

DevInfo in Action

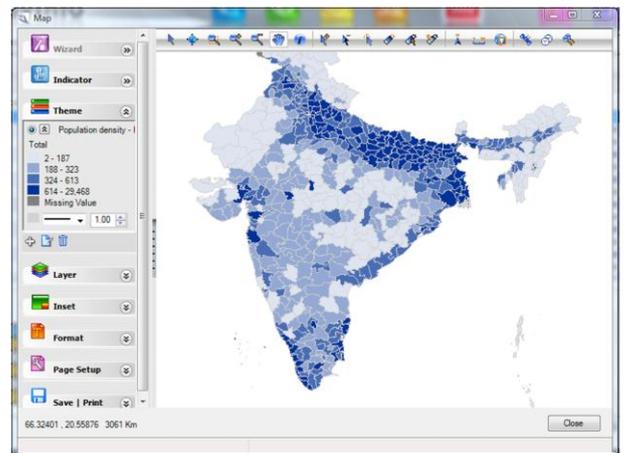
Asia: Using CensusInfo to Disseminate Census Data

With many countries in Asia having recently completed or in the process of completing their census data collection as part of the 2010 global round of censuses, officials are now grappling with the critical issue of how best to disseminate the mounds of tabulated data.

As part of a regional effort to share best practices and solutions to address this issue, statisticians from sixteen countries¹ across Asia convened in New Delhi, India from 28–30 November 2011 to discuss census dissemination strategies. Organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, this regional workshop focused on the use of the [CensusInfo](#) database application to facilitate user-friendly dissemination of census data.



Over the course of three days, participants were introduced to and trained in the use of CensusInfo database technology to accomplish this critical objective. This included learning how to create customized census databases with country-specific indicators and then subsequently retrieve the data to generate easy-to-share presentation materials, such as maps, reports, and population pyramid charts. Special focus was given to creating objects in such a way so as to facilitate getting a particular key message or story across, be it across time (trend analysis) or across sub-national regions (geographic analysis).



Sample output showing population density in India at the district level

Benefits of using CensusInfo

Given the many years of collective census experience represented in the workshop, participants were able to engage in substantive discussions on the benefits of using CensusInfo over traditional dissemination methods. For one, all participants agreed that sharing census data in a user-friendly and easily accessible format is key to any successful census, regardless of a country's population size.

Additionally, all agreed unanimously that one of the most useful software features lies in its mapping capabilities. Using CensusInfo, national statistics offices and other end users can greatly reduce their dependency on external GIS/mapping service providers, as the software can easily support customization of thematic maps at any geographic sub-level.

¹ The countries represented included Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey and Viet Nam.

Another software feature especially appreciated by participants was its adaptability and flexibility to serve the varied needs of a diverse end user base. From its customizable user interface to its ability to generate presentation objects with data coming from multiple sources, the versatility of the software ensures that the needs of both statisticians and end users can be adequately met.

Learning best practices from India

Besides all this, one of the most valuable components of the workshop was the experiences shared across countries, and in particular, learning from the best practices and experiences of the India delegation, which had just recently disseminated its preliminary 2011 census data via a [CensusInfo-powered online interactive dashboard](#).

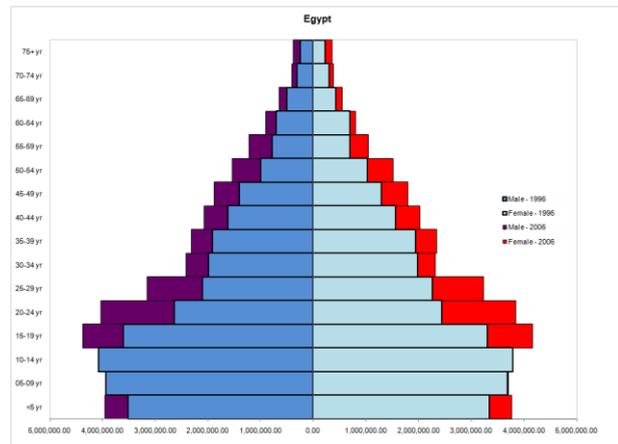
“A census is not complete until the data is disseminated and used,” declared Dr. C. Chandramouli, Registrar General of India. Even with the gargantuan task of processing household survey data for over one billion people still under way, the Government of India understood the need to get its preliminary census tabulations into the public domain as

soon as possible. According to Chandramouli, this had to be done not just using traditional methods but also via popular social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, to engage the broadest possible base of end users.

CensusInfo: “A complete package”

At the close of the workshop, Shantanu Gupta, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF India, stated, “With CensusInfo, a country team receives a complete package. There are terrific wizard and help features within the application, and technical backstopping is available as needed. The application also provides recommendations for all database elements from a global registry, which fosters greater data consistency across countries and regions.”

With a solid grounding in the CensusInfo tool as well as the fascinating exposure to India’s recent experience in putting this technology to work, participants emerged from the workshop with a much clearer road map of how to move ahead with effective national census dissemination in their own countries.



Sample output showing population growth by gender in Egypt from 1996 to 2006



Dr. C. Chandramouli, Registrar General of India, speaking at the workshop

Data making a difference.

For more information on CensusInfo, please contact Srdjan Mrkic, Chief, Demographic Statistics Section, United Nations Statistics Division, at mrkic@un.org.