Session Title – Strengthening Administrative Data: what countries have learned and applied from the administrative data collaborative

Session description

Bhutan has joined the administrative data collaborative convened by the UN Statistics Division and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data together with CEPEI.

Earliest records of administrative data collected in Bhutan were in the form of citizenship records (1744). Eventually, the citizenship records compiled through such exercises were maintained in respective Gewogs, Dzongkhags and in the centre with the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs. These records not only established citizen count but also formed the basis for taxation and mobilisation of labour force in the country.

With the rapid socio-economic progress of the country, planning and decision making has also become equally complex and difficult and this has resulted in increasing need for administrative data to supplement information generated through surveys and censuses. Bhutan has a decentralized statistical system and many data producers are using administrative data to come up with annual/ad-hoc publications. Few of the major publications using administrative data are: Ministry of Education- Annual Education Statistics; Ministry of Health- Annual Health bulletin; Quarterly Morbidity and Activity Report; Annual Blood Bank Report; etc.; Ministry of Agriculture- Agriculture Statistics, Forestry Statistics, etc. ; Department of Revenue and Customs- Bhutan Trade Statistics, National Revenue Report; Royal Monitory Authority- Monthly Statistical Bulletin, Payment Systems Report; Financial Sector Performance Review, and etc, National Statistics Bureau- Statistical Yearbook; National Accounts Statistics; Environmental Accounts Statistics; Vital Statistics, Gewog Data and etc.

Administrative data (Gewog data) at the lowest administrative level has been extensively used for the COVID-19 intervention in conjunction with health information (Quarterly Morbidity and Activity Report, etc.). Also to monitor the movement of people from one District to another, Check Post Management System has been extensively used wherein all details about a vehicle and its passengers are entered into the system before the movement and police check the vehicles against the registration of movement. This is to ensure tracing of any Covid-positive cases that may arise with people moving from one district to another. No movement of positive people can take place since this registration is tied to Citizenship ID card.

For the future, based on lessons learned from joining the collaborative and also future knowledge and that will be gained and tools developed through the collaborative, National Statistics Bureau plans to carry out a thorough review of the Administrative data produced in the country as follows.

A working committee was formed recently at the National Statistics Bureau to work on the following aspects as part of the administrative data assessment. The objectives are "Short term": To streamline the admin data collection, flow and standardization. "Long term": to replace surveys/census by admin data where feasible.

The following steps will be undertaken:

1. Identifying administrative data sources (To initiate with Health and Education sectors and in the long run to cover other sectors after learning through the collaborative on administrative data and applying good practices and using tools made available through the collaborative).
   a. Health
   b. Education

2. To identify existing administrative data systems and data collection forms.
   - Health (Electronic Patient Information system (ePIS), Health Information Management System (HMIS), etc…)
   - Education (Education Information Management System (EMIS), etc….)

3. Assessment phases

   First Phase

   - Forms or contents currently available (Online data collection systems/Forms)

- Frequency of data collection
- Indicators produced

Second Phase
- Are there available guidelines or data collection protocols?
- Are concepts and definitions available and do they confirm to national/international standards?
- Are there sufficient statistical staffs involved in administrative data collection and are they sufficiently trained?
- Are there any measures of assessing data quality?
- Data sharing protocol (Timeline and format)
- Can some gaps be filled up for national / international indicators by including some additional variables in the existing administrative data collection system?

(To follow available/upcoming Data Quality Assessment Tool/s for Administrative Data)

4. Improving quality of administrative data (Based on the assessment)
   - Methodological tools to address quality issue.
     - Quality control tools.
     - Improving data collection, storage and dissemination.
   - Improving financial and human resource issues.
   - Standardization of administrative data concepts and definitions among data producers
     - Harmonizing unit identifiers
     - Harmonizing definition and variables
     - Harmonizing coding systems

   - Improving administrative data accessibility.

   - Agreements between institutions, including the key features of the MOU

   - Use of administrative data.
     - Methodological and technical tools for record linkage and data integration.

   - Linkage between administrative data and sample surveys estimations (National indicators and SDGs).
   - Integration of administrative data in national statistical system.