Mismatch of Minority Population in Bangladesh: Population Census vis- -vis National Voter List

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Abstract

Population census enumerates all individual of a country irrespective of their age, sex, caste, religion, occupation and socioeconomic condition. Every citizen has the right to be included in the population census. Census is not only listing of the people, it is much more than listing per se. Census data is the basis of all development activities and future planning of a nation. As a result, all citizens regardless of their socioeconomic identity and status should be included in the census. On the other hand, voter list includes all adult (18 years and above) individuals irrespective of their age, sex, caste, religion, occupation and socioeconomic condition. Therefore, the estimated adult population in the census should be equal to that in the voter list in a given period of time. Religious minority populations in Bangladesh declined drastically during the last century due to sociopolitical reasons. According to the latest population censuses, this declining trend is still continuing. However, there is also a claim of 'enumeration politics' in the population censuses. It is said that the religious minority populations in the censuses are undercounted. The reason for such undercounts may be

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population politics or merely negligence to the minority people or both. Exclusion of citizens, particularly the minority people from the enumeration of census is violation of law as well as human rights because minority population requires more attention to bring them in the mainstream. The most authentic but impossible way to investigate into this claim is to conduct another census with highest possible accuracy. However, resource and time shall not permit any authority to do so. A comparison between the population in the census and that in the voter list can also reveal this fact to some extent. Using a scientific method this study followed the second option and found that over 6 per cent of the religious minority populations are missing in the last census (2001).

Keywords: Religious minority, population census, undercount of minority, population politics, religion and social exclusion.

1.   Introduction

According to latest census estimates, non-Hispanic white children now make up the minority of babies born in the United States for the first time. The preliminary data highlight demographic changes that could reshape US government policy[1]. While minorities are becoming majority in the developed world (at least in a country like the USA), the scenario is exactly the opposite in the developing world. Minority people are declining here in the course of time. In Bangladesh, the trend seems worse. Along with a declining trend of the minority population, here comes another issue of debate—undercounting the minority in the population census. This study makes an attempt to investigate into that hypothesis.

1.1   Bangladesh Census Years

Bangladesh has a long history of census. The first population census took place in 1872. Since then census has been conducted every 10 years. Since the independence from Pakistan in 1971, as many as five population censuses were conducted in the country including the fifth population census that took place between 15 and 19 March 2011. The Table below shows the census years and the socio-political situation prevailing during the censuses:

As the previous censuses took place in relatively less stable political situations, the fifth census were expected to be more accurate because of its timing. However, the latest census could not avoid controversy. The population, as

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1   guardian.co.uk, Thursday 23 June 2011, 13.38 BST

estimated by the latest census, is 22 million less than the figure projected by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2010.

Table 1: Bangladesh Population censuses

Census Year	Socio-political situation
1974	A new country after the liberation and in the face of a famine
1981	A transitional period in the national politics: Army took over the power from another army -backed government
1991	A transitional period in the national politics: A democratic government just took over after 15 years of non -democratic rule
2001	A transitional period in the national politics: A new government just took over
2011	In the mid-point of a government

Population census: Information discord?
The fifth population census has been conducted after ten years in 2011. It is impossible to deny the significance of population census in the development of a country. The researchers, planners, businessmen, learners, even the politicians of home and abroad are using the data and information of the census as the tools or raw materials for their research. If there is any discrepancy in the data and information, the entire work plan will be challenged. According to the preliminary findings of the population and housing census 2011, Bangladesh's population now stands at 14.23 crore which has created debates among the experts and is not in line with the UNICEF, UNDP and other reports. Other reports showed that our population is more than 16 crore. Due to the negligence of the field workers in visiting every house, the reliability of the report is being questioned. Needless to say that the information of the census is vital in preparing ADP or other economic plans. The controversy about the population census is unexpected. *The Daily Star: Sunday, July 31, 2011*

According to UNFPA's annual report on "State of the world population 2010", released in October 2010, the population of Bangladesh was 164.4 million[2]. Since many raised questions about the accuracy of the census, the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was assigned for the first time for the task of post-enumeration check. BIDS has estimated that Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) failed to count 3.97 percent of the population in the 2011 census[3].

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[2]   The Financial Express. VOL 18 NO -273 REGD NO DA 1589 | Dhaka, Sunday July 17, 2011

[3]   bdnews24.com. "3.97% people uncounted in census". April 9, 2012. http://bdnews24.com/details.php?id=222078&cid=2

2.   Religious Composition of Bangladesh Population

The National Report of the Bangladesh Population Census[4] 2001contains a separate chapter (Chapter 8) on religious composition of population. For clear understanding of the population growth by religion, the following section has been written on the basis of data and analysis presented in the report.

2.1   Population Growth by Religion

Numerical distribution and percentage variation of major religious communities in Bangladesh from 1901 to 2001 have been furnished in Table 2 (Table 8.1 in the original report of Bangladesh Population Census 2001). The table shows that in terms of percentage variations over the preceding censuses, the Muslim community increased by 10.9 percent in 1911 over 1901. On the other hand, comparatively lower increasing trends of this community have been observed in 1921 and 1931. High mortality due to the occurrence of famines, droughts and epidemic diseases during this period might be the causes of these slow trends. A sharp decline by 10.1 percentage points in 1951 over 1941 may be explained by the net effect of out migration. That is the emigrated number of Hindus after independence of 1947 was relatively larger than the immigrated number of

Table 2: Numerical Distribution and Percentage Variation by Major Religious Communities, 1901-2001

Census Year	Population (000)	Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Christian		Others	
		Number (000)	Percent variation	Number (000)	Percent variation	Number (000)	Percent variation	Number (000)	Percent variation	Number (000)	Percent variation
1901	28927	19113	NA	9545	NA	……	NA	……	NA	269	NA
1911	31555	21202	10.9	9952	4.3	……	NA	……	NA	401	49.1
1921	33254	22646	6.8	10166	2.2	……	NA	……	NA	442	10.2
1931	35604	24731	9.2	10453	2.8	……	NA	61	NA	359	(-)18.8
1941	41999	29509	19.3	11747	12.4	……	NA	53	(-)13.1	690	92.2
1951	41933	32227	9.2	9239	(-)21.3	319	NA	107	101.9	41	(-)94.1
1961	50840	40890	26.9	9380	1.5	374	17.2	149	39.3	47	14.6
1974	71478	61039	49.3	9673	3.1	439	17.4	216	45.0	111	136.2
1981	87120	74587	23.7	10570	9.3	538	22.6	275	27.3	250	125.2
1991	106315	93881	24.4	11179	5.8	623	15.8	346	25.8	286	14.4
2001	123851	111079	18.3	11379	1.79	840	34.8	357	3.2	198	(-)30.8

Source: National report (Provisional), Bangladesh Population Census 2001, page 65

Note:
1.   *Hindus in this and subsequent tables include both caste Hindus and Scheduled caste.*
2.   *Christian community is not available separately in the zila of Sylhet in 1931 census and as such they have been included... in/others*
3.   *…..means merged with others*
4.   *NA-means Not Available.*

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4   Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Population Census 2001 (National Report Provisional). July 2003

Muslims from India. Moreover there was severe famine during 1941 to 1945 due to the Second World War which caused a huge loss of life from starvation. From 1961 to 1991, the rates of increase of Muslim population were high but in 2001 it again declined to 18.3% from 24.4% in 1991. High fertility with moderately declining level of mortality during the last four decades may account for this rapid increase.

The decennial variations of Hindu population in Bangladesh have shown slow trend of increase over the census year 1901 to 1941 and 1961 to 2001. This may be partly due to the prevalence of relatively lower fertility among the Hindu population. The Hindu population decreased by 21.3 percent points in 1951. This may be partly due to the migration of Hindus from the former East Bengal to West Bengal on account of the partition of British India and the creation of the two independent and sovereign states of Pakistan and India in 1947.
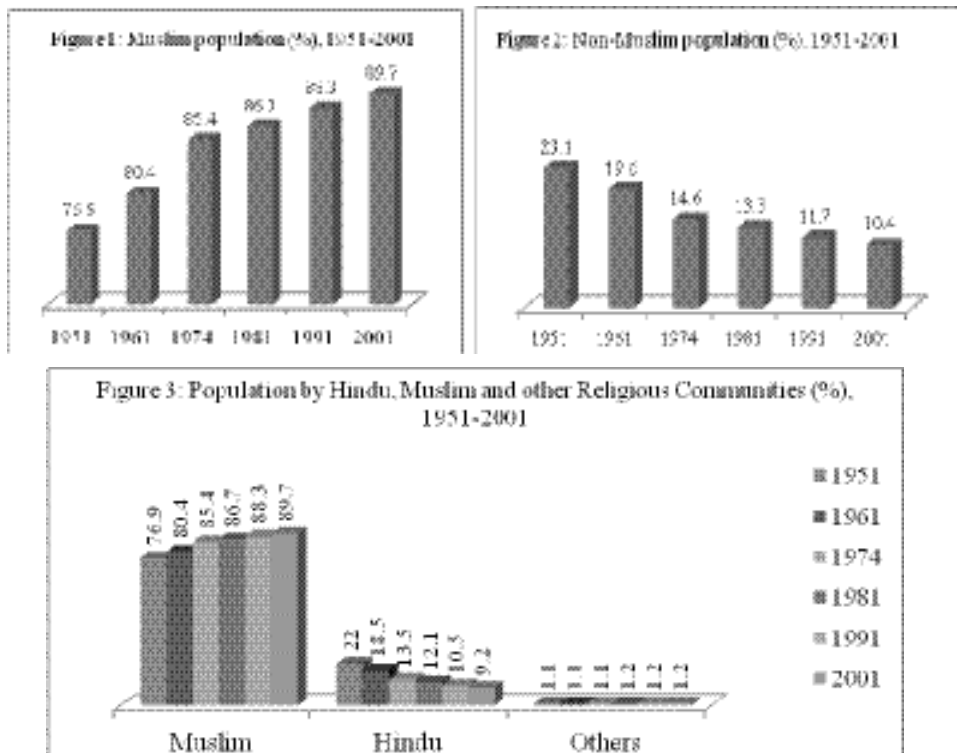
2.2   Religious Composition over Time

Percentage distributions of population by different religious communities of the country from 1901 to 2001 have been presented in Table 3 (Table 8.2 in the original report). The figures in the table show that the proportion of Muslim population in 1901 was 66.1 percent which has risen to 89.7 percent in 2001 and this has increased by 23.6 percent points during the last ten decades since 1901. Comparatively rapid increases in Muslim population are noticed from the census year 1961. The percent variations of the composition of Muslim population between the census years 1941 to 1951 and 1961 to 1974 calculate to 6.6 and 5.0 percent points respectively. It is observed from the table that the Hindu population has declined from 33.0 percent in 1901 to 9.2 percent in 2001. The aggregate reduction was about 23.8 percent points over 1901. The differential growth rates between Muslims and Hindus, the migration of Hindus following the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, Indo-Pak war in 1965 and the Liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 coupled with relatively lower fertility rate of Hindu population are the likely causes for decline in the relative share of Hindu population in Bangladesh. The Buddhists and the Christians are the minor religious communities in Bangladesh. There is virtually no change in the composition of these two communities since 1974. The combined share of these two groups to the total population of the country is only 1.0 percent. In terms of percentages the size of Christian population to the total population remained constant at 0.3 percent while Buddhist population at 0.7 percent in 2001. The percentage distribution of population by religious communities from 1951 to 2001 is depicted in the Figures 1, 2, and 3.

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Table 3 : Population by religious Communities in Percentage, 1901-200

Census Year	Total	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Christian	Others
1901	100.00	66.1	33.0	-	-	0.9
1911	100.00	67.2	31.5			1.3
1921	100.00	68.1	30.6			1.3
1931	100.00	69.5	29.4		0.2	1.0
1941	100.00	70.3	28.0		0.1	1.6
1951	100.00	76.9	22.0	0.7	0.3	0.1
1961	100.00	80.4	18.5	0.7	0.3	0.1
1971	100.00	85.4	13.5	0.6	0.3	0.2
1981	100.00	86.7	12.1	0.6	0.3	0.3
1991	100.00	88.3	10.5	0.6	0.3	0.3
2001	100.00	89.7	9.2	0.7	0.3	0.2

Source: National report (Provisional), Bangladesh Population Census 2001, page 66

Source: National Report (Provisional) Bangladesh Population Census 2001, page 67

2.3 Variations in Age Structure

Age structure of the population of different religions is shown in Table 4 (Table 8.5 in the original report) which exhibits significant variations between religions.

It seems that Muslim, Buddhist and Christian have more population in the younger age groups than that of Hindu population both in the 2001 and 1991 censuses. It is also true in both urban and rural areas. This reflects prevalence of comparatively lower fertility levels in Hindu community.

Table 4 : Population be Age, Religion and Locality in Percentage 1991 and

Age	2001					1991			
group	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Christian	Others	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Christian
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-4	13.22	10.73	11.28	12.83	14.97	16.7	13.7	18.8	22.1
5-9	13.74	11.70	12.68	13.86	14.03	16.8	14.9	15.1	13.2
10-14	12.92	11.79	12.64	11.52	9.65	12.2	11.9	11.7	10.4
15-19	9.64	9.88	9.28	9.30	8.10	8.4	8.4	9.0	8.4
20-24	8.81	8.92	8.70	8.72	7.77	8.3	8.6	7.5	7.8
25-29	8.67	8.85	9.11	8.46	8.51	8.5	8.9	7.7	8.0
3034	7.01	7.47	7.01	7.36	7.53	6.1	6.6	6.0	6.0
35-39	6.37	7.22	7.32	7.04	7.81	5.5	6.2	5.9	5.7
40-44	4.95	5.52	5.46	4.82	5.48	4.3	4.7	4.2	4.3
45-49	3.64	4.40	3.91	4.20	3.79	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.5
50-54	3.19	3.62	3.55	3.09	3.42	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.0
55-59	1.85	2.38	2.61	2.28	2.28	1.8	2.3	2.1	1.9
60-64	2.25	2.59	2.29	2.46	2.66	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.2
65-69	1.13	1.51	1.27	1.40	1.29	1.0	1.4	1.1	1.1
70+	2.61	3.33	2.87	2.67	2.70	2.1	2.8	2.2	2.4
0-14	39.88	34.22	36.60	38.21	38.65	45.7	40.5	45.6	45.7
15-64	56.38	60.94	59.26	57.72	57.36	51.2	55.3	51.1	50.8
65+	3.74	4.84	4.14	4.07	3.99	3.1	4.2	3.3	3.5

3.   Background and Objective of the Study

At the backdrop of huge decline in the religious minority people, particularly the Hindus; as well as a hypothesis based on observation by different organizations that the minority population is not only declining, they are also undercounted in the population census, Self Help Association for Rural People through Education and Entrepreneurship (SHAREE) initiated this study primarily with the following objectives to investigate into the hypothesis:

- To explore the extent of inclusion or exclusion of minority in national population census;

- To investigate into the much-talked issue that *minorities are always undercounted* in the population census;

- Sketch population dynamics in the CHT in relevance to Census; and

- To forward some suggestions for inclusion of the excluded.

4.   Methodology

For investigating into the hypothesis a comparative method has been adopted. The comparison has been made between population enumerated by two major sources of the government—the latest population census 2001 conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) preceding the last national Parliament election and the voter list prepared by the Bangladesh Election Commission (EC). The detail of the methodology has been described below:
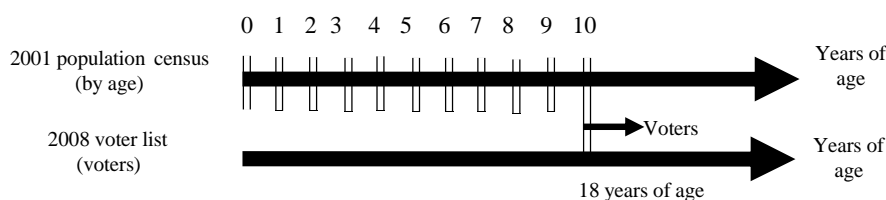
4.1   The Documents

As mentioned earlier, two vital sources of population statistics—the latest population census and the voter list, have been used for the comparison. The latest available **population census** before the last national Parliament election is that of the 2001 and the latest **voter list** was prepared in 2008 by the Bangladesh Election Commission (EC). The population census is supposed to enumerate all the individuals of all age, sex, caste, religion and occupation. However, the census authority does not provide any document to the enumerated households as a proof of enumeration. On the other hand, all individuals of 18 years and above are supposed to be enumerated in the voter list. The Election Commission provided all the enumerated individuals with a document called the National Identity Card and the accuracy of their enumeration has been accepted by all at home and abroad. As the ID card has been made an essential document for getting certain services such as buying a cell phone connection, opening a bank account etc, there is no scope of dropping any individual of 18 years or above.

4.2   The Compared Populations

In the population census report, the heads for the religious composition of the populations are 'Muslims', 'Hindus', 'Christian', 'Buddhist', 'Other' and 'Tribal'. On the other hand, the voter list does not contain any direct information about the religious identity of the individuals. However, this document contains the name of the individual, his or her father's name and/or husband's name and mother's name along with other information. Muslim names are very easy to identify at least in the context of Bangladesh. However, if there is any difficulty with identifying the religious identity from the name of any individual, his or her father/mother/husband's name can help come out of that difficulty. Thus, the religious identity (Muslim or Non-Muslim) of the voters can be identified with accuracy from the voter list prepared by EC.

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In the census, the total population is also segregated by different age groups and by religions. The population 10 years and above in 2001 is supposed to be 18 years and above in 2008 when the voter list was prepared. That is, the individuals who were 10 years and above in 2001 became 18 years and above in 2008 and hence have been included in the voter list. However, a portion of this population also died between 2001 and 2008. Considering this, the age specific death rate has been deducted from the census population in a compounding decreasing manner. A simple framework of estimating voters in 2008 using 2001 census population is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 : A simple framework of estimating voters in 2008 using 2001 census population

2008 Voters= those age 10 years and above in 2001 population census minus those 10 years and above in 2001population census who died between 2001 and 2008

4.3   The Sample Population and Study Area

For comparison purpose of the populations between the two documents, the population data from the census as well as the voter list have been taken from 67 Unions of 7 Upazilas of 7 Districts of Bangladesh under the 7 administrative Divisions[5]. The sample Districts, Upazilas and Unions have been shown in the following table:

Table 5 : Sample Districts, Upazilas and Unions

Division	District	Upazlia	Number of Unions
Rongpur	Dinajpur	Kaharole	6
Khulna	Bagerhat	Mongla	6
Rajshahi	Natore	Natore Sadar	13
Barisal	Pirojpur	Nazirpur	6
Chittagonj	Chittagonj	Banshkhali	14
Sylhet	Maulvibazar	Kulaura	11
Dhaka	Gopalgonj	Kotalipara	11
Total	7	7	67

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[5]   Although the total number of Unions in the Upazilas is 77, 10 Unions have been dropped both from the census and the voter list. These unions did not match in both of the sources because of restructuring of borders or merging with other unions

As mentioned earlier, the comparison has been made between the number of Muslim population and population of other religions. As sample, 67 Unions of 7 Upazilas from 7 districts (one from each Division) were selected. Voter list (2008) of the Election Commission was considered as benchmark for the comparison. Since the existing voter list only considers the adults (18 years and above), comparison of the adult population (18 years and above) was used as a proxy for the whole population. The voter lists of the 7 Upazilas were collected from the Bangladesh Election Commission by Unions and Wards. Then the voters were identified as Muslims and non-Muslims with the help of a number of research associates (RA). The task was time consuming because the RAs had to read all the names on the voter lists by hamlets, villages, wards, and then unions and then on the basis of the name of the voters they decided whether the voter was a Muslim or non-Muslim. Thus segregating the voters by all the hamlet, wards, union etc the total number of Muslim as well as non-Muslim voters in the respective upazila was obtained. Now, these voters have been considered as the population 18 years and above in 2008 in that Upazila.

Adjusting the census population with death rate: 18 years and over population (according to census) in 2008 has been estimated by adjusting age specific death rate with the 10 years and over population of 2001. For the estimation of death rates of this population between 2001 and 2008, the death rate of the year 2005 has been considered as the median year for population adjustment in the present study. According to Sample Vital Registration System 2007, death rate of the population 10 years and over in 2005 was 5.74 (per thousand)[6]. In this regard, compound death rate has been used for the projection of total population of 18 years and over in 2008. The main rationale behind this compounding death rate calculation is that- at the end of each year total population reduced due to specific death rate; and so in the next year the death rate is worked out on a smaller amount of population than the original population. Through this calculation, it has been estimated that between 2001 and 2008, every 1000 population of 10 years and over declined to 960 (18 years and over) due to death incidences occurring for that age cohort.

4.4   Three possible outcomes for 18 years and above Population

As per the methodology adopted for the study as well as the two vital sources of data used, any of the following three outcomes are possible with the population:

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[6]   Authors' estimation based on age specific death rate of rural population (Sample Vital Registration System, 2007, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics)

1. EC = Census: If the number of 18 years and above population enumerated in the census and National Identity Card Project of the Election Commission (EC) is found same, then it implies that there is no mismatch. This is also the ideal scenario.

2. EC > Census: If the number of 18 years and above population enumerated in the census is less than that in the National Identity Card Project of the Election Commission (EC), it implies that some people are missing (undercounted) in the census.

3. EC < Census: If the population of 18 years and above enumerated in the census is greater than that in the National Identity Card Project of the Election Commission (EC), it implies that some people are missing in the EC project (or they are over counted in census).
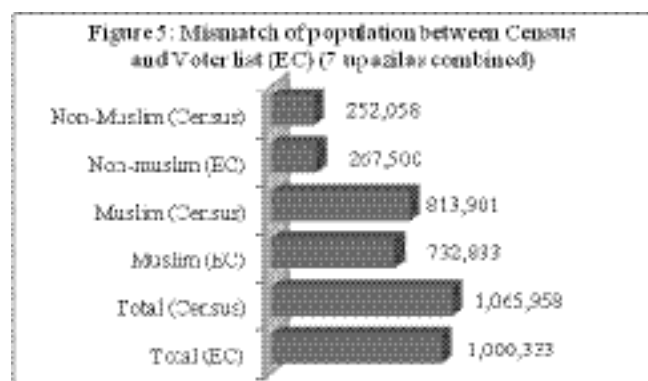
While the first possibility indicates ideal situation, the second and the third possibilities indicate deviation.

5.   Findings of the Study

This section describes the findings of the study. These are the outcome of analyses of data from the census and the voter list. The findings have been discussed in line with the three possibilities mentioned in the previous section. At first the overall scenario has been depicted. Then the findings from each of the Upazilas have been shown. Finally, some suggestions have been forwarded to include the potential excluded individuals in the census.

5.1   Overall Mismatch of Populations in the two documents

Following the methodology, overall, a difference of 65,626 individuals is observed between the estimated adult (18 years and above) population in the 2001

Figure 5: Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) (7 upazilas combined)

Non-Muslim (Census)	252,058
Non-muslim (EC)	267,500
Muslim (Census)	813,901
Muslim (EC)	732,833
Total (Census)	1,065,958
Total (EC)	1,000,333

census and that in the voter list in 7 study Upazilas in 2008. As data show, according to the census, the estimated adult population in the study areas in 2008 was 10,65,958. However, as per Election Commission's voter list, this population is 10,00,333. That means Election Commission's population was 6.2 per cent less than the census population. Where have they come from in the census and why are not they in the voter list?

If the religious identity of the population is considered, population data of the 7 Upazilas show that in the same year, the Muslim population as per the census was 8,13,901 and the non-Muslim population was 2,52,058. However, as per Election Commission data, the Muslim population of that year was 7,32,833 and the non-Muslims were 2,67,500. Therefore it implies that, in the census the Muslim population is shown 10 percentage points higher than that in the voter list of the Election Commission. Ideally, both of the numbers are to be equal. On the other hand, in 2008, according to the population census, the number of non-Muslim population was 252,058 and that in the voter list was 267,500. That is, 5.77 per cent of the non-Muslim population is missing in the census.

Key Findings

- In 67 Unions of 7 Upazilas, 15,442 religious minority people are undercounted (missing) in census. However, they are found in the voter list. The census authority does not provide the enumerated households with any document. As a result, there is a scope of dropping some households or some members of a particular household. On the other hand, the Election Commission provided all the listed adults with an identity card (well known as National Identity Card). As the ID card has been made an essential document for getting certain services such as buying a cell phone connection, opening a bank account etc, there is no scope of dropping any individual of 18 years or above. Considering the voter list as more accurate, in the study Upazilas the number of religious minority adult people would be 15,442 more than their number in the census. This might be true for the populations of the other age groups as well.

- Similarly, in the Census, over counted Muslim people are 81,068. However, they do not exist in the voter list of Election Commission. It is natural to raise the question where did they come from in census.

- In 5 Upazilas, population of the religious minority was undercounted; while in 2 Upazilas it was over-counted (Nazirpur and Kotalipara).
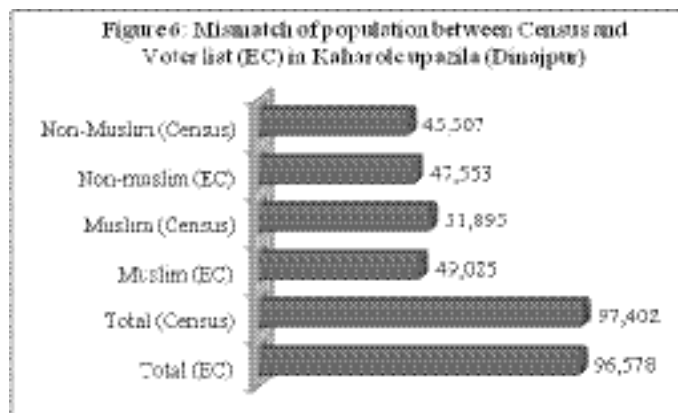
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- The non-Muslim population in the voter list is observed 6.1 % more than that in census report.

- The Muslim population in voter list is observed 10% less than that in census report.

- If the voter list is considered accurate, the observation is that the census undercounted the religious minorities and over counted the religious majority (Muslim) populations.

Table 6 : Comparison of the population composition
between census and voter list data (%)

Data Sources	Total population	Muslim population (%)	Population of other religions (%)
Census (7 Study Upazilas)	1,065,959	76. 4	23.6
Voter list (7 Study Upazilas)	1,000,333	73.3	26.7
National (Census 2001)	123,851,120	89.7	10.3

5.2 Upazila Scenario: Kaharol (Dinajpur)

In Kaharol Upazila of Dinajpur district, the estimated adult population in 2008 as per census was 97,402. According to EC data, this population was 96,578. That means the census shows an additional 824 individuals who does not exist in the voter list. By religion, census data suggest that the Muslim and Non-Muslim population of 18 and above years of age in 2008 was 51,859 and 45,507 respectively. However, in the voter list, they were 49,025 and 47,553 respectively. The data demonstrate that 28,340 additional Muslim adults are shown in the census. However, they do not exist in the voter list. Similarly, a number of 2,046 non-Muslim adults are missing in the census but they are present in the voter list of Election Commission.
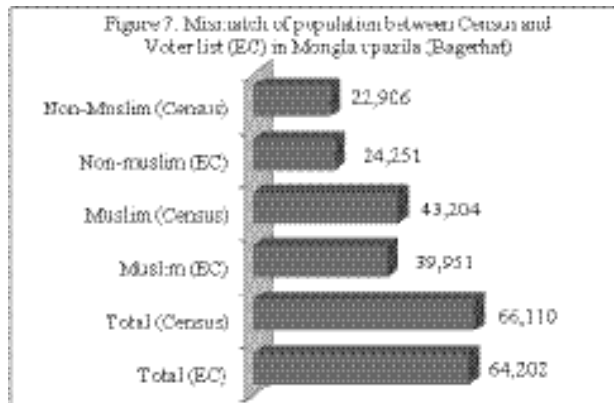

Figure 6: Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Kaharole upazila (Dinajpur)

Non-Muslim (Census)   45,507
Non-muslim (EC)   47,553
Muslim (Census)   51,895
Muslim (EC)   49,025
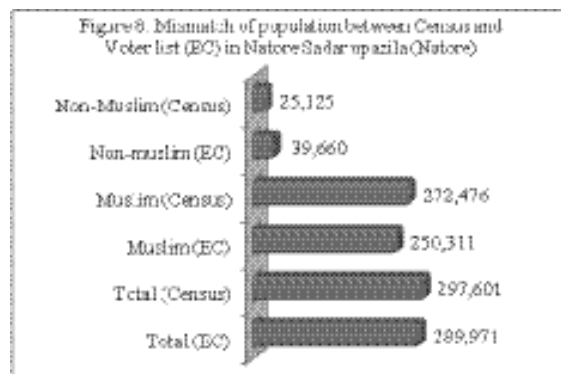Total (Census)   97,402
Total (EC)   96,578

Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 4.5 % more than that in census report
- The Muslim population in voter list is 5.5% less than that in census report
- If the voter list is considered accurate, the conclusion is that the census undercounted the non-Muslims and over counted the Muslim populations.

5.3   Upazila Scenario: Mongla (Bagerhat)

As per census data, the total adult population of Mongla Upazila of Bagerhat district in 2008 was 66,110 and according to voter list the number is 64,202. That means, there is a difference of 1908 individuals between the two sources. By

Figure 7. Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Mongla upazila (Bagerhat)

Non-Muslim (Census)	22,906
Non-muslim (EC)	24,251
Muslim (Census)	43,204
Muslim (EC)	39,951
Total (Census)	66,110
Total (EC)	64,202

religious identity, census data show that the number of adult Muslims in the Upazila in 2008 was 43,204; and it was 39,951 in the voter list of EC. The figures

Figure 8. Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Natore Sadar upazila (Natore)

Non-Muslim (Census)	25,125
Non-muslim (EC)	39,660
Muslim (Census)	272,476
Muslim (EC)	250,311
Total (Census)	297,601
Total (EC)	289,971

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imply an over count of 3,253 individuals in the census. However, they are not found in the voter list. Similarly, at that time non-Muslim adults in the Upazila as per the census and voter list were 22,906 and 24,251 respectively. The finding here is exactly opposite to that happening with the Muslims. At least 1,345 adult non-Muslims are missing in the census. That means the census undercounted these 1,345 adult non-Muslims.
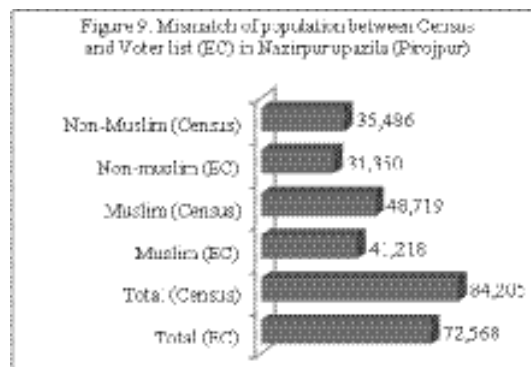
Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 5.9 % more than that in census report
- The Muslim population in voter list is 7.5% less than that in census report.

5.4   Upazila Scenario: Nator Sadar (Nator)

As figure 8 shows, there is a difference of 7,630 adult individuals between the census and the Election Commission data. The census population is 2.6 per cent higher than that of the EC. Muslim adult population in the Upazila in 2008 according to census and EC was 272,476 and 250,311 respectively. That means in the census 22,165 Muslims were over counted whose existence cannot be found in the voter list. Likewise, the non-Muslim adult population of Nator Sadar was 25,125 according to census and 39,660 according to EC's voter list. Considering the Election Commission's data as more accurate, it is clearly evident that the census undercounted 14,535 non-Muslims during enumeration.

Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 57.9 % more than that in census report

Figure 9. Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Nazirpur upazila (Pirojpur)

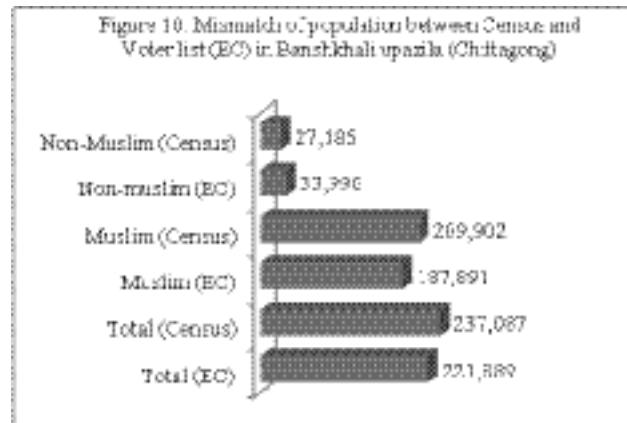|	
Non-Muslim (Census)	35,486
Non-muslim (EC)	31,350
Muslim (Census)	48,719
Muslim (EC)	41,218
Total (Census)	84,205
Total (EC)	72,568

- The Muslim population in voter list is 8.1% less than that in census report
- The census undercounted the non-Muslims and over counted the Muslim populations.

5.5 Upazila Scenario: Nazirpur (Pirojpur)

In Nazirpur Upazila of Pirojpur district, in 2008 the number of adult population as per the census and voter list was 84,205 and 72,568 respectively. That is, in the Upazila the census over counted 11,637 adult individuals. If the religious identity of the population is taken into consideration, 7,501 Muslims are found over counted in the census. On the other hand, 4,136 non-Muslim people were also over counted in the census.

Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 11.7 % less than that in census report
- The Muslim population in voter list is 15.4 % less than that in census report.

Figure 10. Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Banshkhali upazila (Chittagong)
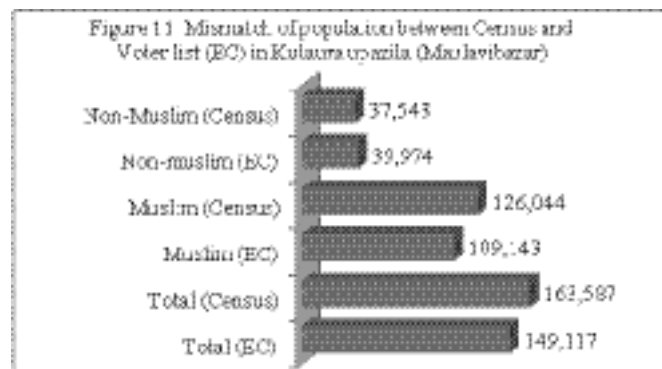
5.6 Upazila Scenario: Banshkhali (Chittagong)

Regardless of religious identity, the number of adult population of the Upazila in 2008 as per census (237,087) is 151,98 more than the voter list population in that year. On the other hand, the number of Muslim adults as per census was 209,902 and in the voter list their number was 187,891. That is, a number of 22,011 Muslims were over counted in the census. However, the finding is opposite for the

non-Muslim population. Whereas the census data show the non-Muslim population (18 years and above) of Banshkhali Upazila in 2008 was 27,185, according to the voter list it was 33,998. That is, a number of 6,813 non-Muslim people remained hidden or missing in the population census of 2001.

Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 25.1 % more than that in census report

- The Muslim population in voter list is 10.5% less than that in census report

- The census undercounted a large number of the non-Muslims and over counted the Muslim populations

Figure 11 Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Kulaura upazila (Maulavibazar)
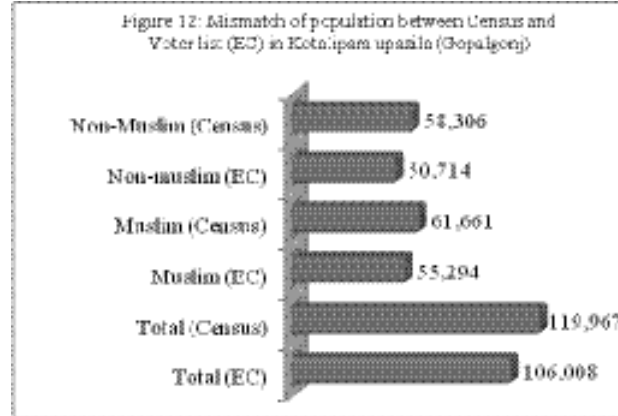
5.7   Upazila Scenario: Kulaura (Maulavibazar)

In Kulaura Upazila of Maulavibazar district, the adult population in the census in 2008 was 14,470 more than that in the voter list. At least 16,901 Muslim people were over counted in the census that cannot be found in the voter list. Similarly, 2,431 non-Muslims were missing in the census and they are found in the voter list of Election Commission.

Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 6.5 % more than that in census report

- The Muslim population in voter list is 13.4 % less than that in census report

- The census undercounted the non-Muslims and over counted the Muslim populations.

Figure 12: Mismatch of population between Census and Voter list (EC) in Kotalipara upazila (Gopalgonj)

Non-Muslim (Census)   53,306
Non-muslim (EC)   30,714
Muslim (Census)   61,661
Muslim (EC)   55,294
Total (Census)   119,967
Total (EC)   106,008

5.8   Upazila Scenario: Kotalipara (Gopalgonj)

In Kotalipara Upazila of Gopalgonj district, the finding is somewhat different from the other Upazilas discussed so far. However, the case is similar to that of the Nazirpur Upazila of Pirojpur district. The census population of 18 years and above is 13,959 more than the voter list of Election Commission. Here 6,367 Muslims are over counted who are not in the voter list. On the other hand, a number of 7,592 non-Muslims were also over counted in the census.

Key Findings

- The non-Muslim population in voter list is 13 % less than that in census report
- The Muslim population in voter list is 10.3% less than that in census report
- The census over counted both the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations.

Suggestion and Appeal

Population census is not only enumeration of the people, it is much more. Therefore, exclusion of citizens, particularly the minority people from the enumeration of census is violation of law as well as human rights because minority population requires more attention to bring them in the mainstream. The overall finding of the study is that the population census undercounts the religious minority populations and over-counts the religious majorities. However, there are also observations of undercounting the both. It clearly demonstrates the inaccuracy of the census enumeration as well as negligence to the minority

populations by the state party. Considering the importance of inclusion of all citizens in the population census, it is worthwhile to put forward the following suggestions:

1. All individuals irrespective of caste, creed, religion, race, ethnicity, occupational groups, "backward sections of citizens", etc should be enumerated in the census as per law. All excluded people must be included in the census through post-enumeration check. This is absolutely necessary, in compliance with the Constitution and the Vision 2021 (i.e., attaining a secular, progressive, liberal democratic welfare State by year 2021), to ensure true human development.

2. Representatives from all excluded groups/people should be involved while designing the population census.

3. All enumerated households can be given a document as a proof of enumeration including the number of members enumerated to avoid dropping of households or household members.

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