

Fifty Years of Bangladesh: Achievement in Population Sector

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Abstract: *Fifty years ago, when the Pakistani military carried out a massacre against the people of East Bangle, the freedom-loving people stood up and fought back. They sacrificed themselves for the independence of their motherland and finally, Bangladesh has been established as a sovereign nation in South Asia. A lot of positive changes had been made during this period after huge exhaustion made up by the West Pakistan central government. Bangladesh just passed its fifty years of independence. This study has been carried on to analyze the ins and outs of the population sector of Bangladesh. All data has been collected from secondary sources. This paper had attempted to discuss all other related sectors to focus on the achievement in the population sector with some recommendations.*

Keywords: *Economy, education, health, human development index, population.*

I. Introduction

Development is a difficult concept to define, as it is often based on an individual's perception. In the past, countries have been referred to as first world, second world, or third world nations. This terminology has been modified many times over the years due to it assuming that communism is the superior form of government. It is also patronizing to countries that are second and third world. When it was discovered that the terminology used for developing and developing was offensive, the terms were removed. Instead, it implied that once a country has developed, it will continue developing until it eventually loses its status. These terms are often used to describe countries that are more or less economically developed. However, these terms do not take into account other factors such as culture and happiness of the population.

The most commonly used metric for assessing development is the country's gross domestic product (GDP) or Gross national product (GNP). However, this measure is mainly focused on economic terms. It omits other factors that contribute to development, such as culture and happiness depending on the central decision of a nation. Economies, education, equality, distribution of wealth, political situation, demographics all are very much important to nations overall development. One of them is very much interrelated to each other. In this paper, demographics are highlighted more as unless the population how a nation may go for further development. Nations have to have population for educating, farming, exchanging etc. all the activities. This paper has tried to study about the achievement of population sector in Bangladesh after fifty years off its independence.

The objective of this paper is to identify how, in Bangladesh, the current population dynamics are affecting human development particularly in light of the post Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Government of Bangladesh's Seventh Five Year Plan. This paper has tried to identify the depth and dimension, strength and weakness of the past and current policies and program strategies regarding population sector. It has also examined the current situation critically to identify the gaps in the existing policies and the problems in the implementation of the program.

This paper has compared between the past and present for providing a future guideline. Ultimately, all these important issues, suggestions and findings will be incorporated in the future courses of action at policy level. This research will help to effectively cope with the challenge of population dynamics and the most effective way to achieve human development in Bangladesh and contribute in shaping and reshaping future course of action in the national program.

II. Literature Review

Population and development issues are inextricably mingled and have profound reinforcing effect with each other. Although it has been widely recognized and frequently cited, very few efforts have been made to synthesize the two and theorize the concept of population and development. Malthus (1778) was the first to

identify the danger of population explosion and its inhibiting effect in achieving and sustaining development efforts. One of his assumptions was that “Whenever human beings obtain more than mere subsistence, their numbers go up until everybody is back at the level of near subsistence”, proved to be inaccurate in the context of developed and developing countries, where fertility transition have taken place. Contrary to the contention of Malthus it is in fact at the level of prosperity rather than subsistence where population growth stabilizes. However, such an assumption generated debate across wide range of experts about the role of population growth and its implications on development.

Keynes (1935) identified population growth as a stimulating factor for rapid economic growth through creation of “effective demand” and Lewis (1954) also considered high population growth as an essential factor for industrialization through the supply of labor at a cheaper rate generating capitalist surplus. During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries rapid population growth was contributed to a steady economic growth as hold by Keynes and Lewis.

The international migration from Europe to North America, Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth and early twentieth century’s was a major factor in moderating the problem of population in European countries. Moreover, colonization, favorable trades and wider market access contributed to their development. Ultimately rapid industrialization, urbanization, a rise in income and standard of living, literacy rate and democratic practices among others created a condition of prosperity, empowerment, mobility, aspiration and security for a majority of their population which ultimately contributed to the stabilization of the population in the developed World.

The contention of Keynes and Lewis about the stimulating role of population growth on development proved to be less applicable in the case of many developing nations. In fact, higher population growth may not ensure higher effective demand in the absence of higher income, investment and employment for these expanding populations and it may turn into liability and degrading factor as predicted by Malthus. However this paper is for particularly to incorporate the population and development issues in Bangladesh after fifty years of its independence where those old theories did not work out and synthesize the both in order to generate interests for the diverse group of multidisciplinary professionals.

III. Methodology

This study has been carried on to analyze the ins and outs of population sector of Bangladesh. All data has been collected from secondary sources as such articles from Journals, newspaper columns, annual reports published by national and international agencies, etc. A simple excel spreadsheet has been used to analyze and organize data. A sample graph has been used for easy presentation. It had tried to disclose all the achievement in population sector in Bangladesh.

IV. Discussion

Access to micro credit activities targeted at the grassroots level by the efforts of government and non-government organizations and to expand the coverage of essential services to the disadvantaged sections contributed substantially to achieve the positive results. Fifty years after the independence of Bangladesh, it has achieved a lot of successes in all major sectors including sanitation, woman empowerment, trade and communication etc. The per capita GDP at current prices increased from US \$217 in 1991 to US\$ 1965 in 2020 (MOF, 2021). Industry has emerged as the largest sector of the economy, contributing about 30 percent to the GDP. The GDP exhibited a robust growth rate of 6.7 percent found in recent years which is better than many other South Asian neighborhood countries. (See Appendix 01)

Achievement in Fifty Years by Bangladesh

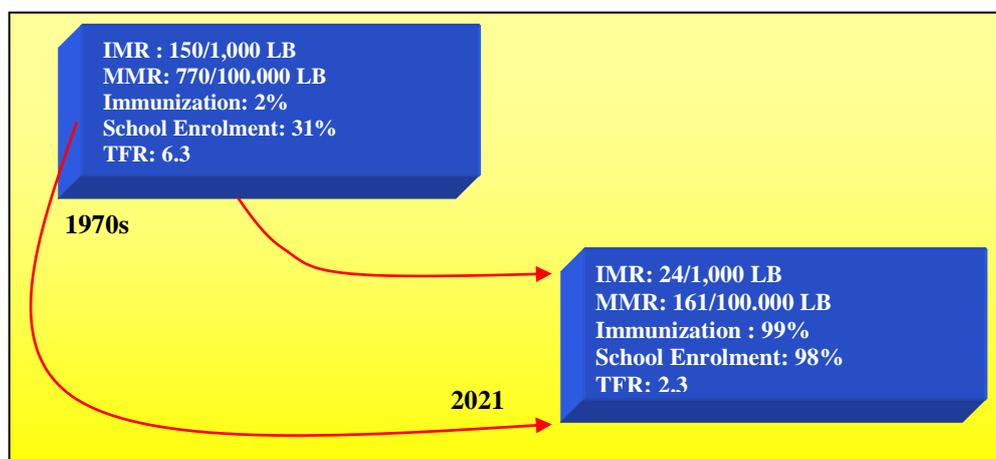
During 1970s and 1980s socio-economic development had been to a great extent stabilized due to high population growth. In spite of adverse socio-economic environment, commendable success in Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/ RH) has been achieved over the period of four decades in Bangladesh. All successful sectors of Bangladesh are discussed in this paper under two categories, as such I. population sector and II. Other (non-population) sectors-

Achievements in the Population Sector

The total fertility rate (TFR) has been declined from 6.3 births per woman in 1970s to 2.3 births per woman in 2017 (BDHS, 2019). The total fertility rate (TFR) for 2015–2017 is found same as 2.3 births per woman in 2011; that is why, the 4th Health Nutrition and Population Sector Program (HNPSPP) sets objective to attain a total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.0 by 2022. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) came down from 150 in 1975 to 38

per thousand live births in 2018 (BDHS, 2019). In conformity with IMR, immunization coverage also peaked up to 94 percent from as low as only two percent in 1985. The country had declared as a polio-free status by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2014 while the under five-mortality rate declined from around 133 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990 to only 36 in 2015 (BBS, 2015; WHO, 2020). Life expectancy at birth rose from 45 years in the mid 1970s to 73 years in 2019 (WB, 2019). Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) also declined from 770 per 100,000 live births to about 173 in 2017 (WB, 2019). During the same time, population growth rate declined from 3.9 per annum to 1.37 percent in 2019 (BBS, 2019). Aside from the successes in the health sector, notable achievements have also been accomplished in the education sector depicted in figure 01.

Figure 01: Achievement on Population Sector in Bangladesh



Achievements in Other Development Sectors

Progress has also been made in improving Bangladesh's Human Development Index (HDI). Bangladesh's HDI value for 2019 is 0.632, which put the country in the medium human development category and positioning it at 133 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2019, Bangladesh's HDI value increased from 0.394 to 0.632, an increase of 60.4 percent, with marked improvement in life expectancy, adult literacy, gross primary school enrolment ratio, nutritional status and declining infant mortality rates (UNDP, 2020). Primary school enrolment increased from 31percent during 1970s to about 98percent in 2018 (DPE, 2018). These results have been achieved by a stable macroeconomic environment leading to sustained economic growth.

Access to micro credit activities targeted at the grassroots level by the efforts of government and non-government organizations and to expand the coverage of essential services to the disadvantaged sections contributed substantially to achieve the results. The per capita GDP at current prices increased from US \$ 217 in 1991 to about US \$ 1,960 in 2019-2020 (MOF, 2012 and WB, 2021). Industry has emerged as the largest sector of the economy, contributing about 30 percent to the GDP. The GDP exhibited a robust growth rate of between 6.1 to 6.7 percent from fiscal year 2009-10 to 2018-19.

During early 1990s, Bangladesh experienced a dramatic fertility reduction and development in agricultural sector. Both supply and demand factors contributed to this success. Commitment from the top of the government, frequent worker client contacts with substantial messages of Family Planning at domiciliary level backed by self supervised guide, broadening the choice of contraception with clinical and nonclinical methods, introduction of maternal child health community based FP program, coordination between public, private and NGOs and support from the partner agencies contributed to this success. On the other hand, access to media, electricity, microcredit and female literacy which created mobility, empowerment and aspiration of women crystallized the demand for small family norm predicted by demand school (Caldwell, 1994).

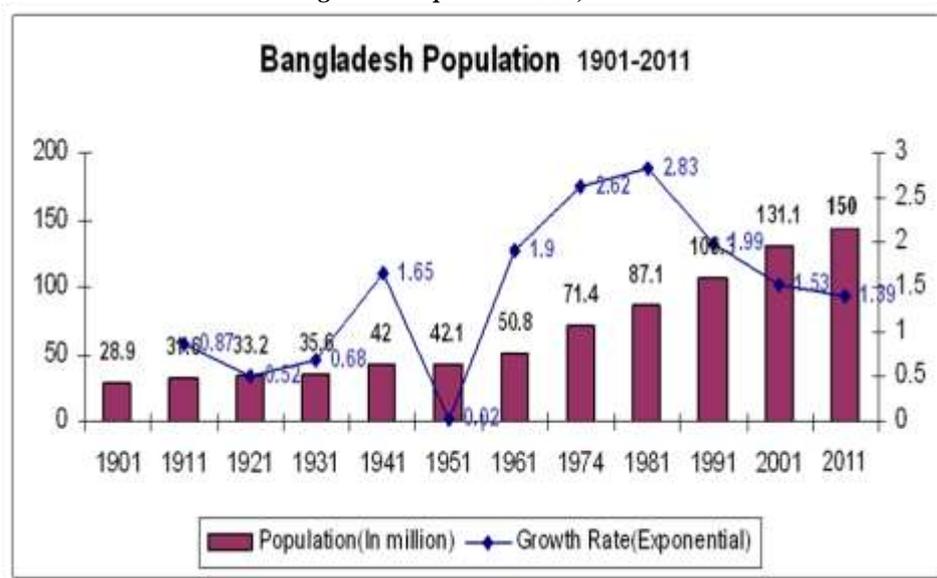
Past and Present Population Scenario of Bangladesh

The underlying importance of population issue should not be underestimated since Bangladesh has a very high density, more than thirteen times higher than Myanmar, three to four times higher than India and Pakistan and 100 times higher than Russia. (WPR, 2021).

Figure 2 depicts the population size in Bangladesh from 1901 until 2011. During the first half of the last century from 1901 to 1951 the population increased at around 45 percent. This slow increase is due to high birth as well as high death rates. During the second half (1951-2001) population growth was very rapid. During this time the population tripled within 50 years time. Such a high population growth had serious socio-economic

and environmental consequences and Bangladesh had to take a hectic population program to wage an effective battle against population explosion. Bangladesh achieved 50 percent fertility decline in the 1970s and 1980s but 1990s witnessed a plateau which lasted for a decade at a TFR of 3.3 children per woman.

Figure 2: Population Size, 1901-2011

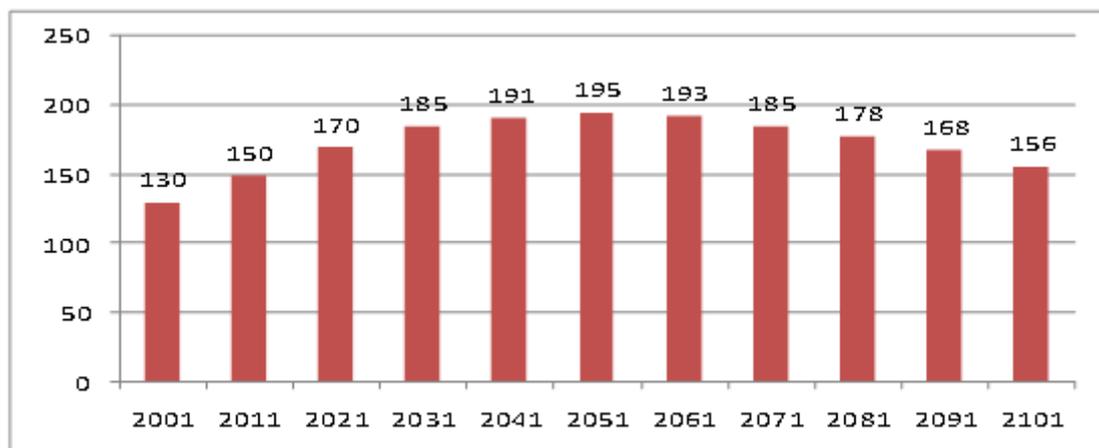


Source: UNFPA, 2012

Projected Population Scenario of Bangladesh in 2100

The assumption made by the UN agencies and Population Reference Bureau (PRB) in 2016 that the Plateau may be continued for a longer time considering fragile socioeconomic conditions their population projection was very high. With the decline of fertility, these were being revised down to 215 million by Population Reference Bureau (PRB) in 2008 similar to the projection of BBS in 2007. With the dramatic decline in recent years UN has revised the projected figure further. The UN global population projection (UN, 2019) shows that Bangladesh population peaking below 2000 million in 2050 then fall to 155 million by 2100. Even the lower projections considering recent fertility decline indicates that population stabilization is a long way off, and will probably be closer to 25 million more than current population size in 2050. The Demographic scenario considering trend analysis, future population growth has been projected in the year 2100 in figure 3.

Figure 3: Projected Population of Bangladesh in Million, 2001-2101



Source: PRB, 2016

It is a challenge for Bangladesh to achieve sustainable development at least until 2050 due to high population growth. The figure 3 shows that Bangladesh population may be stabilized in 2051 with the

population of about 195 million with a condition that current wanted fertility rate which is as low as 1.6 TFR far below replacement level will be achieved by 2050.

This population explosion could be minimized by addressing momentum effect, meeting unmet need and ensuring quality services. It is depicted in figure 3 that in future as high as 80 percent population will increase due to momentum effect in Bangladesh. The momentum effect could be minimized by increasing the age at marriage and delaying the first birth and through women education, employment, empowerment, mobility and aspiration etc.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Today, the greatest desire of mankind should be the creation of a civilization in which utmost respect is paid to the human beings themselves. There is a need for new enlightenment, conceived and nurtured by every individual and nation to chart and shape the destinies. New approach needs to be developed with the idea that good programs. The strategic vision should embrace an approach that highlights the need for a progressive realization of rights in the shortest possible time. Poverty reduction and acceleration of the pace of social development should be made the overarching strategic goals under the future plan in Bangladesh. New guiding philosophy, mission, vision and goals need to be set as a means to self-fulfillment as well as happiness in the social and private life on the basis of global conscientious and national needs. Few recommendations may be conducted-

- The reduction of adolescent fertility can be accelerated by providing greater access to higher education for adolescent girls.
- More advocacy and awareness has to be raised through campaigns on safe motherhood and reproductive health issues.
- More promotion needs for contraceptive products at lower cost for rural people significantly.
- Embedding holistic and compatible action plans in the population and health areas in the concerned regions would foster accelerated social development that might be narrowed down the regional disparities in reaching the sub-national level.
- Develop appropriate information and service delivery mechanism to ensure Reproductive Health and Family Planning (RH/FP) services and information be universally accessible.
- Blend demand and supply factors by understanding sociology of demand and supply as well and formulate policies, programs and allocating resources accordingly.
- Strengthen service delivery needs to address unwanted birth and pregnancies.
- Ensure frequent worker client contact with unmet need groups to translate their desire in to real practice.
- Empower people to move from passive receiver of services from domiciliary level to an active seeker at static clinics, private/community/NGO outlets and other hubs available nearby.

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Appendix 01: Table for Socio Economic Indicators of Selected South Asian Countries

Indicators	Bangladesh	Pakistan	India	Myanmar	Sri Lanka
Population in million 2011	150	170	1,155	48	20
Population growth rate	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.1	0.5
Population density/.Km	1,000	204	373	78	306
Life expectancy	68(M), 70(F)	64(M), 65(F)	63(M),64(F)	58(M) 64 F	72 (M), 77(F)
GDP per capita (\$)	846	1,000	1,220	-	1,990
GDP Growth in %	6.7	5.1	7.7	3.9	6.6
Population below 1 \$	33.5	22.2	27.5	30.0	15.2
Prevalence of child Mal	39.2 (68, 90)	31.3 (38,90)	43.5 (53,90)	29.6	38.4 (33,90)
Literacy: Primary Com.	76	63	86	95	97
Literacy: Gender Parity	103	75	89	56	102
Mat.Mortality100,000 LB	194	320	240	-	92
Under 5 mortality Rate	53(133/1990)	121/135	78/90	137/118	16
% of birth with skilled attendants	32	31	47	68	96

Sources: World Development Report by WB 2010, , BDHS-2011, MDGs Needs Assessment, Planning Commission 2009, World Population Review 2011 and MOF 2012.