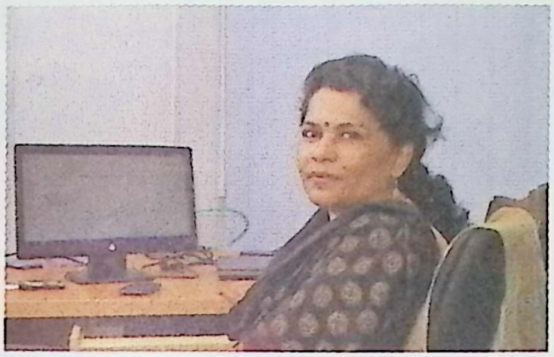
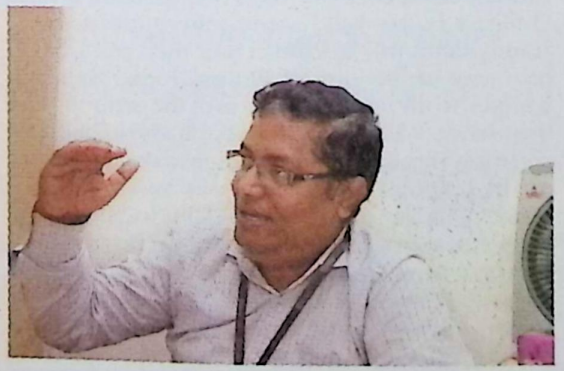


Dr Shantana R Halder

> We have to learn to adopt the best practices of the developed countries where people drink a lot of cow milk.

grazing cows, the government must allocate *khas* land which is often left unproductive. Farmers should have access to easy loans. We have to be innovative about cattle feed. We can use the remaining part of the corn, kitchen leftovers, and leaves of Ipil tree (Leucaena leucocephala). Milk Vita is going to introduce TMR (Total Mixed Ration). It is a mixture of concentrate, leaves and roughage. Annually, 21,719 metric tons of powdered milk is imported some of which is unregulated. Condensed "milk" has reached even the remotest villages."

> The knowledge and skills of those who have studied Animal Husbandry should be better utilized.



A Q M Shafiqur Rouf

Adulteration in milk is a concern among milk drinkers. Rahman posits that joint teams of BSTI, mobile court and City Corporation will have to monitor the quality of milk. Anyone found guilty must be punished under law. "Pouring adulterated milk on the roadside is not a solution."

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) is the apex National Standards body of Bangladesh responsible for developing and promoting industrial Standardization. Kamal Prashad Das, Director (CM), BSTI says, "Pasteurised milk is one of the 59 food items that we test and permit to use the BSTI logo. Several times a year we conduct tests that are internationally accredited. Any vendor found selling uncertified powdered milk is fined or jailed and his products are confiscated. In 2013, Safe Food Law was passed in the parliament. When it is implemented, the food inspectors will be able to work freely; adulteration in all food items including milk will be reduced."

Change is needed at the policy level. Nour-E-Alam, the Regional Manager of BRAC Dairy says, "Dairy farming is part of agriculture. But in the national budget, it has been put under livestock. We have been led by the media to believe that powdered milk is better than cow milk. It's not." There has been sort of a cultural shift from drinking milk. "In cities, children prefer carbonated beverages to milk. They choose burgers and French fries over traditional, healthy food like rice pudding," says Dr Shantana R Halder. "We have to learn to adopt the best practices of the developed countries where people drink a lot of cow milk. Drinking buffalo milk which contains more fat may be popularized. We need more chilling centres. Supply of electricity must be uninterrupted." Dr Halder is Chief, Population Planning and Research at UNFPA. She has worked as a senior research fellow at BRAC in the past and co-authored a major study tiled *Dairy production, consumption and marketing in Bangladesh*.

The dairy industry needs to retool its marketing to tout the usefulness of cow's milk. They have a tough battle ahead. Nutrition Professor Dr Khursheed Jahan says, "Some malted milk producing companies have launched ads claiming that the power of milk will be enhanced if their product is mixed with milk. It's unnecessary. Milk is a complete food." However, it may not be ideal for everyone. Various research shows that only one third of people produce the lactase enzyme during adulthood, which enables them to digest milk.

Shafiqur Rauf says, "Compared to Europeans, Asians in general have deficiency in lactase, an enzyme essential to digestion of whole milk. That is why a lot of us have stomach problems after drinking milk. The answer to that problem can be yogurt which contains lactic acid producing bacteria which helps the body produce lactase. The nutritional value of yogurt is almost the same as milk."