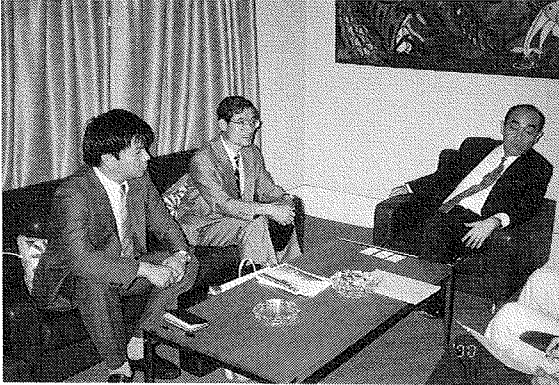


**Report on the Basic Survey of
Population and Development
in Southeast Asian Countries
——Bangladesh——**

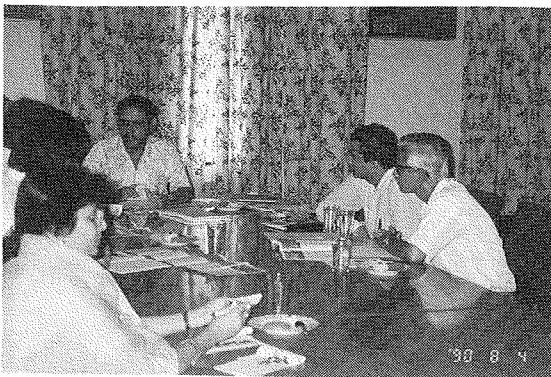
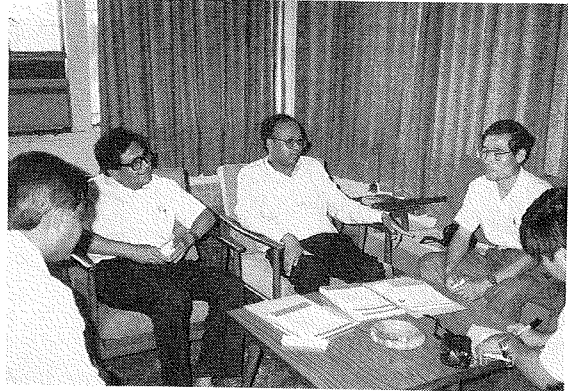
FEBRUARY 1991

**The Asian Population and Development
Association**

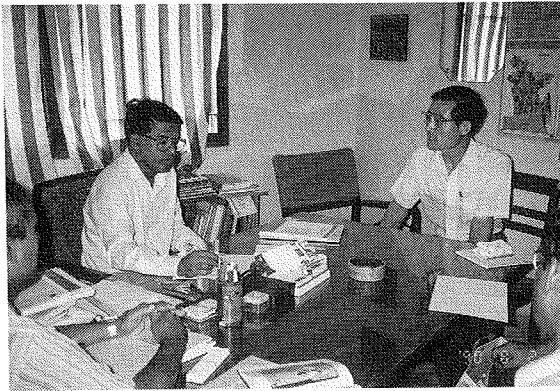


◀ Courtesy call to Embassy
of Japan
From the right :
Ambassador Takeo Iguchi
Hiroaki Washio, Chief of
Survey Team
Tomomi Otsuka

▶ Bangladesh Institute of
Development Studies (BIDS)
From the right : Hiroaki
Washio, Chief of Survey
Team
M. Hassain, Director
General
M. Rahaman Khan,
Research Director



◀ Bangladesh Shishu Academy
In the Centre :
M. G. Kibria, Director



◀ University of Dhaka
From the left : Nazul Islam,
Professor Hiroaki Washio,
Chief of Survey Team



▶ Gazaria Upazila Health
Complex
On the Left:
M. Habibur Rahman



◀ Slums in Dhaka
Municipality

Foreword

This report presents the findings of a basic survey of population and development in Bangladesh. In 1990, the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) was entrusted with the survey project, "Basic Survey of Population and Development in Southeast Asian Countries" by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Japan International Corporation of Welfare Services. APDA selected Bangladesh as the country in which its field survey would be conducted. The actual survey and analysis of the resultant findings were conducted by APDA's survey committee (Chairperson, Dr. Toshio Kuroda, Director Emeritus, Population Research Institute, Nihon University).

For effective application of population policies in the Southeast Asia and other countries, population dynamics as population growth, diseases, mortality, reproduction, population distribution and internal migration, as well as static data of the population including family structure and population structure by age must be closely defined. In addition, effects of these factors on living and welfare standards, and medical care must be reviewed.

The objective of this survey was to contribute to resolving the problems related to population and development in Asian nations, by conducting a detailed survey of population dynamics, living and welfare standards and health and medical care and other aspects in the Southeast Asian countries.

The field survey was conducted with the guidance and cooperation of Ambassador Takeo Iguchi and Mr. Takeshi Ota, First Secretary, Mr. Ryoji Noda, Second Secretary both of the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, and Mr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman Deputy Director, MIS, Directorate of Family Planning, Ministry of Health and Family Planning. Also, the secretariat of the Government of Bangladesh provided assistance and escorts while conducting our survey. In Japan, members of Policy Planning & Evaluation Division, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health and Welfare and Department of Policies, Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cooperated in the planning and arrangements of the field survey. I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to all of them.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that this report would contribute to the further advancement of the population and development program in Bangladesh as well as the Japanese Government's effective cooperation with Bangladesh.

Furthermore, I would like to add that this report is the responsibility of APDA and does not necessarily reflect the views nor policies of the Ministry of Health and Welfare or the Japanese Government.

March, 1991.
Takashi Sato
Chairman
The Asian Population and
Development Association

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Summary

Bangladesh: The vicious circle between rapid population growth and poverty

Bangladesh is a representative example among developing countries of the vicious circle that exists between population growth and poverty. Population growth is manifested in the difference between a high birth rate and a declining mortality rate. In the case of Bangladesh, even today the crude birth rate exceeds 40/1000, and total fertility rate is also as high as 5.4 persons. Presently the crude mortality rate is on the decline but still high, 15.0/1000, with infant mortality rate at the abnormally high 130/1000. Moreover, the average longevity is less than 50 years, 49.1 for men and 48.1 for women.¹⁾ A shorter average longevity in women is also seen in South Asia's Pakistan and India. It has been observed that this is the result of malnutrition and the harsh labour conditions of women in poverty stricken societies.

The average yearly population growth rate is 2.7% (2.18% according to Government Statistics for 1987). This high average is a great impediment to socio-economic growth. A 85% of the population lives in absolute poverty. The literacy rate is 26%, while one third of labour force is unemployed. These situations are directly representing conditions of poverty in Bangladesh.²⁾

Demographic transition is closely related to levels of modernization. A high birth-mortality rate reflects a low level of development, just as a low birth-mortality rate reflect a high degree of development. The degree of decline attained in the birth rate and the degree of improvement in the mortality rate are represented by the demographic transition index. In the case of Bangladesh, the demographic transition index is only 30% the need to make a 70% decline in the birth rate and improvements in the mortality rates. In other parts of Asia such as Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, the demographic transition process has been completed with the achievement of lowered birth and mortality rates. China and Korea are in the final stages of its completion.³⁾ Bangladesh is still far from the road to modernization.

From a geographical perspective the populations of Japan and Bangladesh have some common features. The total area of Bangladesh is only 40% about of that of but the size of their populations is about the same. To Japan's 122 million, Bangladesh has a population of 102.6 million (1987), that is close to Japan. Among the world's largest populations, Japan occupies the 7th position with Bangladesh following in a close 8th. Bangladesh shows highest population density with its average of 712 people per square kilometer. Japan with 323 people (1987) per square kilometer, only less than half the density of Bangladesh, occu-

pies the 4th position in the world. In comparison with Bangladesh's great expanses of flat land, Japan is made up mostly of mountainous terrain. However, for this reason, Japan's specific population density per square kilometer of agricultural land exceeds 2,200 people. This is more than two times larger than Bangladesh's 1000 people per square kilometer of agricultural land. Japan holds the number 1 position in the world for specific population density. Bangladesh is number 4. This is just the opposite of their general population density ranks. From an economic perspective, however, Bangladesh belongs to the group of least developed countries. Its GNP is the alarmingly low U.S.\$ 160 per head (1988, World Bank estimates). Japan on the other hand belongs to the more developed countries category. The GNP is U.S.\$ 16,000 per head, (1988, Agency of Economic Planning) or nearly 100 times that of Bangladesh.

The abnormally high population growth in Bangladesh as explained above, is the source of the conspicuous lack of development in the socio-economic sectors. In addition, natural disasters coupled with political instability or what could be called man-made disasters are a visible hinderance to this country. However, even in Bangladesh there are some projects that merit hope. For example, the small scale Rural Poor Program. This program aimed at helping impoverished peasants directly in their region, strives to rear the local people towards a entrepreneur spirit while elevating their living standard at the same time. Ambitious projects implemented in Bangladesh, though now yet small scale, are now internationally attracting notice as measures to stimulate peasant's volition toward productive activities.

International aid and collaboration for Bangladesh have been forthcoming from the more developed countries and also the United Nations. The government of Bangladesh is of course playing an active role in formulating efforts towards ending the vicious circle of rapid population growth and poverty. This study aims to comment on what results have been produced by efforts made by the government, the people and international cooperations. And finally from the results of this limited investigation we dared to suggest basic strategy for truly ending the vicious circle of population growth and poverty.

Notes

1) United Nations: World Population Prospects 1988, United Nations, New York, 1989, p.290. Compared with official to statistics from Bangladesh this rate of increase is higher. For further information on this point please see Ch.2 The Population and Family Planning in Bangladesh.

2) M. Mosleh Uddin: Rural Development and Poverty in Bangladesh, V.R.F. Series No.169, Institute of Developing Economies, February 1990, pp.70-71.

3) For method of measuring the Demographic Transition Index and the computed results for various Asian Countries see, The Asian Population

and Development Association: Structural Change in Population and Development, Japan's experience in Aging, "Population and Development Series No. 11, February 1990, p.16.

4) Ibid., Uddi's paper

Postscript: I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. M. Mosleh Uddin for allowing me to quote from his paper.

