= Banglapedia =

Banglapedia , or the National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh , is the first Bangladeshi encyclopedia . It is available in print , CD @-@ ROM format and online , in both Bengali and English . The print version comprises ten 500 @-@ page volumes . The first edition was published in January 2003 by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh , with a plan to update it every two years . The second edition was issued in 2012 .

Banglapedia was not designed as a general encyclopedia but as a specialized encyclopedia on Bangladesh @-@ related topics . For the encyclopedia 's purposes , Bangladesh is defined as the territory comprising ancient Eastern India , Suba Bangla , Shahi Bangalah , Mughal Suba Bangla , Bengal Presidency , Bengal Province , East Bengal , East Pakistan , and the independent Bangladesh , in historical succession .

The encyclopedia 's chief editor is Sirajul Islam . Over 1200 writers and specialists in Bangladesh and abroad helped create the entries . Banglapedia has over 5 @,@ 700 entries in six editorial categories , each of which is overseen by an expert editor , as well as over 2 @,@ 000 single and four @-@ colour illustrations and 2 @,@ 100 cross @-@ references .

The project was funded by the Bangladeshi government , private sector organizations , academic institutes and the UNESCO . Though its original budget was 800 @,@ 000 taka (roughly 10 @,@ 000 USD) , the Asiatic Society eventually spent 80 million taka (roughly 1 million USD) on the project . Despite controversies over entries on the Bangladesh Liberation War and indigenous people , both the Bengali and English versions became popular upon publication .

= = Development = =

The Banglapedia project originated when the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh was working on a three @-@ volume study titled History of Bangladesh , 1704 @-@ 1971 in 1991 . The editors felt the need for a standard desk reference , as that project progressed laboriously , culling facts from various libraries . The idea finally led to a concept paper prepared by Sirajul Islam and his colleagues and submitted to the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh in early 1994 . The Banglapedia project was formally adopted on 19 February 1997 , and Islam was appointed project director and chief editor . As the head of the Project Implementation Committee , his task was to plan and manage the project funding . In 1996 , some three dozen committees were formed with three to four people in each committee to recommend the entries . Twenty @-@ seven thousand entries were proposed , requiring a 20 volume compendium . Because of financial constraints , the number of entries was cut down to around 6 @,@ 000 . The project officially took off in 1998 .

When the project began , the Society had only eight hundred thousand taka in its coffers for the project . Banglapedia raised further contributions from universities , banks , multinational companies , international organisations and even private individuals . A pool of agencies , including UNESCO , the University Grants Commission , universities , financial institutions and NGOs initially financed the project , which was completed at a cost of taka 80 million . Education Ministry funded about 74 % of the cost , while 26 % of the fund came mostly from universities and banks . Before direct sales started on 3 January 2003 , 4 @,@ 000 copies of the English version and all but 250 copies of the Bengali version were sold in advance out of the initial print of 5 @,@ 000 copies for each versions . For an additional run of 10 @,@ 000 prints people waited in queues outside the Asiatic Society office on the day of the release , and sales continued until 9 : 30 in the evening . A total of 4 @,@ 500 sets of the Bengali version and 2 @,@ 500 of the English version were sold on the day of release .

= = History of Bengali language encyclopedias = =

The first attempt to compile a Bengali encyclopedia was undertaken by Felix Carey (1786 ? 1822) , who was the son of Reverend William Carey (1761 ? 1834) of Serampore and the first lexicographer of the Burmese language . In 1819 , he began the translation of the fifth edition of

Encyclopædia Britannica , naming it Vidyarthabali . From October 1819 till November 1820 the book was printed by Felix Carey every month in 48 @-@ page installments . Thus completed , the first part of Vidyarthabali was compiled into the 638 @-@ page Vyabachchedvidya , the first book on anatomy and surgery in Bengali . Work on the second part , Smritishastra , which was largely on jurisprudence , then began . But , Carey died after only two 40 @-@ page installments were printed in February and March 1821 .

It was followed by Maharaja Kalikirshna Dev Bahadur 's (1808 ? 1974) Sankshipta Sadvidyabali (1833) , a concise encyclopedia . Then came Raja Radhakanta Deb 's Sabdakalpadrum (1822 ? 1858) , a Sanskrit encyclopedic dictionary in eight parts . Next was Rajkrishna Ray (1849 ? 1894) and Saratchandra Dev 's (1858 @-@ unknown) joint work Bharatkosh , the first Bengali encyclopedia laid @-@ out in alphabetical order (1880 ? 1892) published in three volumes . Reverend Krishna Mohan Banerjee 's (1813 ? 1885) adaptation of Encyclopædia Britannica , Vidyakalpadruma or Encyclopædia Bengalensis (1846 ? 51) , and the 22 @-@ volume Bangla Visvakosh (1886 ? 1911) , edited by Nagendranath Basu (1866 ? 1938) with contributions from many major personalities of contemporary Bengal , were published next .

After the independence of Pakistan and the partition of Bengal in 1947 , there have been more attempts to compile and publish an encyclopedia . The first was a project to produce a Bengali adaptation of Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia by Franklin Book Programs Inc . , undertaken in 1959 and aborted ten years later . The unfinished papers were compiled into four unequal volumes as Bangla Visvacos (1972) with Khan Bahadur Abdul Hakim as the chief editor . After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 , three specialized encyclopedias were published - the multi @-@ volume Islami Bishwakosh (Encyclopedia of Islam , 1986) by Islamic Foundation Bangladesh , 5 @-@ volume Shishu @-@ Biswakosh (Encyclopedia for Children , 1995) by Bangladesh Shishu Academy , and 4 @-@ volume Vijnan Biswakosh (Encyclopedia of Science , 1998) by Bangla Academy .

= = Content = =

Banglapedia contains over 5 @,@ 700 entries , which are divided into six categories : arts and humanities , history and heritage , state and governance , society and economy , natural sciences , and biological sciences . The writing of each article was overseen by an expert editor .

Banglapedia was not designed as a general encyclopedia . Its purpose is to provide a standard desk reference for Bangladeshis , as well as for people interested in Bangladesh , Bengali @-@ speaking people , and related political , cultural and geographical contexts .

The encyclopedia 's editors intended to cover the rise of the Bengal Delta on the physical plane , and its evolution to date , and the changing features of the formation of the delta 's janapada or human settlements on the human plane . The latter includes the rise and fall of kingdoms , invasions from within and beyond and their implications , dynastic rules and administration , as well as other aspects of Bangladesh 's past and present . Entries on topics after 1947 are restricted to the geographical region of Bangladesh . However , for biographical entries , the linguistic identity prevails .

The range of topics covered by Banglapedia includes political geography , religion , literature , art and architecture , folk practices and institutions , indigenous and colonial administration , politics , society , economy , ethnicity , and the sciences . All 64 districts of Bangladesh , as well as 451 upazilas , have been described in details ranging from topographical accounts to the number of dairy farms and hatcheries . Over 2 @,@ 000 single- and four @-@ colour illustrations depict Bangladeshi art and architecture , everyday life , cities and villages and personages . It has about 2 @,@ 100 cross @-@ references , cartographic information , tables and statistics . It is laid out in alphabetical order and is prefaced by an essay by the Chief Editor . There is a section explaining how to use the Banglapedia , which clarifies issues such as date systems , contributors , cross references , and headings .

= = = Operational definition of Bangladesh = = =

According to the publisher , the goal of this reference tool is to inquire , interpret and integrate the lived experiences and achievements of the people of Bangladesh from ancient times to the present . The project , conceptually and territorially , interprets the term " Bangladesh " to mean successively ancient Eastern India , Suba Bangla , Shahi Bangalah , Mughal Suba Bangla , Bengal Presidency , Bengal Province , East Bengal , East Pakistan , and Bangladesh . The editor 's preface states :

From ancient times to 1971 , the political geography of the region has changed often , and with that its name has also undergone changes . The cognates of Vanga , Bangalah , Vangla , Bengal , Vangadesh , Vangladesh , etc. have the closest affinity both territorially and linguistically with the term Bangla . With the rise of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation state , the term has no doubt obtained a specific meaning . It may be noted here that the term Bangalah or Bengala , from which Bangla and Bengal originated , was coined and circulated by Muslim rulers whose seats of administration were located mostly within the present territory of Bangladesh .

= = Working team = =

Over 1 @,@ 200 writers and specialists contributed to the encyclopedia , one fifth of whom were foreign experts in Bangladesh or experts working abroad . They are mostly academics , as well as specialists in districts and upazilas for locality inputs and people from professions and occupations . District and upazila cartography has been processed at the Geographic information system (GIS) and cartographic laboratory set up for the Banglapedia . A gazetteer group was created to focus on districts and upazilas . The fact that around 400 local intellectuals were charged with writing about their respective zillas and upazilas was described as a unique approach to information gathering . In addition , 250 people worked in research management for seven years . A total of 2 @,@ 000 scholars and technicians were involved . There were 270 full @-@ time personnel on the project in all , with 35 to 40 people employed at any given time .

Sirajul Islam is the chairman of the Board of Editors of Banglapedia , and the editor of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh . A professor of history at the University of Dhaka , the oldest and largest university in Bangladesh , Islam gave up his day job five years before the formal date for retirement , to make time for Banglapedia . He also edited the 3 volumes of the History of Bangladesh (political , economic and socio @-@ cultural) , published by the Asiatic Society In 1991 . He is now working on the Children ? s Banglapedia and the Cultural Survey of Bangladesh , and is also in charge of the National Online Biography project of the Society and the Banglapedia Trust .

The encyclopedia was prepared by a board of editors that included Professor Sirajul Islam of the Department of History , Dhaka University , as the Chairman and Chief Editor , Professor Sajahan Miah of the Department of Philosophy , Dhaka University , as the Convenor and Managing Editor , Professor M. Aminul Islam as the Chairman of Project Implementation Committee , the Chairman of Fund Management Committee , and the Chairman of Cartography Committee , Professor Abdul Momin Chowdhury as the Chairman of Publication Committee , Professor S M Mahfuzur Rahman as the Convenor of Purchase and Procurement Committee , Shahida Alam as the Convenor of Public Relations and Communication Committee , and Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury as the Chairman of Multimedia Committee .

The management structure includes a total of sixty members , divided into six different sub @-@ committees headed by six subject editors . Each sub @-@ committee covered a particular discipline . There were six consulting editors , four language editors , and three translation editors . Each subject editor received assistance from six assistant and associate editors . Banglapedias subject editors were : Professor Abdul Momin Chowdhury (History and Heritage) , Professor Wakil Ahmed (Arts , Humanities , Religion) , Professor Mahfuzur Rahman (Society and Economy) , Dr Kamal Siddiqui (State and Governance) , and Professor S M H Kabir (Science and Technology) .

= = Electronic versions = =

The CD @-@ ROM version of Banglapedia has more entries than the print version , along with 65 video clips , 49 audio clips , 2 @,@ 714 images and thumbnails , and 647 maps . The audio clips include songs by Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam , while the video clips include Sheikh Mujibur Rahman 's speech on 7 March 1971 . Some images that appear in black and white in the print version are in color in the CD @-@ ROM version . Designed to run on Windows 98 , Windows ME , Windows 2000 and Windows NT , the CD @-@ ROM version includes about 70 @,@ 000 links and an option to create a personal " favorite list " .

Banglapedia has had several online addresses , some are no longer authorised by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh .

= = Controversy = =

Controversy over Banglapedia broke out even before publication , when the Inqilab group , a major Bangladeshi newspaper publishing house , got hold of a few entries on religion and related issues . There have also been complaints about an omission of Jamaat @-@ e @-@ Islami 's activities during the Bangladesh Liberation War . A study by Bdnews24.com , a news portal , claimed that Banglapedia is biased and inaccurate about Bangladesh 's indigenous population . The encyclopedia is also reported to have used derogatory coinage such as Mogh for Marma and Rakhine , Tipra for Tripuri and Murang for Mros , as well as upajati (literally " sub @-@ nation " , used to mean " tribal ") to define them all . Leaders of the indigenous community , including Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council member and Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti leader Rupayan Dewan and General secretary of Adivasi Forum Sanjib Drong , have endorsed the study 's findings . Chief editor Islam acknowledged the complaint and promised to amend the second edition accordingly .