

**Country paper of Bangladesh on
“Workshop on the organization of
National Statistical Systems and user-producer
relations for countries in South Asian”**

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Introduction:

Statistical information is an essential tools for the development in the economic, demographic, social and environmental fields and for mutual knowledge and trade among the states and the peoples of the world. In light of these, in august 1974, Bangladesh government established a centralized official statistical system named the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) was created by merging four relatively larger statistical agencies of the provincial and central governments, namely, the Bureau of statistics, the Bureau of Agriculture statistics, the Agriculture census Commission and the population Census Commission.

About a year later, in July 1975, Statistics Division was created and placed under the Ministry of planning. The Statistics Division was headed by a Secretary who was also the Directory General of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

In 2002, the Statistics Division has been merged with Planning Division and BBS is now under the administrative control of the Ministry of Planning and headed by Director General.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is the lone national statistical organization (NSO) responsible to collect, compile, disseminate and publish official statistics of all sectors of the economy to meet the data needs of the users for national planning and formulating policies by the government. It has a most centralized official statistical system responsible for providing almost all statistics.

BBS is headed by a Director General (DG) and the overall control lies with the Ministry of Planning. The guidance with respect to statistical policy is to provided by the National Statistical Council (NSC) headed by the honorable minister for planning. Six technical committees assist the council in technical work relating to the following subject matter areas:

- (i) Agricultural Statistics

- (ii) National and Social Accounts
- (iii) Population and Demography
- (iv) Trade
- (v) Industry, and
- (vi) Sample Survey.

BBS has been functioning through 8 separate wings and two-tier field offices located at all the regions(old district) and at every upazilla and thana(sub district) level. The 8 wings are namely;

- (i) Computer Wing
- (ii) National Accounting Wing
- (iii) Agriculture Wing
- (iv) Demography and Health Wing
- (v) Industry and Labor Wing
- (vi) Census Wing
- (vii) Finance, Administration and MIS Wing (FA & MIS Wing)
- (viii) Training and Research Wing

Field Offices are Working under the supervision of FA & MIS Wing.

Main Functions of BBS:

- (a) To collect, compile, analyze, disseminate and publish statistics of all sectors of the economy for meeting needs of development planning, research and decision making.
- (b) To organize and conduct national censuses
- (c) To organize and conduct statistical surveys
- (d) To conduct research and develop standards
- (e) To compile and publish information on national accounts
- (f) To promote and maintain application of statistical standards.

Organizational set-up of BBS:

- (a) Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is headed by the Director General. It has got one Deputy Director General, Seven Directors, Seven Joint Directors and 37 Deputy Directors.

(b) Improving co-ordination in National Statistical System:

Co-ordination among National statistical System and its data user agencies is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system. The main user of the statistical data is the planning commission which is responsible for formulating national policies for development preparation of strategic plan for poverty reduction and achieving the targets of MDG . An addition to that Food department, Agriculture department, Bangladesh Bank and other agencies both private and public use BBS data to fix up procurement prices of food item, fixation of target production, Inflation etc for their own purposes. For these reason, BBS has to coordinate with different ministries, agencies, and others under the supervision and guidance of National Statistical council. BBS interact and coordinate with the concerned public and private organizations in various ways:

1. Important public departments, autonomous bodies and research and professional societies like as Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, Bangladesh Institute of development Strategies(BIDS), Bangladesh Bank, Chamber of Commerce, Statistical association, Economic association, concerned expert teachers of different universities etc are members of the technical committee on censuses and surveys also the National Statistical Council. Representative of different ministries are the members of the steering and coordination committee of BBS. They provide forward their suggestion and comments for generation relevant

statistics for their use in different national census and periodic sample surveys.

2. For users-producers interaction, seminars, workshops and expert consultation are held before each of the census and surveys and also for the dissemination of the census and survey results.

Achievements:

With the coordination of different ministries, agencies, and others, BBS conducts decennial census like population census, Agricultural census, Economic census and different sample survey like Household Income and Expenditure, labor force survey ,Sample Vital Registration, Child Nutrition survey Multiple indicator Cluster Survey(MICS) etc for meeting the data needs of the administrative, policy makes, researchers, development partners and others users.

Future Plan:

1. To increase co-ordination among different ministries, agencies and others.
2. The NSC plays leading role on coordination between different ministries, agencies and others. So it is necessary to strengthening NSC and hold regular meeting of NSC, at least twice in a year.
3. For improving coordination, establish offices to all district.
4. Strengthening of capacity building of BBS in turns of trained manpower, equipment, transport vehicle etc.

Challenges :

1. Due to lack of adequate manpower of BBS at field level, active cooperation could not be established among the various concerned government agencies and others logistic and technical facilities of the BBS and Sometimes the various statistical publications require more times to publish, for delay in data entry and processes for data collection;

2. Lack of proper training for statistical staff;
3. Inadequate data dissemination system (internet, digital system and others)

(c) Autonomy of National Statistical offices:

BBS is the only national statistical Institution responsible for collecting, compiling and disseminating statistical data of all the sectors of the economy to meet the data-needs of the users for the planning purpose and for formulating policies by the government. The role of BBS is to provide the necessary data for preparing various national plans and policies for the overall development of the country.

At present, there are 23 regional statistical offices and 497 Upazilla(field level office) statistical offices located in the 23 greater districts in Bangladesh. The BBS is responsible for providing technical and administrative guidance to the Bureau government in matters of all official statistics programs and the implementation agency of all programs of official statistics of Bangladesh.

BBS now working under the policy guidance of the planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and participates in policy monitoring and evaluation through various inter ministerial and inter agency committees. One of the committee is National Statistical Council. It has 30 members. These members are representative of different ministries, organization, agency, educational institution, chamber of commerce, different association etc. The Council is the national forum where both users and producers of data decide on all national programmes in the area of statistics.

At present BBS has to seek clearance of the concerned authority in publishing the key statistical information such as GDP, price statistics, inflation, current production statistics etc. This delays in the publication of the report. BBS should be given full authority to publish all data of its own.

Future Plan and Key Issues:

If, NSO (BBS) gets autonomy in its work, it will work without any biasness and free from undesirable pressure. Not only that it can conduct which census and surveys are needed for the country and society as well and also reduce time lag for publishing different census and surveys report.

(d) How can we increase user engagement ?

At present, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is taken different measure for increase user producer interaction. These are:

- (1) A well functioning and data based Website.
- (2) Research oriented and resourceful library.
- (3) Quick publication of key statistical report such as Yearly pocket book.
- (4) Taken initiative to increase cooperation and coordination among the users-producers. For users-producers interaction, seminar cum expert consultation is held before each of the census and surveys and also for the dissemination of the census and survey results.
- (5) BBS working for data archiving of all major census and surveys using internationally accepted dissemination mechanism such as “Meta data Tool...
- (6) Network system is used in head quarter for user engagement.
- (7) Citizen charter is existent.

Future Plan:

- (1) Arrange more seminar and workshop on different statistical issues.
- (2) Strengthening data Archive, library, Web site,
- (3) Strengthening networking in field level units,
- (4) BBS should become more assertive once its image improves through quality outputs released in a timely manner for more user management.

(5) Creating statistical cells in important ministries. (Recommended by Task force)

(6) To establish Training Academy.

(7) To rationalize manpower by deploying more official in zila and upzila offices.

Key Issues:

(1) For implementation of increase user engagement, financial resources will be required.

(2) In some cases, BBS uses outdated sample and weighting system, such practices fail to increase user engagement. So, updated sample and weighting system should be introduced.

(3) BBS has lack of human resources development and also lack of logistic support. Proper policy formulation and implementation are required regarding user engagement.

(e) How useful are Administrative data for Statistical purposes?

BBS collects and compiles various statistics on different sectors. It also collects primary data from primary sources that is root level and secondary data from secondary sources. Administrative data collects from official records of different ministries, agencies, department, organization, NGOs etc. like as foreign trade statistics, environment statistics, statistics of educational institution etc.

(1) BBS collects data from Administrative sources, the costs are considerably lower and prepared statistics relatively quickly and released earlier than data collected through censuses and surveys.

(2) Presently, BBS collects Government Income and Expenditure data from Government accounts, foreign trade statistics from custom records on Import and Exports, Forest area are covered from forest department,

Vehicle registration statistics from Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority, Money exchange rate data from Bangladesh Bank, agriculture inputs data from Agriculture Ministry, production of fish from Fisheries department, Meteorology data from Meteorology and so on.

Though BBS used Administrative data, but sometimes there are several deficiencies occurred. These data are often incomplete or inaccurate and also biased. In some cases, financial incentives encourage misreporting. Data collection system may not be properly trained.

The concepts and definition used as required in terms of laws and regulations may be unsuitable for statistical purposes and also not conform to international standard.

Service data or administrative data obtained from different line Ministries, Division, Directorates are biased because they like to focus on their own achievements. These data are not suitable for monitoring the achievement in the relevant field. Therefore, scientifically desired sample survey can be the best alternative which is unbiased. However, in order to get reliable estimate from the sample survey at the disaggregated level sample size should be increased.

e) Role of National Statistical Offices in Analysis, including the provision of micro data :

i) Present status:

Along with presentation of data, BBS has been analyzing the sample surveys and censuses unit level data on limited basis. In most of the sample survey reports carry brief analysis viz. spatio-temporal trend, contingent tables with background variables. Multivariate analysis has also been done in specific cases. In every census, there is separate analytical report that captures comparative scenarios including temporal trend.

Pro-active attitude for analysis: there is a data archive in BBS to promote external research and analysis.

ii) Future plan

Due to the increasing demand by the policy makers/users, the organization has plan to analyze micro data on the following areas

- Gender statistics
- Poverty analysis
- Environmental compendium /climate change

Develop thematic core groups in health, environment, gender etc. to build capacity for need-driven analysis for policy planning.

iii) Key issues

- 1) Need capacity building including in specific areas
- 2) Constraint of extra resources for separate analysis of microdata.
- 3) Absence of web-based data repository

f) Adjusting the National Statistical Offices to emerging statistical issue: Climate change:

It is quite challenging issue to provide empirical evidence by producing the temporal trend of climatic change.

Action to be done/Issue:

- 1) Need to set up a group of personnel with proper training to disseminate the data by the help of international statistical partners/relevant organization.
- 2) Regional level resource centre can be set up for appending and analyzing data.