



**Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies**  
1/46, Old Elephant Road, Eskaton, Dhaka-1000

**Panel Discussion**  
On  
**Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Demographic Explosion in Bangladesh:  
Policy Prescriptions and Future Outlook**

Organized by BISS on Thursday, 05 August 2010

Address of Welcome  
by  
**Major General Golam Mohammad, nwc, psc**  
Director-General, BISS

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*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*

Respected Chief Guest, **Professor Doctor Syed Modasser Ali**, Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on Health and Family Welfare, and Social Welfare Affairs, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,  
Respected the Session's Chair, **Professor Muzaffer Ahmad**, Former Chairman, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), and Member, Board of Governors, BISS Excellencies, Learned Speakers and Designated Discussants, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
*Assalamu Alaikum* and Good Morning.

It is, indeed, a great pleasure and privilege for me to welcome you all to the Panel Discussion on **Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Demographic Explosion in Bangladesh: Policy Prescriptions and Future Outlook** organized by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS). We are very grateful to the Hon'ble Chief Guest for his kind presence in this august gathering despite his busy schedule.

**Distinguished Guests,**

Rapid growth of population has become a pressing issue for a developing country like Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries. The 2007 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey has claimed that the country's population of 150 million had been increasing at a rate of 1.43% or 2 million a year. The same survey has claimed that use of contraceptive declined by 2% in 2007 from that in 2004. The concern quarters have contented that the target of lowering the fertility rate to 2.2% by 2011 cannot be met if family planning activities were to continue at the current pace. Both official and non-official sources admit that there exists mismanagement in family planning, impacting negatively on population control.

**Learned Participants,**

It can hardly be disputed that demographic explosion that Bangladesh has been facing has made the task of nation building process difficult. The population boom has already hit hard the country's social and economic sectors. The economic and social problems in the overpopulated areas include, among other things, joblessness, under employment, drugs, crimes, traffic chaos, pollution, problems with the basic utility services such as supply of electricity, water, gas, etc. The family planning has been encountering a set of challenges that have not been helpful in population control. Like all other South Asian countries, majority of Bangladesh's population live in rural areas. Land scarcity, unequal distribution of land and high proportion of agricultural labourer have been identified, among other things, as push factors for villagers to migrate to urban areas of the country. In Bangladesh, nearly 50% of the urban population is concentrated in the metropolitan cities and divisional headquarters. Dhaka, being the capital and centre of administrative and economic activities, attracts people from all over the country. According to an informed source, Dhaka's population has currently been estimated at 11 million. Such huge population has made Dhaka as the world's one of the most densely populated cities, giving rise to varied consequences. These consequences, among others, include increased slums, environmental degradation, lack of urban services, difficulties in the traffic system, pressure on job market, criminalization, social insecurity, etc. Population control has become imperative to make Dhaka a liveable city.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Bangladesh is already the seventh biggest country in the world in terms of population. The country, as indicated earlier, is already overburdened with a vast population. If the current trend of population growth remains unchanged, the population of the country could be doubled within 49 years. It is necessary to bring down the population growth rate below 1% within a decade if Bangladesh's objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to be achieved. Against these settings, today's Panel Discussion will try to spot causes, consequences, and challenges of demographic explosion in Bangladesh. It will also explore ways to address these challenges, and will offer a set of policy prescriptions that will likely to give a future direction and outlook for the country in controlling its demographic explosion.

Have said these, let me once again welcome you all to the Panel Discussion, and do express my deepest gratitude to the Hon'ble Chief Guest for his kind presence amidst us.

**Now I request the respected Chair of the Session to commence the proceedings of today's Panel Discussion.**

Thank you.