



Census Profile: New York City's Bangladeshi American Population

Asian American Federation of New York Census Information Center

Introduction

Using data from the 2000 and 1990 U.S. censuses, this profile depicts traits and patterns among New York City's Bangladeshi population. It covers population size and growth, immigration, citizenship status, education, English ability, income, poverty, and housing. Comparisons with New York City's total population provide context.^{1 2}

Among highlights, census data show that New York City's Bangladeshi population more than quadrupled

Bangladeshi American Statistics at a Glance

Population	
2000 Alone or In-Combination Population in New York City	28,269
Population in Queens (as a Percentage of NYC Pop.)	18,310 (65%)
Population in Brooklyn	6,243 (22%)
Population in the Bronx	2,442 (9%)
Population in Manhattan	1,204 (4%)
Population in Staten Island	70 (0.2%)
1990 Population	4,955
Population Growth from 1990 to 2000	471%
Immigration	
Foreign-Born Population	23,157
Foreign-Born Percentage of Total Population	85%
Educational Attainment (Adults 25 and Older)	
Number of Adults Without a High School Diploma	4,517
Percentage of Adults Without a High School Diploma	27%
Limited English Proficiency (Speaks English "Well," "Not Well," or "Not at All")	
Total number	14,840
Percentage of Total Population	60%
Income	
Median Household Income	\$31,537
Median Family Income	\$29,231
Per Capita Income	\$10,479
Number of Households Earning Less Than \$20,000	2,040
Percentage of Households Earning Less Than \$20,000	31%
Number of Households Earning More Than \$100,000	472
Percentage of Households Earning More Than \$100,000	7%
Poverty	
Number of Individuals Living in Poverty	8,312
Percentage of Total Population Living in Poverty	31%
Number of Children (Under 18) Living in Poverty	2,984
Percentage of Children Living in Poverty	38%
Number of Elderly (Over the Age of 65) Living in Poverty	183
Percentage of Elderly Living in Poverty	35%



Union Square Park in Manhattan

from 1990 to 2000. Compared with New York City residents overall, in 2000, the Bangladeshi population had slightly higher educational levels but substantially less command of English, lower incomes, higher poverty rates and larger households.

Population

In 2000, the New York metropolitan area had the largest Bangladeshi population of any metropolitan region in the United States.³ About 95 percent of the Bangladeshi population in New York State lived in New York City as of the last census.

From 1990 to 2000, the Bangladeshi population in New York City experienced the greatest population increase percentage-wise for any Asian American group in the city. The 471 percent growth, from 4,955 to 28,269, far exceeded 9 percent for the city overall and 71 percent for the city's total Asian population.⁴ The addition of 23,314 Bangladeshi New Yorkers represented the third-largest numerical increase among Asian groups in the city in the last decade.⁵

The sixth-largest Asian group in New York City in 2000, Bangladeshis comprised more than 3 percent of the city's Asian population – up from 1 percent in 1990, when Bangladeshis were the city's ninth-largest Asian group.

Within the city, in 2000, the majority (65 percent, or 18,310) of Bangladeshis lived in Queens, followed by Brooklyn (with 22 percent, or 6,243); the Bronx (9 percent, or 2,442); Manhattan (4 percent, or 1,204); and Staten Island (0.2 percent, or 70).

By age group, 29 percent (7,839) of the city's Bangladeshi residents were children (age 17 and younger); 69 percent (18,865) were working-age adults (18 to 64); and 2 percent (520) were senior citizens (65 and older).

More than 80 percent of elderly Bangladeshi New Yorkers have limited English skills.

Immigration and Citizenship

The vast majority (85 percent, or 23,157) of New York City's Bangladeshi population in 2000 was foreign-born, compared with about one-third (36 percent) of all city residents.

Most Bangladeshi immigrants in New York City came to the United States in the last 20 years, with the greatest influx in the last decade, fueling recent population growth. Specifically, 77 percent (17,759) immigrated from 1990 to March 2000; 19 percent (4,410) came to this country from 1980 to 1989; and 4 percent (988) arrived before 1980.

Of the city's Bangladeshi immigrants counted in the 2000 census, 30 percent (6,759) were naturalized citizens, compared with 45 percent of all New York City immigrants. According to 2000 census data, 29 percent of foreign-born Bangladeshi New Yorkers who had immigrated in the last 20 years were citizens – a lower percentage than 31 percent of foreign-born residents city-wide.

Educational Attainment

Education levels for Bangladeshis in 2000 were similar to those for the general New York City population.

Of the city's total Bangladeshi adult population, more than one-fourth (27 percent, or 4,517) had not graduated from high school, compared with 28 percent of adults city-wide.⁶ Also, 13 percent (2,147) of all Bangladeshi adults in the city had less than a ninth-grade education, compared with 15 percent of all city adults.

At the high end of the educational spectrum, 52 percent (8,500) of Bangladeshi adults in New York City had some form of post-secondary education, compared with 48 percent of all city adults.

Most Bangladeshi children in the city (94 percent, or 5,749) were enrolled in the New York City public school system, surpassing 79 percent of all city children.

English Proficiency

New York City's Bangladeshi adults had considerably less command of English than adults city-wide in 2000. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) was most common among elderly Bangladeshis.⁶

The majority (60 percent, or 14,840) of Bangladeshi New Yorkers population spoke English "well," "not well" or "not at all," compared with 24 percent of all city residents. The LEP classification applied to 65 percent (12,341) of Bangladeshi working-age adults and 83 percent (431) of Bangladeshi senior citizens, compared with 25 percent of working-age adults and 27 percent of senior citizens throughout the city.

Income

By all Census 2000 income measurements, Bangladeshis in New York City had markedly lower incomes than the general New York City population.

Bangladeshi per capita income was \$10,479 – less than half of the city-wide figure (\$22,402). In addition, Bangladeshi median household income of \$31,537 and median family income of \$29,231 were lower than \$38,293 and \$41,887, respectively, city-wide.⁷

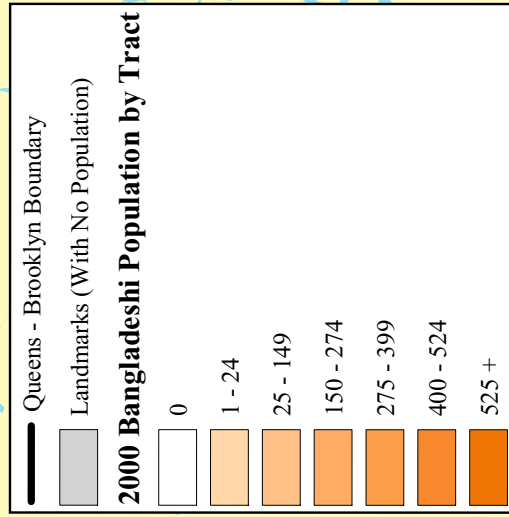
Poverty

Bangladeshis in the city experienced higher poverty rates than the total New York City population as of the 2000 census.⁸

Almost one-third (31 percent, or 8,312) of all Bangladeshis in the city lived below the poverty line, compared with 21 percent of all New Yorkers. By age category, 38 percent (2,984) of Bangladeshi children lived in poverty, compared with 30 percent of all city children. The poverty gap was greater for Bangladeshi senior citizens, of whom 35 percent (183) lived in poverty – nearly double the 18 percent rate for senior citizens city-wide.

The preponderance (94 percent, or 2,796) of the city's Bangladeshi children in poverty lived in two-parent families, compared with 34 percent of all city children below the poverty line.

2000 Distribution of the Bangladeshi American Population in New York City



Produced by the Asian American Federation of New York.
Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau Summary File One.
"Single Race Alone or in Combination" Category.

Housing

Bangladeshi households in New York City in 2000 averaged 4.19 people, far exceeding the general city population of 2.59. Higher occupancy of Bangladeshi homes suggests the necessity-based existence of multiple rent-payers in a housing unit, which could inflate household income artificially and indicate overcrowding.

According to the 2000 census, 85 percent of Bangladeshis in the city rented and 15 percent owned their homes, compared with 70 percent renters and 30 percent homeowners in the city overall.

Footnotes

¹ All numbers are from the Summary Files (SF) One, Two, Three and Four of the U.S. census. However, SF One and SF Two data refer to information collected from a 100 percent U.S. population survey while SF Three and Four data represent a sample survey.

² Rates and percentages for each section of this profile are derived from the data universe related to the topic at hand. Therefore, population tallies for one subject will not necessarily correspond with those for another topic.

³ In 2000, the New York metropolitan area had the largest Bangladeshi population in the United States (31,979). Smaller Bangladeshi populations lived in metropolitan areas for Washington, D.C. (3,364) and Los Angeles (3,057).

⁴ When compared with the “Bangladeshi Alone” category for the 1990 census, the Bangladeshi population increased by 286 percent (14,193).

⁵ For education tabulations, adults were defined as individuals age 25 and older.

⁶ Limited English Proficiency in this profile refers to individuals who spoke English “well,” “not well” or “not at all.”

⁷ Household income refers to the income of all occupants of a housing unit. Family income refers 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.

⁸ In the 2000 census, families and individuals were classified as below the poverty line if their total family income or unrelated individual income was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children younger than 18 present in 1999. For these thresholds, please see <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/threshld/thresh99.html>.

Technical Note

Race Categories

The 2000 census was the first decennial census in which respondents were allowed to mark more than one race. As a consequence, Census 2000 race information is far more complicated than such data from previous censuses. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. “Asian Alone” corresponds to the respondents who reported exactly one Asian group and no other

race category. “Alone” should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census 2000 data. To be as inclusive as possible, this profile uses “Asian Alone or in Any Combination” numbers.

“Alone or in Any Combination” corresponds to the responses (not respondents) that included the selected Asian group, either alone or in any combination with other Asian groups or other race categories. If a respondent selected an Asian group and another racial group (e.g., Bangladeshi and black), that individual, while excluded from the “Asian Alone” count, was tallied in the “Alone or in Any Combination” count for the Asian group and the other racial group. Hence, some overlap in the “In Combination” numbers occurred. “Alone or in Any Combination” should be considered the maximum population size in any analysis that uses Census 2000 data.

About This Profile

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

The Asian American Federation of New York, a nonprofit leadership organization that works collaboratively to meet the critical needs of Asian Americans in the New York area, was selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to operate the only Asian American-focused CIC in the Northeast. Established in 2000, the center provides census information, conducts data and policy analysis, and encourages census participation. For more information on the Federation, visit www.aafny.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

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

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