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**Use of Administrative Data for Statistical
purposes:
Bangladesh perspective**

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1. Introduction:

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is the National Statistics Organization (NSO) responsible for collecting, compiling and disseminating of statistics for all the sectors of the economy for meeting the data needs of planners, administrators, policymakers, researchers, NGOs, development partners and other uses. The main data sources of BBS are the Censuses of Population and Housing, Agriculture and Non-farm Economic Activities. The other data sources are periodic sample surveys conducted on Agriculture, Demography and Health, Household Income and Expenditure, Labour Force, Children and Mother, Manufacturing Industries, Establishments and Institutions, Vital Statistics etc. These data are published by BBS in the Census and Survey reports.

2. Use of Administrative data for Statistical Purposes

In the context of Bangladesh a number of administrative data are used for GDP estimation and are published in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin and Statistical Pocket Book & Statistical Year Book. The Administrative data that are currently used for Statistical Purposes cover the following areas:

- Transport, Storage and Communication
- Mining and Quarrying
- Power, Gas and Water
- Education
- Construction
- Health and Social Welfare
- Exports and Import
- Banking and Monetary Statistics
- Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities
- Fishing

3. Problems Associated with Administrative data

Administrative data are collected by the line Ministries and Divisions by their administrative channels. These data are collected through prescribed forms, registrars, formats, and other documents. The major problems associated with the administrative data are as follows:

- I. Standard Concepts and Definitions are not always followed;
- II. Data collected for administrative units suffers from incompleteness due to negligence of the concerned officials and varies widely by the areas;
- III. Data collected are not properly verified as the personnel's involved are not aware of its subsequent use;
- IV. Administrative data collected from different Stakeholders of the line Ministries, Divisions, Directorates are often suffers from upward bias as they have a tendency to highlight their success and try to achieve the target fixed earlier;
- V. In absence of required manpower in the sub-regional offices, the completeness of data suffer widely and disaggregated & sub-national data are not available;
- VI. Detailed data are not collected, only one or two information of certain aspects are collected which is not very useful for statistical purpose;
- VII. Complete coverage of units are not done in some cases such as transports, business or commercial enterprises as the owner do not register with the licensing authority to avoid taxes, fees and other criteria. Therefore, actual number may be much higher than the registered numbers;
- VIII. Sometimes higher number is shown in administrative records to get certain benefits such as number of students in schools to get teachers monthly pay order (MPO). However, the actual number may be much less;
- IX. Duplication of data are often observed in case of some observation units such as "students" where same student are shown in different educational institutions to get financial benefit;
- X. Inadequate access of data to NSOs as computerization is not done by most of the line Ministries, Division, Directorates etc.

4. Quality Checking of Administrative Data

In absence of reliable and representative survey data it is difficult to cross-check the quality of administrative data. In the context of Bangladesh we generally check data from administrative sources with the survey findings where possible. One glaring example is data on crop production. Crop production data are collected by Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) through their local officials and BBS also collect the some data through sample surveys. The method that BBS follow is the crop-cutting experiment simultaneously with the farmer's interview. Experience shows that crop production statistics from DAE always differs widely from BBS survey. DAE estimate is always higher than BBS. Almost similar case with educational statistics, the literacy and enrollment rate estimated by Ministry of Education is always higher than the literacy and enrollment rate obtained from BBS surveys. However, some data could not be verified such as transport statistics, storage statistics, real-estate etc. due to absence of survey data.

5. Interaction with the Agencies Collecting Administrative Data

BBS maintain close relationship with other Ministries, Division and Directorates who are involved in collection of administrative data. The concerned officials of these institutions are included in the technical and working groups formed for BBS surveys and studies. The BBS officials also participate in their activities. However, formal training is not given to these officials on a regular basis. They are included in the orientation programmes and survey based training programmes. At present, BBS has no independent training academy to train the officials of statistical cell/data collection unit of the line ministries. BBS has a plan to establish a full fledged training academy to train the officials of BBS and other ministries for quality improvement of data collection. The initial work for establishing such institute is under process.

6. Major Obstacles/Weakness in Using Administrative Data for Statistical Purpose

The major obstacles/weakness in using administrative data for statistical purpose are as follows:

- Lack of completeness of data
- Lack of unbiased data
- Standard concepts and definition are not followed
- Inadequate statistical knowledge of the stakeholders involved in data collection
- Inadequate content of data
- Non-availability of data in electronic form for further tabulation and analysis
- Delay in supplying data

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Administrative data is cost effective but suffers from a lot of limitations. Therefore, for improvement of the administrative data for statistical purposes the following steps should be taken:

- Statistical cell should be institutionalized in every ministry/division/directorate.
- The statistical cell will work under the guidance of NSOs (for Bangladesh BBS)
- The personnel working in the statistical cell of the line ministries should be given proper training for collecting data
- All questionnaire, forms, returns should be finalized in consultation with NSO so that the data collected can be used for statistical purposes.
- Professional person should be appointed in the statistical cell for collecting appropriate data.
- Additional resources should be allocated for the line ministries for collecting relevant data through administrative channels.
- The line ministries/Divisions/Directorates should keep close liaison with the NSOs in collecting data.
- NSOs should verify the administrative data by other survey/study before publishing the data.