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## History Of Bangladesh

By Josiah William

Bangladesh, named after Bangla (Bengali), the language of most of its inhabitants other than a few

small ethnic or tribal people, a small in area but large in population South-Asian country. The history of Bangladesh is the eternal history of collision between oppressors and oppressed. European traders had arrived in the late 15th century and eventually the British East India Company controlled the region by the late 18th century, from which the British extended their rule over all of India. When Indian independence was achieved in 1947, it was divided in a predominantly Muslim Pakistan and a predominantly Hindu India.

Bengal was thus divided into an eastern part called East Pakistan and a western part, the Indian state of West Bengal. East Pakistan was dominated and frequently neglected by West Pakistan and tensions turned into a struggle for independence in 1971. In March, the attempted repression of this movement resulted in the deaths of millions of Bengalis and a refugee problem that led to Indian intervention in December and, subsequently, independence from Pakistan on 16th December has brought today's Bangladesh.

Bangladesh consists mostly of a low-lying river delta located on the Indian subcontinent with a largely marshy jungle coastline on the Bay of Bengal known as the Sundarbans, home to the Royal Bengal Tiger. The densely populated delta is formed by the confluence of the Ganges (local name Padma), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and Meghna rivers and their tributaries as they flow down from the Himalayas. Bangladesh's alluvial soil is highly fertile but vulnerable to both flood and drought. In Bangladesh hills rise above the plain only in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (highest point: the Keokradong at 1,230 m) in the far southeast and the Sylhet division in the northeast.

Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, climate of Bangladesh is tropical with a mild winter from October to March, a hot, humid summer from March to June, and a humid, warm rainy monsoon from June to October. Natural calamities, such as floods, tropical cyclones, tornadoes, and tidal bores affect Bangladesh very often. Dhaka is the country's capital and largest city, other major cities include Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and Sylhet. Apart from very small countries such as Singapore and Bahrain, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world.

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The Bangladeshi population is relatively homogenous and consists of about 98% ethnic Bengali, who speak Bengali or Bangla. Urdu-speaking, non-Bengali Muslims from other regions of India such as Bihar, as well as various tribal groups who live mostly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the southeast, comprise the remainder. Most Bangladeshis (about 83%) are Muslims, but Hindus constitute a sizable (16%) minority. There are also small number of Buddhists, Christians, and animists. Bengali, a member of the Indo-Aryan languages and written in a script similar to Devanagari, is the official national language although English is largely used in official and business purposes.

In Bangladesh, the president is the head of state and holds a largely ceremonial post, with real power held by the prime minister, who is head of government. The prime minister is appointed by the president and must be a member of parliament (MP) whom the president feels commands the confidence of the majority of other MPs. The cabinet is composed of ministers selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president. The Bangladeshi parliament is the House of the Nation or Jatiya Sangsad, whose 300 members are elected by popular vote for five-year terms of office. The

highest judiciary body in Bangladesh is the Supreme Court.

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### **Inadequate Sex Awareness Poses Adolescent Health Risk**

**By Billy I Ahmed**

It is not uncommon, in a country like Bangladesh, that conversation about sexual issue remains a taboo. It is high time, that such taboo should be unshackled. Else, the ticking time bomb of HIV/AIDS could peter out risking 23percent adolescents of 130 million adolescents population of Bangladesh or face the supposedly sub-Saharan Africa's consequence— it is said, within a span of ten years millions of children's will vanish in the Sub-Saharan Africa, who are born with AID.

Recently, during a news briefing at Dhaka on 29 September 04, an official of UNFPA, said, poor

knowledge of sex among adolescents poses a threat to their reproductive health. According, to Suneeta Mukerjee, the country director, Bangladesh UNFPA, "Parents must speak freely with their growing children about sex to ensure healthy living."

On 31 August 04, at Rangpur a town in Northern Bangladesh, 335 kilometers from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, an advocacy meeting was arranged by Social Marketing Company (SMC).

Severe concern over the prevailing Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), Human Immune Defiance Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Syndrome (AIDS) in Bangladesh and in the surrounding countries was discussed in the meeting. The present number of 13,000 HIV positive patients in Bangladesh is not an accurate figure, the number is higher, reported the Non-Government Organisations (NGO).

Some NGO officials working in the field in Rangpur region said, the number of STD patients is alarmingly rising. The patients include even a large number of school going children from class eight up to university levels. They are taking all types of drug,

Adopting all means opening the huge door for HIV/AIDS vulnerability.

The advocacy meeting was participated by Government, NGO officials, physicians, journalists, Imams ( who leadprayers in the mosque, also it refers to titles of various Muslim religious leaders.)of different Mosques and the elites of the town.

Most opposition to sex education in Bangladesh is based on the assumption that knowledge is harmful. But research in this area reveals that ignorance and unresolved curiosity, not knowledge, are harmful. This issue was identified in a face to face interactive dialogue jointly organised by UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund) and CWD (Concerned Women Development) in observance of "World AID Day" Participated by some twenty-four teens of both sexes from the country. The teens identified religious ignorance, absence of appropriate approach on sex education in the curricula at secondary level of education as impediment to organising effective programs against HIV/AIDS.

Recalling, what La Rochefoucauld, (French classical author) said, about youth—"youth is a perpetual intoxication; it is the fever of reason," it is this fever of reason, that is driving the adolescents who due to obscenity and ignorance indulge in early sex, being vulnerable to STD and AIDS infection. Our failure to tell children what they want and need to know is one reason why we have the out-of-wedlock

teen's pregnancy and abortion, even risk them to sexually transmitted diseases (STD) acquired immune deficiency (AID).

For parents of today, sex is a dirty word. They feel uncomfortable in discussing sex education with their children. But are we aware on an average a child is exposed to 9000 sexual scenes per year. These parents should know that sex is not always a dirty word. It is an important aspect of our life. The main reason parents do not or cannot discuss sex education with their children is because of the their cultural upbringing, their religious training. They are often brought up in a state of ignorance in regard to sex issues.

What is sex education and who should give it?

Is sex education about knowing the anatomy and physiology of the human body or about the act of sex or about reproduction and family life or about prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy? The problem with this is that at the present time sex Ed taught is incomplete. It does not cover morality associated with sex, sexual dysfunction and deviations.

Who should teach sex?

With regard to the question that should teach sex education, I believe everyone has to play his or her role. Parents have to assume a more responsible role. A father has a duty to be able to answer his son's questions and a mother has the same duty to her daughter. We can hardly influence the sex Ed taught schools but we could supplement that with ethical and moral dimension adding family love and responsibility.

Hazards of early sex: A variety of injuries are possible and do happen when sex organs are not ready for sex in terms of full maturation. Some of these injuries have Cervical cancer has been thought to be related to sex at an early age and with multiple partners.

Why do children get involved in sex?

There are many reasons why children get involved in sex. The most common reason, detachment from home can lead to attachment elsewhere.

Sexual pressure on them is everywhere, from the TV where about 20,000 sexual scenes are broadcasted in advertisement, soap operas, prime time shows and MTV. The hard core rock music nowadays fans the flames of sexual desires. Most parents do not know what kind of music their children are hearing. If they care and listen to rock songs like Eat Me Alive (Judas Priest), The Last American Virgin, (Tina Turner), Material Girl (Madonna), they will know that these songs have pornographic words and sentences which made Kandy Stroud, a former rock fan, begged parents to stop their children from listening to what she calls 'Pornographic Rock'. Six out of ten as young as eight years in Bangladesh watch Indian TV channels. These channels can be termed as sex stimulators, be it a music or a serial. Instead, the parents should encourage their kids to watch channels like Discovery, History and Animal Planet; they are both educative and entertaining.

Research shows music does affect sexual mood. It does so by activating melatonin, the hormone from the pineal gland in the brain, which is turned on by darkness and turned off by flashing lights. It is the same gland that has been thought to trigger puberty and affects the reproductive cycle and sex mood.

What is the role of parents?

Parents should control the music children are listening to or the TV program they are watching, the magazines they are reading, and the clothes they are wearing. Take the case of Phola Baisak, you find young girls attired in Holud Sari (Turmeric Colour) with matching bangles and Tip(a colourful spot) in the forehead not only they look graceful but reflects our cultural value and very next day back to jeans

and tops– which may provokes desire amongst the young opposite sex.

About dating:

Many of the pregnancy occur at the end of the date and are not reported. According to a news agency in one it's write–up reports sex dating in Bangladesh is prevalent, however it mentions,"even though there is no reliable statistics, the incidence is growing, expert says." Few notorious cyber cafes are hub of porno with cozy coops ideal spot for "smooch dating!"

Anything which breaks down sexual inhibition and loss of self–control i.e. alcohol, drugs, petting or just being together for two member the opposite sex in a secluded place should not be allowed for teenagers. We must remember that, these young adolescents are a major segment of our population who will soon enter the reproductive and sexually active stage of life all potential target to STD and HIV. Therefore, before it is too late, the teaching of reproductive health to adolescents is basic life support. Parents act now!

In summary parents should teach their children that our values systems are different from western way of life. Having a feeling and love in your heart for someone of the opposite sex is different and beyond control, while \_expression of the same through sex is entirely different and should be under control.

Billy I Ahmed, is a Columnist and Researcher , writing for leading English Dailies and Journal in Bangladesh as well as overseas online newsletter. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means , in print or electronic media without written permission of the author. For reproducing or reprint, please contact the author by e–mail:

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