Asian American Federation Census Information Center

Profile of New York City’s Bangladeshi Americans: 2005-2007

Introduction
Using data from the Census Bureau’s 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) and Census 2000, this profile outlines characteristics and trends in New York City’s Bangladeshi American population. It presents data on growth rates, immigration, citizenship status, educational attainment, English ability, poverty, income, and housing. Key variables will be placed in context with New York City’s total population.

Bangladeshis in New York City had lower English skills, lower incomes, higher poverty rates, devoted larger portions of their income to housing costs and lived in more crowded housing conditions, compared to all New York City residents.

Bangladeshi New Yorker Statistics at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alone or in-Combination Population in 2005-2007</td>
<td>27,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in Queens as a Percentage of NYC Pop.</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in Brooklyn</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in the Bronx</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in Manhattan</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in Staten Island</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone or in-Combination Population in 2000</td>
<td>28,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change from 2000</td>
<td>-2% (see text)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration and Citizenship</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-Born Percentage of Total Population</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship Percentage of Foreign-Born</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment (Adults 25 and Older)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults Without a High School Diploma</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults With Some College Education</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited English Proficiency (Speaks English “Well,” “Not Well” or “Not at All”)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Total Population</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$34,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
<td>$32,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$11,470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Total Population Living in Poverty</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Children Living in Poverty</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Elderly Living in Poverty</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population estimates from the ACS give conflicting snapshots of the Bangladeshi community. Using the Bangladeshi Alone or in Combination data, the Bangladeshi population in New York City shrank by 2 percent from 28,269 in 2000 to 27,804 in the most recent estimate. However, the Bangladeshi Alone figures tell a different story, where the population grew by 35 percent from 19,148 to 25,916. The City’s total population grew by 3 percent over the same period.

New York City was home to 93 percent of New York State’s Bangladeshi residents, which is a slight decrease from 95 percent in Census 2000. Bangladeshis, the sixth largest Asian group in the city, comprised 3 percent of the Asian population, about the same as in 2000.

By borough, 53 percent of Bangladeshi New Yorkers lived in Queens, 24 percent in Brooklyn, 15 percent in the Bronx, 7 percent in Manhattan, and 1 percent in Staten Island. In 2000, the distribution of the Bangladeshi population was similar with 65 percent living in Queens, followed by 22 percent in Brooklyn, 9 percent in the Bronx, 4 percent for Manhattan, and 0.2 percent for Staten Island. The map on page 3 shows the distribution of Bangladeshis by ACS Public Use Microdata Areas, which are based on New York City Community Districts. Neighborhoods with large Bangladeshi populations included Kensington in Brooklyn; and Astoria, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Jamaica in Queens.

The Bangladeshi population in New York City was younger overall than the general population. Just over 34 percent were children (under 18 years of age) and 3 percent were seniors (age 65 or older), compared to 23 percent and 12 percent for all New Yorkers, respectively. The percent of Bangladeshi seniors was 2 percent in 2000 and the percent of Bangladeshi children was 29 percent. The age distribution for all
New Yorkers remained unchanged from 2000.

Females were less than half (45 percent) of the Bangladeshi community in the city, while citywide females were 52 percent. Both Bangladeshis and the general population had the same percentage of children (49 percent were female for both groups) and those age 18 to 34 years (48 percent for Bangladesh, 51 percent citywide) who were female. However, only 38 percent of Bangladeshis age 35 to 64 years and 48 percent Bangladeshi seniors were female, lower than the general population, where 52 percent of those age 35 to 64 years and 61 percent of seniors were female.

**Immigration and Citizenship**

Over the same time period, the Bangladeshi immigrant population declined from 23,157 to 20,663, a decrease of 11 percent, compared to 2 percent decline for the citywide Bangladeshi population. As a consequence, the percent of Bangladeshi Americans who were immigrants fell from 85 percent in 2000 to 74 percent in the most recent data. Contrast this decrease with the small increase in the share of immigrants from 36 percent to 37 percent among all New York City residents. However, using the Bangladeshi Alone data instead, the population of Bangladeshi immigrants grew from 16,146 in 2000 to 19,386 in the 2005-2007 ACS, at a rate of 20 percent.

Most Bangladeshi immigrants (84 percent) in New York City came to live in the United States in 1990 or later, a much higher percentage than immigrants in general (53 percent).

Of the city’s Bangladeshi immigrants surveyed in the ACS, 52 percent were naturalized citizens, compared with 51 percent of all New York City immigrants.

**Education**

Bangladeshi in New York City had similar education levels as the citywide population. In New York City’s Bangladeshi adult population, 21 percent did not have a high school diploma, same as citywide. In 2000, these were 27 percent for Bangladeshis and 28 percent overall. Also, 8 percent of Bangladeshis adults had less than a ninth-grade education, about the same as the 10 percent citywide rate. In 2000, these percentages were 13 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

At the other end of the spectrum, 51 percent of Bangladeshis had some form of post-secondary education, same as that for the city overall. The rate for Bangladesh in 2000 was similar at 52 percent while the general population rate was at 48 percent.

**Immediate Proficiency**

New York City’s Bangladeshi population had higher rates of limited English proficiency (LEP) than the general population. According to the ACS, 54 percent of Bangladeshis spoke English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all,” compared with the citywide LEP incidence of 23 percent. In 2000, the Bangladeshi LEP rate was higher at 60 percent while the rate citywide was 24 percent. More than half (59 percent) of working-age Bangladeshi adults (age 18 to 64) and 87 percent of elderly Bangladeshis had English limitations, compared with a quarter of all working adults and one-third of all seniors citywide.

**Poverty**

Bangladeshis were among the poorest Asian ethnic groups in the city. Overall, 31.7 percent of Bangladeshis lived below the poverty line, higher than the citywide rate of 18.9 percent. Among children, 42.4 percent of Bangladeshis lived in poverty – a higher rate than 27.8 percent for all children. The 22.8 percent poverty rate for Bangladeshi seniors was close to the 19.0 percent for all elderly New Yorkers.

**Income**

Bangladeshis in New York City had lower incomes than the general population. Bangladesh median household income of $34,034 was less than the citywide figure of $47,581. Median family income for Bangladeshis of $32,007 was below the $52,913 median income for families in general. Bangladeshi per capita income of $11,470 was lower than the citywide per capita income of $28,610.

**Housing**

Compared with the average New York City household size (2.67 people), Bangladeshis had much larger households (averaging 4.21 people). Bangladeshi
Bangladeshi Americans in New York City by Community Districts

Legend
- Surrounding Areas
- NYC Landmarks

Population of Bangladeshi Alone
- 0 - 499
- 500 - 1,499
- 1,500 - 2,531

Surrounding Areas
NYC Landmarks

Legend

Population of
Bangladeshi Alone

Staten Island

Produced by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center
Sources: 2005-2007 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Set, U.S. Census Bureau
households were more likely to live in crowded conditions. While 8 percent of households in general had more than one occupant per room, almost two in five (39 percent) of Bangladeshi households had more than one occupant per room.\(^1\)

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**Almost two in five Bangladeshi households had crowded conditions.**

Corresponding with overall New York City patterns, most Bangladeshi households rented. In the city, 73 percent of Bangladeshi households rented, compared with 66 percent for the city overall. Since Census 2000, homeownership has risen in New York City, from 15 percent to 27 percent among Bangladeshis and from 30 percent to 34 percent in the general population.

Bangladeshi households in New York City also were more likely to devote a large share of their income to housing expenses than households in general. Among homeowners, close to 83 percent of Bangladeshi households paid thirty percent or more of their household income to owner costs, compared with 40 percent of all households that owned.\(^1\) For renters, 66 percent of Bangladeshi households spent more than thirty percent of their household income on rent and utilities, compared with 49 percent of all households that rented.

**Footnotes**

1 Data sources used in this brief were the 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) Special Population Profile and the Census 2000 and are for the Bangladeshi Alone or in Any Combination category, unless otherwise noted. The 2005-2007 ACS represents a three-year period estimates and represents the best available data on small populations as of January 2009.

2 This profile will mostly use Bangladeshis Alone or in Combination data instead of the Bangladeshi Alone data, because the two sets of data were consistent aside from the population totals.

3 Data for Bangladeshis Alone only.

4 For education attainment, adults were defined as people age 25 or older.

5 Data based on Bangladeshis Alone only.

6 “Limited English Proficiency” refers to individuals who reported speaking English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all”.

7 Data based on Bangladeshis Alone only.

8 Families and individuals were classified as below the poverty line if their total family income or unrelated individual income over the last 12 months was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of household, and number of related children younger than 18 present for the year and month the data was collected. For these thresholds, please see http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2007/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf.

9 The small sample sizes for Bangladeshis in New York City resulted in large margins of error. As a consequence, statistical tests comparing the ACS poverty rates with Census 2000 poverty rates show no statistically significant difference between the two data sets. In short, the ACS data can not show whether poverty rates have changed since 2000.

10 Household income refers to the income of all occupants of a housing unit. Family income referred to the earnings of a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.

11 The commonly accepted definition of crowded housing is more than one occupant per room.

12 Selected monthly owner costs are the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property; real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities; and fuels. It also includes, where appropriate, the monthly condominium fee for condominiums and mobile home costs.

**Technical Notes**

**Race Categories**

Beginning with the Census 2000, the Census Bureau collects data in which respondents were allowed to mark more than one race. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. “Bangladeshi Alone” corresponds to the respondents who reported only Bangladeshi and no other race category. “Alone” should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

To be as inclusive as possible, this profile uses “Bangladeshi Alone or in Any Combination” numbers where possible. “Alone or in Any Combination” corresponds to the responses (not respondents) that included Bangladeshi, either alone or in any combination with other Asian groups or other race categories. If a respondent selected Bangladeshi and another racial group (e.g., Bangladeshi and black), that individual, while excluded from the “Bangladeshi Alone” count, was tallied in the “Alone or in Any Combination” count for Bangladeshi and the other racial group.

**American Community Survey**

As part of the redesign of the decennial census, the Census Bureau has implemented the American Community Survey (ACS) as the replacement for the Decennial Census Long Form. Instead of collecting Long Form data (demographic, housing, social, and economic information) once every ten years, the ACS will eventually supply communities at the local level with new data every year. In order to obtain sufficiently large number of samples for small populations, the ACS will make use of the concept of period estimates. For Census tracts, five-year period estimates will be updated annually starting in 2010. For communities with 20,000 or more people, annual three-year period estimates will be released at the end of each year beginning with 2008. Populations with 65,000 or more people will receive annual single-year estimates starting in 2006.

**About This Profile**

This is one of a series of Asian American population profiles prepared by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (CIC) to increase understanding of the rapidly-growing and diverse Asian American population in the New York metropolitan area. For more on the Federation, visit www.aafederation.org.

Data citations from this profile should include the following acknowledgment:

“Data derived from analysis by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center.”

For more information regarding this profile, please contact the Asian American Federation Census Information Center at (212) 344-5878 x19 or howard.shh@aafederation.org, or visit www.aafny.org/cic/.

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