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- 1) What do we want from the population census (not just for the short term i.e. the immediate census, but also in terms of the long term role of the population census within the statistical system)?

Ans: While satisfying the immediate data needs in the country, the Population Census, in the long run will form an integral part of a country's National Statistical System. It will be the principal source of information on population, demographics, migration, education, economics and housing. The census data will also be a valuable benchmark data on a wide range of characteristics about the population. In fact for the statistical system the population and housing census forms a major basis for future bench mark or references in terms of ensuring frames and weights for future surveys estimates. It allows for measuring the accuracy of the survey estimates.

The Census makes every effort to include everyone. It is the only survey that provides a detailed picture of the entire population, and is unique because it covers everyone at the same time and asks the same core questions everywhere, making it easy to compare different parts of the country.

The information provided by the Census allows central and local Government, health authorities and many other organizations to target their resources more effectively, and to plan housing, education, health and transport services for years to come.

The first population and housing census of Bhutan 2005 was conducted on 30 and 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2005. While planning and designing the census at the preparatory stages, all the major users or the stakeholders participated in the preparation of the census questionnaires so as to satisfy the needs of the wide range of data users. The Census operation itself was an inter-Ministerial, and cross-sectoral undertaking starting from the lowest local administrative levels. Involving the data users from the preparation of the census until the production of the reports will ensure the comprehensiveness of the scope of the census and appropriateness of the characteristics that are collected in a census. Such a structural organization and collaboration of stakeholders will enhance greatly the user based collection of information.

The Population and housing census unlike other surveys is capable of producing data to the smallest geographical area viz. a village. The data will facilitate the prevalent decentralized system of decentralized bottoms-up developmental planning. The local people formed the part of the Census Teams in Delineating Enumeration Areas, Listing of Census Houses, Structures and Households during the preparatory phases. Later on during the Census Day the local people were involved in the updating the maps and the household lists within their assigned area of responsibility. When reports are published, they were disseminated to the Local Administration Offices which will be of use to the local people in program

planning. Such a set up of conducting the census will certainly imbibe in the minds of the people how useful such information are for them.

There is a wide range of Post-Censusal activities to keep the human resources capability afresh and alive with the knowledge and experiences of the past census. Census Data User workshops for the different sectors will be conducted from time to time on specific issues concerning various sectors. Trainings for in-depth analysis will be conducted for persons dealing with census and surveys. Re-orientation and refresher courses will be conducted for the Dzongkhag Statistical Officers to keep them abreast with the activities of the population activities. Analysis of census data for various sectors will be conducted in consultation with the ministries, sectors, and other agencies so as to benefit them in the best possible manner.

The population census will provide with the Sampling Frame for all other socio-economic surveys. It provides data for comparison of the degree of variations on different socio-economic statistics among the smallest areas, among the dzongkhags and the regions. Only then, it will stimulate to determine factors of difference and consequently development programmes may be formulated precisely. Census will also provide as a benchmark for other surveys to track trend in socio-economic developments.

The Census is a count of all people and households. It is the most complete source of information we have about the population. Most importantly a census provides data at the smallest area level like a village. Extensive and detailed cross-classification is possible. This is not possible in a sample survey. It will also allow the evaluation of basic household need in key sectors – health, education, housing, industries, drinking water, energy, telecommunication, communication, sanitation and other sectors; and evaluate the benefits of development programs at a small area level over a period of time. e.g (2005-2015)

## 2) What resources are available for use?

The National Statistical Bureau is responsible for all activities relating to information and data collection in the country. Major statistical operations may be planned and sequenced in appropriate intervals to minimize duplication of efforts and resources. Not only will this reduce the burden to respondents but more so allow for an effective use of the scarce technical staff. The statistical staff at the local levels will be involved in every statistical operation that occurs in their area of jurisdiction. Responsible sector officers will also be involved in statistical operations whereby statistical experience and skills are developed simultaneously.

Skills and experience of the available staff include:

- 1) Census Methodologies
- 2) Census Operations
- 3) Census Management
- 4) Census Mapping and GIS
- 5) Census Reports

The National Statistics Bureau has recently been attached with the Prime Minister's Office owing to the importance attached to statistics. This has given a comparatively high regard and moral to the NSB. The NSB is also the agency to collect, regulate and disseminate statistical information. This has uplifted the position of the NSB in the government organisational structure.

The administrative set of the government and commitment of the local administration and their cooperation with the rest is notable. This may be one of the greatest strengths of the government to carry out any statistical operations. The NSB maintains a close cooperation with the sectors with regard to statistics.

The NSB has drafted a National Statistical Act for the country which will be a tool to effective statistical operations. The successes of the NSB on statistical operations and the recent successful completion and dissemination of Population and Housing Census of Bhutan 2005, and the regular publications of the NSB has earned itself the credibility from the users as a source of statistical information.

### 3) How do we achieve the population census goals/objectives with what we have?

There are different skills, tools, strategies and approaches which may be employed. How can we get our staff to adopt an innovative mindset? How do we work with other parts of government to achieve these goals?

A population census is a total process of collecting, compiling and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons in a country or delimited territory. This involves the collection of data on the total number of persons, their composition (age, sex, marital status, etc.), dynamics (fertility, mortality, migration) and their spatial distribution (location).

The planning and administration of any census exercise must be related to its objectives. The conduct of the 2005 population and housing census is predicated on the following objectives:

- To provide information and data on population for purpose of facilitating national planning and economic development
- To disseminate information to users
- GIS enable the dissemination of small area statistics.
- obtain data for small geographic areas or for sparse populations.

Population and Housing Census is a huge undertaking involving all individuals within the territory of a country. Successful conduct of the census involves the following:

- i) Precise planning and design of census methodologies appropriate to the local conditions. The planners of census therefore should be skilled in census/survey methodologies besides having a clear understanding and experience of the local geographical, social and economic situations. During the design stage, it is important to include few important variables of major sectors in the census questionnaires so that each sector has a stake in the census and to make them feel they are a part.
  - ii) Political commitment, administrative strengths and inter sectoral cooperation and commitment of local administration are vital in the success of a census. Local administrative representative are the most resourceful in identifying the enumeration areas, locating the census units and to find the way out quickly.
  - iii) Management of the census team in an effective manner. Particularly for a de facto census involving only a short period of enumeration time, it is most beneficial to train the supervisors, enumerators and other census team members adequately. Assigning of census teams to their respective area ahead of enumeration date to let the team acquaint and familiarize with the EAs is an advantage.
  - iv) Skilled and experienced statistical personnel for supervising will help ensure the quality of the data collected.
  - v) Data editing and entry and tabulation must be done immediately after the enumeration so that the error if any could be verified easily.
- 4) What will be the impact on various parties, including data users, the Statistical Office managing the population census, other government agencies and the general public on achieving the goals/objectives?
- i) The NSB will have an added statistical capability built up, the experiences it gained in conducting the census and human resource capability enriched. It will also have a store of valuable database from the census.
  - ii) As the census provides the data needed by users, the greater participation and support in the conduct of the census will follow in the next round of the census.
  - iii) The government agencies require the data most. Since they participated in the conduct of the census, and having fulfilled their data need, a stronger support for a census in future is expected from the government.
  - iv) Local people will understand the current situation in their locality through the census reports. They will use the data for developing their local development programs. The local people will understand the importance of census and stimulate future cooperation.