

# **Family Planning and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh**

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A fair society is one that is just, inclusive, and embracing of all without any barriers to participation based on sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ethnicity, age, class, ability, or any other social difference. One where there is access to healthcare and education, technology, justice, strong institutions, peace and security, social protection, decent work, and housing. But how can research truly contribute to creating global equity and diversity without showcasing diverse voices that are underrepresented in academia or paying specific attention to the Global South?

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# **Family Planning and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh: Empowering Marginalized Communities in Asian Contexts**

BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2024

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83549-165-2 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83549-164-5 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83549-166-9 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*This book is dedicated to the memory of Late Mahatab Uddin Shekh, my beloved uncle. His unwavering commitment to the cause of family planning and population management for the vulnerable marginalized communities in Bangladesh remains an enduring source of inspiration. He dedicated his life to improving the well-being of those who needed it most, and his legacy continues to shine brightly as we strive to empower and uplift these communities through knowledge, compassion, and sustainable development. May his passion for positive change serve as a guiding light for all those who work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of the marginalized.*

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## About the Author

**Dr M. Rezaul Islam**, a Distinguished Academic and currently a Professor of Social Work at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, possesses over 27 years of extensive experience in teaching, research, and global collaborative initiatives. Holding a Master of Social Work (MSW) and a PhD from the University of Nottingham, UK, his expertise transcends disciplinary boundaries, enabling him to decipher complex socio-political dynamics. He has made significant contributions to various universities worldwide and has been affiliated with esteemed institutions such as the University of Malaya, the University of Johannesburg, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD). His consultancy work with prestigious organizations, editorial roles, and high-impact scholarly contributions have earned him acclaim. His dedication extends to community engagement, capacity building, and driving positive change, all fueled by a fervent commitment to advancing knowledge and societal well-being.

His expansive scholarship covers social work, community development, climate change and disasters, child and community well-being, poverty and inequality, and migration studies. He has authored 15 meticulously written and edited books, 45 enlightening book chapters, and an impressive 120 impactful journal articles. His research spans topics like climate change, migration, and social inequality, with a focus on South Asia and the Arab world. Central to his work is a resolute commitment to social justice and empowerment, addressing the challenges faced by marginalized communities and advocating for research-informed solutions. In his role as a doctoral supervisor, he has guided impactful research endeavors, leaving an enduring mark on the advancement of knowledge. His mentorship has led to insightful explorations in areas such as the empowerment initiatives of faith-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs), smartphone addiction's effects on social capital, gender norms among garment workers, and the socioeconomic well-being of international migrant workers.

His contributions extend to consultancy, research, and partnership endeavors, covering diverse topics from father-child influence on child development in Abu Dhabi to child rights advocacy and climate resilience enhancement in Bangladesh. His active editorial roles within esteemed journals and involvement in professional associations underline his dedication to advancing knowledge in the social sciences. His illustrious career is further highlighted by prestigious awards, including the University Grants Commission (UGC) Gold Medal Award and a Full Scholarship for his PhD studies at the University of Nottingham, UK. These accolades solidify his reputation as a respected scholar and leader in the field, embodying a commitment to enriching societal well-being through rigorous research and scholarly engagement.

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# Foreword

It is with immense pride and pleasure that I introduce this exceptional volume, *Family Planning and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh: Empowering Marginalized Communities in Asian Contexts*, authored by my former brilliant student and now esteemed colleague, Professor M. Rezaul Islam. Having witnessed his academic journey from its inception, I can attest to his unwavering commitment and expertise in the field of social work and family planning.

In an era where the world faces multifaceted challenges, this book assumes great significance by highlighting the pivotal role of family planning in achieving sustainable development goals. Professor Rezaul Islam's meticulous exploration of the intricate relationship between family planning and sustainable development is a testament to his deep understanding of the subject matter. This comprehensive work examines aspects, from understanding population dynamics and cultural influences on family planning to assessing knowledge gaps and formulating effective communication strategies for marginalized communities. What sets this book apart is its unwavering focus on empowering marginalized communities, particularly within the unique context of Bangladesh.

It is heartening to see Professor Islam's dedication to the welfare of these communities, recognizing their unique needs and potential for empowerment. His insights and strategies, presented throughout this book, are invaluable not only for Bangladesh but also for the broader Asian context. The comparative analysis of family planning approaches across diverse Asian regions offers a broader perspective, allowing readers to comprehend the complexities of varying sociocultural contexts and religious influences.

As a former mentor, I have always taken great pride in Professor M. Rezaul Islam's academic journey, and this book is a testament to his continued dedication and exemplary work in the field of social work and family planning. I am unequivocally confident that this book will emerge as an invaluable and indispensable resource, deeply resonating with academics, practitioners, policymakers, and all those fervently dedicated to propelling forward the crucial causes of family planning and sustainable development within the intricate tapestry of Asian contexts.

**A. S. M. Atiqur Rahman, PhD**

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# Preface

## ***Book Summary***

*Family Planning and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh: Empowering Marginalized Communities in Asian Contexts* is a comprehensive exploration of pressing themes that encompass various disciplines, including social work, community development, public health, community well-being, poverty, and inequality. This book distills decades of research, scholarly inquiry, and practical experiences into a cohesive narrative aimed at addressing critical challenges facing marginalized communities, with a particular focus on the context of Bangladesh.

At its core, this book explores the dynamic relationship between family planning and sustainable development and underscores the pivotal role of empowerment in this context. The introductory chapters set the stage by highlighting the imperative of inclusivity and the significance of marginalized communities in Bangladesh, framing a holistic approach that integrates family planning and sustainable development to drive empowerment.

Throughout this book, readers will find an in-depth analysis of critical subject matters, including:

*Population Dynamics:* This book provides a comprehensive understanding of global population trends and the challenges they pose. It explores demographic shifts in Asian countries and offers insights into the demographic landscape of Bangladesh. This knowledge forms the foundation for addressing issues related to family planning and sustainable development.

*Family Planning Strategies:* This book thoroughly examines family planning initiatives on a global scale, considering cultural factors that influence family planning choices. It also provides an overview of family planning programs in diverse Asian contexts. By analyzing these strategies, this book offers insights into effective approaches that empower communities through informed family planning decisions.

*Empowering Marginalized Communities:* A central theme in this book revolves around empowering marginalized communities. It provides a comprehensive perspective on understanding these communities, discusses the empowerment paradigm, and offers strategies to uplift them through family planning initiatives. This includes tailored approaches that consider the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups.

*Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices:* Understanding the levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to family planning among marginalized communities in Bangladesh is a key focus. This book explores barriers and provides recommendations for bridging knowledge gaps, transforming attitudes, and enhancing practices to ensure the well-being of these communities.

*Communication Strategies:* Effective communication plays a crucial role in reproductive health and family planning. This book examines communication strategies within the context of marginalized communities in Bangladesh. It considers the use of information, education, and communication (IEC) and social and behavior change communication (SBCC) to empower these communities through informed decision-making.

*Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):* In the final chapters, this book connects the dots between family planning and the SDGs. It discusses how family planning contributes to achieving sustainability and explores the challenges related to SDGs concerning family planning among marginalized communities. This book closes with actionable recommendations to address these challenges and make progress toward the SDGs.

This book serves as a valuable resource for a diverse audience, including students, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and individuals interested in understanding and addressing the multifaceted challenges that marginalized communities face within the Asian context, particularly in Bangladesh. It offers not only insights but also practical guidance for those committed to making a positive impact in these vital areas of social and community development.

### ***Readers of This Book***

This book *Family Planning and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh: Empowering Marginalized Communities in Asian Contexts* is intended for a diverse audience, including the following:

*Students:* Undergraduate and graduate students studying fields such as social work, sociology, public health, international development, development studies, health economics, gender studies, and related disciplines will find this book valuable for academic coursework, research, and gaining a comprehensive understanding of critical issues in family planning and sustainable development.

*Researchers and Academics:* Scholars and researchers interested in social work, community development, reproductive health, sustainable development, and related fields can benefit from this book's in-depth analysis, comprehensive coverage of topics, and potential for inspiration and direction for further research.

*Policymakers and Practitioners:* Policymakers, government officials, and practitioners working in the fields of public health, community development, and family planning will find this book's insights useful for shaping policies, programs, and interventions that address the needs of marginalized communities.

*International Organizations:* Professionals working in international organizations such as the United Nations, World Health Organization, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focused on reproductive health, poverty reduction, and sustainable development can gain valuable perspectives and evidence-based strategies from this book.

*Community Leaders and Activists:* Leaders and activists involved in grassroots movements, community development, and advocacy for marginalized communities will find this book's content relevant for guiding their efforts in empowerment, education, and sustainable development.

*Educators and Trainers:* Educators and trainers in the field of social work and public health can use this book as a resource for curriculum development and training programs focused on family planning, community empowerment, and sustainable development.

*General Readers:* Individuals with a general interest in global issues, social justice, and community well-being can benefit from this book's accessible explanations and real-world examples that shed light on critical challenges and potential solutions in Asian contexts.

Overall, this book's comprehensive coverage and practical insights make it a valuable resource for a wide range of readers who are passionate about addressing the complex challenges faced by marginalized communities and advancing sustainable development in Asia and beyond.

### ***Importance of This Book***

This book *Family Planning and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh: Empowering Marginalized Communities in Asian Contexts* by Professor M. Rezaul Islam holds significant importance in several keyways:

*Addressing Critical Issues:* This book tackles critical issues such as family planning, sustainable development, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. These topics are central to improving the well-being of societies, especially in developing regions like Asia, and this book provides valuable insights into addressing these challenges.

*Empowering Marginalized Communities:* This book places a strong emphasis on empowering marginalized communities. By highlighting strategies and approaches to uplift these communities, it contributes to more inclusive and equitable development, which is crucial for reducing poverty and social inequality.

*Evidence-based Guidance:* Through research and analysis, this book offers evidence-based guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and organizations involved in family planning and sustainable development. It helps inform decision-making and program development to achieve tangible, positive outcomes.

*Academic and Research Contribution:* This book contributes to academic scholarship by providing a comprehensive resource on various aspects of family

planning, sustainable development, and community empowerment. It can serve as a foundational text for researchers and students seeking to deepen their understanding of these topics.

*Global Relevance:* While this book focuses on Bangladesh, its themes have global relevance. Many countries face similar challenges related to population growth, reproductive health, and sustainable development. Lessons and insights from this book can be applied in various international contexts.

*Policy Development:* Policymakers, both in Bangladesh and other countries, can use this book's recommendations and findings to develop policies that support family planning, gender equality, and community development. This can lead to more effective governance and improved public health.

*Advocacy and Awareness:* This book can also serve as a tool for advocacy and raising awareness about the importance of family planning and sustainable development. It provides a resource for individuals and organizations advocating for positive change in their communities.

*Capacity Building:* By discussing communication strategies and educational approaches, this book contributes to capacity-building efforts. It equips professionals and organizations with knowledge and strategies to effectively engage with communities and drive positive change.

In summary, this book plays a vital role in addressing pressing global challenges related to family planning, sustainable development, and marginalized communities. Its importance lies in its potential to inform policies, inspire action, and empower individuals and organizations to work toward more equitable and sustainable societies.

### ***Chapter Outlines***

*Chapter 1:* In this Introductory chapter, this book outlines its scope, emphasizing the imperative of empowerment and inclusivity. It unveils the concept of marginalized communities, explores the interplay between family planning and sustainable development, highlights their significance in Bangladesh, and advocates for a holistic approach to empower these communities.

*Chapter 2:* This chapter delves into global population trends and challenges, examining demographic shifts in Asian countries and providing insights into the demographic landscape of Bangladesh. It also explores the socio-economic impacts of population growth, setting the stage for discussions on family planning.

*Chapter 3:* "Exploring Family Planning Strategies," this chapter reviews family planning initiatives worldwide, considers cultural factors influencing family planning, and provides an overview of family planning programs in various Asian contexts, including Bangladesh.

*Chapter 4:* Offering Comparative Insights, this chapter compares family planning approaches in different Asian regions, providing an overview of family planning programs in South Asia and delving into case studies that examine religious, legal, and sociocultural factors impacting family planning practices.

- Chapter 5:* Focusing on Empowering Marginalized Communities from a Bangladesh Perspective, this chapter introduces marginalized communities, explores the empowerment paradigm, discusses strategies to empower these communities, and highlights how family planning can catalyze empowerment.
- Chapter 6:* “Knowledge About Family Planning Among Marginalized Communities in Bangladesh” is the subject of this chapter. It defines the significance of knowledge about family planning, explores the relationship between knowledge and family planning, unveils knowledge levels among marginalized communities, and discusses strategies to bridge knowledge gaps.
- Chapter 7:* Turning to “Attitudes Toward Family Planning Among Marginalized Communities in Bangladesh,” this chapter defines the importance of attitudes, explores their relationship with family planning, unveils attitudes among marginalized communities, addresses attitudinal barriers, and discusses strategies for attitude transformation.
- Chapter 8:* This chapter examines the “Practices of Family Planning Methods and Commodities Among Marginalized Communities.” It emphasizes the importance of family planning practices, explores their link with reproductive health, uncovers practices among marginalized communities in Bangladesh, and discusses tailored programs for effective practice adoption.
- Chapter 9:* Focusing on “Communication Strategies for Empowering Marginalized Communities,” this chapter explores the significance and scope of communication strategies in reproductive health. It discusses the role of mass media, tailors’ communication strategies for marginalized communities, and examines the use of IEC and SBCC among marginalized communities.
- Chapter 10:* Turning to “Family Planning and Sustainable Development Goals,” this chapter explores the achievement of sustainability through family planning and development programs. It links family planning to the targets and indicators of SDGs, offers lessons from global approaches, highlights challenges in achieving SDGs related to family planning among marginalized communities, and provides recommendations to overcome these challenges.
- Chapter 11:* In a Comparative Analysis, this chapter draws insights from different Asian contexts, facilitating a cross-Asian comparison that incorporates lessons learned from various regions and religious contexts.
- Chapter 12:* This book concludes with “Conclusions and Future Directions Toward Family Planning, Empowering Marginalized Communities and Sustainable Development,” summarizing key findings and offering guidance for future research and action in the fields of family planning, community empowerment, and sustainable development.

Warm Regards,  
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## Acknowledgments

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the individuals who played a pivotal role in the creation of this book, particularly in Chapters 6–9, where I utilized the study data from “Formative Research on Knowledge, Attitude & Practices on Family Planning Commodities and Services in Bangladesh,” generously funded by the Director General, Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). Their unwavering support and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping this work.

I am profoundly grateful to my wife, Anjum Akter, whose unwavering encouragement and unwavering support have been my constant pillars of strength throughout this journey. To my daughter, Jemima Fairouse, and my son, Riasat Anjam, your presence and understanding have been a source of inspiration that fueled my determination to bring this work to fruition.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, for granting me the invaluable research leave that enabled me to dedicate focused time and effort to this endeavor. This opportunity played a pivotal role in shaping the direction and depth of this work, and I am truly appreciative of the institution’s support. Additionally, I am indebted to the University of Sharjah, UAE, for providing me with a unique professional environment that offered the privilege of a 3-day weekend during my tenure. This arrangement facilitated an optimal balance between my academic responsibilities and the dedication required to bring this book to completion.

My appreciation also extends to my colleagues, mentors, and peers whose insightful discussions and valuable feedback enriched the content and quality of this work. Their collective contributions have undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the pages of this book. Finally, I acknowledge all those whose names may not appear here but whose support, encouragement, and positive energy have played an integral role in the realization of this project. Your contributions have been instrumental, and for that, I am sincerely thankful.

Warm Regards,  
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## Chapter 1

# Introduction: Empowering Marginalized Communities through Family Planning and Sustainable Development

### Abstract

This introductory chapter sets the stage for an exploration of the critical linkages between family planning, sustainable development, and the empowerment of marginalized communities, with a specific focus on Bangladesh. This chapter outlines the scope of this book, emphasizing the imperative of empowerment and inclusivity. It also delves into the concept of marginalized communities, shedding light on their unique challenges and vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the interplay between family planning and sustainable development is discussed, highlighting their interconnectedness. This chapter underscores the significance of marginalized communities within the context of Bangladesh and advocates for a holistic approach that combines family planning and sustainable development as a powerful means of empowerment.

*Keywords:* Empowerment; marginalized communities; family planning; sustainable development; Bangladesh

The world's path toward sustainable development is inextricably linked to the well-being and empowerment of every community, regardless of their circumstances. In this pursuit, the challenges faced by marginalized communities often remain hidden, hindering progress and equity. This chapter serves as the gateway to a comprehensive exploration of how family planning and sustainable development intersect within the context of Bangladesh, with a focus on empowering those on the margins of society.

## **1.1 Scope of the Book**

This book's scope is centered on the intricate dynamics of family planning, sustainable development, and empowerment within the challenging landscape of marginalized communities in Bangladesh. It ventures into the realms of policy, culture, and societal norms to decipher the complexities that shape family planning initiatives. By delving into the interplay between family planning and sustainable development, this book aims to highlight their symbiotic relationship, demonstrating how family planning acts as a catalyst for broader progress. The scope extends to the heart of empowerment within these communities. It examines the multifaceted ways in which empowerment can transform lives – enabling individuals, particularly women, to make informed decisions about their reproductive health, engage in education, participate in the economy, and become active members of their communities. Through diverse case studies, this book explores how empowerment and family planning are intertwined, creating a roadmap for sustainable development.

Furthermore, this book's scope encompasses the crucial elements of knowledge, attitudes, and practices within marginalized communities. By probing into the understanding of family planning, the attitudes that influence choices, and the practical implementation of these strategies, this book unveils insights that can guide targeted interventions. The communication strategies employed to reach these communities are also explored, emphasizing cultural sensitivity and effective methods to disseminate information. This book takes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from fields such as sociology, public health, development studies, and communication. This interdisciplinary lens broadens the scope, enabling readers from various disciplines to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate web of factors influencing family planning, empowerment, and sustainable development within Bangladesh's marginalized communities.

In essence, this book's scope spans a holistic exploration of family planning's impact on empowerment and sustainable development within marginalized communities. It aims to offer a nuanced perspective on the challenges and triumphs faced by these communities, providing actionable recommendations and insights that can resonate not only within academic circles but also in policy realms, international development agendas, and the broader pursuit of sustainable change.

## **1.2 The Imperative of Empowerment and Inclusivity**

In the pursuit of a more just and equitable world, the concept of empowerment stands as a beacon of transformation. Empowerment transcends the conventional understanding of aid or assistance (Adams, 2017); it embodies the idea of enabling individuals and communities to become architects of their destinies. This introductory section explores the critical importance of empowerment within the overarching goal of sustainable development, emphasizing its role as a powerful tool to uplift and include those who have historically been marginalized. At the heart of empowerment lies the recognition of individual agency and the right

to meaningful participation in the decisions that shape one's life (Kabeer, 1999). This concept goes beyond mere access to resources; it entails the provision of opportunities, knowledge, and skills that allow individuals to exert control over their circumstances (Islam, 2014a, 2024b; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). In the context of marginalized communities in Bangladesh, empowerment becomes a means to break free from cycles of dependency and vulnerability, paving the way for self-reliance and resilience.

Empowerment holds the potential to break down barriers and dismantle the structures that perpetuate inequality (Hendriks, 2019). By enabling individuals within marginalized communities to have a voice in matters that affect them, empowerment leads to a fairer distribution of power and resources (Katz, 2014). It promotes a shift from passive recipients of aid to active participants in their development journey, fostering a sense of ownership and pride. Moreover, this section highlights the deep interconnection between empowerment and inclusivity. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) underscore the commitment to leaving no one behind, which necessitates targeted efforts to reach those who are most marginalized (Winkler & Williams, 2017). Empowerment becomes the means to bridge this gap, ensuring that the benefits of development are shared by all. It is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical imperative to achieve sustainable progress.

By addressing the imperative of empowerment within the context of marginalized communities, this chapter sets the tone for this book's exploration of family planning and sustainable development. It underscores the transformative potential of empowerment as a driving force behind positive change, emphasizing the need for interventions that are tailored to the unique challenges and aspirations of these communities. As the subsequent chapters unfold, the intricate links between empowerment, family planning, and sustainable development will be unveiled, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of how these elements converge to shape the future of marginalized communities in Bangladesh and beyond.

### **1.3 Unveiling Marginalized Communities**

In the landscape of development, certain communities are often relegated to the periphery due to a complex web of factors that hinder their access to opportunities, resources, and services. These are the marginalized communities, whose geographic isolation, cultural barriers, and socioeconomic challenges make them particularly vulnerable (Islam, 2020; Trujillo, 2003). Geographical isolation is a defining characteristic of many marginalized communities. Whether residing in remote rural areas or marginalized urban pockets, these communities are physically distant from the centers of governance and service provision. This isolation often results in limited access to basic amenities, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. As a consequence, individuals within these communities face compounded challenges that impede their development trajectories. Socioeconomic disparities further compound the marginalization experienced by these communities. Poverty,

lack of access to credit, and limited economic prospects exacerbate the cycle of vulnerability. Cultural factors also play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of marginalized communities. These factors can include traditional norms, gender roles, and societal expectations that hinder individuals, particularly women and girls, from accessing education, healthcare, and reproductive health services (Denno et al., 2015).

### **1.4 The Interplay of Family Planning and Sustainable Development**

Family planning serves as a cornerstone of individual agency and well-being. Family planning enables individuals and couples to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives, fostering control over the timing and number of their children. This autonomy not only contributes to improved health outcomes but also resonates with the larger societal goal of achieving equitable and sustainable development. Furthermore, family planning is closely intertwined with gender equality and women's empowerment. By providing women with the means to control their reproductive choices, family planning empowers them to participate more fully in education, employment, and community activities. This empowerment, in turn, catalyzes a ripple effect that promotes balanced power dynamics within families and communities, advancing the cause of gender equity.

As we explore the intricate web of SDGs, it becomes evident that family planning reverberates across multiple dimensions of development. It intersects with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by improving maternal and child health, while also aligning with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by addressing disparities in reproductive health access. Moreover, family planning's implications extend to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), as it empowers families to plan for their future and allocate resources wisely.

Within the specific context of marginalized communities in Bangladesh, the potential impact of family planning is even more pronounced (Lee et al., 1998). Tailored family planning programs can dismantle barriers and address cultural sensitivities, ensuring that these communities can access the services they need (Dehlendorf et al., 2010). As chapters unfold, we will delve into how family planning interventions can be strategically designed to bridge gaps and empower these marginalized communities, contributing to their health, empowerment, and sustainable development.

In essence, this section lays the groundwork for the subsequent chapters to unravel the intricate relationship between family planning and sustainable development. Through the exploration of knowledge gaps, attitudes, practices, and communication strategies, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of how these elements synergize to shape the trajectory of marginalized communities in Bangladesh and beyond, furthering the pursuit of equitable, inclusive, and sustainable progress.

## **1.5 The Significance of Marginalized Communities in Bangladesh**

Within the diverse tapestry of Bangladesh, there exist communities that have long been relegated to the margins of mainstream development discourse. These marginalized communities, often residing in remote and underserved areas, bear the brunt of geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic barriers. Marginalized communities, by their very nature, present a complex and multifaceted challenge. Geographical isolation is a defining characteristic, as many of these communities are situated in areas that are difficult to access due to rugged terrain, inadequate infrastructure, and limited connectivity. This isolation translates into limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, exacerbating the cycle of poverty and vulnerability. However, the significance of marginalized communities extends beyond their challenges. These communities possess a rich cultural heritage, often rooted in traditional practices and knowledge systems that have sustained them for generations.

In the realm of sustainable development, leaving no one behind is a central tenet. The SDGs underscore the commitment to inclusivity and equity, advocating for the upliftment of marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Within this framework, empowering marginalized communities takes on paramount importance. By bringing these communities to the forefront of development initiatives, Bangladesh can make substantial strides toward achieving the SDGs and ensuring a fairer and more just society. Despite their challenges, these communities often possess innate resilience, resourcefulness, and community cohesion. By harnessing these qualities, interventions can be designed to leverage their strengths, fostering a sense of ownership and agency that enables these communities to actively participate in their development journey.

As the subsequent chapters delve into the intricacies of family planning, knowledge, attitudes, practices, and communication strategies, it is imperative to remember that these dimensions intersect with the unique circumstances of marginalized communities. The experiences, needs, and aspirations of these communities shape the lens through which we approach empowerment, family planning, and sustainable development. By understanding the significance of these communities within the context of Bangladesh, we can lay the groundwork for informed and impactful interventions that propel them toward a brighter, more equitable future.

## **1.6 A Holistic Approach: Family Planning and Sustainable Development for Empowerment**

In a world where progress is often measured by economic indicators alone, the concept of sustainable development encompasses a broader, more holistic perspective. At its essence, family planning extends far beyond contraception; it represents the fundamental right of individuals and couples to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives. By enabling access to a range of family

planning methods and information, individuals can exercise control over when and how many children they have. This control not only contributes to improved maternal and child health but also affords families the ability to allocate resources wisely and plan for a more prosperous future.

Sustainable development, on the other hand, transcends economic growth and encapsulates environmental, social, and institutional dimensions. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring a balance between the needs of the present and the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Within this paradigm, empowering marginalized communities becomes imperative, as their inclusion is not just a matter of equity but a catalyst for sustainable progress. The intersection of family planning and sustainable development, especially within marginalized communities, is where empowerment takes root. When individuals have the agency to control their reproductive choices, they are better equipped to engage in education, economic activities, and community leadership. This empowerment, especially for women, breaks down traditional barriers and fosters gender equality, leading to more balanced power dynamics within families and communities.

By aligning family planning and SDGs, marginalized communities can emerge as thriving agents of change. This synergy reinforces the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses both reproductive health and broader development needs. The subsequent chapters of this book will explore this synergy further, delving into the nuances of knowledge, attitudes, practices, and communication strategies that underpin the empowerment of marginalized communities. In essence, this section underscores the interconnectedness of family planning, sustainable development, and empowerment. It sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of how these elements converge to shape the trajectory of marginalized communities in Bangladesh. Through targeted interventions, tailored strategies, and a commitment to inclusivity, this book aims to contribute to the global dialogue on equitable and sustainable development, demonstrating the potential for transformative change within the unique context of Bangladesh's marginalized communities.

## Chapter 2

# Understanding Population Dynamics

### Abstract

This chapter provides a comprehensive exploration of global demographic trends and challenges, specifically focusing on Asian countries and the demographic landscape of Bangladesh. This chapter highlights the implications of rapid population growth, aging populations, and urbanization, analyzing their socioeconomic impacts on education, healthcare, and employment. By contextualizing these trends within the broader framework of sustainable development, this chapter sets the stage for understanding the intricate relationship between population dynamics and the empowerment of marginalized communities through family planning strategies.

*Keywords:* Demographic trends; population growth; socioeconomic impacts; marginalized community; sustainable development

### 2.1 Global Population Trends and Challenges

Population refers to the complete count of individuals belonging to a specific species residing within a particular geographical area at a given moment. In the context of human populations, it signifies the total count of individuals inhabiting a designated region or nation at a specific time. The dimensions and trends of human populations have far-reaching implications for diverse social, economic, and environmental facets, encompassing the utilization of resources, development of infrastructure, public health, and the impact on the climate. Consequently, comprehending population dynamics holds substantial importance for policy-makers, researchers, and the general populace, as it can offer valuable insights for decision-making concerning planning, advancement, and allocation of resources.

The global human population has undergone a substantial increase over the past century, and current estimates suggest this growth trajectory will persist

in the forthcoming decades. According to the United Nations (2019b), the world's population reached 7.7 billion in 2019 and is anticipated to swell to 9.7 billion by 2050. This upsurge is predominantly driven by several factors, including enhanced life expectancy, diminishing mortality rates, and declining fertility rates in select regions. Gu et al. (2021) noted a consistent rise in the global population, with a mid-2020 figure of 7.8 billion, up from 7 billion in 2010, 6 billion in 1998, and 5 billion in 1986. The average annual growth rate between 2015 and 2020 was approximately 1.1%, marking a reduction from its peak of 2.3% in the late 1960s. Of the 201 countries and territories examined, 73 countries experienced a slower growth rate during 2010–2020 compared to the previous decade, with over 60 of these being developing nations. The deceleration in population growth can be attributed to a decrease in fertility rates. Globally, the total fertility rate (TFR) declined from 2.7 in 2000 to 2.4 births per woman in 2020, contrasting with 3.7 in 1980 and 5.0 in 1950. High-income and upper-middle-income countries have consistently maintained TFRs below the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman for several decades, with some countries even displaying notably low fertility rates of 1.5 births per woman or less over extended periods (United Nations, 2019a).

The decline in fertility rates can be attributed to a multitude of factors. These include advancements in public health, improved nutrition and food security, the development of medical technology, better socioeconomic conditions, and the availability of enhanced family planning methods and services. These factors have collectively enabled couples to have the number of children they desire without experiencing an excessive number of births. Additionally, there has been a notable shift in the attitudes of young couples regarding the timing and quantity of children they wish to have. However, it's important to note that despite declining fertility rates, population growth is expected to persist due to a phenomenon known as population momentum. This is the force driving future population growth based on the existing age structure of a population. More than two-thirds of the projected increase of 1.9 billion in the global population from 2020 to 2050 can be attributed to population momentum. The remainder of this increase is influenced by above-replacement level fertility and declining mortality rates. While there is an anticipated slowing of the population growth rate throughout this century, uncertainties about future trends persist, with these uncertainties becoming more pronounced as time progresses. Projections indicate that the world population is poised to reach 9.7 billion by 2050 and 10.9 billion by 2100. The projected intervals with a 95% confidence range between 9.4 and 10.1 billion for 2050 and between 9.4 and 12.7 billion for 2100 (Fig. 2.1).

Future population trends are expected to exhibit significant variations across regions and countries. In general, most countries and areas worldwide are projected to continue growing between 2020 and 2050. However, as we move into the latter part of this century, more than half of the countries and areas are anticipated to experience a population decline. Among the eight sustainable development goal (SDG) regions, sub-Saharan Africa is expected to contribute the most to global population growth throughout the century, with its global population share steadily increasing. In contrast, the global population shares of other SDG