

Growth rate 2.36 p.c. :

density 1566 per sq. mile

14

Population

now 9 cr

By A Staff Correspondent

The total population in 1981 Bangladesh Population Census stands at 89,940,000.

The estimate has been made after necessary adjustments through a Post Enumeration Check (PEC). The PEC made under the close supervision of demographic experts including the United Nations advisers, indicated a national undercount of 3.3 per cent in the preliminary count of the total population under the Census at 87,052,024.

The annual compound rate of growth on the basis of adjusted population of 1974 and 1981 has been calculated at 2.36 per cent on an average for the intervening period between the Population Census in 1974 and the one in 1981. On the same basis the population growth rate stood at 2.70 per cent in the country during the period between the Census of 1961 and that of 1974.

As compared to the situation in the sixties to early seventies the rate of population growth during the last seven years, from 1974 till to date

has thus shown only a slight moderation. The average compound rate of population growth in the country over the last two decades has been estimated at 2.59 per cent per annum.

The Preliminary Report on Population Census (1981) was made public on Saturday. Announcing the findings of the report at a Press conference at the State Guest House on the day Planning Minister Dr. Fasihuddin Mahtab said that the detailed Census results with special analysis on specific demographic characteristics and socio economic analysis would be published by June next year. The preliminary report had been worked out through manual process and the detailed findings along with comprehensive tables depicting important demographic and socio economic indicators would be prepared through the computer process, he added.

Dr. K. M. Ghulam Rabbani, Director General of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics was also present at the Press conference.

The Preliminary Report on the 1981 Bangladesh Population Census, which is the second National Population Census in the country, has been brought out within a period of less than four months. The Census to mention here was conducted on March 6, 7 and 8, last.

Explaining the extent of under enumeration in the 1981 Census the Planning Minister maintained that under counting of the population was common in all national cen-

suses for various reasons.

He noted that reducing the under enumeration had been consistently pursued in all countries with some success but wiping out this persistent phenomenon appeared to be a feat too complex to be practically accomplished at this time. The Post Enumeration Check to estimate the extent of under count in the 1981 Census was conducted in 250 sample enumeration areas he added.

He pointed out that the results of the PEC indicated the extent of under count in the second National Population Census at 3.3 per cent (approximately 6 per cent in Urban and 3 per cent in Rural areas) as against the related figure at 7.3 per cent (19 per cent Urban and 6 per cent Rural) in the previous Census of 1974.

According to the findings of the Census on the basis of the actual counted population, the Preliminary Report shows the total number of male population in the country at 44,849,973 and that of the female population at 42,202,051. This indicates a sex ratio (males against 100 females) at 106 in 1981 as against 108 in 1974.

The number of total households in the country stand at 15,135 under the 1981 Census as against 12,679 in 1974.

This suggests a rise in the average size of household from 3.64 in 1974 to 3.78 in 1981 despite the growth in population and the increase in the total number of households. Dr. Fasihuddin Mahtab explained this situation by observing that the housing units in the country did not grow

in a proportionate way to cater to the needs of the increasing population.

The per capita availability of land has shown a decrease from the level of 0.47 acre in 1974 to 0.38 acre in 1981 as a result of the growing pressure of population on land during the period.

The average density of population per square mile stands at 1566 in 1981 as against 1286 in 1974. Excluding the river area the average density per square mile is 1675 under the 1981 census as against 1375 under the one in 1974.

The Planning Minister stated that the urban population (covering major urban centres under existing 79 municipality locations) in the country would be about 10 per cent of the total population in 1981. This figure stood at 9 per cent of the total population in 1974 he added.

Dr. Mahtab estimated that the total urban population in Bangladesh would be around 13 to 14 per cent in 1981 when the number of population in thana headquarters outside the municipality locations and other "growth centres" would be taken into account.

He observed that the development strategy under the current Second Five-Year Plan had laid a great deal of emphasis on the development of a large number of "growth centres" spread all over the country to serve as the focal points of non agricultural economic activities. The size of the urban population in all the neighbouring developing countries is proportionately much larger than that in Bangladesh.

he added. The growth centres as envisaged under the current Second Five-Year Plan will serve as the catalyst for faster urbanisation process in the country, he observed.

The 1981 Population Census estimates the number of villages (with fifty or more households) at 65,487 with an average population of 1,276 per each village. The number of adjacent village settlements (with less than fifty households) stand at 20,163 with an average population of 172 per every such settlement.

The Preliminary Report on Population Census (1981) notes that the population of Dacca Statistical Metropolitan Area (SMA) (covering Dacca, Narayanganj, Mirpur Gulshan and Tongi Pourashavas Siddhirganj Demra, Gulshan thana, part of Keraniganj, Fatullah Bandar and Savar thanas and entire Cantonment area) stands at 3,458,602 including 73,788 floating and transient persons who were counted on the night of March 5.

The population of Chittagong SMA (consisting of Chittagong Pourashava, Bandar Double Mooring and Sitakunda thanas and part of Hathazari thana) has been found to be 1,388,475 including 24,883 floating and transient persons.

The population of Khulna SMA (comprising of existing Khulna Pourashava and part of Khulna and Daulatpur thana) is 623,184 while that of Rajshahi SMA (including entire Boalia and part of Paba thanas along with the university) is 171,600.

Outside the four statistical metropolitan areas, Sylhet recorded the highest population of 166,847 followed by Barisal and Rangpur with population of 159,298 and 155,964 respectively.

Among the twenty administrative districts in the country Dacca district has the largest population with 10,049,000 followed by Comilla (6,880,000) and Mymensingh (6,543,000). The Chittagong Hill Tracts, as before, has the least population with 746,000 but the population growth rate in this district, has been the highest at 46.85 per cent mainly due to immigration from other districts.

The sub division wise population in 1981 shows that Dacca Sadar subdivision has the largest population (4,069,765) followed by Chittagong Sadar (2,990,849) and Bogra Sadar (2,101,906). In terms of population the largest thana in the country is Begumganj under Noakhali district with a population of 588,815.

While presenting the preliminary report of the Second National Census to the newsmen, Dr. Fasihuddin Mahtab stated that a sample survey covering one per cent of the total number of the households in the country would be undertaken in November this year with a view to collecting more detailed set of data relating to the detailed demographic profile and the socio-economic status in terms of income asset holding occupation housing, etc.

Dr. Ghulam Rabbani of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics told the newsmen that the sample survey along with the compilation of a number of village based tabulations would be aimed at creating

micro level data banks for initiating elaborate village level planning.

Replying to a question the Planning Minister said that the total cost for the Second National Population Census would be about Taka 15.7 crore of which a sum of Taka six crore would come from UNFPA. The cost for the census included the payment of honorarium for 20,600 enumerators and 46,000 supervisors, he added while noting that the payment on account of such honorarium involved an amount of Taka three crore.