A committee of top financial thinkers is created to draw up a plan for reforming the banking sector. But this plan will not be carried out because there are very few motivated intelligent and trained individuals who can be relied upon at the management and other levels of the

are wary of investing in the manufacturing sector because of labour management dispute, low productivity etc. In order to compete and grow in the market economy private sector needs to adopt new management tools such as market research training, financial management etc. But they have not been able to do so because they lack individuals who have the expertise to carry out these reforms. Therefore the private sector in Bangladesh is still operating with outmoded management tools.

It becomes quite clear we need highly motivated, intelligent and trained work force (both blue and white collars) in order to carry out the reforms and also to catch up with the major economies of the world.

Human resource development can

the students for employment in Bangladesh. But worse is what is offered is neither taught nor learned. In a typical case teachers are not interested in teaching and students are not interested in learning. They are interested in only passing examinations. Teachers show this by repeating nearly the same questions year after year. Students show this by not attending their classes regularly and depending on notes which are collected almost religiously. Of course we must not forget all those strikes and violence which brings the whole

The only bright aspect of the educational system is the recently created CELP programme and other programmes offered by the Open University. Advantages of this approach is (i) they reach a large number of people (ii) the subjects taught are up to date and need based (iii) They are cost-effective for two reasons: One reason: no infrastructure such as buildings, blackboards, benches to be needed. The other reason: teaching staff is reduced because part time, contract based teacher can be used. There is no need to create permanent

## Pollution Reduces Fish Yields from Asia's Rivers

by Juan L. Mercado

YIELDS from inland fishery in Asian countries peaked in the early 1990s and are backsliding. This vital source of protein for poor rural families "now show symptoms of excessive exploitation".

"Asia produces 54 per cent of the world's inland fish catches," says the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in its new report: The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. "But present yields cannot be substantially increased through capture fisheries."

Asian inland fisheries outstrip Africa's 25 per cent share. Republics of the former Soviet Union chip in seven per cent. And both North and South America account for 4.5 per cent each.

Most Asian countries like Indonesia, the Philippines or Nepal,

need to feed growing populations. But marine catches peaked in 1989. Inland fisheries started a downward dip three years later.

FAO Regional Representative A Z M Obaidullah Khan told Depthnews: Asian nations need to reinforce stocking programmes. Pollution of rivers, estuaries and other inland waters has to be reversed with little loss of time, says the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

"Largest loss in yields are in river fishers," the United Nations official pointed out. Historically, teeming rivers of Asian countries, like the Chao Phya in Thailand or the Irrawadi in Myanmar, once produced substantial catches. These have dwindled to insignificant levels.

People's participation is the hinge for success of river rehabilita-

tion programmes, the FAO official observed. And governments must also broaden support, through private enterprise, for aquaculture — "a remarkable growth sector in the 1980s".

Among problems that dampened aquaculture's surge in the early 1990s were: diseases spawned by polluted environments, technology lag for untapped areas, and price fluctuations, the FAO report notes.

A rebound in river fisheries can complement aquaculture growth Mr Khan said. FAO estimated global aquaculture must double its 1993 production in just 17 years if the gap in fish supplies is to be closed by the year 2010.

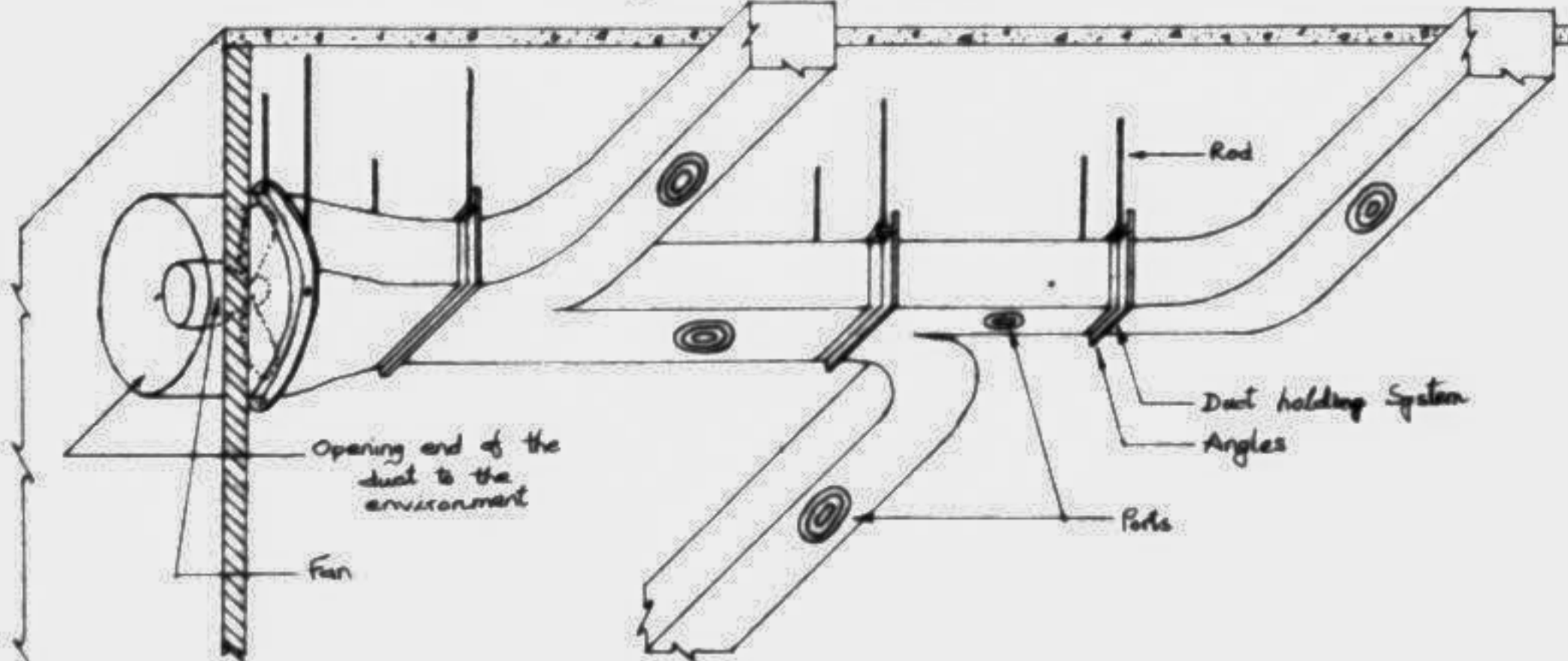
"Technically, this is feasible," Mr Khan explained. But this requires far better planning most decisive environmental policies and disease control than mustered so far.

Satisfying demand in the 21st century will partly depend on "customer acceptance of farmed products", says the State of the World Fisheries report.

— Depthnews Asia

## Forcing Air Circulation into Houses

by Ifrikhar Uddin



is not enough sun light and where the air circulation is very thin.

To overcome this air circulation problem, there is a simple technique which might be found in some big industries in large scale, consisting of ducts and fans only. In Engineering language duct means a rectangular cross-sectional pipe which we can build easily with GI sheets, according

to our own desired cross-section and fix it beneath the roof. Like tree-branches we can continue this duct from one room to the next leaving ports at the bottom of the duct at necessary points, through which the air will enter into the rooms. For doing the air suction into the duct and flowing it through the duct fan(s) is/are used at the free ends of the duct, which will be open to the envi-

ronment. The capacity, type and number of fans will depend on the duct length and the air volume requirement. For fixing the duct beneath the roof we can use light angles encompassing the duct and can hang these angles to the roof with rods. I think the picture will help you to understand it. In the picture one end is shown exposed to environment, but if required similar types of openings

could be made to the environment. And the fan shown is of simple type, if required different types of higher capacity fan (s) might be used.

In central air conditioning system the chilled air is distributed into the rooms mostly based on this principle. As central air conditioning unit is very expensive and it consumes lot of electricity, so very small number of people can afford it. In this case, I think we could adapt this type of air circulation system where the only power consuming element is the fan, which consumes very little amount of electricity.

Like all other devices, it has some advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are:

(1) Always outside air will be in circulation into the houses/offices/ market places, etc.

(2) Always you are getting fresh air.

(3) It will help to remove the trapped air from the rooms.

Now the disadvantage which is: (1) Initial cost i.e. installation cost is high but it is much lower than central air conditioning unit. There may be several other ways for circulating air into the buildings. But for a proper and accurate design, consulting a mechanical engineer is essential.