

In Memorium (Col. B. L. Raina)

Col. B. L. Raina, one of the pioneers of the official family planning programme in India, and the first Director of the programme in the Ministry of Health, died at Delhi on Thursday, the 10th July, at the age of 86.

Col. Raina was a medical historian, repute and author of several books, especially on population and health sciences in ancient India. As a devoted social worker, he founded as early as 1937 "Help our Mothers Society" in Ujjain for providing family planning services. He was the discoverer of the larvicidal fish 'Schizothorax Progastus' in 1945. He worked for some time with the Judge Advocate General's office to study the International Humanitarian Laws and Conventions and was associated with the Geneva Conventions Implementing Act. He wrote his first book *Family Planning: Why, When and How* in 1939 and wrote many papers on medicine and family planning. He edited the seven volumes on Indian Armed Forces Medical Services during the Second World War. He was a recipient of the Padma Shri Award in 1969.

I met Col. Raina first time in August 1961, as a young scholar with a Ford Foundation fellowship to study the Courses for Masters in Public Health at Harvard. I met him along with other Ford fellows of our batch at Delhi on our way to USA and we were very impressed by his humorous remarks on how some Indians, while going abroad for the first time, behave under a different cultural condition. I was tensed up in undertaking my first fellowship abroad, leaving my family behind and Col. Raina cheered me up and gave me the courage to undertake the study. We kept in touch with each other for the next three decades and I found in him a good friend, philosopher and guide. With a large smile writ on his face, a cordial and positive approach in the resolution of issues and very eager to help friends in need, Col. Raina was a father figure and a towering personality in the family planning field in India.

With Col. Raina's demise, India has lost a doyen of family planning programme in the country. He is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son. May his soul rest in peace.

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