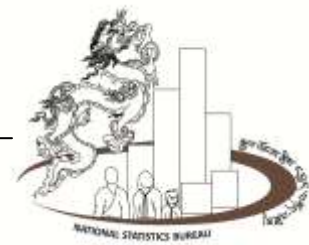




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POLICY CONCEPT NOTE – MICRODATA DISSEMINATION POLICY

1. Context and Background - Reason/Rationale for proposing a new policy.

As development activities progressed in the country the demand for reliable and timely socio economics data increased by manifolds. It was in 1971, during the formulation of the 3rd Five Year Plan, the statistical cell was established within the then Ministry of Development to cater to the planning data needs. Later in 1979 the cell was expanded and upgraded to a divisional status within the Planning Commission and was called the Central Statistical Office (CSO).

In order for the organization to perform more independently the CSO was detached from the Planning Commission Secretariat and was given an autonomy status and was designated as the National Statistics Bureau (NSB).

Under the decentralized statistical system, each ministry and agency were responsible for collecting their own sector specific data for policy and planning purposes.

Although in the current system, there are a number of statistical activities being carried out by various agencies, they are however mostly on adhoc basis and therefore have created a lot of data gaps and data inconsistencies. This has resulted in the duplication of efforts, waste of limited resources, respondent burden, and often leading to conflicting data estimates and confusions thereof. Availability of microdata will enable in the conduct of deeper policy specific research which will complement in coming up with appropriate intervention in the selected thematic areas.

“Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Happiness and Prosperity”, the vision document of the Royal Government of Bhutan, recognizes that in order to manage development, the process of change must take account of the need for up-to-date information required for forward analysis and informed decision-making. There is a need for concerted efforts to develop the national information systems and data base required to plan, monitor and evaluate the nation’s development, and to support informed decision-making. The Vision promotes the development of information dissemination for the benefit of the government offices, business community and the general public

What is microdata?

Microdata is a processed dataset pertaining to individual respondent units and their characteristics. Microdata can also mean administrative data although survey and census data are usually disseminated through the National Data Archiving System (NDAS).

Current Situation Analysis

In the absence of any policy data producers do not have clear policy/guidelines on disseminating microdata. The microdata is being disseminated by the data producers (agencies) based on the individual request without any uniformity and standards being followed; some



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agencies anonymize their data, while some do not anonymize at all in the absence of any clear policy/guidelines. There is no competent authority with clear procedures in place for data users to approach when microdata is required.

Numerous surveys and censuses as well as administrative data are collected by different agencies (Annex 1). The microdata is retained with the conducting agency and there is no proper modality of microdata sharing.

In order to facilitate uniform and standardized microdata dissemination through a data hub, therefore, microdata policy is deemed necessary.

Implications

1. Microdata is public resource and many researchers are not able to access the microdata in absence of proper dissemination policy leading to individuals conducting their own surveys resulting in waste of resources (time and money) and also leading to data duplication, and respondent burden and fatigue;
2. Published report without access to microdata limits the ability of further analysis on specific research interest of the users; and
3. No standard microdata format.

Limitation of current policy options and approaches

NSB functions through an executive order vide Com/04/06/1196 dated 26th May, 2006, but there is no clear direction on microdata dissemination.

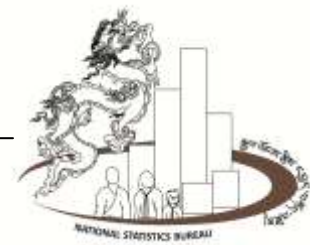
NSB disseminates microdata to the users within the prescribed mandate. However, NSB is not able to enforce microdata dissemination through a single window as our mandate does not encompass other agencies. Data collected by different agencies should be strictly for statistical purposes, and the identity and confidentiality of information of any individual respondent should be fully protected but data is not anonymized for dissemination by some agencies.



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2. Policy Recommendations

To facilitate uniform and standardized microdata dissemination through a data hub, the following are the specific policy recommendations:

1. Define the nature of the micro-data files that will be disseminated;
2. Formulate the terms and conditions under which these files can be accessed by users;
3. Develop microdata sharing mechanism among the data producers to the data hub;
4. Develop standard guidelines for microdata anonymization and microdata security;
5. Define periodicity for the release of microdata through Public Use File (PUF); and
6. Introduce nominal user fee for private individuals, NGOs and international organizations.

Cost

The major cost will be incurred for procurement of equipment to establish data hub and strengthening the technical skills of the personnel managing the data hub. The technical skills of the data producers from different agencies for data management and anonymization should also be strengthened. Technical assistance may be explored from external funding if required.

Benefits

1. One-stop data access point;
2. Standardized microdata set available;
3. Timely release of Microdata; and
4. Nominal revenue.

3. Integration of GNH and crosscutting issues

This policy is in line with the concept of GNH that provides clear direction for planning and monitoring of sector based programs and project based activities. The implementation of the policy will be mainly done through ICT which is a green initiative and cost effective. The microdata set contains all those information related to cross cutting issues like poverty, gender, climate change, population, health, education, ICT, environment, disaster etc. The use of this microdata by researcher, policy makers, planners, and private individuals will lead to better planning based on informed decision and the promotion of knowledge based society.

Microdata will help in coming up with targeted policy interventions at the lowest level which is not possible from published reports.

One of the GNH pillars is to promote balanced regional development. To promote this there is the need to understand the level of development in different parts of the country (by region/gender). Having microdata policy will enable the researchers and analyst to study the region specific issue in depth.



4. Process and Indicative timeline

Sl.	Activity	2016 (by months)						2017												
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Policy inception	■																		
2	Need assessment																			
3	Drafting of concept note																			
4	The submission of concept note to GNHC	■																		
5	Endorsement of concept note		■	■	■	■														
6	Drafting of policy and policy protocol								■	■										
7	Consultation of stakeholders										■	■								
8	Submission of draft policy to GNHC												■	■	■					
9	Endorsement of Microdata dissemination policy															■	■	■	■	■

Existing Legal Framework

Having reviewed most of the existing acts/policies, the proposed microdata policy do not contradict the existing acts/policies. However, few acts/policies highlights the importance of data confidentiality and sharing as presented in table in annex 2.

Identified Stakeholders

Stakeholders can be divided into two major categories: Data producers and data users; and the major data producers are the following:

1. All relevant government agencies;
2. Non-Governmental Organizations;
3. Corporations; and
4. Private agencies.

The major data users are the following:

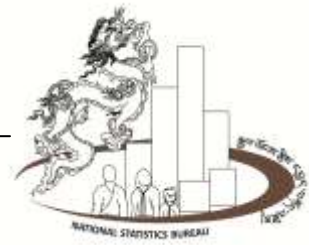
1. All government agencies;
2. Non-Governmental Organizations;
3. International development partners;
4. Private agencies; and
5. Individuals.



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5. Major impediments or risks foreseen in the development of the policy.

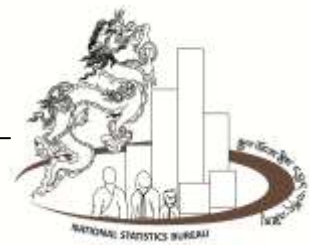
- (1) Poor coordination among various data producers;
- (2) Poor literacy on microdata use;
- (3) Difficulty in changing the mindset of the people;
- (4) Technical skills of the data producers; and
- (5) Harmonization of microdata formats.



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Annex 1

Sl.	Name of Census/Survey	Frequency	Disseminating Agency	Microdata dissemination (yes/No)	If Yes, in what format? (Anonymized: Yes/No)
1	Labour Force Survey	Annual	MoLHR	yes	yes
2	Job Prospecting Survey	Annual	MoLHR	yes	yes
3	Health Facility Survey	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
4	Patient Satisfaction survey	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
5	KAP Survey on HIV in Bhutan	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
6	KAP survey on Maternal and Child Health	Adhoc	MoH	yes	yes
7	IDD elimination survey	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
8	National Health Survey, 2012	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
9	Malaria KABP and Indicator survey	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
10	The First National Oral Health Survey	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
11	Bhutan NCD STEPS Survey 2014	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
12	National Nutrition Survey 2015	Adhoc	MoH	no	no
13	Bhutan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	Every 5 years	NSB	yes	yes
14	Bhutanese Weaver Survey 2010	Adhoc	NSB	yes	yes
15	Bhutan Living Standards Survey	Every 5 years	NSB	yes	Yes
16	National Integrity Assessment Survey	Every 3 years	NSB	yes	yes
17	Enterprise Survey	Adhoc	NSB	no	no
18	Population and Housing Census of Bhutan	Every 10 years	NSB	yes	yes
19	KAP Survey on Religious Personnel	Adhoc	NSB	yes	Yes
20	Youth Survey	Adhoc	NSB	no	No
21	GNH Survey	Every 3 years	CBS	no	no
22	Agriculture Survey	Annually	MoAF	yes	yes
23	Livestock Census	Annually	MoAF	yes	yes



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Annex 2: Referred 15 approved policies posted on the GNHC’s website and 30 draft policies for which the comments are closed.

Sl.	Act	Mention of data or possible conflict	Section/Article
1	CSAB 2010	Required to protect the wider public interest and confidentiality of the matter Maintain confidentiality of any info – duties of the Civil Servant	Sec 37 (g) Sec 44 (h)
2	Evidence Act of Bhutan 2005	Just mention of a need to prove with a copy of data compiled.	Sec 45
3	Penal Code of Bhutan 2011	Mention of secrecy of the official information only	Sec 35 (a)
4	Bhutan Information Communication Act of Bhutan 2006	Mention of data message. The reviewer not so clear of what does it really mean.	In many sections – need some more time to review this Act further
5	Policy Guidelines for Information Sharing Info sharing in between the public agencies	Mentions the need to share any Survey/Census data for any researches Specifies a need to develop a and data sharing security and data protection policy	Sec 2.1 Need to refer this guidelines more and find if there is any conflicting issues

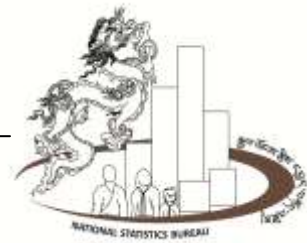
Sl.	Policy	Finding/Mention of data or possible conflict	Section/Article
1	Social Media Policy of the RGoB	Finding: Mentioned as an “Open Data.” Similarity in ways of providing and disseminating the data for Micro-Data and Open Data in here. Conflicting issues: Standard electronic format data to aggregate, disaggregate, or otherwise manipulate and analyze the data with that of standard/consistent data - anonymization.	Sec 6 (2)
2	Social Media Policy of the RGoB	Finding: Here, it broadly states the data accessibility and accountability though not specifically about as the Micro-Data Dissemination. Conflicting Issues: Both Micro-Data Dissemination Policy (MDDP) and the Social Media Policy are Government information.	Sec 4 (1)
3	Social Media Policy of	Finding: To make availability of timely and accurate information in the society. Similarly, the Policy Statement/objective of MDDP is	Sec (5)



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	the RGoB	also to have periodic information to the users. Conflicting issues: Both the policies - MDDP & SMP do have the Policy Statement/objectives of making the timely and accurate information to the society and users.	
4	Bhutan Telecom and Broad Band Policy	Finding: The MoIC to review any data collection and reporting arrangements for the achievement of the policy and plan goals Conflict Does MDDP needs to be reviewed by and consulted with the MoIC Need to consult the MoIC	Strategic Plan (E-10)
5	Evaluation Policy of the RGoB	Finding Data collection to maintain the highest level of the accuracy and precision and the most relevant measures and methodologies	Sec 3.81. Sec 6.7.1
