

## Women education for population control

Population explosion in a least developed country like Bangladesh is a scourge. It has to be contained in a scientific way. Efforts are underway to reduce the population growth and after decades of population control measures, what is very much visible is that the urban middle class have adopted family planning as a way of life. But the unbridled rise in population among the urban slum dwellers have aggravated the situation. The large birth rate among population in urban slum and rural areas is causing demographic imbalance. This in fact is also causing social tension and disequilibrium which must be tackled with utmost care.

Against this backdrop Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while presiding over the first meeting of the reconstituted National Population Council in Dhaka the other day declared that a sound national population policy would be enunciated soon in consonance with the socio-economic condition of the country. Without mincing words she observed that no policy or programme would enable us to combat population boom unless we could make our womenfolk educated and self-sufficient in all spheres of life particularly in the economic field. She also underscored the need for imparting reproductive education to the male counterpart to make the population control drive meaningful and successful.

Women form fifty per cent of the total population in Bangladesh. They form an integral part of the society and hence need adequate education to help eradicate the menace of burgeoning population. With proper education they can participate in the motivational campaign to arrest the disquieting trend. Islam is also not averse to family planning methods and has given emphasis on planned parenthood. In this respect the suggestion of the Prime Minister to invite Islamic scholars from Muslim countries who attained spectacular success in population control to train the Ulema in our country about the religious aspects of the issue carries meaning. She also suggested sending our Ulema abroad for acquiring training on modern outlook in this subject deserves to be implemented on a trial basis at the earliest.

The declaration of the Prime Minister for imparting education to women to combat population boom must be given a concrete shape. Initially women living in the urban slums and rural areas should be brought within the fold of education with the active participation of NGOs and private sector organisations. The task is best with the political commitment of