



PHOTO: STAR
TIB Treasurer M Hafizuddin Khan speaks at a roundtable discussion at Biam Multipurpose Auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and on his right is TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. The roundtable was organised to release Transparency International (TI) Global Corruption Report (GCR) 2007. (Story on Page 20)

Establish counselling centres for adolescents Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday stressed the need for establishing counselling centres for adolescents at union and upazila health complexes by using existing infrastructures and healthcare facilities.

These centres could provide information on reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases to adolescents and remove their misconceptions about different physical and psychological changes, they added.

They said around one-fourth of the total population are adolescent who are void of mental and reproductive health care in their transitional period.

The roundtable titled 'Counselling at district and upazila level healthcare centres for the development of reproductive health of the adolescents' was organised by National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (Nipson) at its office at Mohakhali in association with Save the Children USA.

"Around 22 to 25 percent of the total population in the country are adolescent and though there are separate programmes on maternal and child health, this section lacks proper healthcare facilities," said Abdur Rahman, head of mother and child health department of Nipson.

The speakers said the adolescent boys and girls should be made aware of their reproductive health as maternal death increased three times for under-18 mothers.

Besides they should be made aware of HIV/ AIDS and other

sexually transmitted diseases, and should be refrained from other vulnerable behaviour by providing counselling, they added.

The speakers said introduction of counselling centres at upazila and union level needs only government's willingness to utilise its healthcare service providers by giving them little training on counselling.

The number of people coming for preventive care is very little comparing to that of the curative treatment seekers, they said, adding that the government healthcare service providers should give counselling service beside preventive and clinical service.

While moderating the programme, Prof Nurunnabi of population science department of Dhaka University, said in spite of having knowledge on certain issues, it is found that people do not practice it and there is 30 percent gap in knowledge and practice which could be reduced by counselling.

We should also think on how the health centres could be made user-friendly, he added.

Director of the Directorate General of Health Dr Mozaffar Hossain said necessary steps would be taken to establish at least a counselling centre in every upazila to provide counselling service to the adolescent boys and girls at least once a week so that they could refrain themselves from vulnerable behaviour.

The speakers also talked about a model of a counselling centre established at Nasirnagar in Brahmanbaria where teenaged boys and girls have been providing with counselling service on early marriage, menstruation, wet dream and safe motherhood twice a year.

Nipson Director Dr Mohammad Zafar Ullah, Dr Ferdousi Begum of Shahid Suhrawardi Hospital and doctors and representatives from different medical institutions including Save the Children USA were present at the discussion.

Dutch, SDC support for education sector

UNB, Dhaka

The Netherlands Embassy and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) yesterday signed a five-year agreement of cooperation with Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) for achieving the education for all and the MDGs in Bangladesh.

According to the agreement, the Dutch contribution will be Tk.

19.5 crore while SDC's Tk. 13.4 crore. A third development partner, Oxfam Netherlands, will contribute Tk 3.5 crore.

Netherlands Ambassador Kees Beemsterboer, Switzerland Ambassador Dr Dora Rapold and CAMPE Executive Director Rasbeda K. Chowdhury signed the deal at the Netherlands Embassy.

Under the agreement (2007-2012), the Netherlands Embassy

and SDC would provide support to CAMPE for working towards achieving the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals in Bangladesh.

A press release of the Netherlands Embassy said CAMPE is a national coalition of NGOs working towards the implementation of programme interventions in the education sector.