

CENSUS '81

Bangladesh is going to have its second population census next March. The decision for conducting the census from March 5 to March 7 of 1981 was taken at a meeting of the Council of Ministers with the President in the chair on Wednesday. Necessary preparations for the work are being finalised. It is believed that the machinery for this gigantic task has been evolved and set to make the programme a success, and derive the results and benefits which are expected of the population census of a country.

It is customary with every country to have, in the first year of each decade, a full counting of heads of its people, along with the collection of various information and data about different strata and sections of the society. It is, however, more than a ritual in the sense that the enumeration of population in a scientific method lays the foundation of various surveys and knowledge of basic facts about a country and its social, economic, cultural and political life. Population census, therefore, provides the focus on different aspects of the position and progress of a nation—a focus and projection which is essential for building or rebuilding of the society and for formulating the nation's development programmes. Correct statistics are admittedly an indispensable prerequisite for the growth of a planned economy, which we have embarked upon. But, unfortunately, our statistical base is weak. We must remove this shortcoming as quickly as possible. The basic importance of the 1981 census lies here. Its success would considerably determine the future progress of the country.

It may be noted that following the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state in December, 1971, we had our first population census in 1974. But that was not a fullfledged one because of time and other factors. The full dress one we are now having in March. After the cent percent counting of population in the first phase, it will pass on to the second phase of sample enumeration for the collection of detailed information on housing, economic, social and demographic characteristics—which, we would reiterate, is very vital to the whole performance of the census.

We would also emphasise the need and importance of public participation in the work of census for full gains from it. For this, we believe, authorities are taking appropriate steps. Publicity campaign should be geared up to ensure public co-operation.