

# STATUS OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS IN SOUTH ASIA COUNTRIES

2018

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**STATUS OF CIVIL REGISTRATION  
AND VITAL STATISTICS IN  
SOUTH ASIA COUNTRIES**

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# Foreword

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Being registered at birth is a human right. UNICEF likes to call birth registration a “passport to protection”, because it prevents exclusion and violations of many civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Each birth registered is a chance for a child to access health services or education, to obtain a passport – and later on to join formal employment, or to open a bank account for example. It is also the first step to help prevent child marriage, recruitment by armed forces or groups in a conflict, illegal adoption, statelessness, being trafficked or treated as an adult in the criminal justice system.

As part of civil registration, it is necessary for all vital events to be registered, and in particular births, deaths, and marriages. This continuous and permanent registration supports not only the individual but their descendants, providing basic biographical identity information, family connections and the place of origin.

At the national level, quality vital statistics are essential for a State’s efficient and effective governance. States must know their population in order to appropriately plan, develop policies and services and allocate resources. Incomplete demographic information distorts the reality and often it is the most vulnerable that are not counted – thereby leading one to underestimate further violations of rights.

Countries in South Asia are committed to realising complete civil registration. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, all countries commit to birth and death registration. Across the region, countries are working to end child marriage, and have recognised the importance of birth and marriage registration to attain this goal.

The *Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in South Asia Countries* provides a comprehensive review of the current registration practices in the region. It provides a baseline to measure progress in the structure of the registration systems, identifies some areas for reform, and can be used to identify solutions found in one country that may be useful in another.

It is our responsibility to use every opportunity to better protect children, and civil registration is a very important avenue for that. I am confident that this publication will contribute to our joint efforts to attain universal civil registration in South Asia.



**Jean Gough**  
**Regional Director**  
**UNICEF South Asia**

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# Acronyms

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<b>a2i</b>	Access to Information (Bangladesh)	<b>DGHS</b>	Directorate General of Health Services (Bangladesh)
<b>ACCRA</b>	Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority	<b>DHIS2</b>	District Health Information System 2
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank	<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and health surveys
<b>AFIS</b>	Automated Fingerprint Information System	<b>DNR</b>	Department of National Registration (Maldives)
<b>BBS</b>	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	<b>DoCR</b>	Department of Civil Registration (Nepal)
<b>BCRS</b>	Bhutan Civil Registration System	<b>EPI</b>	Expanded programme on immunization
<b>BRIS</b>	Birth Registration Information System (Bangladesh)	<b>EVAW</b>	Elimination of violence against women Law (Afghanistan)
<b>BRN</b>	Birth Registration Number (Bangladesh)	<b>HMIS</b>	Health Management Information System (Afghanistan)
<b>CBS</b>	Central Bureau of Statistics	<b>ICD</b>	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems
<b>CC</b>	Community Centre (Bhutan)	<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technologies
<b>CRS</b>	Civil Registration System	<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>CRVS</b>	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics	<b>MCCoD</b>	Medical certification of cause of death
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization	<b>MICS</b>	Multiple indicator cluster surveys
<b>DCRC</b>	Department of Civil Registration and Census (Bhutan)		
<b>DCRCO</b>	Dzongkhag Civil Registration and Census Office (Bhutan)		



<b>MIS</b>	Management information system	<b>PCMA</b>	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (India)
<b>MMDA</b>	Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (Sri Lanka)	<b>RBD</b>	The Registration of Births and Deaths Act (India)
<b>MoFAGA</b>	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (Nepal)	<b>SAIEVAC</b>	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
<b>MoHCA</b>	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (Bhutan)	<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>MoHFW</b>	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Bangladesh)	<b>SRS</b>	Sample Registration System (India)
<b>MoIA</b>	Ministry of Interior Affairs (Afghanistan)	<b>TCRCO</b>	Thromde Civil Registration and Census Office (Bhutan)
<b>MoLGRD</b>	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (Bangladesh)	<b>UID</b>	Unique Identification Number
<b>MoPH</b>	Ministry of Public Health (Afghanistan)	<b>UNESCAP</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
<b>NADRA</b>	National Data Base Authority (Pakistan)	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>NDO</b>	National Database Organization (Pakistan)	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>NIC</b>	National identity card	<b>UT</b>	Union Territory
<b>NPR</b>	National population register (India)	<b>VA</b>	Verbal Autopsy
<b>NSO</b>	National statistical office	<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>ORG</b>	Office of the Registrar General (Bangladesh)	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# Executive summary

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Birth registration, the official government record of a child's birth, establishes the existence of the child under law and provides the foundation for safeguarding many of the child's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child specifies that all children have the right to be registered at birth without discrimination. UNICEF emphasizes the central role of birth registration in ensuring that children are counted and have access to basic services such as health, social security and education.

UNICEF strategic actions are geared towards strengthening national child protection systems in order to reduce the obstacles of registering every child at birth, and to register marriages. Actions in support of registration include: legal and policy reform; civil registry strategic planning, capacity building and raising awareness; community-based registration and social mobilization campaigns; and specific for birth registration, its integration into other services such as health and education. Innovative approaches are also used, including SMS technology and support to governments to develop online birth registration information systems. In South Asia, UNICEF has set ending child marriage as a regional priority. Birth and marriage registration is one action that can support the ending of this harmful practice.

Since birth, death and marriage registration policies, systems and procedures vary country by country and across regions, there is a need to ensure these differences are documented and understood for policy, programming and data collection purposes.

To address these gaps in knowledge, UNICEF is facilitating the documentation of policies and procedures for birth, death and marriage registration to gain insight into country specific structural barriers and incentives for registration in countries of South Asia. The objective of this report is to document the policies, systems and procedures in place for the registration of births, deaths and marriages in the region.

In particular, the report focuses on documenting the following points:

- i. The legal framework for civil registration, its compliance with the principles of civil registration and the procedures for registering births, deaths and marriages;
- ii. The organization of civil registration;
- iii. The availability of the civil registration system and its proximity to the population, particularly in remote areas;
- iv. The cost of registration, which is a barrier to universal registration in several countries;
- v. The minimum age of marriage, including its derogations, which has an impact on the continuing child marriage practice;
- vi. The information collected via civil registration and its compliance with the recommended topics of the *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a vital statistics system*; and
- vii. Coverage of the civil registration system.

Following the declaration adopted at the November 2014 Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok, Thailand, many South Asia countries conducted comprehensive assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems. This exercise led stakeholders to a greater understanding of the urgent need to reform and improve CRVS systems. As an outcome of the assessments, several countries developed or are in the process of developing CRVS strategic plans with the assistance of international organizations such as UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO). Typical strategic actions include revising the legal framework, establishing a central civil registration agency, developing a network of local registrars, engaging communication operations to raise public awareness and developing IT tools to improve the quality of civil registration.

All countries reviewed in this report have a legal framework for civil registration, with the exception of Bhutan for which there is reference to “birth registration” in the Bhutan Citizen Act. However, some legal frameworks are incomplete, and do not cover all the items aforementioned. In particular, the establishment of vital statistics is usually not mentioned in the legal acts. The definition of vital events is rarely provided and in compliance with international definitions, leading to possible biases.

The legal age for marriage is 18 years or older for both men and women in only three of the countries under review. Child marriage (under 18), without parental or court consent, is still permitted for girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka an even lower age of marriage is allowed with parental and/or court consent for girls, and child grooms are legal in Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Across the region, 30 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married before the age of 18. The three countries with the highest rates of child marriage are Bangladesh (59 per cent), Nepal (40 per cent) and Afghanistan (35 per cent).

The organizational structures for the efficient management, operation and maintenance of the system might be centralized or decentralized. A centralized system relies on being managed at the national level, with subnational offices at appropriate local levels. Decentralized systems are those where the primary responsibility for civil registration and local vital statistics rests with subnational authorities, such as governments of states or provinces. In the case of decentralized systems, a national organization would establish national standards and guidelines to be applied uniformly and compile overall statistics for the country from the data provided by the subnational entities. In South Asia, only Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka have a centralized civil registration system. However, even in countries where the civil registration system is decentralized, a national agency is responsible for setting standards of practice. Nevertheless, federal countries where civil registration is under the responsibility of the states face discrepancies in the process of registration, including different fees.

The *UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System* sets out the topics or variables to be investigated for vital statistics purposes through the civil registration system for each vital event. The list of recommended topics is structured around two collection priorities: higher priority or core topics, and less urgent or additional topics.<sup>1</sup> The *UN Principles and Recommendations* endorses four basic variables that are collected in all countries – date of occurrence, date of registration, place of occurrence, place of registration. In contrast, compliance in the collection of core topics on marriage is better than for death which is better than the case of live births. In particular, information of high value for monitoring reproductive health – for example, presence of an attendant at birth or weight at birth – are missing in many countries.

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<sup>1</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014, paras. 60–62.

Constraints and bottlenecks remain and hinder the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in general and the identification of the population in South Asia. These include: lack of knowledge or understanding of the civil registration process among large sections of the population; insufficient staff numbers and among them relatively low qualification levels; insufficient number of civil registration centres to adequately serve remote populations; lack of computerization of the civil registration procedures, to mention a few.

It is therefore necessary to support South Asia countries to develop and strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems, in particular by considering civil registration of all vital events instead of focusing only on registration of births or deaths, and to help countries to build sustainable systems.

# 1 Background

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Many people in Asia and other regions of the world are born and die without leaving a trace in any legal record or official statistic, and without attaining the right to a recorded name and nationality.<sup>2</sup>

Civil registration is defined as the “continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population, as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements in each country.”<sup>3</sup>

According to United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) data, the birth registration rate for children under 5 in South Asia based on data available between 2006 and 2016 was 60 per cent, significantly lower than the world average of 71 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

The advantages of a well-functioning civil registration system are not only apparent in times of conflict and post-conflict. In peacetime, such a system provides the foundations of good governance. Effective civil registration enables effective government planning. It provides better government service delivery at lower unit cost; it supports the implementation of age-related legislation and protects against family separation; and it helps to reduce issues of statelessness and risk of conflict over issues of nationality.

Within the domain of public health, information obtained from civil registration and vital statistics is critical, allowing tracking of individual births and building profiles of mortality and causes of death.

Registration of births and deaths supports vital statistics, efficient government planning, effective use of international aid, and monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 16, “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” includes as target 16.9, “...to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030.” Goal 17, “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” aims at increasing significantly the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data. It includes as target 17.19.2 the proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years, and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration.

Marriage registration systems enforce and often specify exceptions to a country’s minimum age to marry, potentially protecting children from early marriage. In many countries, marriage registration is also a prerequisite for transferring benefits between current or former spouses.

The absence of a comprehensive and integrated civil registration system has been, and continues to be, a hindrance to development efforts. It prevents countries from improving the efficiency of their public services and data needed to support development programmes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bringing an end to poverty and hunger, and to child marriage; promoting quality education,

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<sup>2</sup> Setel, Philip W et al., ‘A scandal of invisibility: Making everyone count by counting everyone’, *The Lancet*, vol. 370, 3 November 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *The State of the World’s Children 2017*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930-7, December 2017.

gender equality and the advancement of women; reducing infant mortality and improving maternal health or combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases, requires available and reliable statistics on fertility, mortality and causes of death, mainly from the use of vital statistics. This explains the crucial importance of permanent and complete registration of vital events and the link with the national institutes of statistics.

Civil registration has become a major concern on the Asian continent. The Asia and Pacific CRVS Decade (2015–2024) was proclaimed at the ‘Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific’, which was held in November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand. At that meeting governments also adopted the Ministerial Declaration to ‘Get Every One in the Picture’ in Asia and the Pacific and made a commitment to focus their efforts on improving CRVS systems. Through the declaration of the Asia and Pacific CRVS Decade, governments gave a timeframe of 2015–2024, for all people in Asia and the Pacific to benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development. In May 2015, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted Resolution 71/14 on the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015–2024.

UNICEF is particularly involved in supporting birth registration as a component of its actions regarding child protection. Birth registration, the official recording of a child’s birth by the government, establishes the existence of the child under law and provides the foundation for safeguarding many of the child’s civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child specifies that every child has the

right to be registered at birth without discrimination. UNICEF stresses that apart from being the first legal acknowledgement of a child’s existence, birth registration is central to ensuring that children are counted and have access to basic services such as health, social security and education. Knowing the age of a child is central to protecting her/him from child labour, being arrested and treated as adults in the justice system, forcible conscription in armed forces, child marriage, trafficking and sexual exploitation. A birth certificate as proof of birth can support the traceability of unaccompanied and separated children and promote safe migration. In effect, birth registration is their ‘passport to protection’.

UNICEF is a member of the South Asian Coordinating Group for Ending Violence Against Children (SACG), a network of UN agencies, NGOs and other actors working together to coordinate actions against violence against women and children in South Asia. UNICEF is fully involved in supporting the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2015–2018).<sup>5</sup> The plan supports the Kathmandu Call for Action<sup>6</sup> adopted by the regional intergovernmental body, South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC). Within this plan, birth and marriage registration are considered necessary in the efforts to end the practice of child marriage, something that is further reflected in national and subnational action plans to end child marriage.

UNICEF has two simultaneous strategies for ending child marriage: to change attitudes and behaviours and to establish structures, institutions and social norms that uphold the aspirations of all girls and boys. UNICEF has five approaches to bring about these changes:

- i. Increase agency and resources for adolescents – especially girls – at risk of and affected by child marriage;

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<sup>5</sup> South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia (2015–2018), SAIEVAC, Kathmandu, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, Kathmandu Call to End Child Marriage in South Asia, SAIEVAC, Kathmandu, 2014.

- ii. Enhance legal and development policy frameworks to protect the rights of adolescent girls and boys;
- iii. Use robust evidence for advocacy, programming, learning and tracking progress;
- iv. Enhance systems and services that respond to the needs of adolescents at risk of, or affected by, child marriage; and
- v. Increase investment in girls, and shift the social expectations of girls and boys (including by engaging women and men).<sup>7</sup>

UNICEF strategic actions are geared towards strengthening national child protection systems in order to reduce the obstacles to registering every child at birth and to registering marriages. Actions in support of birth and marriage registration include: legal and policy reform; civil registry strategic

planning, capacity building and raising awareness; community-based registration and social mobilization campaigns; and the integration of birth registration into other services, such as health, social protection and education. Innovative approaches are also used, including information and communication technologies and support to governments to develop online birth registration information systems.

Since birth, death and marriage registration policies, systems and procedures vary by country and across regions, there is a need to ensure these differences are documented and understood for the purposes of policy, programming and data collection. To address these gaps in knowledge, UNICEF is facilitating the documentation of policies and procedures for birth, death and marriage registration to gain insight into country specific structural barriers and incentives for registration in South Asian countries.

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<sup>7</sup> UNICEF-ROSA, Ending Child Marriage: Progress report, access at: <[www.unicefrosa-progressreport.org/childmarriage.html](http://www.unicefrosa-progressreport.org/childmarriage.html)>

# 2 Civil registration system

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## 2.1 Definition of the civil registration system

“A system of civil registration includes all institutional, legal and technical settings needed for the performance of civil registration functions in a technical, sound, coordinated and standardized manner throughout the country, considering the cultural and social circumstances particular to that country.”<sup>8</sup>

The principal purpose of civil registration – and the reason why it must be facilitated by the State – is to serve as an institution capable of disclosing facts relating to civil status based on technical legal principles. It is a means through which individuals can be assured of the legitimacy and authenticity of civil status related facts in order to accredit them to other individuals or the administration itself by means of public registration documents known as ‘certifications’. The purpose of registration activity and of the registration method – i.e., the collection and compulsory, continuous and permanent recording of civil status data for storage – is precisely to ensure its possible subsequent use in any eventuality and at any time when there is a need to prove its veracity and legality authentically and with the necessary guarantees.<sup>9</sup>

A comprehensive civil registration system has a number of statistical advantages over other means of obtaining vital statistics. Such a system generates records that are relatively free from certain types of response errors and that are not subject to sampling errors. It provides statistical data for

planning, administration and research at whatever geographical or administrative level required and is, by nature, continuous – once the system is established, statistics can be obtained at a relatively low cost because they are now the by-product of an administrative process. The system can record data that might be difficult to obtain in a field inquiry, such as weight at birth or cause of death. It also provides an inventory of events that can be evaluated against census data and other records, and used as a starting point for more in-depth studies of fertility, morbidity and mortality.

## 2.2 Vital events recommended for registration

According to the *UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System*, the vital events that are recommended for inclusion in a civil registration system are the following: live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, annulments, separation (judicial), adoption, legitimation, recognition.<sup>10</sup>

Not every country records all vital events or publishes the statistics for registered events, although this remains an ultimate goal. Some countries do not yet have the means or feel the need to register each kind of vital event. To facilitate the establishment or the improvement of the civil registration system, an order of registration priority is assigned to vital events. Those of higher priority are live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages and divorces. Top priority should be given to live births and to deaths because they are basic to the assessment of population growth as

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<sup>8</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014, p.65.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

<sup>10</sup> See definitions of vital events, *ibid.*, p.4.



well as the health of the population. They also provide direct protection for the holders of the certificate. Recording foetal deaths and their characteristics should be granted the next highest priority, especially because of their value to understanding fertility, fecundity and pregnancy outcomes.

## 2.3 Principles of the civil registration system

Civil registration is defined as the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population, as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements in each country.<sup>11</sup>

**Compulsory:** A country's civil registration system must be compulsory in order to assure its smooth operation and effectiveness. While it is necessary for every country to establish a law on registration, it must be noted that the existence of such a law is not a sufficient condition for ensuring that the general public reports the occurrence of vital events. Registration as compulsory has to be linked to the imposition of some form of penalty on those who fail to comply, i.e., failure to register the occurrence of a vital event should be punishable by law. Since penalties for failure to comply with registration laws may not always be invoked and penalties may also be a deterrent to registration, it is imperative that there be a legal basis for prosecution to ensure general compliance with the registration law. Thus, a legal framework for civil registration is fundamental to its operation as a coherent, coordinated and technically sound system.

The compulsory nature of civil registration may be in conflict with birth registration as a child right. In

some circumstances the registration of a birth – or indeed of a marriage or a death – would be in conflict with the best interest of the child when it could lead to discrimination or stigmatization of the child. To safeguard against such possibilities, UNICEF advocates for registration to be made compulsory only when all of the other principles and good practices are in place.

**Universal:** In order to ensure that maximum value is derived from the registration system by both individuals and users of vital records and statistics information, registration requirements must apply to the entire population of the country, independent of geographical location or population subdivision. This implies that the service needs to be accessible throughout the country and to all population groups, be they citizens or not. To reach universal birth registration UNICEF advocates for it to be free of cost. There are several other UN bodies that have adopted statements on free birth registration and identify charges for late registration as counterproductive and a hindrance to registration.<sup>12</sup>

**Continuous and permanent:** The continuity and permanence of the registration method requires the existence of an agency of sufficient administrative stability to ensure its operation is not limited by the factor of time. Permanence of the system is a requirement for the continuity of registration and vital statistics data, which is necessary for a meaningful understanding of both current figures as well as trends in vital statistics measures.

**Confidential:** Through the civil registration method, a variety of information is collected about individuals within the population. For this reason access to the registry must be strictly controlled. In certain situations, especially those involving conflict and/or ethnicity, mistrust over confidentiality can be one reason why people may choose not to register a vital

<sup>11</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> General Assembly Resolution A/HRC/22/L.14/Rev.1 (2011); General Assembly Resolution, 'Human Rights in the Administration of Justice' (2012); *UNICEF Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (2007).

event. In such cases, programmes should review the structure of the registration system, legislative acts that govern it, and the protocols for data transmission to ensure that confidentiality is guaranteed. The design of birth certificates is an important factor in this regard and should include only the minimal amount of personal information in order to protect individuals from unnecessary risk.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.4 Use of vital statistics from a civil registration system

Civil registration is the main source of data necessary for a reliable, continuous, permanent and quality system of vital statistics. The information recorded in the civil registration system of a country serves as the basis for its system of population statistics.

Vital statistics and their subsequent analysis and interpretation are essential for setting targets and evaluating social and economic plans. These would include the monitoring of health and population intervention programmes and the measurement of important demographic indicators of levels of living or quality of life such as expectation of life at birth and the infant mortality rate. Among the demographic uses of vital statistics are the preparation of population estimates and projections, studies of mortality, fertility and nuptiality, and the construction of life tables that are important measurement indicators of developmental progress.

Vital statistics are preferably obtained through a civil registration system, as this is the ideal source from which to derive accurate, complete, timely and continuous information on vital events. In addition, vital statistics derived from the civil registration system (and the population registers) can include annual flow statistics from the smallest civil divisions, which no other data-collection system can provide.

Vital statistics, either by themselves or through linkage with other sources, provide information for use in planning, monitoring and evaluating government programmes on public health and on improvement of maternal and child health and other government programmes. Vital statistics derived from civil registration will constitute the only nationally representative source of information on mortality by cause of death, provided that civil registration is universal, continuous and permanent. Such information is invaluable for the assessment and monitoring of the health status of a population and for the planning of adequate health interventions.

Birth, death and marriage rates and data on family size and composition are important sources of the information needed in planning related to public housing. The trends in the birth and marriage rates are indicators of future housing needs and size of the school population and data on those trends are essential in planning for provision of school facilities, as well as for teacher training.

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<sup>13</sup> A Passport to Protection: A guide to birth registration programming, UNICEF, New York, December 2013; Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and trends in birth registration, UNICEF, New York, December 2013.

# 3 Objectives of the report

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This report aims to document the policies, systems and procedures in place for the registration of birth, death and marriage in South Asia.

The report's objectives are to:

- Present information on the birth, death, and marriage registration policies, systems and procedures of each country obtained through a desk review and a series of semi-structured interviews with UNICEF staff in country and regional offices, representatives of other UN agencies, relevant stakeholders and civil registration experts;
- Present information validated by relevant government officials within each country either directly or through UNICEF country offices;
- Compile copies of sample birth, death and marriage registration documents for each country;
- Deliver a final report that summarizes findings and the data collection process;
- Identify problems and barriers related to registration of births, deaths and marriages in required time, costs, procedures, distances, etc.

The only vital events this report considers are births, deaths and marriages, which are the most important ones for the constitution of a civil registration system according to the UN *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System*.

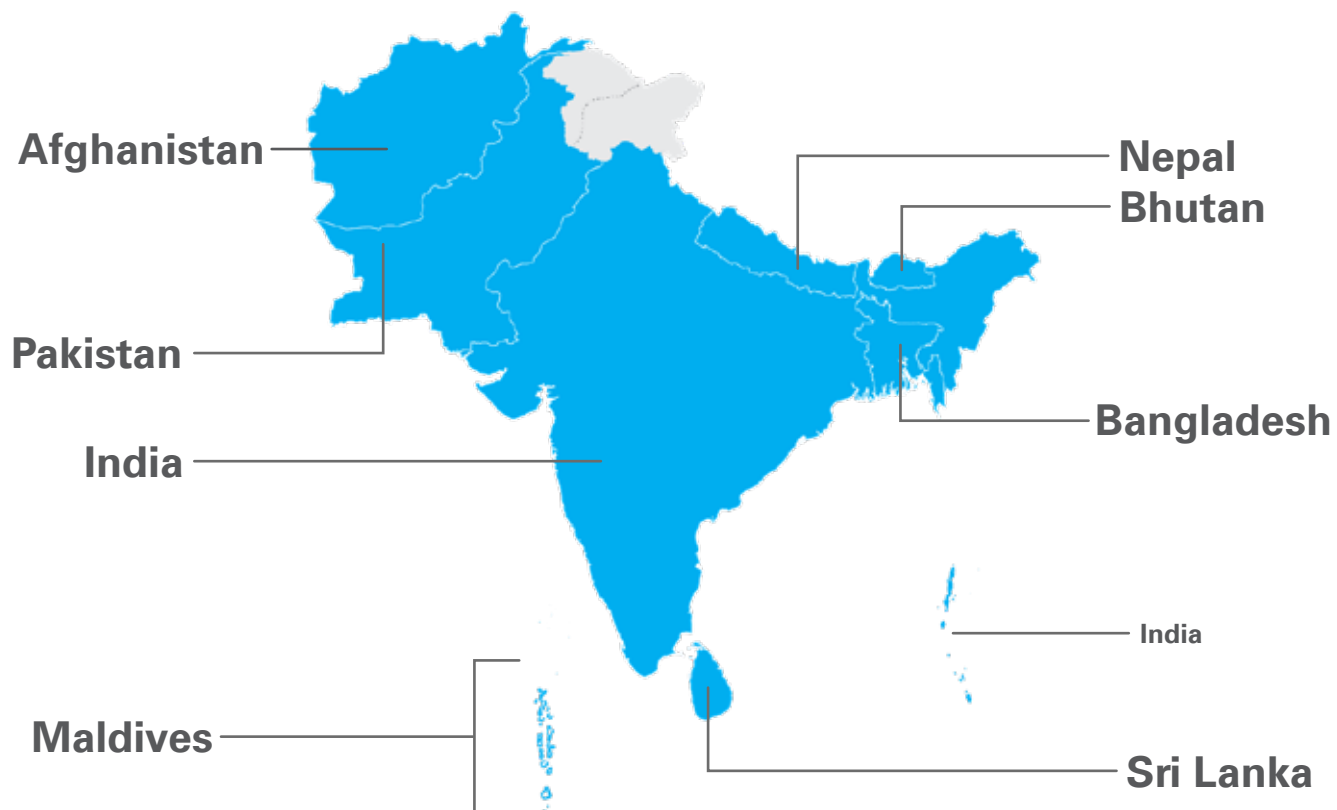
In particular, the report focuses on the following points:

- The legal framework for civil registration, its compliance with the principles of the civil registration system as described above, and the procedures for registering births, deaths and marriages;
- The organization of civil registration, centralized or decentralized, which institution oversees civil registration;
- The availability of the civil registration system and its proximity to the population, particularly in remote areas;
- The costs for registration, which in several countries is a barrier to universal registration;
- The minimum age at marriage, including its derogations, which has an impact on the issue of child marriages;
- The information collected via the civil registration and its compliance with the recommended topics of the UN Recommendations;
- The coverage of the civil registration system.

The report covers the eight countries of the South Asia region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The report begins with an overview of the civil registration systems in the region followed by profiles for each of the countries under review.

**Figure 1:** Countries covered in this report



*The maps in this infographic are stylized and not to scale. They do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line between Jammu and Kashmir represents approximately the Line of Control agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the Parties.*

# 4 Methodology

## 4.1 Overall approach

In order to gather the most relevant and recent information, a desk review was conducted of documentation found on the Internet or provided by informants including laws or acts providing the legal framework for civil registration and recently conducted CRVS assessments. Additional documents, such as samples of registration forms and certificates, were also collected.

A meeting of civil registration professionals of South Asia, co-hosted by UNICEF and UNESCAP in Kathmandu in July 2018, offered an opportunity to check the information gathered with representatives of the institutions in charge of civil registration and to request additional documentation.

UNICEF country offices were asked for assistance when it was difficult to get a contact and for final validation of the profiles on CRVS developed for their respective countries.

## 4.2 Sources of Information

The main sources of information are international organizations and national institutions:

- At global and regional levels:
  - o UNICEF regional office;
  - o UNESCAP

- o The Demographic Statistics Section in the UN Statistics Division is in charge of developing the *UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System* and supporting countries in their implementation. It has developed an accessible online knowledge base comprising documents related to country practices, including descriptions of the civil registration system of some countries.

- At national level:
  - o National Registration Offices (ministries of health, interior affairs, justice); public institutions in charge of civil registration provided detailed information on procedures as well as samples of registration documents. The UNICEF-UNESCAP meeting of civil registration professionals held in Kathmandu in July 2018 offered an opportunity to obtain information from representatives of national civil registration institutions.
  - o National Statistical Offices, which usually collect civil registration data to produce vital statistics.
  - o UNICEF country offices, to provide information and review the report.

This report is expected to be a working document updated over time to note changes in CRVS in South Asia countries or to improve upon information relayed for each country.

**Disclaimer:** The information collected from the civil registration authorities was checked as much as possible against the civil registration acts and forms when available and controlled by the UNICEF country offices. It may, however, include some errors independent of the goodwill of the consultant and UNICEF validators.

# 5 Overview of national civil registration and vital statistics systems in South Asia countries

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## 5.1 'Get Every One in the Picture'

The 2014 Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok, Thailand, adopted a Ministerial Declaration, 'Get Every One in the Picture', and proclaimed 2015 to 2024 the 'Asia and Pacific CRVS Decade'. The Ministerial declaration outlines the commitment of governments to a shared vision that by 2024 all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development.

Through the UNESCAP Commission Resolution 69/15, countries in Asia and the Pacific requested that further regional action be taken to support the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems. The Regional Action Framework contains 3 goals, 15 nationally set targets, 7 action areas and 8 implementation steps for countries to improve

their CRVS systems. The Regional Action Framework facilitates collaborative action at local, provincial, national and international levels by enabling multiple stakeholders to align and prioritize their efforts, and to monitor progress towards achieving shared results.

Following the adoption of the ministerial declaration, many South Asia countries have conducted a comprehensive assessment of their CRVS system (Table 1), and stakeholders are now more acutely aware of the urgent need to reform and improve CRVS systems. As an outcome of the assessments several countries developed, or are in the process of developing CRVS strategic plans with the assistance of international organizations such as UNICEF and WHO. Typical strategic actions include: revising the legal framework, establishing a central civil registration agency, developing a network of local registrars, engaging communication operations to raise public awareness, and developing IT tools to improve the quality of civil registration.

**Table 1:** Implementation steps (selection)

Country	National CRVS coordination mechanism	Comprehensive assessment	National targets	National CRVS strategy
Afghanistan	●	●	●	●
Bangladesh	●	●	●	●
Bhutan	●	●	●	●
India	●	●	●	●
Maldives	●	●	●	●
Nepal	●	●	●	●
Pakistan	●	●	●	●
Sri Lanka	●	●	●	●

● Complete   
 ● In progress   
 ● Not started   
 ● No information

**Source:** - 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country-profiles](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country-profiles)>. Last accessed, 5 September 2018.  
 - UNICEF country offices

## 5.2 Legal basis for civil registration

Civil registration is defined as the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population, as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements in each country.<sup>14</sup>

According to the *UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System*, the legal framework should:

- i. Assign the functions of establishing, operating and maintaining a national vital statistics system to a governmental agency or agencies so as to guarantee the production of basic vital statistics and their primary analysis and dissemination;
- ii. Provide clear designation of duties and responsibilities with respect to registration, recording, reporting, collection, compilation, analysis, evaluation, presentation and dissemination of data;
- iii. Establish an appropriate organizational structure or structures for the efficient management, operation and maintenance of the system;
- iv. Link the production of vital statistics to the civil registration system; and
- v. Designate a central government agency or agencies to be responsible for the maintenance of standards in the design and conduct of the various operations through which vital statistics are collected, compiled, processed, published and disseminated.

<sup>14</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014.

All countries reviewed in this report have in place a legal framework (Table 2) except for Bhutan where the only reference to birth registration is made in the Bhutan Citizen Act. However, some legal frameworks are incomplete, and do not cover all the items aforementioned. In particular, the establishment of vital statistics is usually not mentioned in the legal acts. The definition of vital events is rarely provided and in compliance with international definitions, leading to possible biases.

Time allowed to register a birth varies considerably from seven days in the Maldives to one year in Bhutan. Most of the countries apply fines, or increased fees, for late registration. Registration of births and deaths is usually free, while registration of marriages is subject to fees in all the countries except Nepal (Table 2).

**Table 2: Legal frameworks for civil registration**

Country	Legal framework for birth and death registration	Legal obligation to register within ...			Fines for late registration		
		Live births	Deaths	Marriages	Live births	Deaths	Marriages
Afghanistan	Law of 2014 on Registration of Population Records (revised in 2017).	3 months (free of charge)	3 months (free of charge)	Immediately (30 days when marriage abroad) (fees apply)	No	No	No
Bangladesh	The Births and Deaths Registration Act, 2004, entered into force on 3 July 2006. Last amended in 2013. Rules formulated in 2018.	45 days (free of charge)	45 days (free of charge)	30 days (fees apply)	Yes	Yes	No
Bhutan	Bhutan Citizen Act, 1977 (births)	1 year (free of charge)	No (free of charge)	Yes (fees apply)	No	Not applicable (no legal obligation to register a death)	No
India	The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 (Act No. 18 of 1969)	21 days (free of charge)	30 days (free of charge but fees in some states)	No (fees apply)	No (fees apply)	No (fees apply)	No
Maldives	Law on birth registration and death certification, enacted in 1993	7 days (fees apply)	No (free of charge)	Immediately (2 or 6 months when marriage abroad) (fees apply)	Yes	Not applicable	No
Nepal	Birth, death and other personal events registration act, 1976	35 days (free of charge)	35 days (free of charge)	35 days (free of charge)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pakistan	National Data Base Authority Ordinance 2000, Provincial Government Ordinances 2001 and the Cantonments Ordinance 2002	1 month (free of charge, except in Baluchistan)	60 days (free of charge)	No (fees apply)	Yes	Yes	No
Sri Lanka	Births and Deaths Registration Act No. 17 (1951), amended 2008	3 months (free of charge)	3 months (free of charge)	Immediately (fees apply)	Yes	Yes	No



## 5.3 Legal age for marriage

Table 3 shows the legal age at marriage (with and without parental consent) for men and women. Child marriage (under 18), without parental consent, is still allowed for women in Afghanistan and Pakistan but is also frequently observed in the other countries (Figure 2).

With 30 per cent of women aged 20-24 who married before the age of 18, child marriage is a concern in all countries in the region.

**Table 3: Legal age at marriage**

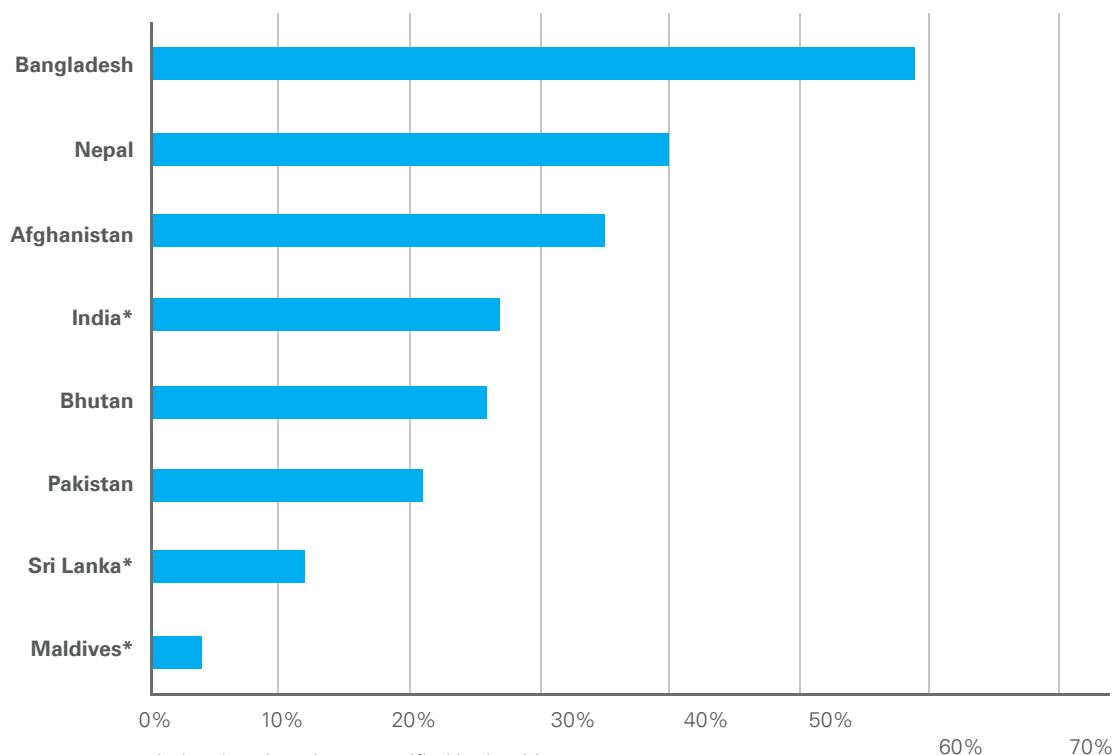
Country	Girls	Girls with parental consent/Court approval	Boys	Boys with parental consent/Court approval
Afghanistan	16	15	18	-
Bangladesh	18	No minimum	21	No minimum
Bhutan*	16	-	18	-
India	18	-	21	-
Maldives**	18	Puberty	18	Puberty
Nepal	20	-	20	-
Pakistan				
Punjab	16	-	18	-
Sindh	18	-	18	-
Hindu marriages	18	-	18	-
Sri Lanka***	18	No minimum for Muslim marriages	18	No minimum for Muslim marriages

\* But according to the guidelines for issuance of marriage certificate between a Bhutanese and a foreign spouse 2015 the legal age of marriage in Bhutan for both men and women is 18 years.

\*\* Under the Family Act, children under the age of 18 can get married at the court if he or she has reached puberty and has received a special permission from the court.

\*\*\* The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA), which regulates Muslim marriages, does not set a minimum age of marriage.

**Figure 2:** Proportion of women 20-24 who married before the age of 18 (2010–2016)



\* Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the title.

**Source:** UNICEF website, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>. Last accessed 27 October 2018.

## 5.4 Organization

A system of civil registration includes all institutional, legal and technical settings needed for the performance of civil registration functions in a technical, sound, coordinated and standardized manner throughout the country, taking into account the cultural and social circumstances particular to that country.<sup>15</sup> Depending on the judicial, political and administrative structures of a country, as well as its tradition, the system may be either centralized or decentralized.

A centralized administration of civil registration has a central agency with national responsibility for directing, coordinating and monitoring civil registration work. An office with such duties can promote national standards and uniform registration of all vital events occurring within the country and among all population

groups. Under the central arrangement, the national registration agency plays both an administrative and technical role over the network of subnational and local civil registration offices. It establishes local registration offices, provides written materials to local registrars to guide their daily work, coordinates the registration procedures throughout the system, and supervises and evaluates the registration work of the local offices.<sup>16</sup> The central office is responsible for coordination with other relevant governmental agencies, including the health services, courts, and statistical service.

In a decentralized system, the primary responsibility for civil registration and local vital statistics rests with subnational authorities, such as governments of states or provinces. In the latter situation, a national organization would establish national standards and guidelines to be applied uniformly and compile

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., para. 284.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Management, operation and maintenance*, UN, New York, 1998, para. 12.

overall statistics for the country from the data provided by the subnational entities. Many countries with a federated political system, a large territory or a large population have adopted a decentralized administration for civil registration.<sup>17</sup> In general, such countries have made provisions for outlining a model law and its regulations so that each major civil division may promulgate its own laws and regulations but in close conformity with the recommended model. There needs to be an agency at the national level to enforce minimum standards and to ensure uniform

practices of civil registration and comparable vital statistics throughout the country.<sup>18</sup>

In South Asia, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka have centralized civil registration systems (Table 4). However, even in countries where the civil registration system is decentralized, a national agency is responsible for setting standards of practice. Nevertheless, federal countries where states are responsible for civil registration face discrepancies in the process of registration, including different fees.

**Table 4: Organization of civil registration**

Country	Organizational structure	Agency responsible for:		Location of primary registration units
		Registration of births and deaths	Registration of marriages	
Afghanistan	Centralized	Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA)	Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA)	Office of Registration of Population Records in the provinces, districts, municipality districts, border ports and airports
Bangladesh	Decentralized	Office of the Registrar General	Ministry of Justice (Registration Directorate) appoints the licensed marriage registrar	Total 5,029 registration offices (4,571 union councils, 319 municipalities, 15 cantonment boards and 124 zonal offices of 11 city corporations). Overseas there are 53 registrar offices in Bangladesh missions in 42 countries
Bhutan	Centralized	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC)	Royal Court of Justice	Community Centre (CC), Dzongkhag Civil Registration and Census Office (DCRCO), Thromde Civil Registration and Census Office (TCRCO), DCRC, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, (MOHCA)
India	Decentralized	Office of the Registrar General	Registrar of Marriage/Marriage Officer, who is generally the District Magistrate	Municipalities, district (Depends on the State)
Maldives	Centralized	Ministry of Health Department of National Registration	Family court	2 hospitals (both in capital city Malé, 6 Regional Hospitals, 13 Atoll Hospitals, 168 Health Centres. 189 Island Councils, 19 Atoll Councils
Nepal	Decentralized	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Department of Civil Registration.	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Department of Civil Registration.	Ward office or rural municipality office
Pakistan	Decentralized	National Data Base Authority (NADRA)	National Data Base Authority (NADRA)	Local Union Council
Sri Lanka	Centralized	Registrar General's Department	Registrar General's Department	District Registrar's Division

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Management, operation and maintenance*, Revision 1, UN, New York, 2018, para. 43.

<sup>18</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014, para. 311.

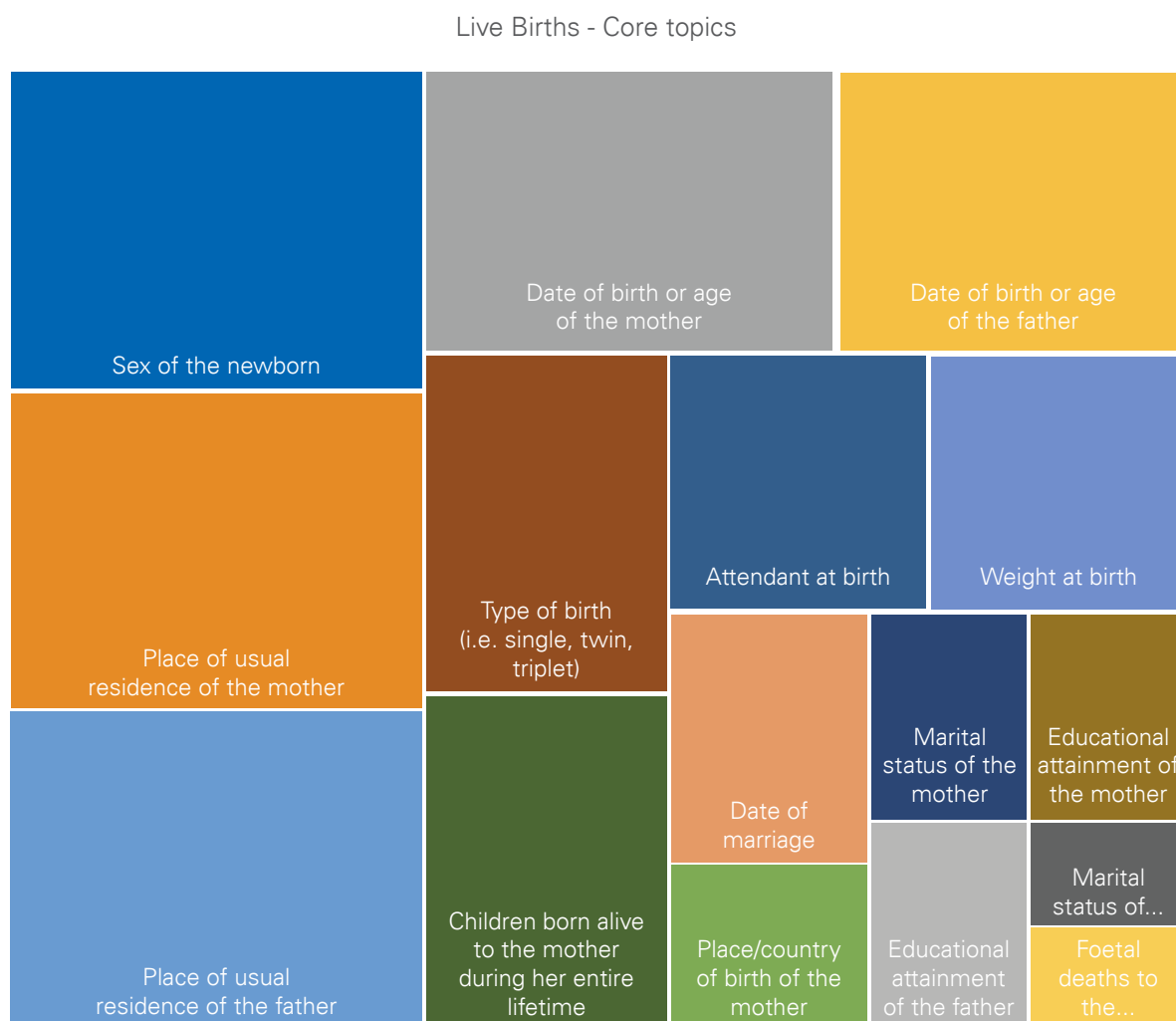
## 5.5 Information collected for vital statistics purposes

The *UN Principles and Recommendations* sets out the topics or variables that are to be investigated for vital statistics purposes through the civil registration system for each vital event. The list of recommended

topics is structured around two collection priorities: higher priority or core topics and less urgent or additional topics.<sup>19</sup>

Table 5 shows the topics that countries collect via their civil registration system, and Table 6 the level of compliance with the UN recommended core topics.

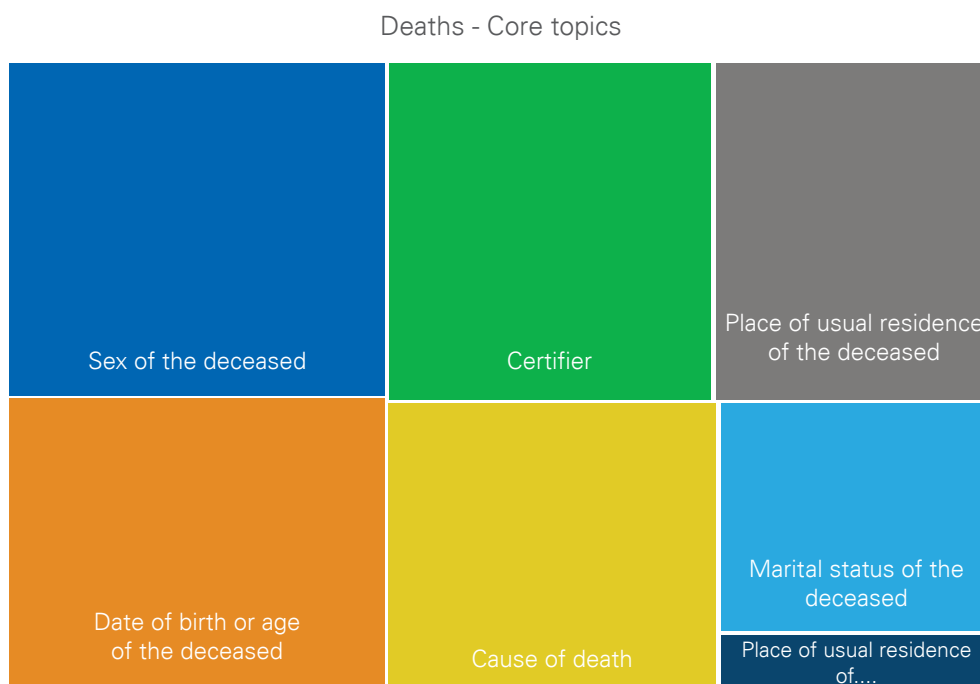
**Figure 3: Relative importance of core topics for live birth registration in South Asia countries**



The area for each topic in the Figure is directly proportional to its frequency among the countries.

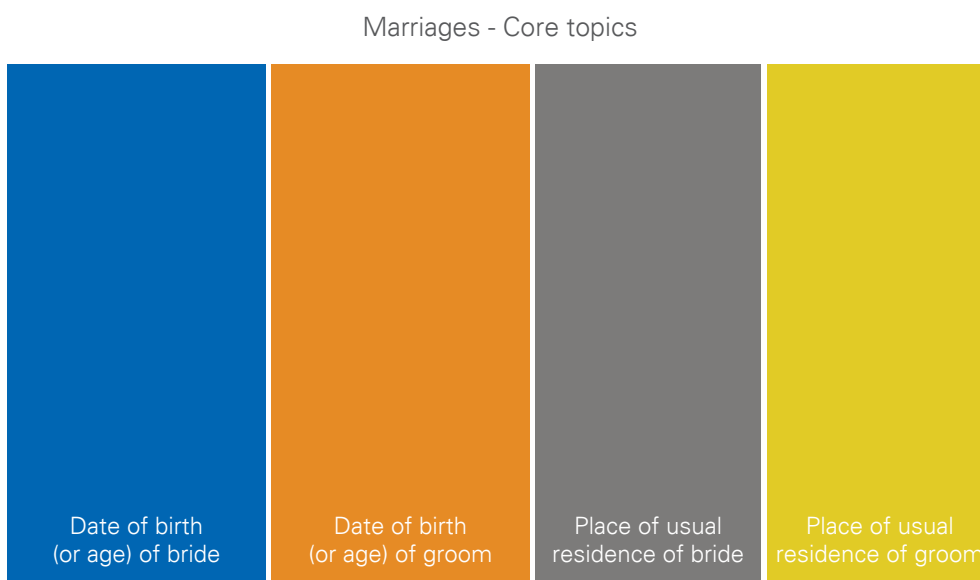
<sup>19</sup> *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, UN, New York, 2014, paras. 60–62.

**Figure 4:** Relative importance of core topics for death registration in South Asia countries



The area for each topic in the Figure is directly proportional to its frequency among the countries.

**Figure 5:** Relative importance of core topics for marriage registration in South Asia countries.



The area for each topic in the Figure is directly proportional to its frequency among the countries.

**Table 5: Information collected at registration (UN core topics)**

Topic	Countries	Number of countries
<b>Characteristics of the event</b>		
Date of occurrence	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Place of occurrence	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Date of registration	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Place of registration	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
<b>Live birth</b>		
Type of birth (i.e. single, twin, triplet)	Afghanistan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka	5
Attendant at birth	India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan,	4
Sex of the newborn	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Weight at birth	India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka	4
Date of birth or age of the mother	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	7
Marital status of the mother	Maldives, Sri Lanka	2
Educational attainment of the mother	India, Nepal	2
Place of usual residence of the mother	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Duration of residence in usual place		0
Place/country of birth of the mother	Bangladesh, Sri Lanka	2
Children born alive to the mother during her entire lifetime	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal	5
Foetal deaths to the mother during her entire lifetime	Maldives	1
Date of last previous live birth		0
Date of marriage	Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka	3
Date of birth or age of the father	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	6
Marital status of the father	Sri Lanka	1
Educational attainment of the father	India, Nepal	2
Place of usual residence of the father	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
<b>Death</b>		
Cause of death	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka	6
Certifier	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	7
Sex of the deceased	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Date of birth or age of the deceased	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Marital status of the deceased	Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal	4
Place of usual residence of the deceased	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka	6
Place of usual residence of the mother (for deaths under 1 year of age)	Maldives	1

**Table 5 Continued:** Information collected at registration (UN core topics)

Topic	Countries	Number of countries
<b>Foetal death</b>		
Sex of the foetus	India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	4
Date of birth or age of the mother	India, Maldives, Sri Lanka	3
Children born alive to the mother during her entire lifetime	Maldives	1
Foetal deaths to the mother during her entire lifetime	Maldives	1
Date of previous live birth to the mother		0
Date of marriage of the mother		0
Place of usual residence of the mother	India	1
Date of birth or age of the father	Maldives	1
Place of usual residence of the father	Maldives	1
<b>Marriage</b>		
Date of birth (or age) of bride	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Place of usual residence of bride	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	7
Date of birth (or age) of groom	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	8
Place of usual residence of groom	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	7

**Table 6 :** Number of UN recommended topics, by country.

Country	Number of recommended topics			
	Live birth (18 topics)	Death (7 topics)	Foetal death (9 topics)	Marriage (4 topics)
Afghanistan	7	5	0	2
Bangladesh	7	5	0	4
Bhutan	3	5	0	4
India	10	5	3	4
Maldives	12	7	6	0
Nepal	12	5	0	4
Pakistan	6	3	1	4
Sri Lanka	11	5	2	4

## 5.6 Quality

One of the most useful indicators of the status of a civil registration system is the measure of completeness of registered vital events. Whereas regular surveys such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys

(MICS) give the percentage of children registered in the 0-5 age group, there is less information related to the coverage of death registration and even less for marriage registration.

**Table 7:** Estimated completeness of birth registrations for children under 5 years, methods of assessment and year of latest assessment.

Countries	Percentage of children 0-5 registered	Assessment method	Year of latest assessment
Afghanistan	42.3%	DHS	2015
Bangladesh	20.2%	DHS	2014
Bhutan	99.9%	MICS	2010
India	79.7%	NFHS-4	2015–2016
Maldives	92.5%	DHS	2009
Nepal	56%	DHS	2016
Pakistan	33.6%	DHS	2012–2013
Sri Lanka	97.2%	DHS	2006–2007











# 6 Information by country

## 6.1 Afghanistan

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/afghanistan](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/afghanistan)> Last accessed 9 August 2018.

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	37% (2015)	80%
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	41% (2015)	85%

**Source:** - 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/afghanistan](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/afghanistan)>. Last accessed 9 August 2018.  
 - Implementing the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific National Progress Update Template, UNESCAP, 3 March 2016.

#### Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO

## Brief history of CRVS in Afghanistan

Registration of vital events has been practiced inconsistently in Afghanistan since 1878. After the end of the Taliban regime (in 2001), the government started to revitalize the system for registration of five vital events (birth, death, marriage, divorce and migration).

The laws governing CRVS in Afghanistan were reviewed in 2014 and 2017. The legislation provides that civil events such as births, deaths, marriage and divorce are to be reported with births and deaths to be registered within three months. There are currently no penalties for non-reporting and the registration of civil events is not widely practiced by the population.

## CRVS system

The Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA) is responsible for the collection of civil registration events, including marriages and divorces. The ACCRA system is centralized. There are registration offices in 364 districts for which ACCRA provides supervision and training in birth and death registration. There are districts in some provinces that are still unable to provide civil registration services due to their deteriorated security situation.

Birth registration predominates at health centres. The current registration rate is around 42 per cent for children under 5 years of age.<sup>20</sup> One of the difficulties for registering births that occur in a health facility is naming the child. Traditionally families choose a name for the new born child in a ceremony attended by relatives and close friends of the parents. This means the child born at a health facility may not have a name to be documented in the birth registration form and the birth document that the child should take away while leaving the health facility. The health facility either keeps the document till the family chooses

a name and returns to complete the registration process or hands over the registration form with the name part blank. In most cases the families do not come back to health facility to complete the process. For those who have the completed registration document they complete the process and certification by taking the form to ACCRA local unit for final sign off. In addition, infrastructure in Afghanistan is poor, and many centres lack direct road connections. Some usable roads may be blocked by snow for long periods in winter further hampering access to the local population. The security situation also makes it difficult to provide consistent services of high quality.

Not much death registration takes place and cause of death data is often not recorded accurately. The community leader or a non-professional registrar can certify deaths occurring outside a hospital and certificates are not required for burial or the claiming of pension or heritage services. Verbal autopsy is not widely used. The International Classification of Disease is not used routinely in the recording of cause of death.

The registration system is mainly paper based. Registration forms, an original and two copies, are available at the local registration centres and are filled by the registrars. When the form is completed the registrar issues the birth certificate and gives it to the parents. The registrar files one copy at the registration centre and the second copy is sent to relevant district in a monthly batch.

## Child marriage

The legal age of marriage is 16 years for women and 18 years for men under the Afghan Civil Code. However, in extenuating circumstances, the father of a girl or a competent court can 'consent' to the marriage of a girl who is 15 years.

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<sup>20</sup> Central Statistics Organization (CSO), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and ICF, 2017, *Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey 2015*, CSO, January 2017.

According to UNICEF, 9 per cent of women aged 20–24 are married by the age of 15 and 35 per cent by the age of 18.<sup>21</sup> The 2009 Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) Law criminalizes child marriage but this law is still not strictly enforced. On 19 April 2017, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Ministry of Information and Culture launched a ‘National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage’, which supports birth and marriage registration as essential to end this harmful practice.

Afghanistan also endorsed the 2014 Kathmandu Call to Action to End Child Marriage in Asia, of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and committed to ensure access to legal remedies for child brides and establish a uniform minimum legal age of marriage of 18. Afghanistan also supported the inclusion of a specific target to end child marriage in the Global Goals for Sustainable Development under Goal 5 on gender equality.

### **Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011)**

*“While noting some progress made in 2009 to increase birth registration, the Committee is however concerned that the majority of children remain unregistered. The Committee also expresses concern about the situation of children born out of wedlock, who may be deprived of their right to birth registration.*

*The Committee draws the attention of the State party to the fact that birth registration is an essential means of protecting children’s rights, in particular protecting children against early marriage, child labour, premature enlistment in the armed forces or, if accused of a crime, prosecution as an adult, and that the lack of a birth certificate may prevent a child from receiving health care, social assistance, and enrolment in*

*school. It urges the State party to take all necessary measures to ensure that all children, including children born out of wedlock, are properly registered at birth.”<sup>22</sup>*

### **CRVS assessment**

UNICEF started discussing the revitalization of birth registration with the Ministry of Interior Affairs in 2002 and since 2003 has assisted the government to improve birth registration systems and structures. This has included support for national immunization day campaigns in 2003 and 2004, putting together comprehensive plans for training modules with instructions for registration, a manual of work procedures and computerization of the process. In 2011, UNICEF recruited an NGO to measure the effectiveness of new systems and identify areas for further improvement, and in 2013 carried out a rapid and comprehensive CRVS assessment, as part of the development of Afghanistan’s 10-year CRVS plan<sup>23</sup> in coordination with WHO.

In 2012, the Health Management Information System (HMIS) Department of the Ministry of Public Health, with the collaboration of WHO, the Ministry of the Interior Affairs and the Central Statistic Organization, conducted a comprehensive assessment of the CRVS system against international standards in order to identify areas for improvement. The comprehensive CRVS assessment demonstrated that the Afghanistan CRVS system required substantial improvement in all areas. The following are some of the main challenges:

- Strategic framework: There were no strategic documents to reflect the vision, mission, goal, objectives, targets and action plan for the long-term implementation of CRVS in Afghanistan.
- Legal framework: The legislation required further review and enforcement.

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *The State of the World’s Children 2017*, UNICEF, December 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Fifty-sixth session, 17 January–4 February 2011, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 44 of the Convention, Concluding observations: Afghanistan.

<sup>23</sup> As part of the CRVS initiative in Asia and the Pacific, countries in the region, facilitated by UNESCAP since 2013, were tasked to conduct CRVS rapid and comprehensive assessments and use the findings to develop a 10 year CRVS plan. Afghanistan completed both assessments and the findings informed this CRVS plan for the country.

- Weak political support: Due to years of war and conflict and competing aid priorities there has been little attention given to the development of a national CRVS system. There was also little public awareness of the importance and benefits of registration.
  - CRVS system structure and organization: The CRVS system needed to be strengthened at district level, with the provision of more offices. These offices also needed to be adequately funded so that regular supplies and equipment can be provided. The introduction of mobile technologies needed to be carefully and judiciously considered.
  - Resources and capacity for implementation: There was a need for greater supervision, training and financial support for the CRVS system.
  - Quality of registration: CRVS forms, tools and procedures for the collection, analysis and dissemination of CRVS data needed revision.
  - Certification of births and deaths: Data remained inaccurate and of poor quality. Reports were often incomplete and not submitted in a timely manner for the publishing and dissemination of results. The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) is not always used routinely in death certification and coding rules are not routinely followed.
  - Lack of coordination: There was poor coordination and collaboration between those responsible for civil registration and vital statistics at either national or subnational level.
  - Culture of data use: Decision and policy makers did not use vital statistics data.
  - Geographical terrain: Road infrastructure was poor, making access and supervision difficult. Community access to offices was low due the large geographical distance between some facilities and the particular difficulties during winter.
  - Lack of security: Security was volatile resulting in population displacement, migration, family separation, increased risk of mortality and threats to public health. This remains a significant challenge to the provision of services.
- In response to the findings of the assessment ACCRA has undertaken several actions with the support of UNICEF, including:
- Refresher training of over 2000 community registrars (community elders and religious leaders) between 2012 and 2015;
  - Developing and broadcasting four TV spots and four radio spots in two local languages in 2013 and 2015;
  - Developing a web-based computer database for birth and death registration, procuring required IT equipment (server, physical firewall, IT racks and cables) in 2013 and 2014;
  - Training 40 MoI registrars to use the birth registration database in 2013;
  - Creating, printing and disseminating general communication material and birth registration guidelines on birth registration in 2013;
  - Conducting a school campaign in 2015 to register children in grades 1–6 in the capital (Kabul province). The campaign provided birth certificates to 1,200,000 students.

### **CRVS strategy**

Based on the results of this assessment, the Afghanistan Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Country Strategic Plan 2016–2020<sup>24</sup> was commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Kabul Afghanistan in response to a request from the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior Affairs’s Civil Registration office and Ministry of Public Health. The Afghanistan CRVS system strategic plan set three goals:

<sup>24</sup> Afghanistan Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Country Strategic Plan 2016–2020, December 2015.

- Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events
- Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights
- Goal 3: Produce and disseminate accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) based on registration records.

To achieve these goals, the Strategic Plan identified seven key strategic areas to develop and enhance the institutional, organizational and individual capacity of providers:

- Key Strategic Area A: Political commitment
- Key Strategic Area B: Public engagement, participation and generation of demand
- Key Strategic Area C: Coordination
- Key Strategic Area D: Policies, legislation and implementation of regulations
- Key Strategic Area E: Infrastructure and resources
- Key Strategic Area F: Operational procedures, practices and innovations
- Key Strategic Area G: Production, dissemination and use of vital statistics

For each area, short-term, medium-term and (in some cases) long-term actions were considered. The total cost of implementation was estimated at US\$21, 337, 500.

A monitoring and evaluation framework was included with a list of indicators and targets, for each of the goals, to reach by 2018 and 2020. For example, the target for birth registration is that the percentage of the number of births registered within the year of occurrence by the total estimated number of births for the same period should be 50 per cent by 2018 and 75 per cent by 2020. Regarding the registration

of deaths, the targets are much less ambitious: the percentage of the number of registered deaths in a given year divided by the estimated number of deaths in that year is expected to reach 10 per cent by 2018 and 20 per cent by 2020.

### **CRVS improvements**

As part of a national e-governance policy and strategy a project was initiated to register the population and issue ID cards electronically. In 2015, a web-based database was developed with the support of UNICEF to register both birth and death but is available only at central and provincial level so far. Districts record details from the forms in birth registration books and send the forms to the relevant province, where information is recorded in the birth registration database that is stored in the Ministry of Interior birth registration server in real time.

As of the end of 2017, a coordination mechanism was established composed of:

- General director of Afghanistan central civil registration authority (ACCRA)
- Ministry of public health
- Ministry of religious affairs
- Representative from the national statistics office
- A representative from WHO
- A representative from UNICEF
- A representative from UNFPA
- Director, Ministry of Public Health HMIS/VSD
- Representatives of CSOs and NGOs

A new assessment of the CRVS system is planned for 2019. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) developed and endorsed a standard operating procedure in 2017, revised in 2018. It states that the health sector must collaborate with ACCRA in birth registration and give responsibility to all health facilities (public and private) to register all children under 2 years who were born

in the health facilities or those born at home and brought to health facilities for vaccination. MoPH has started training all the midwives and vaccinators on birth registration with the support of UNICEF.

The ongoing activities include:

- Expansion and recruitment of new staff at the district and central level;
- On the job staff training;
- Expanding the database to district level;
- Strengthening the system for better registration of five vital events;
- Social mobilization with focus on district governors, heads of villages and religious leaders;
- Strengthening functionality of the CRVS national coordination committee.

A number of opportunities exist for advancing CRVS: There is a strong political will in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the CRVS law was recently revised, digitalization of the national identity card is underway, and the country continues to benefit from the support of UNICEF, WHO and other global institutions.

Taking into consideration that the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) is overwhelmed by the on-going conflict in the country and cannot give due attention and resources to CRVS, UNICEF had advocated for years to separate the CRVS department from MoIA.

Fortunately, in 2018, the President of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan issued a decree

separating the CRVS administration from the Ministry of Interior Affairs and declaring it an independent national administrative entity, directly reporting to the President. This change of reporting line is expected to increase the advocacy for CRVS in terms of improving the national budget allocation and expanding the structure.

The President launched the electronic national ID card in 2018. The launch had been delayed from 2014 due to the long debate on the ethnical information to be included in the card. ACCRA is now considering linking the birth registration database to the national ID and passport databases, through the code number on an individual's birth certificate. Through this code, the national ID and passport databases will automatically retrieve an individual's basic personal data from the birth registration database, and the national ID and passport offices will only have to complete the additional information required for national ID and passport.

### **Vital statistics reporting**

The Vital Statistics and Demographic Department of the Central Statistical Office is responsible for the calculation of indicators, compilation of collected information, statistical analysis, report writing and the dissemination of results. However, the low level of registration does not allow the publication of vital statistics based on civil registration. In addition, there is no capacity at local level to prepare vital statistics data for local use. There is no regular publication to disseminate information on vital statistics data (the last official national publication was released in 1986). Indicators such as maternal, infant and child mortalities are all estimated from national surveys.

## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	Afghanistan
Legal framework for births registration	Law of 2014 on Registration of Population Records (revised in 2017)
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA), formerly a department of the Ministry of Interior Affairs.
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes (art. 17 of the 2014 Law)
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a birth	Parents or lawful relative (art. 17 of the 2014 Law)
Time allowed for registration	3 months (art. 16 of the 2014 law)
Fee for birth registration	No
Fee for birth certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	No
Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country	No. Art. 17-3 of the 2014 Law: Afghanistan's political or consular missions shall be obligated to record birth reports and subsequently submit them to Office of Registration of Population Records and Evaluation of Foreigners' Identity Affairs.
Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national.	Stateless/refugee and non-national children born in Afghanistan are registered and issued birth certificate, but they cannot use the birth certificate to get nationality.
Requirements for birth registration	Demographic information such as identification of the child and of the child's mother and father

**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
Information collected	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Address of the VSU office (province, district/urban district, village or urban ward)</li> <li>2. House number of child's residence</li> <li>3. Volume, page and serial number in the registration book</li> <li>4. Registration date</li> <li>5. Child's name, father's name and grandfather's name</li> <li>6. Sex of the child</li> <li>7. Type of birth (single or multiple birth)</li> <li>8. Place of birth (maternity ward of health facility, home, or elsewhere)</li> <li>9. Date of birth</li> <li>10. Father's national ID number. Registrars are instructed to accept the national ID number of any other family member that has a blood relationship with the child if his/her father's national ID is not available</li> <li>11. Mother tongue (native language)</li> <li>12. Father's occupation</li> <li>13. Full residential address</li> <li>14. Mother's name</li> <li>15. Mother's age</li> <li>16. Place of child in the family (first, second, or third child). All children born by the mother should be counted even if they are no longer living.</li> <li>17. Name and code number of the Registrar</li> </ol>
Processing	<p>Depending on the place of birth, registration process is the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Registration at the provincial, district, and municipal ward level. This is direct registration.</li> <li>2. Registration of births that occur in maternity wards of health facilities. This is the responsibility of the maternity ward staff in their role as deputy registrars.</li> <li>3. Registration of home births by wardens in urban areas and community elders/village leaders in rural areas. These are officially appointed assistant registrars.</li> </ol>



**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
Processing (Continued)	<p>4. Registration of births that occur at home by religious leaders in mosques who are officially appointed by ACCRA as assistant registrars.</p> <p>Registration of home births through the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), fixed centres that have agreed to do birth registration. These are assistant registrars. In cases where EPI fixed centres and maternity wards exist in the same facility the EPI centre must not register births that occur in the maternity ward. EPI centres should only register home births.</p> <p>The duties of the Vital Statistics Directorate of Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (VSD-ACCRA) involve: A web-based computer database capable of registering both births and deaths but is available only at central and provincial level so far. Registration forms are available at the registration centres and are filled by the registrars. As soon as the form is filled the registrar issues the birth certificate. The registration process usually takes five minutes. The registration form is in two copies. One copy is kept at the registration centre and relevant VSD units collect the second copy at the end of each month. Respective VSD units record details from the forms in birth registration books and send the forms to relevant provincial VSD department, which then will be shared with national VSD-ACCRA office in Kabul, where information is recorded in the birth registration database that is stored in the Ministry of Interior Affairs birth registration server in real time.</p>
Place of registration	<p>Article Five 2014 Law:</p> <p>Offices of registration of population records shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Central Office of Registration of Population Records and Evaluation of Foreigners Identity Affairs.</li> <li>2. Office of Registration of Population Records in the provinces, districts, municipality districts, border ports and airports.</li> <li>3. Mobile team of Registration of Population Records.</li> <li>4. Political or consular overseas missions of Afghanistan.</li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	Currently there are registration offices in 364 of 410 districts. Several provinces still have districts that do not provide a civil registration service, mainly due to security concerns. (Source: <i>Afghanistan Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Country Strategic Plan 2016–2020</i> , December 2015.)
Birth certificate required for:	<p>According to Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority, birth registration is the first legal acknowledgment of a child's existence and is a fundamental element contributing to additional rights such as:<sup>25</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationality</li> <li>• Access to health services</li> <li>• Access to school at an appropriate age</li> <li>• Protection from violence, exploitation and child labour</li> <li>• Protection from and during conflicts</li> <li>• Protection from early child marriages</li> <li>• Protection from military service before the appropriate age</li> <li>• Obtaining a passport</li> <li>• Obtaining a national ID (Tazkira)</li> <li>• Right to vote</li> <li>• Right to open a bank account</li> </ul>
Recent studies to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).	CRVS comprehensive assessment conducted in 2015 (not published).
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>Vital statistics data is not officially published as registration data is often incomplete and there needs to be further clarification of mortality indicators. The last population census was conducted in 1979.</p> <p>A monthly vital statistics report (births, deaths, marriages, divorces and migrations) is submitted by the province to the VSD-ACCRA at central level and then shared with the Central Statistics Organization (CSO). However, computer usage is low, there is poor internet access and regular power shortages and weak monitoring of data for quality assurance with data often being incomplete and inconsistent.</p>

<sup>25</sup> Maqool, Abdul Rahman, Director Civil Registration Department Ministry of Interior Affairs, sets out birth registration guidelines, n.d.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Afghanistan
Legal framework for death registration	Law of 2014 on Registration of Population Records (revised in 2017).
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA), formerly a department of the Ministry of Interior Affairs).
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register a death	Yes (art. 20 of the 2014 Law)
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	No (only issued on request)
Legal informant to register a death	Heirs, executor of will or lawful relative of the deceased (art.20 of the 2014 Law). When a deceased person has no parents or relatives, the village head or other local authorities shall be responsible for reporting the death.
Time allowed for registration	3 months (art. 16 of the 2014 law)
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	No
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	No specific requirements
Requirements for death registration	Certification from doctor or approval from witness and a copy of the national ID card of the deceased.
Information collected	Province, region, district and village Date Full name of the deceased Name of the father of the deceased Registration number and the numbers of the book and its pages Address of the deceased Age of the deceased Nationality of the deceased

**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
Information collected (Continued)	<p>Occupation of the deceased Date and the cause of death Marital status of the deceased Sex of the deceased National ID card (Tazkira) number of the deceased, if male Names of father, Address; Tazkira numbers, signatures and seals of the father, relatives, witnesses, and funeral service person. Four signatures shall be required. Signatures and seals of the village head, the regional officer, the census secretary and the governor of the district.</p>
Information collected in case of foetal death	Not applied so far
Processing	<p>Parents and relatives shall report all deaths to the VSD-ACCRA units at national and subnational levels after certification of village heads (community elders) or local authorities. The national ID (Tazkira) of the deceased will be attached to the report. The VSD units have a duty to ensure the accuracy of death reports and ID of the deceased. The details are then entered into the registration book (database) followed by certification and issuance of the death certificate to the prime reporting sources.</p> <p>When a deceased person has no parents or relatives, the village head or other local authority shall be responsible for reporting the death.</p> <p>The duties of the Vital Statistics Directorate of Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority include the collection and analysis of vital statistics data on births, deaths, divorces, marriages and immigration.</p>
Place of registration	<p>Offices of registration of births records in accordance with article 5 of law 2014 shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA)</li> <li>2. ACCRA departments in the provinces, districts and municipality districts</li> <li>3. Afghanistan's overseas political and/or consular missions.</li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	Currently there are registration offices in 364 of 410 districts. There are several provinces with districts that do not provide civil registration services, mainly due to security concerns. (Source: <i>Afghanistan Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Country Strategic Plan 2016 to 2020</i> . December 2015).
Death certificate required for:	Deaths occurring outside the hospital can be certified by the community leader or a non-professional registrar and are not essential for burial, while it is necessary for claiming of pension (if the deceased person's spouse is still alive and/or children under 18 years of age) and/or inheritance services.
Recent studies to assess the coverage and quality of death registration	CRVS comprehensive assessment conducted in 2015 (not published).
Process for establishing vital statistics	Vital statistics data are not officially published since the data is often incomplete and there needs to be further clarification of 'mortality indicators'. The last population census was conducted in 1979.  The province submits a monthly vital statistics report (births, deaths, marriages, divorces and migrations) to the VSD-ACCRA, which is then shared with the Central Statistics Organization (CSO). However, computer usage is low, there is poor Internet access and regular power shortages, and weak monitoring of data for quality assurance so data is often being incomplete and inconsistent.

## MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Afghanistan
Legal framework for marriages registration	Law of 2014 on Registration of Population Records (revised in 2017).
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA), formerly Ministry of Interior Affairs.
Organizational structure	Centralized

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
Legal age for marriage	18 for men and 16 for girls (art. 70 of the Afghan Civil Law), 15 for girls with father's consent, the marriage of a minor girl whose age is less than 15 shall never be permissible (art. 71).
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	Yes (art. 21 of the 2014 law).
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a marriage	Spouse
Time allowed for registration	Immediately (30 days when marriage is abroad, art. 21-5 of the 2014 law)
Fee for marriage registration	No
Fee for marriage certificate	AFN300
Penalty for late registration	No
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	The required official documents of certification from the foreign country
Requirements for marriage registration	One of the spouses, who should have the marriage certificate available with herself/himself.
Information collected	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Province, regions, district and village</li> <li>Name of the man and woman</li> <li>Names of the fathers of the man and woman</li> <li>Number and date of marriage certificate</li> <li>Marital status of the couple prior to their present marriage</li> <li>Profession of the man</li> <li>Places of birth of the couple</li> <li>Dates of birth of the couple</li> <li>National ID (Tazkira) number of the man</li> <li>Name, name of father, Tazkira number and signature of the regional officer or the village head</li> <li>Name, name of father, Tazkira number and signature of the father or the witness</li> <li>Name, name of father, Tazkira number and signature of the Mullah (Islamic religious leader)</li> </ol>








## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Afghanistan
Processing	<p>Art. 21 of the Law: Husband and wife shall be obligated to report their marriage or dissolution of marriage to office of VSD-ACCRA. VSD-ACCRA shall be obligated to take appropriate actions pursuant to the relevant procedures.</p> <p>(3) VSD-ACCRA shall be obligated to immediately report marriage and dissolution of marriage to Office of Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and to the ACCRA's national ID (Tazkira) department.</p>
Place of registration	<p>Offices of registration of births records in accordance with article 5 of law 2014 shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA)</li> <li>2. ACCRA departments in the provinces, districts, and municipality districts.</li> <li>3. Political or consular missions of Afghanistan abroad the country</li> </ol>
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	<p>Currently there are registration offices in 364 of the 410 districts. There are several provinces with districts that still do not provide a civil registration services, mainly due to security concerns. (Source: <i>Afghanistan Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Country Strategic Plan 2016 to 2020</i>. December 2015).</p>
Marriage certificate required for:	<p>The law requires every marriage to be registered and certificate be given but relatively few people register their marriage and tend to obtain a marriage certificate based on their need, such as going to Saudi Arabia for Haj (Pilgrimage), getting asylum in other countries.</p>
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	<p>No study had been conducted so far</p>
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>Vital statistics data are not officially published as registration data is often incomplete and there needs to be further clarification of mortality indicators. The last population census was conducted in 1979.</p> <p>The province submits a monthly vital statistics report (births, deaths, marriages, divorces and migrations) to the central VSD-ACCRA office, which then reports the statistics to the central statistics organization. However, computer usage is low, there is poor Internet access and regular power shortages and weak monitoring of data for quality assurance, which means data is often incomplete and inconsistent.</p>

## 6.2 Bangladesh

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/bangladesh](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/bangladesh)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	12.8% (2014)	100%
Target 1.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	24.6% (2014)	100%
Target 1.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	86.5% (NR)	100%
Target 1.D: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	9.1% (2014)	80%
Target 1.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.	16% (2014)	80%
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	100%	100%



## Continued: National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
Target 2.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex and age.	80%	80%
<b>Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated</b>		
Target 3.A: By .... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2021
Target 3.B: By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2021
Target 3.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).	39% (2014)	100%
Target 3.D: By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year.	NR	50%
Target 3.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.	NR	50%
Target 3.F: By .... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.	-	2021
Target 3.G: By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.	-	2021
Target 3.H: By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.	-	2021

**Source:** -'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/bangladesh](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/bangladesh)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.  
- Report of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Seventy-second session. Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016. Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda.

NR: No response

## Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, Vital Strategies, University of Melbourne, Plan International

## Brief history of CRVS in Bangladesh

Civil registration was established in Bangladesh when the Birth and Death Registration Act 1873 was enacted under British rule in the subcontinent. It remained unsuccessful for 131 years; up to 2004 just 8 per cent of people were registered in Bangladesh despite several amendments to the Law. The Local Government Ordinance (1976) and Pourasha Ordinance (1977) provided that the registration of births and deaths is a compulsory function of Union Parishads (municipal administrative units) and Pourashavas (municipal corporations), within their respective areas. But the functions of registration of births and deaths under the local government laws being contrary to the provisions of the Bengal Births and Deaths Registration Act (1873), of which the Ministry of Health is the administrative Ministry, could not be undertaken by Union Parishads and Pourashavas under the local government laws referred to above. To overcome this legal problem, the Bengal Births and Deaths Registration Act (1873) was amended in 1979. The chairmen of Union Parishads and Pourashavas and chairmen of Cantonment Boards were made registrars of births and deaths and the chairmen and mayors of Chittagong and Dhaka municipal corporation were made registrars as per the Local Government Ordinance 1983.<sup>26</sup>

The Birth and Death Registration Act was amended in 2004. The new Act has brought a major shift in birth registration with improved enforcement impact in death registration. Both registration and the issuance of certificates are free of cost for birth and death. Registration is compulsory within 45 days following the birth or death. A late fee is charged for any registration occurring after 45 days. The Chairman of Union Parishad or his/her representative at union level, mayor of municipality/city corporation or his representative or any councillor approved by mayor at municipality/city corporation level, president of

cantonment board or any person approved by him and ambassador/high commissioner or any person approved by him/her in foreign offices of Bangladesh are made birth and death registrars.

Finally, the Birth and Death Registration Act, 2013, included the provision of punishment for providing false information in case of birth and death registration.

Different stakeholders, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MOLGRD), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) and Ministry of Planning (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics) are engaged in collecting fertility and mortality data but no agency can provide reliable and complete vital statistics that represent the whole population. Administrative requirements of civil registration remain unfulfilled.

## Child marriage

The minimum age of marriage without parental or court consent is 21 for men and 18 for women with special provision for marriage under 18. In February 2017, the parliament adopted the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 despite widespread concerns over a special provision allowing child marriage for girls and boys in "special cases". Bangladesh is a member of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage, which recognizes birth and marriage registration as necessary to end child marriage. The Government, under the leadership of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, developed a National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh, which was adopted in August 2018. Bangladesh is a focus country of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder programme working across 12 countries.

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<sup>26</sup> Presentation on the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system in Bangladesh, by Shahidul Islam Khan, Statistical Officer, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning.

According to UNICEF, 22 per cent of women aged 20-24 are married by the age of 15 and 59 per cent by the age of 18.<sup>27</sup>

### **Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2015)**

*“While noting with appreciation the amendment to the Birth and Death Registration Act, which provides for the establishment of the Office of the Registrar General, the Committee is concerned that this permanent structure is not yet functional. It also remains concerned that despite the introduction of an online birth registration system the registration rate in 2013 remained at 37 per cent for children under the age of 5, and at less than 2 per cent for the registration of children within 45 days from birth as required by the law.*

*The Committee urges the State party to:*

- a. Expedite the operation of the Office of the Registrar General, in order to guarantee birth registration and the prompt issuance of birth certificates;*
- b. Take all measures necessary to increase the birth registration rate, including by establishing mobile registration offices, in particular in rural areas, and undertaking a campaign aimed at registering all children who have not been registered and who do not have birth certificates;*
- c. Promote awareness of the importance of birth registration among parents and relevant authorities through regular mass campaigns and provide information on the procedures for birth registration and the rights and entitlements deriving from such registration.”<sup>28</sup>*

### **CRVS assessment**

An assessment of the CRVS system in Bangladesh to identify gaps and recommend actions was undertaken with technical assistance from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and World Health Organization South East Asia Regional Office (WHO-SEAR).

The activities were carried out from September 2012 to December 2013. The Management Information System unit of the Directorate General of Health Services in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare was identified as the lead agency for the assessment and a review committee was established. The main findings of the assessment include:<sup>29</sup>

- Gaps in legal basis: Mostly the law was not strictly enforced, for both individuals and health centres, and midwives and health assistants;
- Registration practices not harmonized and not in full compliance with the law;
- Lack of coordination among stakeholders to carry out full registration of vital events and to produce vital statistics;
- Need for an integrated and interoperable population register;
- Absence of a legal provision, which includes cause of death on the death registration form as per the tenth revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10);
- Absence of a structure to facilitate data sharing between different government agencies;
- Lack of population awareness regarding the obligation and usefulness of civil registration;
- Lack of quality control and safe archive.

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<sup>27</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a digital world*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930-7, December 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Bangladesh, 30 October 2015, CRC/C/BGD/CO/5.

<sup>29</sup> Report of the Comprehensive Assessment and Strategic Action Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system in Bangladesh, MoHFW-ESCAP-WHO, December 2013.

Following this review, a CRVS Strategic Action Plan was developed. The CRVS Act was amended in 2013, which resulted in the establishment of the Office of the Registrar General (ORG) of Birth and Death Registration in 2016. The Birth and Death Registration Rules, 2006, was updated in 2017. The Birth and Death Registration Act has given legal rights to ensure birth and death registration, with a unique identifier, for any event in country and made it compulsory for every birth and death to be registered within 45 days.

### **CRVS improvements**

In late 2014, Bangladesh established a national coordination mechanism named the “CRVS related Steering Committee”. The Steering Committee is convened by the Cabinet Secretary and comprises 22 members from various agencies, as well as two special invitees. The agencies include the Finance Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Education, Post and Telecommunications Division, Election Commission of Bangladesh, Planning Division, Cabinet Division, ICT Division, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Local Government Division, Statistics and Informatics Division, Law and Justice Division, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), and the ORG. The two special invitees are the Additional Director General (Planning and Development) from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in the Ministry of Health, and the Policy Advisor for the Access to Information (a2i) Programme.

The roles and responsibilities of the inter-agency Steering Committee include the coordination of activities related to CRVS development, providing direction for ministries responsible for CRVS-implementation, and revising, reviewing and disseminating CRVS-related national plans and

documents. To realise the proper implementation of CRVS, the Steering Committee established the CRVS Secretariat at the Cabinet Division.

Bangladesh has recently started practicing the international standard medical certificate of cause of death in four hospitals and is piloting medical certification of cause of death (MCCoD) in 19 others. At selected large hospitals where many deaths occur, physicians have been trained to use the ICD certificate for cause of death, and statistical coding is done according to the Startup Mortality List. Verbal Autopsy (VA) has been introduced in selected areas of the country for community deaths for which there is no medical certificate of cause of death. Death registration is mandatory for conducting VA. Since there are no electronic linkages between the ORG, BRIS and DGHS databases as yet, these deaths along with causes of death are not being notified directly.

Marriage and divorce registrations are still paper-based, and it is also quite simple. Any male of 21 or more years and any female of 18 or more years can get married with mutual consent and marriage is registered by the Kazis (marriage and divorce registrars appointed by the Law and Justice Division). Divorce registration can be done through a similar process. The Law and Justice Division is planning to digitize the marriage and divorce registration system with technical support from the ‘Access to Information (a2i) Programme’ of the Prime Minister’s Office.

### **Key achievements**

UNICEF and the Local Government Division started a project to strengthen the birth registration system in Bangladesh, in 2000. Prior to the establishment of the Registrar General’s office for birth and death registration, UNICEF provided all outreach, logistical and capacity development support for carrying out birth and death registration activities. Since the Office was established in 2016, UNICEF has been providing technical support in the form of skilled ICT officials to maintain the database.

With support from UNICEF, Bangladesh introduced the online Birth Registration Information System (BRIS) in 2010 to replace manual birth registration. BRIS allows users to perform and verify birth and death registration online. It maintains the registration data centrally and in a secured location with back-up system, and it creates a demographic base to build effective strategies and also become an effective monitoring mechanism. The framework has been designed so that it is inter-operable with other databases and information systems of the country. While it was possible for an unauthorized person to see and also to manipulate birth records in manual registers. BRIS enhances the protection of personal information, as access to birth records is now restricted to authorized persons.

As of October 2017, over 157.48 million births have been digitally registered in BRIS at 5,085 local and foreign-based registration offices. Each birth registered is assigned a 17-digit birth registration number (BRN).

The introduction of BRIS has removed duplication and redundancy from birth registration records through the centralized storage of data. It has automated searching, sorting, processing and reporting tasks and has very significantly reduced the time needed for such tasks. Error rates have also been reduced with a combined identity number and bar-coding system.<sup>30</sup>

The last amendment of the Law provided detailed responsibilities of the involved authorities to ensure smooth implementation of CRVS in Bangladesh. The Local Government Division under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is responsible for birth and death registration. Every child is required to have a birth certificate in order to get vaccinated under the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) or to gain admission to education institutions. The Office of the Registrar General for Birth and Death Registration, established in 2016 is responsible for ensuring civil registration.

Bangladesh inaugurated the 'Age verification and marriage registration mobile app' as part of the a2i (access to information) initiative to use registration as a means of supporting local leaders to prevent child marriage.

The MoHFW, with coordination support from the CRVS Secretariat, also made progress on improving the links between the health sector and registration services. Activities included piloting programmes for training in the use of MCCoD, VA and ICD-10 (with Startup Mortality List), as well as improving the quality and collection of vital statistics data by incorporating key variables into the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) to enable real time data tracking.

The report of the CRVS Steering Committee in June 2016 noted that, *"good progress has been made over recent months in planning for the establishment of the Office of the Registrar-General. Rules have been drafted and are nearing final approval, the appointment of the new Registrar-General is imminent, and financial provision made for approximately 25 staff. Core IT systems, both nationally and at a local level, appear to be in place to support the collection of birth and death registrations. Initial mapping of the registration process has been completed using the enterprise architecture methodology."*

However, the report noted that consensus had not been reached on the contribution ORG should make to the wider vision of an integrated service delivery platform or to the production of national statistics. Another issue that should be addressed is the split in the responsibility for registration of vital events between the ORG (births and deaths) and the Law and Justice Division (marriages, divorce and adoption), which could be resolved either through record sharing between the two entities or placing the two functions within the Office of the Registrar General.

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<sup>30</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Good Practices in Integrating Birth Registration into Health Systems (2008-2009)', Case Studies: Bangladesh, Brazil, the Gambia and India, Working paper, UNICEF, January 2010.

The report also noted that very few registrations (possibly less than 2 per cent) were completed within the desired 45 days.

### **The Kaliganj pilot project<sup>31</sup>**

A technical support project for CRVS system improvement in Bangladesh started in December 2016 and most of the activities were completed in June 2017, with technical support from Vital Strategies and the University of Melbourne within the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative. The model used for notification of births and deaths relied on community family welfare staff. They helped the parents to apply, collected the completed forms and handed them over to the Assistant Health Inspector and Family Planning Inspector. They also verified the applications and submitted these to the local registry office. This model was found to be very effective; the rate of birth notification within 45 days increased to 90 per cent of total births.

### **Key priorities for improvement**

The document, 'Get Every One in the picture',<sup>32</sup> identifies the following priorities:

- Strengthen enforcement of existing legislation requiring birth and death registration;
- Create new legislation requiring cause of death registration;
- Streamline coordination and monitoring of the country's various registration points to complete the transition to digital registration;
- Develop effective linkages between civil registration data and the ORG to notify the CRVS system;
- Develop a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of the necessity of birth registration;

- Significantly increase the availability of high quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data.

### **Vital statistics reporting**

Currently, Bangladesh does not produce disaggregated vital statistics reports from civil registration data. Instead, the ORG produces aggregated reports with the number of birth and death registrations from seven divisions, as well as the percentage of birth registrations against estimated population numbers. ORG also provides 'real-time' birth registration data via its website.

With support from UNICEF, the DGHS uses the DHIS2 health dashboard to collect and compile aggregated health data.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is the national body for carrying out different types of statistical data collection and reporting, including the decennial census. BBS is the official source of vital statistics. It produces disaggregated reports from the Sample Vital Registration System that covers 2,012 primary sampling units, each comprising 100 to 150 households. The system was established in 1980. Local registrars collect the data and supervisors then check the quality of the data. Filled-in schedules are sent to the BBS headquarters on a monthly basis. Regional statistical officers, other officers and staff members recheck the data. Internal validation and close supervision of the collection process is carried out to improve the quality of data. The surveys are conducted throughout the year and dissemination is done every two to three years. The BBS then disaggregates the regional and national figures through data extrapolation and publishes them on its website.

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<sup>31</sup> Technical support for CRVS System Improvement in Bangladesh: A successful journey toward full accomplishment

<sup>32</sup> Get Every One in the Picture', Bangladesh, available at <[www.getinthepicture.org](http://www.getinthepicture.org)>.

## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	Bangladesh
Legal framework for births registration	The Births and Deaths Registration Act, 2004, entered into force on 3 July 2006 and was last amended in 2013. Rules were formulated in 2006 and updated in 2018.
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	The Office of the Registrar General. According to section 6 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 2004 (Act No. 29 of 2004) (as amended) ('Registration Act') the 'Registrar' is responsible for registering births, maintaining the birth register and issuing birth certificates. The Registrar is determined by where a person is born or where they permanently reside, namely: Mayor city corporation, Mayor municipality, Chairman union parishad, Cantonment executive officer, Bangladesh Ambassador/High Commissioner (art. 4 of the Law).
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes (art. 8-1 of the Law)
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes (art. 6-d and 11 of the Law)
Legal informant to register a birth	<p>The father or mother or guardian or the prescribed persons (art. 8-1 of the Law), but also local public sector representatives such as community police, health workers, school teachers, NGO workers, etc.:</p> <p>Art. 9. (1) The following persons may send information to the Registrar for registration of the birth or death of a person, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Members of the Union Parishad and the Secretary;</li> <li>b. Village police;</li> <li>c. Councillors of the city corporation or municipality;</li> <li>d. Health workers and family welfare workers engaged in the union council, municipality, city corporation or cantonment area;</li> <li>e. Field workers of NGOs engaged in health and family welfare sectors;</li> <li>f. In relation to births and deaths in any government or private hospital or clinic or maternity or other institution, its appointed medical officer or doctor or any officer empowered;</li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Legal informant to register a birth (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. The caretaker of any graveyard or cremation ground;</li> <li>h. Any other officer or employee employed by the Registrar;</li> <li>i. Jail Superintendent or district or person empowered by him in case of birth and death in prison;</li> <li>j. In case of the unrecognized deceased person lying in the public place, the officer-in-charge of the concerned thana (police station); and</li> <li>k. Any other person or organization, as determined.</li> </ul> <p>(2) When information regarding the birth and death of a person is provided to a person referred to in subsection (1), he himself will take necessary steps to register it or provide necessary assistance including the information of the information provider.</p>
Time allowed for registration	45 days (art. 8-1 of the Law)
Fee for birth registration	No
Fee for birth certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	Between 45 days and 5 years BDT25 or US\$1, 5 years and above BDT50 or US\$2 (rules 2018).
Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country	No. Art. 3 provides: Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, after the implementation of this Act, the birth or death of a person shall be registered as per the provisions of this Act.
Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national	No. Art. 3 provides: Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, after the implementation of this Act, the birth or death of a person shall be registered as per the provisions of this Act.
Requirements for birth registration	Before the birth registration, the name of the child shall be determined (art. 10 of the Law).
Information collected	Name of child, Date of birth, Sex, Number of children born to the mother, Place of residence, Place of birth, Name of both parents, Birth registration number of both parents, National ID number of both parents, Nationality of both parents, Place of residence of both parents, Personal information of the informant, including relationship to the child.



## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Processing	<p>After birth, verifying documentation is issued by a medical facility or, for a home birth an immunization card provided by DGHS field staff is used as the verifying document.</p> <p>Parents/relatives proceed with their birth verification documents along with birth registration application form (or printout of the completed online form if applied online) to a designated registration office.</p> <p>The parents or individuals can submit birth verification documents online using a temporary number provided by the system. If an online application has not already been done the local registrar office will complete the online form in favour of the paper application by the parents or individuals.</p> <p>The local registrar issues birth registration certificate with an assigned BRN to the family.</p> <p>Information is then uploaded to BRIS.</p>
Place of registration	Place of birth or place of residence of the parents.
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	There are 5,029 registration points all over the country: 4,571 union council, 319 municipalities, 15 cantonment boards and 124 zonal offices of 11 city corporations. Overseas there are 53 registration offices attached to Bangladesh missions in 42 countries. All register offices offer online birth and death registration.
Birth certificate required	<p>Art. 18-3: Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, the birth certificate given under this Act shall be used for proof of age in the following matters, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The issuance of passport and ID card</li> <li>b. Marriage registration</li> <li>c. Admission to educational institutions</li> <li>d. Appointment to government, private or autonomous organizations</li> <li>e. Issuance of a driver's license</li> <li>f. Preparation of voter list</li> <li>g. Land registration</li> <li>h. Life insurance policy</li> </ol> <p>And for any other instances notified/mandated by Government Order</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart of DHS or MICS surveys)	Comprehensive Assessment and Strategic Action Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) System in Bangladesh, December 2013
	At present, Bangladesh does not produce disaggregated vital statistics reports from civil registration data. Instead, the ORG produces aggregated e-reports with the number of birth and death registrations from seven divisions, as well as the percentage of birth registrations against estimated population numbers. It provides 'real-time' birth registration data via its website.
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>The vital statistics being done by BBS are calculated based on a sample of population in specific sentinel sites. A local employee goes to find out about local births and deaths. A supervisor also cross checks the households to verify the information. Due to a dual recording system, the VS obtained by this entity is more likely to pick up information on new births and new deaths.</p> <p>It is expected that by 2021, disaggregated statistics on births will be produced from registration records.</p>

## DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Bangladesh
Legal framework for death registration	The Births and Deaths Registration Act, 2004, entered into force on 3 July 2006, and was amended in 2013.
	Office of the Registrar General
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	According to section 6 of the Birth and Death Registration Act 2004 (Act No. 29 of 2004) (as amended) ('Registration Act') the 'Registrar' is responsible for registering deaths, maintaining the death register and issuing death certificates in Bangladesh. The Registrar is determined by where a person died or where they permanently reside, namely: Mayor City Corporation, Mayor municipality, Chairman Union Parishad, Cantonment Executive Officer, Bangladesh Ambassador/High Commissioner (art. 4 of the Law).
Organizational structure	Decentralized

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Legal obligation to register a death	Yes (art. 8-2 of the Law)
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes (art. 6-d and 11 of the Law)
Legal informant to register a death	<p>The son or daughter or guardian of the deceased person will be responsible for the payment of death-related information to the Registrar within 30 days (art. 8-2 of the Law)</p> <p>The following people can send information to the registrar for registration of a person's death:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union council member, and secretary</li> <li>• Village police</li> <li>• City corporation or municipality councillor</li> <li>• Health workers and family welfare workers in the union council, municipality, city corporation or cantonment area</li> <li>• Private workers in the health and family welfare sector (NGO); field workers</li> <li>• In any government or private hospital or clinic or maternal or other institution, the appointed medical officer or doctor or an empowered officer</li> <li>• Caretaker of any graveyard or crematorium</li> <li>• Any other officer or employee employed by the registrar</li> <li>• Jail superintendent or district officer, or the person empowered by her/him</li> <li>• In the case of an unidentified dead person lying in the public place, the officer-in-charge of the concerned <i>thana</i> (police station)</li> <li>• Any other person or organization as may be determined.</li> </ul>
Time allowed for registration	45 days (art. 8-2 of the Law)
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	No

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Penalty for late registration	Free within two years of death. Late registration fee applied after two years: BDT25 (US\$1 abroad). (Art. 13: If birth and death are not registered within the stipulated time mentioned in section 8, they can be registered at a later date with payment of a late fee and following the prescribed process.)
Specific registration requirements or fees for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	None
Requirements for death registration	<p>In the prescribed application form of death registration (print or hand writing), the registrar must apply with the following documents or certificates. The following one or more certification or document should be attached in the appropriate place of the application form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification of government or private health workers, or</li> <li>• Certificate of death given by concerned medical institution or physician, or</li> <li>• A certified copy of the post mortem inquiry report, or</li> <li>• Certified copy of burial or funeral given by the caretaker of the concerned graveyard or crematorium, or</li> <li>• Proof of death given by concerned councillor of union council or related councillor of municipality/city corporation</li> </ul>
Information collected	Name of the deceased, Sex, Date of birth, Date of death, Birth registration number, Cause of death (ICD-10), Place of residence, Names of father, mother and spouse, Birth registration number, National ID number, Informant: Personal information and relationship to the deceased.
Information collected in case of foetal death	Directorate of General of Health collects the data on foetal death, but that database is not linked with Registrar General's database of birth and death registration.
Processing	<p>After death, a death declaration form (Form 804) is issued along with a medical certificate of cause of death by respective hospital or clinic where the death occurred.</p> <p>The family is provided with copies of the death verification documents and they proceed to a designated registration office.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Processing (Continued)	<p>The death verification documents are submitted online along with a Death Registration Application form to the ORG.</p> <p>ORG records the information and a death registration certificate is issued to the family within seven working days.</p> <p>Bangladesh has recently introduced the international standard medical certificate of cause of death in four hospitals and is piloting it in 19 other hospitals. At selected large hospitals where many deaths occur, physicians have been trained to use the ICD certificate for cause of death, and statistical coding is done according to the Startup Mortality List. Verbal Autopsy (VA) has been introduced in selected areas of the country in the case of community deaths for which there is no medical certificate of cause of death. Death registration is mandatory for conducting VA. Since there are no electronic linkages between the ORG, BRIS and DGHS databases yet, these deaths along with causes of death are not being notified directly.</p>
Place of registration	Place where birth is already registered or place of permanent residence.
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	There are 5,029 registration points all over the country: 4,571 union councils, 319 municipalities, 15 cantonment boards and 124 zonal offices of 11 city corporations. Overseas there are 53 registration offices attached to Bangladesh missions in 42 countries. All registration offices are doing online birth and death registration.
Death certificate required	Death registration is required to distribute the property of the deceased, receive family pension, etc. To register the death, the birth of a deceased person must be registered. If the birth is not registered, then the registration of death will only occur after the birth registration.
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of death registration.	Comprehensive Assessment and Strategic Action Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) System in Bangladesh. December 2013.
Process for establishing vital statistics	The vital statistics, being done by BBS, are calculated based on a sample of the population in specific sentinel sites. A local employee finds out about local births and deaths. A supervisor also cross checks the households to verify the information. Due to dual recording system, the VS obtained by this entity is more likely to pick up information on new births and new deaths.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Bangladesh
<p>Legal framework for marriage registration</p>	<p>Marriage, divorce, separation and economic rights at dissolution of marriage are governed almost exclusively by personal laws of Bangladesh:</p> <p><b>Muslims:</b> Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961; Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939; Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974</p> <p><b>Hindus and Buddhists:</b> Hindu Married Women’s Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act, 1946</p> <p><b>Christians:</b> Christian Marriage Act, 1872; Divorce Act, 1869</p> <p>These codified and uncodified rules are subject to interpretation by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and the High Court Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, and as such case law also becomes a source of law.</p> <p>Apart from the personal laws, the civil laws that apply to all religious communities in the context of marriage or divorce are the Special Marriage Act of 1872, the Child Marriage Restraint Act No. XIX of 2017, the Family Courts Ordinance of 1985, and the Guardian and Wards Acts of 1890.</p> <p>The preamble to the Special Marriage Act of 1872 states that it is meant to apply to people who do not profess specified religions or for specified religious groups where marriages are of questionable legal validity.</p>
<p>Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage</p>	<p><b>Muslim marriages</b> must be registered with a marriage registrar or Kazi. The Bangladesh government appoints licensed Kazis in accordance with the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act of 1974.</p> <p><b>Christian marriages:</b> Christian Marriage Act, 1872 Art. 7: The Government may appoint one or more Christians, either by name or as holding any office for the time being, to be the Marriage Registrar or marriage registrars for any district subject to its administration.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where there is more than one marriage registrar in any district, the Government shall appoint one of them to be the senior marriage registrar.</li> <li>When there is only one marriage registrar in a district, and such registrar is absent from such district, or ill, or when his/her office is temporarily vacant, the magistrate of the district shall act as, and be, marriage registrar thereof during such absence, illness or temporary vacancy.</li> </ul>
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal age for marriage	21 for men and 18 for women without parental and/or court consent, and at any younger age with the permission of the parents and/or the court.
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	<p><b>Muslims:</b> Marriage contract and registration required (art. 3 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974)</p> <p><b>Hindus and Buddhists:</b> No provision for registration</p> <p><b>Christians:</b> Marriage registration required</p> <p><b>Others:</b> Registration required (art. 4 of the Special Marriage Act of 1872)</p>
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	<p><b>Muslims:</b> Art. 9 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974, (states) On completion of the registration of any marriage or divorce, the Marriage (<i>Nikah</i>) Registrar shall deliver to the parties concerned an attested copy of the entry in the register, and for such copy no charge shall be made.</p> <p><b>Christians:</b> Yes (art. 17 of the Christian Marriage Act, 1872)</p>
Legal informant to register a marriage	<p><b>Muslims:</b> Art. 5-2 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974 (states): Where a marriage is solemnized by a person other than the <i>Nikah</i> Registrar the bridegroom of the marriage shall report it to the concerned <i>Nikah</i> Registrar within 30 days of the date of such solemnization.</p> <p><b>Christians:</b> Spouses plus two witnesses</p> <p><b>Others:</b> The marriage shall be solemnized in the presence of the Registrar and of the three witnesses who signed the declaration (art. 11 of the Special Marriage Act of 1872)</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Time allowed for registration	<p><b>Muslims:</b> Art. 5 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1974, 1) Where the <i>Nikah</i> Registrar solemnizes a marriage in person she/he shall register the marriage at once. 2) Where a person other than the <i>Nikah</i> Registrar solemnizes the marriage, the bridegroom of the marriage shall report it to the concerned <i>Nikah</i> Registrar within 30 days of the date of such solemnization.</p> <p><b>Christians:</b> Immediately (art. 28 of the Christian Marriage Act, 1872).</p>
Fee for marriage registration	Yes
Fee for marriage certificate	A <i>Nikah</i> Registrar shall charge a fee that is 1 percent of the dowry, subject to a minimum of BDT 100 and a maximum of BDT 4,000.
Penalty for late registration	No
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	-
Requirements for marriage registration	National ID card and proof of age (birth certificate)
Information collected	Place and date of occurrence of marriage, Name, Father's name, Age, Address(es) of the bride and groom, Marital status of the bride.
Processing	<p>Marriage and divorce registration in Bangladesh is still a paper-based system. Marriage and divorce registrars appointed by the Law and Justice Division (and known as <i>Kazis</i>) register marriages. The Law and Justice Division is planning to digitize the marriage and divorce registration system with technical support from the 'Access to Information (a2i) Programme' of the Prime Minister's Office.</p> <p><b>Muslims:</b> Art. 9 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974, states: Every <i>Nikah</i> registrar shall maintain separate registers of marriages and divorces in such forms as may be prescribed and all entries in each such register shall be numbered in a consecutive series, a fresh series being commenced at the beginning of each year.</p>











**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bangladesh
Processing (Continued)	<p><b>Christians:</b> Art. 34 of the Christian Marriage Act, 1872. The person solemnizing the marriage shall forthwith separate the certificate from the marriage register book and send it, within one month from the time of the solemnization, to the marriage registrar of the district in which the marriage was solemnized, or, if there be more marriage registrars than one, to the senior marriage registrar, who shall cause such certificate to be copied into a book to be kept by him for that purpose, and shall send all the certificates which he has received during the month, with such number and signature or initials added thereto as are hereinafter required, to the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages.</p> <p><b>Others:</b> Art. 13 of the Special Marriage Act of 1872. When the marriage has been solemnized, the registrar shall enter a certificate thereof in a book to be kept by him for that purpose and to be called the 'Marriage Certificate Book under Act III of 1872,' in the form given in the third schedule to this Act, and such certificate shall be signed by the parties to the marriage and the three witnesses. The registrar shall send to the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the territories within which his district is situated, at such interval as the Government from time to time directs, a true copy certified by him, in such form as the Government from time to time prescribes, of all entries made by him in the said marriage-certificate book since the last of such intervals.</p>
Place of registration	Place of occurrence of the marriage
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	Marriage registrars are selected following a systematic process and issued with a licence. They are situated all over the country.
Marriage certificate required for:	-
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	-
Process for establishing vital statistics	No statistics on marriage are produced/published.

## 6.3 Bhutan

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/bhutan](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/bhutan)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	82% (2014)	95%
Target 1.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	98% (NR)	99%
Target 1.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	81% (NR)	90%
Target 1.D: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	81% (NR)	90%
Target 1.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.	11% (2011)	85%
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	NR	100% (NR)

## Continued: National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
Target 2.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate, which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex and age.	NR	100% (NR)
<b>Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated</b>		
Target 3.A: By .... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2020
Target 3.B: By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2022
Target 3.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).	11% (2011)	85%
Target 3.D: By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year.	NR	70%
Target 3.F: By .... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.	-	2022
Target 3.G: By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.	-	2024
Target 3.H: By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.	-	2024

**Source:** - 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/bhutan](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/bhutan)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.

- Report of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Seventy-second session. Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016. Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda.

NR: No response

## Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, WHO

## Brief history of CRVS in Bhutan

There is no real legal framework for civil registration in Bhutan. Only the Bhutan Citizen Act, 1977, has references to 'listing' and 'registration' of children born, as follows:

- a. (CHHA 1) All children born of a father who is a Bhutanese citizen should be registered in the official record within one year of his/her birth, whether the children are born inside or outside the country;
- b. (CHHA 2) All children born within the country are required to be listed with the district (Dzongkhag) or the subdistrict (Dungkhag) of their birth.

The Bhutan Citizen Act, 1985, did not alter this regime set out in the Act of 1977, as there are no references related to 'listing' and 'registration' in the 1985 Act. As per the 1985 Act, art. 3 on citizenship by registration, states that a person permanently domiciled in Bhutan on or before 31 December 1958, and, whose name is registered in the census register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by registration. The Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC) has a mandate to deliver civil registration and census services to the general public.

## Child marriage

The legal age of marriage is 18 for men and 16 for women. According to the Marriage Act 1980 (Section Kha 1-11), no marriage certificates shall be granted for marriages performed between a male person who has not attained the age of 18 years and a female who is under 16 years. (Amendment to Section Kha 1-2 of THRIMSHUNG 1957). However, the guidelines for issuance of a marriage certificate between a Bhutanese and a foreign spouse (2015), states that the legal age of marriage in Bhutan for both men and women is 18 years. In order to obtain a marriage

certificate, the guidelines state, both parties must submit an affidavit to the courts in which they are required to certify that they are 18 years and above and eligible to marry.

Bhutan is a member of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage. The regional action plan is to be implemented in the period 2015–2018.

According to UNICEF, 6 per cent of women aged 20–24 years married before the age of 15 and 26 per cent before the age of 18.<sup>33</sup>

## Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017)

*"Taking note of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration, the Committee urges the State party to:*

- a. *Review the Citizenship Act of 1985 to dissociate birth registration from citizenship, simplify the birth registration procedure after the 12-month period, ensure that single mothers can register their children and ensure that children born to either a Bhutanese mother or father, including in cases when the identity of the father cannot be ascertained, are granted Bhutanese citizenship;*
- b. *Consider ratifying the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;*
- c. *Seek technical assistance from UNICEF and UNHCR in the implementation of these recommendations."*<sup>34</sup>

## The 11th Five-Year Plan, 2013-2018

Bhutan has already reached completeness of birth registration with 99.9 per cent of children under 5 years registered, according to the MICS 2010 survey.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a digital world*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930-7, December 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Bhutan, 5 July 2017, CRC/C/BTN/CO/3-5.

However, the Government of Bhutan is committed to improve the service of CRVS to the public. The 11th Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018, of the Gross National Happiness Commission includes provisions to improve the services, and proposes to put in place a reliable service delivery system through the establishment of the online Bhutan Civil Registration System (BCRS). To support the online system, ICT network infrastructure and associated equipment will be upgraded at the headquarters of the dzongkhags, dungkhags and thromdes (municipalities). The Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS) will also be incorporated into the online system to enable efficient verification and authentication of citizen information.

The strategy includes:

- Creating a conducive working environment for the officials and service-oriented facilities for the clientele at the Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC) in order to enhance effective and efficient delivery of civil registration and census services;

- Upgrading the existing Automated Fingerprint Information System;
- Creating step-by-step processes for all services.

Activities planned include:

- Training of DCRC officials and local government representatives on the online, web-based system;
- Advocacy campaign on birth and death registration as per standard operating procedures;
- Construction of office building equipped with furniture and functional amenities;
- Procurement of AFIS (both software and hardware);
- Training of officials and staff on AFIS;
- Procurement of digital cameras, camera stand, back light/frame and accessories;
- Annual Census; Research and analysis of BCRS database;
- Feasibility study on development of bi-lingual BCRS database.

### The expected results are as follows:

Outcome/Outputs	Indicators	Baseline	Plan Target
Outcome 001: Effective and efficient civil registration and census services	Percentage of civil registration and census application/requests processed within the same day	80%	90%
	Percentage TAT of individual service reduced.	75%	90%
Output 001: Bhutan Civil Registration System (BCRS) Database made fully web-based application (Online system)	No. of DCRC services provided effectively and efficiently through online system	15 services	17 services fully operational
	Percentage of 3rd Generation (3G) Citizenship Identity Card issued to eligible Bhutanese citizen who had applied.	71%	100
	Percentage of Special Residence Permit (SRP) cards issued to eligible persons who had applied.	83%	100
Output 002: Strengthened Institutional Capacity	New office building constructed	0	1
Output 003: Strengthen the security and accuracy of online BCRS database	Developed comprehensive and accurate citizen identification through Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS)	NA	1
	Percentage of cases reviewed and updated in the BCRS database.	32%	100

## Recent improvements

During the year 2016, Bhutan established a multi-stakeholder national CRVS coordination mechanism and conducted rapid and comprehensive assessments of the country's CRVS system. It also established baselines and set national targets for the CRVS decade. In the coming years, Bhutan aims to review the legislative framework, improve cause-of-death information and publish regular vital statistics reports based on civil registration data.

Stakeholders involved in the process:

1. Ministry of Health
  - i. Health Information and Management System
  - ii. Health Research and Epidemiology Unit
  - iii. Medical Record Officer
  - iv. Department of Public Health
  - v. Legal Unit
2. Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
  - i. Department of Civil Registration and Census
  - ii. Department of Immigration
  - iii. Legal unit
  - iv. ICT unit

3. National Statistics Bureau
  - i. Survey and Data Processing Division
  - ii. Population Housing and GIS Division

The main recommendations to improve CRVS in the country:

1. Advocate for improved CRVS systems among high-level policymakers in health and non-health sectors.
2. Strengthen the existing coordination mechanism of key stakeholders – Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Health and National Statistics Bureau.
3. Train physicians in cause-of-death certification.
4. Introduce international standard of verbal autopsy techniques to generate data on cause-specific mortality patterns for deaths occurring outside medical facilities.
5. Facilitate access to available aggregated data by decision-makers and researchers.
6. Produce annual vital statistics, including cause-of-death, using civil registration and health records.
7. Develop a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy.

## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	Bhutan
Legal framework for births registration	<p>No real legal framework. The Bhutan Citizen Act, 1977, has references to "listing" and "registration" of children born as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (CHHA 1) All children born of a father who is a Bhutanese citizen should be registered in the official record within one year of their birth, whether the children are born inside or outside the country.</li> <li>2. (CHHA 2) All children born within the country are required to be listed with the Dzongkha or the Dungkhag of their birth.</li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Legal framework for births registration (Continued)	<p>The Bhutan Citizen Act, 1985, did not alter this regime set out in the Act of 1977, as there are no references related to listing and registration in the 1985 Act. As per the 1985 Act, (art. 3, citizenship by registration) a person permanently domiciled in Bhutan on or before 31 December 1958, and whose name is registered in the census register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs, shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by registration.</p> <p>The 2008 Constitution of Bhutan under article 6 (2) makes reference to citizenship by registration, stating: "A person, domiciled in Bhutan on or before the Thirty-First of December Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Eight and whose name is registered in the official record of the Government of Bhutan shall be a citizen of Bhutan by registration."</p>
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC)
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes (CHHA 1-2 Bhutan Citizen Act, 1977)
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes (on request)
Legal informant to register a birth	Parents or any person with a consent from head of household (signature of the head of household)
Time allowed for registration	1 year (Section CHHA1. of the Bhutan Citizen Act 1977)
Fee for birth registration	No fee (except for the service charge payable if the application is submitted at a community centre)
Fee for birth certificate	No fee but if the hospital delivers the birth certificate after the registration of birth by MoHCA, BTN15 has to be paid.
Penalty for late registration	No

**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
<p>Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country</p>	<p><b>Documents required for Bhutanese citizens serving overseas in Bhutanese Embassies/Missions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. Identification documents of parents.</li> <li>3. Birth certificate issued by competent authority. In the absence of birth certificates, statement confirming the parentage of the child from the Head of Chancery for Bhutanese serving in Bhutanese Embassies/ Missions or statement from a concerned elected representative (<i>Tshogpa</i>) of a sub block endorsed by the elected representative of a block/municipality (<i>Gup/Thromde Tshogpa</i>).</li> <li>4. Copy of marriage certificate, otherwise a statement confirming parentage of the child should be obtained from the Head of Chancery.</li> <li>5. Consent from the head of household is mandatory when the child's census is to be registered with person(s) other than the parents.</li> </ol>
<p>Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national</p>	<p><b>Documents required for all other marriage cases and non-Bhutanese:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. Identification documents of parents.</li> <li>3. Notification of birth (if delivered at hospital/BHU).</li> <li>4. Copy of marriage certificate, otherwise endorsement from the guarantor.</li> </ol> <p>For parents who are both non-Bhutanese, birth will not be registered by the MOHCA. Rather the hospital would issue a birth notification certificate, which may not have a legal value.</p>
<p>Requirements for birth registration</p>	<p><b>Documents required for Bhutanese citizens/SRP holders:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. Identification documents of parents.</li> <li>3. Notification of birth (if delivered at hospital/BHU).</li> <li>4. Copy of marriage certificate, otherwise endorsement from the guarantor or <i>Tshogpa</i> and <i>Gup</i>.</li> <li>5. Consent from head of household is mandatory when the child's birth is to be registered by person(s) other than the parents.</li> </ol>



**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Requirements for birth registration (Continued)	<p><b>Documents required for all other marriage cases and non-Bhutanese:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. Identification documents of parents.</li> <li>3. Notification of birth (if delivered at hospital/BHU).</li> <li>4. Copy of marriage certificate, otherwise endorsement from the guarantor.</li> </ol> <p><b>Documents required for Bhutanese citizens serving overseas in Bhutanese Embassies/Missions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. Identification documents of parents.</li> <li>3. Birth certificate issued by competent authority.</li> <li>4. Copy of marriage certificate, otherwise a statement confirming parentage of the child should be obtained from the Head of Chancery.</li> <li>5. Consent from head of household is mandatory when the child's census is to be registered by person(s) other than either of the parents.</li> </ol> <p><b>Documents required for Bhutanese citizens/SRP holders studying/working/residing overseas:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. Identification documents of parents.</li> <li>3. Birth certificate issued by competent authority.</li> <li>4. Copy of marriage certificate, otherwise a statement confirming parentage of the child should be obtained from the Head of Chancery.</li> <li>5. Consent from head of household is mandatory when the child's census is to be registered by person(s) other than the parents.</li> </ol>
Information collected	<p>Name, Nationality, Date of birth, Blood group, Sex, Mother tongue, Religion, Place of birth, Bhutanese Astrological Sign, Citizenship status, Place of residence, Father's name, Father's citizenship, Mother's name, Mother's citizenship, ID number of the person with whom the child is to be registered.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Processing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An applicant will have to submit the duly completed application form, No. BCRS-BR-01.</li> <li>2. The applicant will have to get consent from Head of Household when the child's census is to be registered with person(s) other than either of the parents.</li> <li>3. Attach relevant documents as specified in documents required.</li> <li>4. The applicant will have to produce originals of Citizen Identity/Special Residence Permit card when applying to the service.</li> <li>5. The birth registration certificate can be collected from Community Centre/ <i>Dzongkhag</i> Civil Registration and Census Office (DCRCO)/ <i>Thromde</i>/ DCRC HQ</li> </ol>
Place of registration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Centre (CC)</li> <li>2. <i>Dzongkhag</i> Civil Registration and Census Office (DCRCO)</li> <li>3. <i>Thromde</i> Civil Registration and Census Office (TCRCO)</li> <li>4. Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC), Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MoHCA)</li> </ol> <p>Since 1985, birth registration for the children of non-Bhutanese is not carried out by the DCRC.</p>
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	<p>205 Community centres</p> <p><i>Dzongkhag</i> Civil Registration Offices, DCRCO (All 20 <i>Dzongkhags</i>)</p> <p><i>Thromde</i> Civil Registration Office, TCRCO (Currently Thimphu, Phuntsholing, Gelephu and Sjongkhar Throm)</p> <p><i>Dungkhag</i> Civil Registration Office, Dungkhag CRCO (Phuntsholing, Sipsu, Lhamoizingkha and Gelephu)</p> <p>Department of Civil Registration HQ, DCRCHQ</p>
Birth certificate required to:	<p>Obtain citizenship/nationality (automatic when the birth has been registered)</p> <p>Obtain an identification card</p>
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).	<p>No, but annual census carried out for 3 months to check in the localities whether all children have been registered.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Process for establishing vital statistics	Vital statistics are not produced from civil registration, but from indirect methods based on the population census (crude birth rate).

### DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Bhutan
Legal framework for deaths registration	There is no legal framework. The Census Handbook of 1993 has a death registration form although death registration is not mentioned. Therefore, it is taken as a rule to register death.
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC)
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register a death	No
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes (on request)
Legal informant to register a death	Family of the deceased
Time allowed for registration	1 year (however, even after a year the registration is still accepted)
Fee for death registration	No fee (although a service charge is payable if the application is submitted at a Community Centre)
Fee for death certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	No
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	No
Requirements for death registration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Duly completed application form.</li> <li>2. Death notification issued by the hospital.</li> <li>3. Original citizen identity/Special Resident Permit card or copy of identification documents of deceased (non-Bhutanese).</li> <li>4. Copy of Identification documents of requestor/applicant.</li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Information collected	Name of the deceased, Sex, Date of birth, Occupation, Citizenship, ID/ Passport number, Marital status, Date of death, Type of place of death (e.g. hospital, home), Place of death, Cause of death, Attendant at death, Name of father, Citizenship of father, Name of mother, Citizenship of mother, Name of applicant, Citizenship of applicant, Relation of applicant to the deceased, Supporting documents.
Information collected in case of foetal death	Cause of death, information on congenital abnormalities, foetal infection, factors relating to access to care or provision
Processing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An applicant must submit the duly completed application form in respect of the deceased within 30 days from date of death at the CC/ DCRCO/ <i>Thromde</i>/ DCRC HQ. On expiry of 30 days, the application can be submitted only at the DCRC HQ.</li> <li>2. A competent authorized body, such as a hospital or <i>Gups</i>, issues the death notification.</li> <li>3. The applicant can collect the death certificate from the hospital.</li> </ol>
Place of registration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Centre (CC)</li> <li>2. <i>Dzongkhag</i> Civil Registration and Census Office (DCRCO)</li> <li>3. <i>Thromde</i> Administration</li> <li>4. DCRC, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, (MOHCA)</li> </ol>
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/ rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	<p>205 Community centres</p> <p><i>Dzongkhag</i> Civil Registration Offices (DCRCO) (All 20 <i>Dzongkhags</i>)</p> <p><i>Thromde</i> Civil Registration Office (TCRCO) (Currently Thimphu, Gelephu and Sjongkhar Throm)</p> <p><i>Dungkhag</i> Civil Registration Office, Dungkhag (CRCO) (Phuntsholing, Sipsu, Lhamoizingkha and Gelephu)</p> <p>Department of Civil Registration HQ (DCRCHQ)</p>
Death certificate required for:	Insurance claims, and in the case of civil servants pension claims and other service related benefits of the deceased
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of death registration.	No, but annual census carried out for three months to check in the localities whether all deaths have been registered.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Process for establishing vital statistics	Vital statistics are not produced from civil registration, but from indirect methods based on the population census (crude death rate).

### MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Bhutan
Legal Framework for marriages Registration	Marriage Act of 1980 amended.
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	Royal Court of Justice
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal age for marriage	<p>18 for men and 16 for women. According to the Marriage Act 1980 Section <i>Kha</i> 1-11, no marriage certificates shall be granted for marriages performed between a male person who has not attained the age of 18 years and a female who is under 16 years (Amendment to Section <i>Kha</i> 1-2 of THRIMSHUNG 1957).</p> <p>According to the Guidelines for issuance of marriage certificate between a Bhutanese and a foreign spouse, it is 18 for men and 18 for women.</p>
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Marriage Act 1980 Section <i>Kha</i> 1-3: Whenever a marriage is contracted according to the customary rites and rituals or following an engagement or a love marriage, a Marriage Certificate (<i>Nyentham</i>) shall have to be acquired from a local court of law to make such a marriage valid. Except those couples married prior to the year 1963, who are exempted from acquiring a Marriage Certificate as defined hereinafter in Section <i>Kha</i> 1-9, all other couples married subsequently to that year shall only be entitled to lay claims over properties on their divorce if they have acquired a marriage certificate on payment of the prescribed fines as laid down hereinafter in Section <i>Kha</i> 9-1. (Addendum to Section <i>Kha</i> 1-9 of THRIMSHUNG 1957).</p>
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	Yes

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Legal informant to register a marriage	Marriage Act 1980 Section <i>Kha</i> 1-4: Any couple approaching a Court of law for a marriage certificate shall have to present before the Court as sureties a male person for the bridegroom and a female person for the bride; and the Court shall obtain a document from the said sureties in the form and manner prescribed in Section <i>Kha</i> 1-5.
Time allowed for registration	No
Fee for marriage registration	BTN150
Fee for marriage certificate	Yes
Penalty for late registration	<p>No. But in case of divorce:</p> <p>Marriage Act 1980 Section <i>Kha</i> 9-1.</p> <p>Fines to be deposited in Court by persons seeking divorce but possessing no marriage certificate.</p> <p>(ka) If a divorce takes place within three years after a marriage has been contracted without a marriage certificate, a fine of BTN200 shall have to be jointly deposited in the court by both the parties.</p> <p>(kha) If a divorce takes place within seven years after a marriage has been contracted without a marriage certificate, a fine of BTN400 shall have to be jointly deposited in the court by both the parties.</p> <p>(ga) If a divorce takes place where the duration of a marriage contracted without a marriage certificate exceeds seven years, a fine of BTN600 shall have to be jointly deposited in the Court by both the parties.</p>
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	<p>Guidelines for issuance of marriage certificate between a Bhutanese and a foreign spouse:</p> <p>A Bhutanese marrying a foreign person and desiring to obtain a marriage certificate must comply with the following:</p> <p>A. Petition to the High Court:</p> <p>The parties must submit a petition to the High Court along with the following documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A petition signed by two Bhutanese guarantors, who are not required to be present at the time of the submission of petition, but should be present at the respective <i>Dzongkhag</i> Court during the issuance of the marriage certificate.</li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
<p>Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship (Continued)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Citizenship identity card/passport/visa copy.</li> <li>3. One passport size photograph of each of the applicants.</li> <li>4. Single status certificate issued by the respective <i>Dzongkhag</i> Court, where the census of the person applying for single status is registered. In the case of the foreign spouse, a certificate of single status issued by his/her respective public notary office.</li> <li>5. Copy of divorce agreement/final decree of divorce, if previously married and divorced evidencing a lapse of one year.</li> <li>6. A copy of the death certificate of the spouse, if the party has been previously married and widowed.</li> <li>7. Birth certificate of the child/children if available, or declaration if otherwise.</li> <li>8. Facts establishing to the satisfaction of the court that the couple had been associated with each other for a minimum of one year.</li> <li>9. Proof that one year had elapsed since the couple first applied for the marriage certificate, in cases where the court denied the application.</li> <li>10. Proof of exiting Bhutan within one month from the date of divorce with the previous Bhutanese spouse, if any.</li> <li>11. In addition to the above requirements a foreign spouse shall also submit the following documents:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A certified copy of a certificate of consent, and a certificate, signed by the parents, acknowledging the marital status. A relationship certificate or other documentary evidence establishing the relationship, duly issued by the competent authority of the respective country of the foreign spouse.</li> <li>b. In the event of the death of both the parents, a certified copy of a certificate of consent and certificate stating the marital status must be obtained from at least two blood relatives (i.e. persons of first, second or third degree consanguinity) of the person applying for a certificate of single status. In such a case, a certified death certificate of the deceased parents issued by competent authority and a certified relationship certificate/documentary evidence duly issued by the competent authority of the home country of the foreign spouse, to establish the relationship.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
<p>Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship (Continued)</p>	<p>c. In the event where the legal guardian/s have fostered/adopted the person desiring to obtain a certificate of single status, a certified copy of a certificate of consent and certificate stating the marital status must be obtained from them. In this case, a person must furnish evidence to the satisfaction of the court issuing the certificate of single status to affirm such relationship.</p> <p>d. In the event of the demise of both the foster parents, a certified copy of a certificate of consent and certificate stating the marital status must be obtained from at least two relatives (of first, second or third degree consanguinity) of the person applying for a certificate of single status. In such case, a certified copy of death certificate of the deceased foster parents issued by competent authority and a certified relationship certificate/documentary evidence/s duly issued by the competent authority of the home country of the foreign person must be submitted to establish the relationship.</p> <p>e. If the parents, foster/adopted parents, relatives, or legal guardians deny giving the certificate of consent and the certificate stating the marital status, then such certificate shall be obtained from the respective court or the public notary office.</p> <p>f. A copy of the passport (or any other such official document) of the natural/foster/adopted parents or of any person from whom a certificate of consent and certificate stating the marital status, is obtained as the case may be.</p> <p>g. Any other certified legal document/s to prove his/her marital status may be submitted for review by the registrar of the court.</p> <p>h. A certified copy of the clearance certificate from the competent authority stating that he or she is not convicted of a criminal offence.</p>
<p>Requirements for marriage registration</p>	<p>For registration of marriage between two Bhutanese the following documents are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duly filled Affidavit of Parties/Witnesses In-re Marriage Certificate forms, Form No. G-6 and Form No. H-8.</li> <li>• A copy of divorce agreement/judgement</li> </ul>



## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Requirements for marriage registration (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of the citizenship identity cards of the parties and the witnesses.</li> <li>• A consent letter from the present wife in case of subsequent marriage.</li> <li>• A copy of the death certificate of the deceased spouse, if previously married and widowed.</li> <li>• A copy of the birth certificate(s) of the child/children if any or declaration if otherwise.</li> <li>• Family tree/census of both the bride and groom issued by the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs.</li> <li>• A legally signed joint application by the spouses stating the intent.</li> <li>• Three recent passport size, individual photographs of husband and wife.</li> <li>• The parties and the witnesses need to be present on the date of appointment.</li> </ul>
Information collected	<p>Names of bride and groom, Dates of birth of bride and groom, Occupations of bride and groom, Names of parents of bride and groom, Household details (House number, <i>Thram</i>, village, <i>geowg</i>, <i>dzongkhag</i>, country) of bride and groom, Religion of bride and groom, ID card and/or passport numbers of bride and groom, Names and ID card numbers of witnesses:</p>
Processing	<p>Marriage Act 1980, Section <i>Kha</i> 1-4</p> <p>Thereafter, the court shall fully satisfy itself as to whether or not the couple are eligible to marry each other and whether or not any provisions of the Marriage Act will be contravened by contracting such a marriage. If no provisions are contravened, then that couple shall be recognized as a husband and wife and the court shall grant them a marriage certificate as prescribed in the form and manner "Ka" set forth in the Schedule.</p> <p>Marriage Act 1980, Section <i>Kha</i> 1-6.</p> <p>If either of the parties to the marriage under unavoidable circumstances is physically unable to attend a court for obtaining a marriage certificate, then such a couple may obtain a marriage certificate through the local village headman (GUP).</p>









## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Bhutan
Processing (Continued)	Accordingly, that village headman shall conduct a thorough enquiry into the form and manner prescribed in the aforesaid Section <i>Kha</i> 1-5 and thereafter execute an agreement from the bride and bridegroom together with the guarantors as prescribed in the form and manner " <i>Ga</i> " set forth in the Schedule and submit the same to the Court with a forwarding letter. (Addendum to the resolution passed under agenda 2 of the 21st National Assembly held on the 11th month of the Wood Dragon Year.).
Place of registration	Court of the place of residence/online request: < <a href="http://www.citizenservices.gov.bt/Judiciary/openApplication.html?method=openApplication&amp;applType=MC">www.citizenservices.gov.bt/Judiciary/openApplication.html?method=openApplication&amp;applType=MC</a> >  Since 1985, for marriages between a Bhutanese and non-Bhutanese marriage certificates are not issued by the DCRC, however the certificate is maintained by Department of Immigration, MoHCA.
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	<i>Dzongkhag</i> Court - District courts (20) <i>Dungkhag</i> Court - Subdistrict courts (15)  Online
Marriage certificate required for:	Child registration, legal proof of marriage, divorce
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	No
Process for establishing vital statistics	Vital statistics are not produced from civil registration, but from indirect methods based on the population census.

## 6.4 India

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/india](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/india)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	85.6% (2013)	100%
Target 1.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	86% (2013)	100%
Target 1.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	50% (2013)	75%
Target 1.D: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	70.9% (2014)	100%
Target 1.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.	11.6% (2013)	60%
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	60%	100%

## Continued: National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
Target 2.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex and age.	NR	100%
<b>Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated</b>		
Target 3.A: By .... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2020
Target 3.B: By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2020
Target 3.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).	11.6% (2013)	60%
Target 3.D: By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year.	13.3% (2013)	7%
Target 3.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.	NR	NR
Target 3.F: By .... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.	-	2017
Target 3.G: By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.	-	2018
Target 3.H: By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.	-	2018

**Source:** -'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/india](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/india)> Last accessed 1 September 2018.  
- Report of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Seventy-second session. Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016. Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda

NR: No response

## Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, WHO

## Brief history of CRVS in India

The history of the civil registration system (CRS) in India dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1886, the Central Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act was promulgated to provide for voluntary registration throughout British India. Post-independence, the Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD Act) was enacted in 1969 to promote uniformity and comparability in the registration of births and deaths across the country and compilation of vital statistics based thereon. With the enactment of the RBD Act, registration of births, deaths and stillbirths became mandatory in India. The Registrar General, India, at the Central Government level coordinates and unifies the activities of registration throughout the country. However, implementation of the statute is vested with the state governments. Functionaries appointed by the state governments conduct the registration of births and deaths in the country. The offices of the Directorate of Census Operations, which are subordinate to the Office of the Registrar General, India, are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Act in their concerned State/UT. The Act mandates the use of uniform birth and death reporting forms and certificates throughout the country.<sup>35</sup>

The registration hierarchy is the following:

- National level: The Registrar General of India coordinates and unifies the implementation of the Act in the country. He is assisted by a Joint Registrar General and Assistant Registrar General for the states;
- State level: The Chief Registrar is the Chief Executive Authority in each state/UT for implementing the provisions of the Act. He/she is assisted by an Additional Chief Registrar/Deputy Chief Registrar;
- The District Registrar supervises registration in the district, assisted by an Additional District Registrar;

- Local level: The Registrar is in charge of the registration of vital events and submission of statistical information on registered events. Sub-registrars are appointed for specified areas within the area under the jurisdiction of a registrar.

## Child marriage

The legal age of marriage is 21 for men and 18 for women under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) of 2006. The PCMA establishes punishments for those who do not prevent child marriages. The Act creates child marriage prohibition officers and includes a right to annul underage marriages, although such annulments rely on families to report the act.

India is a member of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage.<sup>36</sup> A national action plan to prevent child marriages was drafted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2013, but has not yet been finalized. However, plans to end the practice have been adopted in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, and other states have plans under development. All of these recognize the importance of birth and marriage registration to end child marriage. India is a focus country of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder programme working across 12 countries.

According to UNICEF, 7 per cent of women aged 20-24 were married by the age of 15 and 27 per cent by the age of 18.

## ***Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2014)***

*“The Committee expresses its concern at the generally low rate of birth registration as well as the disparities in birth registration rates across the State party and the insufficient awareness among*

<sup>35</sup> Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India website: <[www.censusindia.gov.in/vital\\_statistics/CRS/CRS\\_Division.html](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/CRS/CRS_Division.html)>, last accessed 2 September 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Girls Not Brides website: [www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/india/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/india/), last accessed, 23 August 2018.

the relevant authorities and the population about the importance of universal birth registration. The Committee is also concerned at the discordance between the birth registration rate and the issuance of birth certificates.

The Committee strongly urges the State party to:

- a. Expedite the adoption of the amendments to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969; make it accessible to the population; and guarantee both birth registration and prompt issuance of birth certificates;
- b. Take all necessary measures to increase the birth registration rate, including by establishing mobile registration offices in particular in rural areas and undertaking a campaign aimed at registering all children who have not yet been registered and who do not have birth certificates;
- c. Promote awareness of the importance of birth registration among parents and relevant authorities through regular mass campaigns and provide information on the procedures for birth registration and the rights and entitlements deriving from birth registration.<sup>37</sup>

## CRVS assessment

The CRVS system was reviewed in 1999 and a revamped system of CRS was implemented with effect from 1 January 2000. Since that time India has not conducted a comprehensive assessment of its CRVS system but plans to conduct one in the coming years.

In 2011, the Office of the Registrar General identified the following challenges:

- Lack of awareness regarding the need and importance of registration;
- Low priority accorded to the system of civil registration by the states;

- Bottlenecks in monitoring the flow of registered vital events;
- Problems in estimating infant mortality rates and maternal mortality rates due to under reporting of domiciliary infant deaths and stillbirths, and misclassification of maternal deaths;
- Delayed reporting by the states reducing the utility of data;
- Lack of coordination among the concerned departments;
- Low level of reporting by registration units;
- Problems in linking birth certificates to basic services.

## Recent improvements

To tackle these issues, a series of initiatives has been taken:<sup>38</sup>

- The content and size of the registration forms has been reviewed: Legal items are now separated from statistical ones; new relevant items such as birth weight, duration of pregnancy, age of mother at the time of marriage have been added. Consequently, the number of forms was reduced from 21 to 13;
- A coordination mechanism has been established: The Registrar General, India, is the Chairman of the Committee. The chief registrars of eight selected states are members of the Committee. A representative of Union Health & Family Welfare Department is also a member of the committee;
- A software application for online and offline registration of birth and death has been developed: This application covers the entire gamut of the civil registration system: Registration of events, generation of certificates, and generation of statistical tables and reports. The application, which is already available

<sup>37</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the third and fourth periodic report of India, 7 July 2014, CRC/C/IND/CO/3-4.

<sup>38</sup> Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India website: <[www.censusindia.gov.in/vital\\_statistics/CRS/CRS\\_Division.html](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/CRS/CRS_Division.html)>, last accessed 4 September 2018.

in English, is being translated into 13 Indian languages. The software is currently being implemented across all states. It is functioning well in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh and Puducherry. However, it is still under implementation in Bihar and Jharkhand, which have low levels of birth registration;

- A nationwide database of medical institutions has been prepared. This comprehensive database has the address, telephone numbers and other contact details of the institutions where events occur. The plan is to electronically monitor the registration of events occurring in these institutions through an ICT enabled platform;
- An SMS based application called 'Event Monitoring System for Registration' has been developed and is currently under pilot testing. This application attempts to track the events at the level of institutions and ensure their registration;
- A standard training manual has been developed in 13 languages for the registration functionaries. Regular training of registration functionaries has been introduced by providing financial assistance to the state governments;
- Data digitization: A project, supported by UNICEF, to keep old records in easy to retrieve digital form has started. This will help in storage of registers in electronic format and allow easy access to the records;
- An intensive multi-modal publicity and awareness campaign on birth and death registration is already underway. Plans are being formulated to expand this campaign in all regional languages in order to increase the coverage of the CRVS system;
- Creating a policy environment for demand generation for birth and death registration is one

of the basic needs identified by a national task force set up to strengthen the CRVS. As per its recommendations, the registration of events has been linked to the Government's various welfare schemes;

- National Population Register: India is in the process of setting up a national population register (NPR). This is the first step towards the creation of a national register of citizens and raises the issue of a national identity card. The civil registration system has been linked to the NPR.

### **Vital statistics reporting**

In India, the coverage of the registration system is incomplete and not up to the mark to be utilized for statistical purposes at the national level. However, as per the 2016 Vital Statistics Report, there are 24 states/UTs where the coverage of birth registration is more than 90 per cent (18 states/UTs for the coverage of death registration).

Vital statistics are mainly generated through the decennial Population Census, the Civil Registration System where the coverage is satisfactory, and the Sample Registration System (SRS).

The SRS was initiated in 1969–1970 to provide reliable annual estimates of birth, death and infant mortality rates at state and national levels, separately for rural and urban areas. It also provides estimates of the child mortality rate (CMR), total fertility rate (TFR), sex ratio at birth and in the 0-4 age group, institutional deliveries, medical attention before death, etc. Mortality rates in the under 5 cohort have been generated annually from 2008. The SRS is one of the largest household surveys with a demographic sample covering 1.3 million households and a population of about 7 million.

## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	India
Legal framework for births registration	The Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RDB), 1969 (Act No. 18 of 1969)
Office of the Registrar General of India in charge of the implementation of the RBD Act.	Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India in charge of the implementation of the RBD Act.
Official authorities in charge of registering births	Different departments at various levels in states and Union Territories (UTs), carry out the registration work. A unilinear hierarchy exists in 11 states/ UTs where a single department is involved at all levels of registration. The Health Department is involved at all levels of registration in 9 states (Assam, Chandigarh, Haryana, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar Islands). The Panchayat department in Kerala and Local Administration Department in Puducherry are responsible for execution of this work at all levels. At present, the Health Department supervises the civil registration work in 21 states and UTs, Department of Planning, Economics and Statistics in 13 States/UTs, Department of Panchayats in Kerala and local administration department in Puducherry.
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes, certificates are issued for those registered within prescribed period of 21 days of occurrence of event and also beyond the prescribed period, namely delayed registration. Provisions have been made in Rule 8 framed under Section 12 of the RBD Act. <sup>39</sup>
Legal informant to register a birth	<p><b>Section 8-1: 8. Persons required to register births and deaths</b></p> <p>1. It shall be the duty of the persons specified below to give or cause to be given, either orally or in writing, according to the best of their knowledge and belief, within such time as may be prescribed, information to the registrar of the several particulars required to be entered in the forms prescribed by the state government under sub-section (1) of section 16:</p>

<sup>39</sup> The RBD Act is national. The Office of the Registrar General of India is responsible for Administration of the Act, including changes in the Act or development of model rules. However, implementation of the Act is the responsibility of the State government, as per the State rules as adopted by the State based on the model rules.



**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
<p>Legal informant to register a birth (Continued)</p>	<p>a. In respect of births and deaths in a house, whether residential or non-residential, not being any place referred to in clauses (b) to (e), the head of the house or, in case more than one household live in the house, the head of the household, the head being the person, who is so recognized by the house or the household, and if he is not present in the house at any time during the period within which the birth or death has to be reported, the nearest relative of the head present in the house, and in the absence of any such person, the oldest adult male person present therein during the said period;</p> <p>b. In respect of births and deaths in a hospital, health centre, maternity or nursing home or other like institution, the medical officer in charge or any person authorized by him/her in this behalf;</p> <p>c. In respect of births and deaths in a jail, the jailor in charge;</p> <p>d. In respect of births and deaths in a choultry, chattram, hostel, dharmasala, boarding house, lodging house, tavern, barrack, toddy shop or place of public resort, the person in charge thereof;</p> <p>e. In respect of any new-born child or dead body found deserted in a public place, the headman or other corresponding officer of the village in the case of a village and officer in charge of the local police station elsewhere: Provided that any person who finds such child or dead body, or in whose charge such child or dead body may be placed, shall notify such fact to the headman or officer aforesaid;</p> <p>f. In any other place, such person as may be prescribed</p> <p><b>Section 10. Duty of certain persons to notify births and deaths and to certify cause of death - (1) It shall be the duty of:</b></p> <p>i. The midwife or any other medical or health attendant at a birth or death;</p> <p>ii. The keeper or the owner of a place set apart for the disposal of dead bodies or any person required by a local authority to be present at such place; or</p> <p>iii. Any other person whom the state government may specify in this behalf by his designation, to notify every birth or death or both at which he or she attended or was present, or which occurred in such areas as may be prescribed, to the Registrar within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Time allowed for registration	21 days, under rule 5(3) framed under Section 8 of the RBD Act. However, provision under Sections 8, 9 and 13 of the Act provides for delayed registration too.
Fee for birth registration	There is no fee for registration within prescribed period, although small fees are prescribed under Rule 9, framed under Section 13 of the Act, and they vary according to the state.
Fee for birth certificate	Fees vary according to the state/local body.
	Yes
	<p><b>Section 13:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any birth or death of which information is given to the Registrar after the expiry of the prescribed period but within 30 days of its occurrence, shall be registered on payment of such late fee as may be prescribed [Rule 9 (1)].</li> <li>Any birth or death of which delayed information is given to the Registrar after 30 days but within one year of its occurrence shall be registered only with the written permission of the prescribed authority and on payment of the prescribed fee and the production of an affidavit made before a notary public or any other office authorized in this behalf by the State Government [Rule 9 (2)].</li> <li>Any birth or death that has not been registered within one year of its occurrence, shall be registered only on an order made by a magistrate of the first class or a Presidency Magistrate after verifying the correctness of the birth or death and on payment of the prescribed fee [Rule 9 (3)].</li> <li>The provisions of this section shall be without prejudice to any action that may be taken against a person for failure on his part to register any birth or death within the time specified therefore and any such birth or death may be registered during the pendency of any such action.</li> </ol> <p><b>Fees:</b>  Registration after 21 days but within 30 days: Rs2  Registration after 30 days but within 1 year: Rs5  Registration after 1 year: Rs10  Fees vary from state to state</p>
Penalty for late registration	

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
<p>Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country</p>	<p>The India consulates register the births and deaths of Indian citizens occurring outside India (as per the provisions made in the Citizens Rules, 1956, under the Citizenship Act, 1955), and issue birth and death certificates.<sup>40</sup> The certificate issued by the India consulates is valid and holds good for all purposes. Also, Indian citizens have been allowed to register the births of their children at the place of their usual residence within 60 days of their return to India, if they return with a view to settling there:</p> <p><b>Section 20.</b> Special provision as to registration of births and deaths of citizens outside India:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Registrar General shall, subject to such rules as may be made by the Central Government in this behalf, cause to be registered information as to births and deaths of citizens of India outside India received by him under the rules relating to the registration of such citizens at India consulates made under the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955), and every such registration shall also be deemed to have been duly made under this Act.</li> <li>2. In the case of any child born outside India in respect of whom information has not been received as provided in subsection (1), if the parents of the child returns to India with a view to settling therein, they may, at any time within 60 days from the date of the arrival of the child in India, get the birth of the child registered under this Act in the same manner as if the child was born in India and the provisions of section 13 shall apply to the birth of such child after the expiry of the period of 60 days aforesaid.</li> </ol>
<p>Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Requirements for birth registration</p>	<p>Form No. 1: Birth report</p>
<p>Information collected</p>	<p>Place of registration, Date of registration, Date of birth, Sex, Name of the child, Name of the father, Permanent address, Name of the mother, Type of place of birth (hospital, home, etc.), Place of birth</p>

<sup>40</sup> Such registration is credited to the RBD Act, 1969 [Section 20 (1)].

**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India																																																																																							
Information collected (Continued)	Town or village of residence of the mother, Religion of the family, Father's level of education, Mother's level of education, Father's occupation, Mother's occupation, Age of the mother (in completed years) at the time of marriage: (If married more than once age at first marriage may be entered), Age of the mother (in completed years) at the time of this birth, Number of children born alive to the mother so far including this child, Attendant at birth, Methods of delivery (natural, caesarean, forceps/vacuum), Birth weight in kilograms (If available), Duration of pregnancy (in weeks).																																																																																							
Processing	Midwife or any other medical or health attendants who assisted or were present at the birth or death are duty bound to notify the registrar concerned about the occurrence of the event.  In the case of birth at home, the head of household has to register at the district registration office or its closest local office.																																																																																							
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**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India			
<p>How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points. (Continued)</p>	States/UTs	Registration Units (Number)		
		Rural	Urban	Total
	Nagaland	1, 395	32	1, 427
	Odisha	N.A.	N.A.	4, 968
	Punjab	2, 951	164	3, 115
	Rajasthan	9, 894	190	10, 084
	Sikkim	23	10	33
	Tamil Nadu	14, 404	1, 695	16, 099
	Telangana	8, 747	69	8, 816
	Tripura	1, 118	144	1,262
	Uttar Pradesh	54, 292	650	54, 942
	Uttarakhand	7, 805	118	7, 923
	West Bengal	3, 694	246	3, 940
	<b>Union Territories</b>			
	Andaman and Nicobar (A & N) Islands	N.A.	N.A.	91
Chandigarh	5	7	12	
Daman and Nagar (D & N) Haveli	23	2	25	
Daman and Diu	17	7	24	
Delhi	N.A.	N.A.	14	
Lakshadweep	10	0	10	
Puducherry	20	20	40	

**Source:** Vital Statistics of India Based on the Civil Registration System 2016. Office of the Registrar General of India:

1. Jharkhand total registration units include hospitals
2. Number of registration units in respect of Gujarat pertains to 2013; Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Manipur, Punjab and Tripura pertain to 2015.
3. Sum of rural and urban units might not tally as some of the states/UTs do not provide data
4. NA Not Available

Birth certificate required for:

Right to vote, admission to schools and to the Government Service, claiming the right to marry at the legally permissible age, settlement of inheritance and property rights, and obtaining Government-issued identity documents like a driver's license or passport.

Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).

The Office of the Registrar General, India, publishes an annual report on the coverage of civil registration. See for example: <[http://crsorgi.gov.in/web/uploads/download/crs\\_report%202015\\_23062017.pdf](http://crsorgi.gov.in/web/uploads/download/crs_report%202015_23062017.pdf)>.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Process for establishing vital statistics	The system of registration of births and deaths is constantly generating statistical information at the local level. The registrar consolidates the information contained in the reporting forms each month for onward transmission to the Chief Registrar of the concerned state/UT. She/he, in turn, is required to submit an annual report on the Act and a statistical report to the State Government by July and December, respectively, of the following year to which the report relates. The chief registrars are also required to send a copy of these reports to the Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

## DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	India
Legal framework for deaths registration	The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 (Act No. 18 of 1969)
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India is in charge of the implementation of the RBD Act.  Different departments handle the registration work at various levels in states/UTs. A unilinear hierarchy exists in 11 States/UTs where a single department is involved at all levels of registration. In nine states namely Assam, Chandigarh, Haryana, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim and A&N Islands, the Health Department is involved at all levels of registration. Panchayat department in Kerala, and Local Administration Department in Puducherry are responsible for execution of this work at all levels. At present, the Health Department supervises the civil registration work at state level in 21 states/UTs, Department of Planning, Economics and Statistics in 13 states/UTs, Department of Panchayats in Kerala and Local Administration Department in Puducherry.
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register a death	Yes

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes (within 30 days)
Legal informant to register a death	<p><b>Art. 8:</b></p> <p>(a) In respect of births and deaths in a house, whether residential or non-residential, not being any place referred to in clauses (b) to (e), the head of the house or, in case more than one household lives in the house, the head of the household, the head being the person, who is so recognized by the house or the household, and if she/he is not present in the house at any time during the period within which the birth or death has to be reported, the nearest relative of the head present in the house, and in the absence of any such person, the oldest adult male person present therein during the said period;</p> <p>(b) In respect of births and deaths in a hospital, health centre, maternity or nursing home or other like institution, the medical officer in charge or any person authorized by him in this behalf;</p> <p>(c) In respect of births and deaths in a jail, the prison officer in charge;</p> <p>(d) In respect of births and deaths in a choultry, chattram, hostel, dharmasala, boarding house, lodging house, tavern, barrack, toddy shop or place of public resort, the person in charge thereof;</p> <p>(e) In respect of any new-born child or dead body found deserted in a public place, the headman or other corresponding officer of the village in the case of a village and officer in charge of the local police station elsewhere: Provided that any person who finds such child or dead body, or in whose charge such child or dead body may be placed, shall notify such fact to the headman or officer aforesaid;</p> <p>In any other place, such person as may be prescribed.</p>
Time allowed for registration	21 days
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	Fees vary according to the state/local body.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
	<p>No penalty, but fees for late registration:</p> <p><b>Art 13:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any birth or death of which information is given to the registrar after the expiry of the period specified therefore, but within thirty days of its occurrence, shall be registered on payment of such late fee as may be prescribed.</li> <li>2. Any birth or death of which delayed information is given to the registrar after thirty days but within one year of its occurrence shall be registered only with the written permission of the prescribed authority and on payment of the prescribed fee and the production of an affidavit made before a notary public or any other office authorized in this behalf by the State Government.</li> <li>3. Any birth or death that has not been registered within one year of its occurrence, shall be registered only on an order made by a magistrate of the first class or a Presidency Magistrate after verifying the correctness of the birth or death and on payment of the prescribed fee.</li> <li>4. The provisions of this section shall be without prejudice to any action that may be taken against a person for failure on his part to register any birth or death within the time specified therefore and any such birth or death may be registered during the pendency of any such action.</li> </ol> <p><b>Fees:</b>  Registration after 21 days but within 30 days: Rs2  Registration after 30 days but within 1 year: Rs5  Registration after 1 year: Rs10  However, fees vary from state to state.</p>
<p>Penalty for late registration</p>	
	<p>The India consulates register the births and deaths of Indian citizens occurring outside India as per the provisions made in the Citizens Rules (1956) under the Citizenship Act (1955) and issue birth and death certificates. The certificate issued by the India consulates is valid and holds good for all purposes.</p> <p>Art. 20: Special provision as to registration of births and deaths of citizens outside India.</p>
<p>Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality</p>	



## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India																																			
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality (Continued)	The Registrar General shall, subject to such rules as may be made by the Central Government in this behalf, cause to be registered information as to births and deaths of citizens of India outside India received by him under the rules relating to the registration of such citizens at India consulates made under the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955), and every such registration shall also be deemed to have been duly made under this Act.																																			
Requirements for death registration	Form No. 2 Death Report, Declaration of Death by a Doctor (Medical Certificate) if applicable																																			
Information collected	Place of registration, Date of registration, Date of death, Name of the deceased, Unique Identification Number (UID) of the deceased, Sex of the deceased, Name of mother, UID of the mother, Name of father, UID of the father, Name of husband/wife, UID of husband/wife, Age of the deceased, Address of the deceased, Place of death (including type of).  Place of residence of the deceased, Religion, Occupation, Type of medical attention received before death, Cause of death, Maternal mortality, Smoking prevalence, Alcohol prevalence.																																			
Information collected in case of foetal death	Place of registration, Date of registration, Date of occurrence, Sex, Name and UID of the father, Name and UID of the mother, Type of place of birth (hospital, home, etc.), Place of birth, Address.  Town or village of residence of the mother, Mother's level of education, Age of the mother (in completed years) at the time of this birth, Attendant at birth, Duration of pregnancy (in weeks), Cause of foetal death.																																			
Processing	Once a death occurs, a designated family member should contact the local registration office.																																			
Place of registration	Registrar/Subregistrar in whose jurisdiction the death has occurred																																			
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**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India			
	States/UTs	Registration Units (Number)		
		Rural	Urban	Total
	Goa	191	14	205
	Gujarat	18, 133	170	18, 303
	Haryana	477	127	604
	Himachal Pradesh	3, 226	56	3, 282
	Jammu and Kashmir	261	87	348
	Jharkhand	4, 429	41	8, 857
	Karnataka	30, 640	610	31, 250
	Kerala	941	94	1, 035
	Madhya Pradesh	23, 846	704	24, 550
	Maharashtra	40, 887	557	41, 444
	Manipur	98	35	133
	Meghalaya	150	12	162
	Mizoram	566	266	832
	Nagaland	1, 395	32	1, 427
	Odisha	N.A.	N.A.	4, 968
	Punjab	2, 951	164	3, 115
	Rajasthan	9, 894	190	10, 084
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	Telangana	8, 747	69	8, 816
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	Uttar Pradesh	54, 292	650	54,942
	Uttarakhand	7, 805	118	7, 923
	West Bengal	3, 694	246	3, 940
	<b>Union Territories</b>			
	Andaman and Nicobar (A & N) Islands	N.A.	N.A.	91
	Chandigarh	5	7	12
	Daman and Nagar (D & N) Haveli	23	2	25
	Daman and Diu	17	7	24
	Delhi	N.A.	N.A.	14
	Lakshadweep	10	0	10
	Puducherry	20	20	40

How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.  
(Continued)

**Source:** Vital Statistics of India Based on the Civil Registration System 2016. Office of the Registrar General of India:

1. Jharkhand total registration units include hospitals
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3. Sum of rural and urban units might not tally as some of the states/UTs do not provide data
4. NA Not Available

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Death certificate required to:	<p>Prove the time and date of death</p> <p>Establish the fact of death for relieving the individual from social, legal and official obligations</p> <p>Establish the claim on property</p> <p>Enable settlement of property inheritance, and</p> <p>Authorize the family to collect insurance, among other benefits</p>
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).	The Office of the Registrar General, India, publishes an annual report on the coverage of civil registration. See for example: < <a href="http://crsorgi.gov.in/web/uploads/download/crs_report%202015_23062017.pdf">http://crsorgi.gov.in/web/uploads/download/crs_report%202015_23062017.pdf</a> >.
Process for establishing vital statistics	The system of registration of births and deaths is constantly generating statistical information at the local level. The registrar consolidates the information contained in the reporting forms each month for onward transmission to the Chief Registrar of the concerned state/UT. She/he, in turn, is required to submit an annual report on the Act and a statistical report to the State Government by July and December, respectively, of the following year to which the report relates. The chief registrars are also required to send a copy of these reports to the Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

## MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	India
Legal Framework for marriages Registration	<p>Provisions for marriage registration exist under various laws, such as the Hindu Marriages Act, 1955, Special Marriage Act, 1954, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, and the Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872. However, there is no provision for simply keeping a record of all marriages that is available to any and every individual in the country regardless of religion, region or customs.</p> <p>The Special Marriage Act 1954, laid down a procedure for registration but the Act was primarily intended to enable couples to opt out of personal laws, and did not imply that the couple has opted out of religion. It simply meant that religion has no relevance for registration of a marriage under this Act.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Legal Framework for marriages Registration (Continued)	<p>Though the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 1969, was introduced to include the registration of marriages, it did not cover all citizens. These amendments applied only to the Christian community and once again remained short of becoming national legislation.</p> <p>Report No. 270 of the Law Commission of India of July 2017 proposes to amend the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 to include the compulsory registration of marriage within its purview.</p>
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	Registrar of Marriage/Marriage Officer, who is generally the District Magistrate
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal age for marriage	21 for men and 18 for women
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	No
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	<p>Special Marriages Act, 1954, Art. 47-2: The Marriage Officer, on application, shall give certified extracts from the Marriage Certificate Book to the applicant on payment by him/her of the prescribed fee.</p> <p>Applicants who marry under Hindu customs can get their marriage registered within one month under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 (Section 8) by applying to the office of the subregistrar using a prescribed form with relevant proof of marriage.</p>
Legal informant to register a marriage	Spouses
Time allowed for registration	No
Fee for marriage registration	Fees can vary according to the state
Fee for marriage certificate	Fees can vary according to the state
Penalty for late registration	No
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	A citizen of any foreign country is required to present a no objection letter from the embassy or consulate of his/her country. The parties also have to wait at least 30 days from the date of the initial application to formalize the marriage so that the marriage officer can publish a notice – sometimes even in a newspaper – giving an opportunity for any objections to the marriage to be voiced.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Requirements for marriage registration	Marriage proof (e.g. wedding invitation, Temple marriage receipts, verification of marriage solemnization); Evidence of age, identity and address. Three witnesses.
Information collected	<p><b>Hindu marriage:</b> Name, Religion, Caste, Age, Profession, Place of residence, Date of birth, Names of fathers and mothers of both bride and groom, Place and date of solemnisation of marriage, Place and date of registration</p> <p><b>Christian marriage:</b> Name, Age, Marital status, Profession, Place of residence, Names of fathers of both bride and groom, Place and date of solemnization of marriage, Place and date of registration</p>
Processing	<p><b>Under the Hindu Marriage Act:</b> Parties to the marriage have to apply to the registrar in whose jurisdiction the marriage is solemnised or to the registrar in whose jurisdiction either party to the marriage has been residing for at least six months immediately preceding the date of marriage.</p> <p>Both the parties have to appear before the registrar along with their parents or guardians or other witnesses within one month from the date of marriage. There is a provision for an extension (or condonation of delay) of up to five years, by the registrar, and thereafter by the district registrar concerned.</p> <p><b>Under the Special Marriage Act:</b> The parties to the intended marriage must give notice to the marriage officer in whose jurisdiction at least one of them has resided for not less than 30 days prior to the date of notice. She/he should display the notice in a conspicuous place in his/her office. If either of the parties is residing in the area of a different marriage officer, a copy of the notice should be sent to that official for similar publication. The marriage may be solemnized after the expiry of one month from the date of publication of the notice, if no objections are received. If any objections are received, the marriage officer has to enquire into them and take a decision either to solemnize the marriage or to refuse it. Registration will be done after solemnization of the marriage.</p>









## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	India
Processing (Continued)	Any marriage already celebrated can also be registered under the Special Marriage Act after giving public notice of 30 days, subject to conditions. However, as stated above, the bridegroom and the bride must be of age (i.e. 21 years for him and 18 years for her).
Place of registration	Marriage officer of the place of marriage
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	At least one in every district (718 districts)
Marriage certificate required for: -	
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration	No
Process for establishing vital statistics	No centralized compilation of marriage registration data.

## 6.5 Maldives

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/maldives](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/maldives)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	100% (2014)	100%
Target 1.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	99% (2014)	100%
Target 1.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	98.6% (NR)	100%
Target 1.D: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	90.1% (2014)	100%
Target 1.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.	100% (2014)	100%
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	68.0%	100%

## Continued: National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
Target 2.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex, and age.	100%	100%
<b>Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records, and are disseminated</b>		
Target 3.A: By .... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	TA	
Target 3.B: By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	TA	
Target 3.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).	85.9% (2014)	100%
Target 3.D: By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year.	10% (2012)	4%
Target 3.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.	14.0% (2014)	NA
Target 3.F: By .... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.	TA	
Target 3.G: By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.	TA	
Target 3.H: By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.	-	NR

**Source:** - 'Get Every One in the Picture', website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/maldives](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/maldives)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.  
- Report of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Seventy-second session. Bangkok, 15–19 May 2016. Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda

NR: No response

TA: Target achieved

NA: Not applicable

## Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, WHO



## **Brief history of CRVS in the Maldives<sup>41</sup>**

Registration of births and deaths in the Maldives started at the end of the 1980s through the process of collecting information on the number of people living on an island, for a national identity card database. The Department of National Registration (DNR) conducted the exercise, sending teams to all atolls to collect information and interview the people around the Maldives.

Then, in 1993, Maldives enacted a law on birth registration and death certification, which covers the entire population living in the archipelago. The law gives specific guidelines for birth registration, issuance of birth certificate and certification of death. This led to the establishment of the vital registration system in 1999.

The DNR is responsible for the collection of birth forms and death forms and the Ministry of Health maintains data relating to births and deaths with the information collected from the birth and death form completed at the time of occurrence of a birth and a death.

## **Child marriage**

Under the Family Act, children under the age of 18 can get married at the court if he or she has reached puberty and has received special permission from the court. The legal age of marriage without requiring consent is 18 for men and women. According to UNICEF, 4 per cent of the women aged 20–24 were married by the age of 18.<sup>42</sup>

Maldives is a member of the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage.<sup>43</sup>

## **Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2015)**

In its concluding observations regarding Maldives in 2007, the Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the State party's efforts to improve the system of birth registration, including by establishing a birth registration database and by raising awareness among parents. However, the Committee was concerned that the current system of birth registration continued to encounter difficulties. The Committee recommended that the State party continued to improve the system of birth registration, inter alia, by strengthening its efforts to sensitize and mobilize public opinion on the need for birth registrations as well as by developing the birth registration database and training registry personnel. Meanwhile, children whose births have not been registered and who are without official documentation should be allowed to access basic services, such as health and education, while waiting to be properly registered.<sup>44</sup>

In its 2016 report, the Committee did not include any provision regarding birth registration.

## **CRVS improvements**

The establishment of the online birth and death system, in 2010, an online software application built on the Government Network of Maldives or GNM (e-Government platform), has led to significant improvement in the civil registration process. It is envisaged that births and deaths will be reported online at point of service and real time updated information will be available when necessary. However, the system still has some unresolved issues. Currently only government hospitals, including regional and Atoll hospitals, have access to enter births and deaths into the system, but due to

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<sup>41</sup> Vital Statistics Report of Maldives, final draft, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a digital world*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930, December 2017.

<sup>43</sup> 'Girls Not Brides' website: <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/maldives/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/maldives/)>, last accessed 23 August 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 44 of the Convention, Concluding observations: Maldives, 13 July 2007, CRC/C/MDV/CO/3.

staff constraints, they have stopped entering birth forms to the system. Birth forms are being entered centrally at DNR using both the MS Access database and online system.

The Ministry of Health formulated Regulation No. 2015/R-179, which came in to force in 2015. This regulation includes procedures to be undertaken at the occurrence of births and deaths and actions to be taken for births and deaths taking place out of country. Additionally, this includes the guidelines on recording the births and deaths forms. This regulation also includes the responsibilities of each stakeholder (DNR, city council, island and atoll council) in processing the CRVS system of the country.

### **Coordination mechanism**

The first meeting of the newly established national CRVS coordination mechanism was held on the 1 March 2017 in Malé. It involved senior officials from the Ministry of Health, Department of National Registration, National Centre for Information Technology, and the National Bureau of Statistics and was chaired by the State Minister of Health. Challenges to improve the CRVS system, at least on birth and death registration, were highlighted with the experiences with writing the first vital statistics report of the Maldives. The report writing was supported by the ESCAP project to strengthen national capacity in producing and disseminating vital statistics from civil registration in Asia and the Pacific. As a result of the meeting a technical working group to review issues of data quality was established and report back to the Committee. It was also agreed to increase the number of stakeholders invited for the next meeting and for the Committee to have frequent meetings. The meeting identified which agencies will be leading the review process of the CRVS system and take responsibility for coordinating with other relevant agencies.<sup>45</sup>

### **Challenges**

The first meeting of the CRVS Coordination Mechanism recognized that even though the vital registration system is computerized and most of the forms are entered online, problems still persist in the system.

Some of the key challenges identified by the report include:

- Limited staff capacity in hospitals for death coding and statistical report generation;
- Mismatch between the fields and categories in the online system and the hardcopy of the Birth/Death Registration form;
- Numerous issues on the current online system which is hosted by the National Centre for Information Technology; system slow, amendments cannot be done;
- Lack of incentives for registering deaths;
- Insufficient coding of cause of death, with a back log of forms;
- Lack of coordination among the stakeholders, lack of professionalism in handling the forms;
- The bureaucracy involved in generating reports and requesting for an amendment;
- Lack of procedures for quality and consistency checks in entering births and deaths;
- Lack of training module for newly recruited officials at local councils/hospitals for filling births/death forms.

### **Vital statistics reporting**

As the civil registration system in the Maldives ensures universal coverage, it allows it to produce vital statistics. The data is compiled monthly and

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<sup>45</sup> Vital statistics report of Maldives. First report of the CRVS Coordination Group (Draft).

reports are generated annually after a delay of about five months. The health institutions play the main role in filling and sending the forms on time to DNR.

The Ministry of Health is coordinating in the compilation and analysing of the civil registration data and coding, while DNR is gathering hardcopies from institutes (health facilities / Atoll and Inland councils) and entering data into the online system.

Limited quality assessment methods for data analysis, data correction and dissemination are used to control the quality of the data.

**Progress in VRS strengthening following CRVS report completion:**

- Upon completion of the CRVS report, undertaken in a UNESCAP project, UNFPA assisted in hiring a local consultant to further look into the challenges and strengthen coordination among the different sectors. The consultant carried out

a one to one consultation with each agency to look into the process of births and deaths registration. In addition to the above-mentioned issues, the review identified overlap of mandate and confusion of the role and responsibility of each agency, as factors in creating uncertainty as to who should take the lead in certain activities.

- Lack of staff capacity at different levels.
- The CRVS report and the current assessment was limited as it focused on the births and deaths. Assessment of the marriage data needs to be conducted.
- Limited capacity to carry out data analysis.
- The CRVS coordinating mechanism has been formalized but there is uncertainty as to who will carry out this process.
- There is no plan in place for the dissemination of an annual CRVS report.

**Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages**

**BIRTH REGISTRATION**

Country	Maldives
Legal framework for births registration	Law on birth registration and death certification, enacted in 1993
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	Ministry of Health Department of National Registration (responsible for collection of birth and death forms)
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes (upon request)

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
Legal informant to register a birth	Parents
Time allowed for registration	7 days
Fee for birth registration	Yes (MVR20)
Fee for birth certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	If the parents fail to submit a completed birth form within 7 days, they will be charged a fine of MVR5 with an additional MVR1 for each working day thereafter. Even in the case of a birth that results in death within the given timeframe of seven days, a completed birth report form must still be submitted. Failure to do so results in an application of a MR 5 charge.
Specific requirements or fees for children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country	To register Maldivians born abroad, the birth certificate issued from the hospital has to be submitted to register in the CRVS system. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to submit the original and a copy of the birth/death certificate to Atoll/Island councils for verification. Once the council verifies the certificate, and makes a second copy, the original will be handed over to the parents. Once this process has been completed, Atoll/Island councils are mandated to send a copy of the birth certificate to the Department of National Registration (DNR).  According to the civil registration regulations, it is compulsory even for Maldivians residing abroad to register the births within the civil registration system in the country. Unless the birth has been registered and the child's information has been entered into the national registration system, a passport for these children cannot be issued. For births/deaths of Maldivians residing abroad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as a mediator to send these documents to DNR via letters and/or emails. The Maldives embassies, high commissions and/or consulates established in foreign countries, assist the Maldivians in getting this process completed.
Specific requirements or fees for a child whose parent is a foreign national	No
Requirements for birth registration	Birth report form, Identification of parents, Nationality of parents, Parents' marriage certificate

**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
Information collected	<p>Sex, Gestational age, Weight at birth, Date and time of birth, Place of birth, Mode of delivery, Birth type, Age/date of birth of the mother, Attendant at birth, Personal information of attendant, National Identity Card (NIC) number of the mother, Place of usual residence of the mother, Nationality of the mother, Marital status of the mother, Number of pregnancies of the mother, Number of deliveries of the mother, Number of abortions/miscarriages of the mother, Number of children born alive, Number of foetal deaths of the mother, Age at first pregnancy, Age at first marriage, Age/date of birth of the father, NIC number of the father, Place of usual residence of the father, Nationality of the father, Marriage date, Marriage duration, Marriage certificate number</p>
Processing	<p>Births are currently entered through dual process, online and paper. If the birth occurs in a health facility (as do more than 90 per cent of Maldives births) the birth form (Foolhumaa form) is filled by the health facility and one copy is given to the parent(s) of the child, and two copies sent to Island Council. The island councils are mandated to submit the yellow copy of the birth form to Atoll Council (or to the Malé City Council in Malé). The Atoll Council is responsible for sending the yellow copy to DNR. With the birth form (Foolhumaa form) the parent will apply for the birth certificate and to register the child in the household registry.</p> <p>If the birth occurs outside a health facility, the traditional midwife or health care worker is responsible for completing the birth form. If a woman seeks care at the health facility after delivering at home, the attending health worker will need to ensure that a birth form has been completed. Then the parents need to register the birth at the Island Council.</p> <p>Births and deaths are currently entered through dual process, online and paper. For a birth or a death that occurs in a government hospital, the hospitals are mandated to register the information into the online system in real time. Where there is no access to the government system (e.g., private hospitals), the yellow copies from the hospital are collected and sent to DNR. Once DNR receives these copies, the birth gets registered into the system. Even though the birth is registered in government health facilities at real time, the yellow copies have to be sent to DNR for verification.</p> <p>Birth registration that includes issuance of the 'Extract of Birth Register' and the 'Birth Certificate' is carried out by the city council in Malé and in the island councils and respective atoll councils. Birth registration is based on the delivery information recorded on birth forms.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
Place of registration	Place of residence
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	2 hospitals (both in capital city Malé), 6 Regional Hospitals, 13 Atoll Hospitals, 168 Health Centres, 186 Island Councils, 19 Atoll Councils
Birth certificate required for:	<p>For a person to get a national identity card, the first step is the registration of his/her birth. Once the birth is registered, the person can then apply for a 'birth certificate'. It is at this time that each person is issued a unique ID number from the system. The next step is registering the person in a house registry. All these documents have to be submitted to get the ID card issued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to health care</li> <li>• Access to education</li> <li>• Access to social benefits</li> <li>• Many application procedures to acquire loans, passports, transport license, housing, and marriage require the applicant to show or submit his/her national identity card.</li> </ul>
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).	<p>Maldives Vital Registration Study 2015: According to the results Maldives has a completeness rate of almost 100 per cent for births.</p> <p>According to the Rapid Assessment of the CRVS system using the tool developed by WHO and University of Queensland, the completeness with regard to birth registration data is 97.4 per cent (October 2014).</p>
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>The Department of National Registration (DNR) is responsible for collection of birth forms and death forms. A major improvement that was brought to the reporting of vital events is the establishment of the online birth and death system in 2010. This is an online software application built on the Government Network of Maldives or GNM (e-Government platform). It is envisaged that births and deaths will be reported online through the online birth and death system at point of service and real time updated information will be available when necessary. At present the system has some unresolved issues. Birth forms are being entered centrally at DNR.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Maldives
Legal framework for death registration	Law on birth registration and death certification enacted in 1993
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	Ministry of Health Department of National Registration (responsible for collection of birth forms and death forms)
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register a death	Yes
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a death	Guardian, relative
Time allowed for registration	No
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	No
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	For deaths of Maldivians residing abroad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as a mediator to send these documents to DNR through letters/emails. The high commissions/consulates established in foreign countries, assist the Maldivians in getting this process completed.
Requirements for death registration	Death form. The law requires that the death is certified by the most qualified designated person available – i.e., a doctor, community health worker, island chief and so on.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
Information collected	Name and ID number of the deceased, Age/date of birth, Nationality, Place of residence, Place of work, Marital status, Occupation, Name and ID number of both parents, Nationality of both parents, Place of residence of both parents, Informant personal information, Place of occurrence of death, Date and time of death, Cause of death.
Information collected in cases of foetal death	Recorded using the birth form:  Sex, Gestational age, Weight at birth, Date and time of birth, Place of birth, Mode of delivery, Birth type, Age/date of birth of the mother, Attendant at birth, Personal information of attendant, NIC number of the mother, Place of usual residence of the mother, Nationality of the mother, Marital status of the mother, Number of pregnancies of the mother, Number of deliveries of the mother, Number of abortions/miscarriages of the mother, Number of children born alive, Number of foetal deaths of the mother, Age at first pregnancy, Age at first marriage, Age/date of birth of the father, NIC number of the father Place of usual residence of the father, Nationality of the father, Marriage date, Marriage duration, Marriage certificate number
Processing	Deaths are currently entered through dual process, online and paper. A person cannot be buried without completing the death form and certifying the death. Cause of death is also enforced as much as completing the death form by health facility, as per international WHO reporting standard. The death certificate or 'death form' comprises a white original page on top with yellow and pink carbon copies underneath. The white original death certificate is given to the family of the deceased and this copy is taken to the cemetery. A body will be buried only when the death certificate is submitted.  Government hospitals are mandated to register births and deaths into the online system at real time. Where there is no access to the government system (e.g., in private hospitals), the yellow copies from the hospital are collected and sent to DNR. Once DNR receives these copies, the birth gets registered into the system. Even though the birth is registered in government health facilities at real time, the yellow copies must be sent to DNR for verification.
Place of registration	Place of occurrence of the death



## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	2 hospitals (both in capital city Malé), 6 Regional Hospitals, 13 Atoll Hospitals, 168 Health Centres. 186 Island Councils, 19 Atoll Councils,
Death certificate required for:	Burial, inheritance
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of death registration.	Maldives VRS Study 2015: According to the results Maldives has a completeness rate of deaths just above 90 per cent.  According to the Rapid Assessment of the CRVS system using a tool developed by WHO and University of Queensland, the completeness with regard to death registration data is 70.03 per cent (October 2014).
Process for establishing vital statistics	The Department of National Registration (DNR) is responsible for collection of birth forms and death forms. A major improvement that was brought to the reporting of vital events is the establishment of online birth and death system in 2010. This is an online software application built on the Government Network of Maldives or GNM (e-Government platform). It is envisaged that births and deaths will be reported online through the online birth and death system at point of service and real time updated information will be available when necessary. At present the system has some unresolved issues. Currently it is only the government hospitals - including regional and Atoll hospitals - that have access to enter births and deaths into the system. For births that occur abroad and in private hospitals (e.g.: ADK) the forms are entered centrally, at DNR.

## MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Maldives
Legal framework for marriage registration	Family Act 4/2000 entered into force 1 July 2001
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	Family court
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal age for marriage	Under the Family Act, children under the age of 18 can get married at the court if she/he has reached puberty and has received special permission from the court. Both men and women can get married at the age of 18 without the consent of the court.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	Section 19: Marriages solemnized in the Maldives, marriages solemnized abroad between Maldivians and marriages solemnized between Maldivian citizens and foreign nationals shall be registered in accordance with provisions of this Act.
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a marriage	Spouses
Time allowed for registration	<p>Registration takes place at the time of the marriage. Section 22:</p> <p>Where a Maldivian national contracts a marriage abroad in a country where there is an official representative office of the Maldives, she/he shall within two months from the date of contracting the marriage make an application to that office to register the marriage in accordance with the provisions of this Act and Regulations made under it.</p> <p>Where a marriage was contracted in a country where there is no official representative office of the Maldives, an application to register the marriage in the Maldives in accordance with this section shall be made within 6 months from the date of contracting such marriage.</p>
Fee for marriage registration	Section. 19: A marriage shall be registered under this Act upon payment to the Registrar of Marriages of a fee provided in the Regulations made under this Act. Currently MVR100 for marriage registration and MVR20 to submit the form.
Fee for marriage certificate	Yes (MVR10)
Penalty for late registration	No
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	<p>Section 16: A marriage between a Maldivian national and a foreign national may only be solemnized upon fulfilment of the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where the man and the woman proposing to contract the marriage satisfy the conditions required for making a marriage valid under Shari'ah.</li> <li>Where a man of foreign origin proposes to contract a marriage with a Maldivian woman, the man is financially competent in accordance with the principles held by the competent Court of Law in the Maldives to bear the expenses of maintaining a family.</li> </ol>









## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Maldives
Requirements for marriage registration	Section 3: A marriage may be solemnized in the Maldives only by a judicial <i>mauzun</i> in the presence of the judicial guardian of the bride and two witnesses in addition to the man and woman desirous of contracting the marriage and only upon an offer to marry being made by one of the parties to that marriage and that offer being accepted by the other and having received in accordance with this Act the consent of the judicial guardian of the bride, and having completed all other formalities required to be completed in respect of a marriage solemnized in accordance with this Act.
Information collected	Date of occurrence, Name, Place and date of Birth, Place of usual residence, Income, Educational level, Occupation, Criminal record, Information about the parents of the bride and groom, Single parent allowance, Expenses for children
Processing	Registration at the family court
Place of registration	Place of celebration of marriage
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/ - rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	
Marriage certificate required for:	Birth registration, applying for house/flats
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	No
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>Judicial Administration publishes 'Judicial Statistics' annually. In this publication, statistics on marriage and divorces are given. The Statistical Yearbook of Maldives also publishes annual marriage and divorce statistics.</p> <p>However, the marriage and divorce tables according to the VRS recommended tabulation are yet to be assessed and analysed.</p>

## 6.6 Nepal

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/nepal](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/nepal)> Last accessed 22 August 2018.

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	76% (2014-2015)	99%
Target 1.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	NR	90%
Target 1.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	NR	80%
Target 1.D: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	75.0% (2015)	80%
Target 1.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.	45.4% (2013-2014)	Not yet decided
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	100%	100%

## Continued: National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
Target 2.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex and age.	100%	100%
<b>Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated</b>		
Target 3.A: By .... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2024
Target 3.B: By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2024
Target 3.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).	45.4% (2013-2014)	Not yet decided
Target 3.D: By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year.	100.0% (2015)	50%
Target 3.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.	NR	NR
Target 3.F: By .... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.	-	NR
Target 3.G: By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.	-	NR
Target 3.H: By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.	-	2024

**Source:** - 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/nepal](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/nepal)> Last accessed 23 August 2018.  
 - Report of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Seventy-second session. Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016. Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda.  
 - Implementing the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific National Progress Update Template, UNESCAP, 3 March 2016.

NR: No response

## Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, ADB

## Brief history of CRVS in Nepal

Civil registration in Nepal started in 1950 through the Municipal Act 1950 and Village Panchayat Act 1961 (Legal Books Management Committee, Babarmahal). During the period the vital events registration and related tasks were limited to the record keeping of the personal events than as registration. The Central Bureau of Statistics conducted vital events registration in some of the Village Panchayat units (lowest tier of the local government) of Kathmandu valley during the 1960s, but could not continue the process.

The Vital Events Registration Act was enacted in 1976. It defined five vital events (births, deaths, marriages, divorces and internal migration) and made the registration provisions more legally binding. The registration provisions of the Act in the districts came into force in a phased manner that took almost 15 years to cover the whole geographic region.

While the Ministry of Home Affairs, through its Vital Events Registration Division, rolled out the enactment of the law, local registrars at the Village and Town Panchayats level conducted registration tasks. Later in 1993 the task was shifted to the then Local Development Ministry. A section under the ministry was responsible for civil registration that became an integral part of the services of the local bodies coordinated by the Ministry of Local Development (currently Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration MoFAGA) through district development committees.

The registration of births, deaths, marriages, divorces and internal migrations has been ongoing since 1976. People register their personal events at the municipal ward offices and municipal ward secretaries are designated as the local registrars.

Nepal established a specialized agency, the Department of Civil Registration (DoCR), in November

2014. The Department has in a short time improved its service delivery, record management and reporting system by introducing robust and dynamic management information systems integrated with vital events and social security schemes through two factors: Authentication and a unique personal 13-digit identification number.

## Child marriage

The legal age of marriage is 20 for men and women according to the Marriage Registration Act of 1971. The Government of Nepal, under the leadership of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, began to develop its strategy in March 2014 with the support of UNICEF and Girls Not Brides, among others. Nepal is a focus country of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder programme working across 12 countries. Nepal is a member of the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC). SAIEVAC adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage that recognizes birth and marriage registration as necessary to end this harmful practice.<sup>46</sup>

According to UNICEF, 7 per cent of women aged 20–24 are married by the age of 15 and 40 per cent by the age of 18.<sup>47</sup>

## **Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016)**

*“The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (see CRC/C/15/Add.261, para. 43) and urges the State party to increase its efforts, including awareness-raising campaigns, to ensure the registration of all children at birth. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that local government authorities, who are entrusted with the task of birth registration, actively engage with the local communities to ensure that births are registered in a timely and effective manner. In this*

<sup>46</sup> ‘Girls Not Brides’ website: <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/nepal/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/nepal/)>, last accessed 23 August 2018.

<sup>47</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *The State of the World’s Children 2017: Children in a digital world*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930-7, December 2017.

regard, the Committee urges the State party to seek assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF, non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society.”<sup>48</sup>

### CRVS assessment

A 2013 study report, Comprehensive Assessment of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Nepal, critically analysed its legal and resource basis, registration practices, coverage and completeness.

Several gaps have been identified regarding the CRVS system, as follows:<sup>49</sup>

- Legal complexity; although provisions on ‘registration informants’ have been updated and procedures made simpler, the registration could not get to a desired level because of its non-obligatory characteristics.
- Nepali nationals residing abroad are either deprived of, or receive very delayed, civil registration services at their respective missions. As the embassies and consulates are not designated or authorized for registration and issuance of certificates, Nepali citizens tend to register the events whenever they are back home.
- Whereas the Department of Civil Registration (DoCR) is a new authority for civil registration, the Act has no provision for central level institutional arrangements and roles and responsibilities of the department.
- Availability of local registrars at the stations, longer travel time (by public transport or on foot) to the registrar’s stations, the necessity for the physical presence of the informants, and requirement of additional documents have been some of the other issues on the demand side as well.
- Except for the education sector, birth certificates are not mandatory while availing other basic services. A birth registration certificate must be submitted when a child reaches Grade 8, and should be submitted to receive the child cash grant (which is universal only in eight districts at the moment although the government is gradually scaling up).
- The agencies involved (health, education, Public Service Commission, citizenship issuing office, Central Bureau of Statistics, etc.) have different, often conflicting, procedural frameworks that the demand side sees as burdensome (e.g. different supportive documents) and non-standardized (e.g. physical presence for registration).
- The charges for penalties and delays are so small that significant numbers of service recipients are willing to accept the penalties rather than comply with the stated timelines.
- Currently not all registration offices are connected through the Management Information System (MIS). The connectivity related structure and connectivity speed are not sufficient in rural areas. The vital registration records are still kept manually.
- Records prior to the 1990s still await digitization.
- Poor coordination among agencies. Issues like standardization, unification, timing, access and uses have slowed progress on digitization. The major stakeholders in the development of the MIS – National Identity Card Management Centre, Election Commission and the CBS – have a separate database on civil registration. Although a coordination mechanism has been formed under the convene of the Secretary of MoFAGA to discuss, analyse, coordinate and make recommendations to the respective agencies, there continues to be legal and technical issues that cannot be resolved without having a separate law on national card management and codification or amendments to the civil registration Act.

<sup>48</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the third to fifth periodic report of Nepal, 8 July 2016, CRC/C/NPL/CO/3-5.

<sup>49</sup> Gautam, Basant R., Director General/Registrar, Department of Civil Registration, ‘Civil Registration and Vital Statistics: Policy and practices in Nepal’, Babermahal, Kathmandu, Nepal, January 2016.

- Municipalities lack trained personnel. Many local registrars are less familiar with information and communications technology and using computer and applications. The long period of using a manual service and record keeping has resulted in reluctance on the part of local registrars to modernize the system.
- Municipal ward secretaries often consider civil registration as an additional job hence less priority is given to the management of data and reporting. Reporting has been very weak. It is frequently observed that the data supplied to the centre has a large number of errors and there is under reporting.
- Lack of adequate fund/budget and investment plans has significantly hampered the effectiveness of CRVS in Nepal. The Department has been providing minimum required support to the local governments for MIS and technical training orientation.
- Physical infrastructures, equipment and technologies are also a prime concern with respect to delivering civil registration services efficiently and accessibly.
- While the use of civil registration data in vital documents like citizenship certificates, health and education related documents, passport, etc. is increasing, public awareness about the usefulness of civil registration remains limited.
- Since the coverage of vital statistics generated from CRVS is low, data users prefer using census, survey and other routine information in health and other planning and evaluation processes, which further pose question on the data.
- Computerize the registration system and computerize old records;
- Reinforce coordination among agencies;
- Integrate civil registration into other government and non-government service delivery systems.

Nepal is engaged in improving the CRVS system in the wake of the 2015 earthquake, which showed the need for a functional civil registration system, as Government agencies struggled to collect and verify the number of deaths and persons affected for relief distribution.

In 2016, the World Bank launched the project, Strengthening Systems for Social Protection and Civil Registration, to improve the coverage of social security allowances and civil registration, and the delivery of social security allowances. The project supports the DoCR's Civil Registration and Social Security Strengthening Programme. It consists of four components, of which the first component supports the establishment a national population register of individuals and household/family folders to support the expansion of coverage of civil registration and social security allowances. The register will be updated through regular and targeted outreach and communications campaigns. The goal is to establish a civil registration system that will allow all individuals/residents easy access to civil registration, enable regular monitoring of registrations, generate timely vital statistics from a central database, and establish linkage with programmes such as social security allowances. This component has two subcomponents; (i) data collection to establish a population register; and (ii) communications and outreach campaigns.<sup>50</sup>

### **Vital statistics reporting**

To date, in late 2018, Nepal does not produce disaggregated vital statistics reports from civil registration data. The Statistical Office (CBS) is using data of Population Census and other surveys such as Demographic Health Survey for producing Vital Statistics on a regular basis.

### **Next steps**

From the assessment, the following recommendations emerged:

- Amend the current acts and regulations of birth and vital events;

<sup>50</sup> World Bank, Strengthening Systems for Social Protection and Civil Registration Project, accessible, <<http://projects.worldbank.org/P154548?lang=en>>, last accessed 28 October 2018.



## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	Nepal
Legal framework for births registration	Births, Deaths and Other Personal Events (Registration) Act 1976 Births, Deaths and Other Personal Events (Registration) Regulation 1977
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Department of Civil Registration  Rural municipal committees and municipal ward offices designated as the local registrars
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes (Section 6 of the Act)
Legal informant to register a birth	Section 4-1a of the Act: Notice of the birth should be given by the head of the family, and in his/her absence, from amongst one of the major members of the family
Time allowed for registration	35 days (Section 4-1)
Fee for birth registration	No
Fee for birth certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	Between 35 days and 70 days: Rs8 After 70 days: Rs50 Section 5 of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(3) If the person appears for registration of information of a personal event within 35 days of the expiry of the prescribed period as referred to in subsections (1) or (2) of Section 4, the local registrar shall register the event for a charge of Rs8.</li> <li>(4) If someone fails to register a personal event within the time frame, as referred to in subsection (3), unless due to unavoidable circumstances, the local registrar shall charge a penalty of up to Rs50 to register the event.</li> </ul>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Nepal
Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country	<p>Section 4-2 of the Act: If any personal event pursuant to subsection (1) occurs abroad, the person with responsibility to forward such information shall do so within 60 days upon his/her arrival in Nepal.</p> <p>The embassies and consulates are not authorized for registrations and issuance of the certificates: Nepali citizens largely register the events when they are back home. A reform is considered to have service access online or from abroad.</p>
Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national	No
Requirements for birth registration	Identification of the child's father, Nationality of the child's father, Identification of the child's mother, Nationality of the child's mother, Name of the child, Marriage certificate, Father or mother identification. If the father is not identified it is necessary to state 'father unidentified'.
Information collected	Name, Date of birth, Sex, Caste, Type of birth (single, multiple), Weight at birth, Type of place of birth (hospital, home), Place of birth, Attendant at birth, Permanent address, Number of children born, Number of children born alive, Marriage registration number, Date of marriage, Name of both parents, Age of both parents, Educational level of both parents, Citizenship of both parents, Mother tongue of both parents, Place of residence of both parents, Grandfather and applicant details.
Processing	<p>Parent(s) register the child at the local registrar office (Village Development Committees (VDCs) in rural areas, Municipality in urban areas) and given in return the birth certificate. The local registrar reports to the Department of Civil Registration.</p> <p>1, 581 ward offices use online registration.</p>
Place of registration	Ward office or rural municipality office of place of residence of the parents
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	In 2016 the number of local registrars was 6,743 (3,157VDCs and 3,082 wards of 217 municipalities).
Birth certificate required for:	The birth registration certificate is not compulsory for enrolment at schools but many schools demand it, particularly when the child reaches grade 8. To receive the child nutrition grant, the birth certificate is recommended.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Nepal
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (other than DHS or MICS surveys)	A mini survey conducted by DoCR in 2015 - but with a small sample of districts and local government units - shows birth registration as 76 per cent.  Assessment of the CRVS system: Gautam, Basant R, 'Civil Registration and Vital Statistics - policy and practices in Nepal', Basant Raj Gautam, Director General/Registrar General, Department of Civil Registration. Babermahal, Kathmandu, Nepal, January 2016.
Process for establishing vital statistics	Since the coverage of vital statistics generated from civil registration seems very low, data users prefer using census, survey and other routine information in health and other planning and evaluation processes, which further pose question on the data.

## DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Nepal
Legal framework for deaths registration	Births, Deaths and Other Personal Events (Registration) Act 1976 Births, Deaths and Other Personal Events (Registration) Regulation 1977
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Department of Civil Registration.  Village development committees and municipal ward offices designated as the local registrars
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register a death	Yes
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes (Section 6 of the Act)
Legal informant to register a death	Section 4-1a of the Act: Notice of the birth should be given by the head of the family, and in his/her absence, from amongst one of the major members of the family
Time allowed for registration	35 days (Section 4-1)
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	No

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Nepal
Penalty for late registration	<p>Between 35 days and 70 days: Rs8 After 70 days: Rs50 Section 5 of the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(3) If the person appears for registration of information of a personal event within 35 days of the expiry of the prescribed period as referred to in subsections (1) or (2) of Section 4, the local registrar shall register the event for a charge of Rs8.</li> <li>(4) If someone fails to register a personal event within the specified time frame as referred to in subsection (3), unless due to unavoidable circumstances, the local registrar shall charge a penalty of up to Rs50 to register the event.</li> </ul>
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	No
Requirements for death registration	Proof of citizenship of the informant, copy of citizenship of the deceased, Death certificate if death has occurred in hospital.
Information collected	Name of the deceased, Date of birth, Date of death, Place of birth, Address, Citizenship, Marital status, Education level, Caste/ethnicity, Grandfather's name, Father's name, Mother's name, Name of spouse, Cause of death, Personal details of the informant.
Information collected in case of foetal death	No
Processing	<p>Informant registers the death at the local registrar office and is given in return the death certificate. The local registrar reports to the Department of Civil Registration.</p> <p>1, 581 ward offices use online registration.</p>
Place of registration	Place of occurrence of the death
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	In 2016 the number of local registrars was 6,239 (3,157 VDCs and 3,082 wards in 217 municipalities).

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Nepal
Death certificate required for:	Compulsory for transferring entitlement and legal ownership.
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of death registration.	A mini-survey conducted by DoCR in 2015, but with a small sample numbers of districts and local government units, shows the death registration coverage as 75 per cent.  Assessment of the CRVS system: Gautam, Basant R, 'Civil Registration and Vital Statistics – policy and practices in Nepal', Basant Raj Gautam, Director General/Registrar General, Department of Civil Registration, Babermahal, Kathmandu, Nepal, January 2016.
Process for establishing vital statistics	Since the coverage of vital statistics generated from civil registration seems very low, data users prefer using census, survey and other routine information in health and other planning and evaluation processes, which further pose question on the data.

## MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Nepal
Legal framework for marriages registration	Births, Deaths and Other Personal Events (Registration) Act 1976 Births, deaths and Other Personal Events (Registration) Regulation 1977 Marriage Registration Act 1971.
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Department of Civil Registration.  Village development committees and municipal ward offices designated as the local registrars
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal age for marriage	20 years for both men and women (art. 4 of the Marriage Registration Act).
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	Section 4-1b of the Act: Notice of the marriage should be given by both the husband and wife.
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	Yes (Section 6 of the Act)
Legal informant to register a marriage	Spouses

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Nepal
Time allowed for registration	35 days (Section 4-1)
Fee for marriage registration	No
Fee for marriage certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	<p>After 35 days and 70 days: Rs60 Section 5 of the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(3) If the person appears for registration of information of a personal event within thirty-five days of the expiry of the prescribed period as referred to in subsections (1) or (2) of Section 4, the local registrar shall register the event for a fee of Rs8.</li> <li>(4) If someone fails to register a personal event within the specified time frame, as referred to in subsection (3), unless due to unavoidable circumstances, the local registrar shall charge a penalty of up to Rs50 to register the event.</li> </ul>
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	No
Requirements for marriage registration	<p>A copy of citizenship of husband and wife. If wife does not hold citizenship, substitute wife's father and brother's citizenship.</p> <p>Invoice of tax payment of home and land of current fiscal year.</p> <p>Spouses and three witnesses, proof of citizenship.</p>
Information collected	<p>Type of marriage (social/traditional, legal), Date of marriage, Place of marriage</p> <p>Bride and groom information: Name, Caste/ethnicity, Pre-marital status, Education level, Profession, Religion, Mother tongue, Address, Place of birth, Grandfather's name, Mother's and father's names; Personal details of the informant</p>
Processing	<p>Spouses register the marriage at the local registrar office (village development committees in rural areas, municipalities in urban areas) and are given in return the marriage certificate.</p> <p>1, 581 ward offices use online registration.</p>









## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Nepal
Place of registration	Place of residence of husband
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	In 2016 the number of local registrars was 6,239 (3,157 VDCs and 3,082 wards in 217 municipalities).
Marriage certificate required for:	Marriage registration gives legal validity and legitimacy to the marriage.
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	<p>A mini survey conducted by DoCR in 2015 but with a small sample numbers of districts and local government units shows the marriage registration coverage as 76 per cent.</p> <p>Assessment of the CRVS system: Gautam, Basant R, 'Civil Registration and Vital Statistics - policy and practices in Nepal', Basant Raj Gautam, Director General/Registrar General, Department of Civil Registration. Babermahal, Kathmandu, Nepal, January 2016</p>
Process for establishing vital statistics	Since the coverage of vital statistics generated from Civil Registration seems very low, data users prefer using census, survey and other routine information in health and other planning and evaluation processes, which further pose question on the data.

## 6.7 Pakistan

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/pakistan](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/pakistan)> Last accessed 28 August 2018.  
 UNICEF Country Office

#### National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
<b>Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events</b>		
Target 1.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	NR	100%
Target 1.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	NR	100%
Target 1.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.	NR	100%
Target 1.D: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.	NR	80%
Target 1.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.	NR (2014)	80%
<b>Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights</b>		
Target 2.A: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.	NR	100%



## Continued: National targets

Goals/Targets	Baseline	Target
Target 2.B: By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex and age.	NR	100%
<b>Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated</b>		
Target 3.A: By .... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2024
Target 3.B: By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.	-	2024
Target 3.C: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).	NR	80%
Target 3.E: By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.	NR	80%
Target 3.F: By .... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.	-	2024
Target 3.G: By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death, using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.	-	2024
Target 3.H: By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.	-	2024

**Source:** - 'Get Every One in the Picture' website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/pakistan](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/pakistan)> Last accessed 28 August 2018.  
 - Report of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Seventy-second session. Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016. Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda.  
 - Implementing the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. National Progress Update Template, UNESCAP, 3 March 2016.

NR: No response

## Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, ADB

## Brief history of CRVS in Pakistan

After the creation of Pakistan the registration of births and deaths continued to be performed under various pre-1947 Acts and Rules till the promulgation of the Basic Democracies Order, 1959, and Municipal Ordinances, 1960, under which registration of vital events was made compulsory and uniform in both urban and rural areas. The Basic Democracies Order, 1959, was repealed in 1970 and new Local Government Acts were promulgated, under which the registration of births and deaths in urban areas was to be carried out by the Municipal Corporations/ Committees and in rural areas by the Halga Councils. In 1979, Local Government Ordinances, promulgated by the respective provincial government, replaced the Local Government Acts. Under these ordinances the registration of births and deaths in urban areas was made compulsory whereas it was not the case in rural areas. However, the procedures prescribed by the Basic Democracies Order, 1959, and Municipal Administration Ordinance, 1960, were being followed for registration of births and deaths.<sup>51</sup>

The National Database Organization (NDO) was established under the Pakistan Ministry of Interior Affairs in 1998. With the Ordinance of 10 March 2000, the NDO was merged with the Directorate General of Registration, establishing the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), an independent corporate body with requisite autonomy to operate independently and facilitate good governance.

With this Ordinance, registration of births, deaths, marriage and divorce was made mandatory. Furthermore, NADRA was given responsibility for the establishment and development of a central registration database named the Civil Registration Management System and for the issuance of ID-cards and uniform civil status documents, including child registration certificates and family registration

certificates. The authority to issue a number of the civil status documents, including the birth registration certificate was, however, delegated to the union councils.<sup>52</sup>

In response to the failure of central/provincial governments to account for local preferences, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) designed a local government system, which was presented in the 'Devolution Plan 2000'. Consequently, a new local government system was implemented on 14 August 2001, which gave responsibilities to the provinces, in particular the civil registration of births, deaths and marriages. Following this reform, each of the four provinces passed the Local Government Ordinance, 2001. Provincial Government LG Ordinances, 2001, were replaced with Provincial Government Local Government Acts (Punjab/KP/Sindh LG Acts 2013, Balochistan LG Act 2010, and Gilgit Baltistan LG Act 2014).

## Child marriage

Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, set the legal age for marriage at 16 for women and 18 for men. In April 2014, the Sindh Assembly unanimously adopted the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, increasing the minimum age of marriage to 18 and making marriage below 18 a punishable offence. Unfortunately, Pakistan's National Assembly struck down a proposed similar nationwide bill in 2014. In May 2017, the National Assembly rejected the draft Child Marriage Restraint Act for the second time. The proposal would have increased the legal age for marriage from 16 to 18 nationwide. In Punjab, a Bill introducing harsher penalties for marriage under the age of 16 was also adopted. However, it does not increase the age of marriage to 18.

In a recent series of rulings, the Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutional body that gives Islamic

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<sup>51</sup> Government of Pakistan, National Registration System in Pakistan, Asad Mahmood Alvi, Director General of Registration, November 1993, access at: < [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/1993\\_China\\_CRVS/docs/1993\\_Doc.11\\_Pakistan.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/1993_China_CRVS/docs/1993_Doc.11_Pakistan.pdf)>.

<sup>52</sup> Pakistan: Birth registration and related civil status documents, Danish National ID Centre, 30 May 2018.

legal advice to the Pakistan Government, declared that Pakistan laws prohibiting child marriage are un-Islamic.

Pakistan is a member of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage that recognizes birth and marriage registration as critical to end this practice. Pakistan was among the first States to propose a target to end child marriage by 2030 in discussions of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, a major inter-governmental process that helped to shape the next set of international development goals.<sup>53</sup>

According to UNICEF, 3 per cent of women aged 20–24 married before the age of 15 and 21 per cent by the age of 18.<sup>54</sup>

### **Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016)**

In its concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Pakistan, the Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the birth registration units and the optional chip-based card system introduced by the State party to encourage birth registration in all provinces. Nevertheless, it remained concerned that only around 30 per cent of children are registered at birth, with the lowest registration rates in Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The Committee was particularly concerned about the low level of public awareness, the complicated procedures and high fees for birth registration and the lack of effective measures to ensure the birth registration of children belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including children born out of wedlock and refugee and internally displaced children.<sup>55</sup>

Taking note of target 16.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on providing a legal identity for

all, including through birth registration, the Committee strongly urged the State party to:

1. Promote the timely registration of births, especially among marginalized and disadvantaged communities, and educate the public at large about the consequences of non-registration;
2. Remove all fees and simplify the procedures related to birth registration throughout the country, including through the introduction of mobile registration units;
3. Undertake a survey to identify children lacking birth registration or identity documents and take immediate administrative and judicial measures to ensure retroactive birth registration and the issuance of documents for those children;
4. Ensure that children lacking identity documents are not refused access to education, health and public services.

### **CRVS assessment**

In 2013, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms conducted rapid and comprehensive assessments of the CRVS system in Pakistan, in close collaboration with provincial departments, NADRA, WHO country and regional offices, Plan international, UNICEF and other partners.

These assessments revealed serious weaknesses:

- National data for birth and death registration were exceptionally low, with just 34 per cent of births being recorded and almost no death registration mechanisms;
- Cause of death information was lacking and ICD-10 for coding cases of deaths in hospitals was not practiced;
- As a consequence, very few vital statistics were generated from the civil registration systems

<sup>53</sup> Girls Not Brides, 2018, <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/pakistan](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/pakistan)>, last accessed 29 August 2018.

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a digital world*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930-7, December 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Pakistan, 11 July 2016, CRC/C/PAK/CO/5.

These assessments called for the promotion of CRVS in the country with formulation of strong coordination mechanisms with all relevant ministries, departments and partners at National/Provincial levels and for the development and adoption of a uniform CRVS law in place of current fragmented laws. It was also recommended to promote and train public and private health practitioners in coding ICD for cause of death.

### Key achievements

A National Steering and Coordination Committee on CRVS, chaired by the Minister of Planning, Development and Reforms, was established in September 2014. Committee members represent all sectors, including civil registration authorities, provincial and local governments, health and other relevant ministries, statistics authorities, development partners and civil society.

The following thematic areas were identified for the development of a National CRVS Strategy:

- (i) legal framework,
- (ii) resources for civil registration,
- (iii) registration practices, coverage and completeness,
- (iv) death certification and cause of death,
- (v) ICD mortality coding practices, and
- (vi) data access, use and quality checks.

For each of the thematic areas, a technical subgroup has been formed with representation of experts from both public and private sectors. Each subgroup shall compile its recommendations for consideration of the National Steering and Coordination Committee.

NADRA took these initiatives to improve CRVS:

- Launched a new design of digitally secured paper for civil registration certificates;
- Introduced a verification mechanism to check authenticity of new digitally secured paper;
- Developed an online application aimed at real time civil registration;

- Established 4,476 new registration sites in 2016–2017;
- Signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with local governments at central and district level.

A Technical Support Unit for CRVS was established in October 2017 to oversee and facilitate the CRVS development process.

In addition, Pakistan has launched a new project to improve the birth registration rate, using mobile technology. The “Digital Birth Registration” (DBR) project is a joint effort between UNICEF Pakistan and the Sindh and Punjab provincial governments. The project was designed to ensure universal birth registration for children in target districts, primarily through improved governance structures and the use of specially designed information and communications technologies. Furthermore, the Governments of Punjab and Sindh, within the wider national commitment of achieving universal civil registration and vital statistics in Pakistan by 2024, are fully committed to ensure universal birth registration for children under 18 in the following districts: Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Pakpattan, Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur (Punjab) Badin, Noshero Feroze and Thatta (Sindh) and urban centres including Karachi and Lahore.

Initially the project was put into operation in five targeted districts in the two provinces, Pakpattan and Bhawalpur in Punjab and Thatta, Badin and Nosheroferoz in Sindh. Sindh and Punjab have been at the forefront of the project: in the establishment of digital birth registration cells in all local government departments; in the recruitment of project staff at the provincial, district and taluka/tehsil levels; and in the training of master trainers and facilitators at the district level including the marriage (*Nikah*) registrars, union council clerks and lady health workers.

The project features the use of mobile phones to declare births directly from the home by a visiting health worker or a *Nikah* Registrar who inputs the data into the DBR app on his/her phone. The data is then automatically transferred to the local union council responsible for registration and the system communicates with NADRA for validation. After validation a unique identification number is sent directly to the facilitator who provides it to the applicant. The applicant (and/or the facilitator) then presents this number, together with the required documents, to collect the birth certificate at the union council. This way the DBR system saves the applicant at least two visits to the government offices. This is important since parents often fail to register their children primarily because they do not want to lose working days due to traveling to and from union councils.

The project provides service delivery on the doorstep thus minimizing the high opportunity cost associated with birth registration, which was one of the major demand-side limitations. A pilot was conducted in two

union councils of Thatta in partnership with UNICEF, Telenor and departments of local government and health. The results of this intervention have been highly encouraging, showing that 94 per cent of births are now being registered in these Union Councils within the first 60 days in accordance with the law.<sup>56</sup>

The 4th National Steering and Coordination Committee Meeting On Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), held on 17 January 2018 recommended the creation of a CRVS coordinating mechanism at the level of district/tehsil, and to initiate a reform of the CRVS legal framework.

### Vital statistics reporting

Currently, Pakistan does not produce disaggregated, vital statistics reports from civil registration data as the coverage of civil registration is too low. The Statistical Office is using data of the Population Census and other surveys such as Demographic Health Survey to produce vital statistics on a regular basis.

## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	Pakistan
Legal framework for births registration	Local Government Acts (Punjab/KP/Sindh LG Acts 2013, Balochistan LG Act 2010, and Gilgit Baltistan LG Act 2014). Provincial local government departments implemented by union councils.
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	However, the National Data Base Authority (NADRA) falls under the Ministry of Interior Affairs, which is the custodian of the data warehouse on national security and population.
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes

<sup>56</sup> 'UNICEF and Government of Sindh Launch Digital Birth Registration project in 5 districts', Karachi, 30 September 2016, UNICEF Pakistan Country Office website: [www.unicef.org/pakistan/media\\_10051.html](http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media_10051.html).

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Pakistan
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes, the local Government immediately issues a reference slip to register the birth. However, official certification from NADRA requires three working days for timely registration, seven working days in case of late registration (61 days – 7 years); and 20 working days for registration beyond the age of 7 years.
Legal informant to register a birth	Parents, or a close relative
Time allowed for registration	Provinces have different time frames for registration as per their respective bylaws – for instance, Punjab is within 60 days while Sindh is within 30 days.
Fee for birth registration	Only in Baluchistan Province (Rs100)
Fee for birth certificate	Rs 100 (Rs 500 seen here: < <a href="http://www.lifeglees.com/get-child-registration-certificate-crc-nadra-pakistan-made/">http://www.lifeglees.com/get-child-registration-certificate-crc-nadra-pakistan-made/</a> >). Out of the Rs100, 50 are for the security paper, 20-30 for the Union Council and 10-20 for the UC Secretary.
Penalty for late registration	Rs 200 (except in Punjab Province)  The penalty for late registration varies depending on how late the child is registered: Rs50 is the charge after a period of 60 to 100 days, Rs100 for 101 to 200 days, Rs150 for 201 to 300 days and Rs200 is charged from thereon. If registration is done later than seven years after birth the parents must obtain an affidavit from court and the district commissioner has to approve the registration. The parents will also have to submit a medical attestation that evaluates the age of the child and a school attest when completing Form A. The parents need to publish a note in a local newspaper stating that they intend to register the child.
Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country	For example, if born in the USA: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Form S1 filled</li><li>2. Notarized copy of father's Pakistan passport and national ID card</li><li>3. Original or notarized copy of the child's birth certificate</li><li>4. Two photographs of the child</li><li>5. A copy of father's state ID or driver's license</li></ol>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Pakistan
Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country (Continued)	<p>6. US\$5.00/10.00 in the form of a money order payable to the Consulate General of Pakistan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth registration fee for above US\$5.00 (7 working days)</li> <li>• Urgent fee US\$10.00 (2 working days)</li> </ul>
Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national	No
Requirements for birth registration	Identification of parents and grandfather, note from the hospital or attendant midwife or if the child was not born in a hospital or was born without the presence of a midwife, a vaccination card is used as documentation.
Information collected	Child's name, Sex, Date of birth, Place of birth, Date of registration, Father's name, Father's national identity card no. (inc. age and place of birth), Mother's name, Mother's national identity card no. (inc. age and place of birth), Grandfather's name, Place of residence, Attendant at birth, Disability, Name of hospital, Religion, Name of applicant.
Processing	The required documentation is a note from the hospital or attendant midwife note. If the child was not born in a hospital or born without the presence of a midwife, a vaccination card is used as documentation. The Union Council chairperson signs Form A, but if she/he is absent, the vice chair is authorized to sign the document on his/her behalf. The parents keep the original Form A, and the Union Council keeps a copy along with the required documents, e.g. hospital note, and a copy of the parents' computerized National Identity Cards. The Union Council then registers the birth in its manual register.
Place of registration	Local Union Council of residence
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	Registration office in every Union Council
Birth certificate required to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain a secondary school diploma</li> <li>Gain access to social security programmes</li> <li>Obtain a driver's license</li> <li>Obtain citizenship</li> <li>Obtain a passport</li> </ul>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Pakistan
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).	Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform working with Provincial Departments, NADRA, the WHO country and regional offices, Plan international, UNICEF and other partners organized 'Rapid and Comprehensive Assessments of the CRVS' (unpublished) to ascertain the current status of CRVS implementation in Pakistan. These studies used the CRVS assessment tool developed by WHO and University of Queensland, Australia.
Process for establishing vital statistics	No vital statistics are produced from civil registration, as the coverage is too low. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is considered as the entity for vital statistics generation but there exists no legal authority to this effect.

## DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Pakistan
Legal framework for death registration	Local Government Acts (Punjab/KP/Sindh LG Acts 2013, Balochistan LG Act 2010, and Gilgit Baltistan LG Act 2014).
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	Provincial local government departments implemented by Union Councils. However, the National Data Base Authority (NADRA) falls under the Ministry of Interior Affairs, which is the custodian of the data warehouse on national security and population
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal obligation to register a death	Yes (art. 21 of the National Data Base Authority Ordinance 2000)
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes (on request)
Legal informant to register a death	Son or other blood relative
Time allowed for registration	60 days
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	No



## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Pakistan
Penalty for late registration	The requirements for late registration vary depending on how late the death is registered: Rs50 is charged after a period of 60 to 100 days, Rs100 for 101 to 200 days, Rs150 for 201 to 300 days and Rs200 would be charged from there on.
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	No information
Requirements for death registration	Hospital death certificate, graveyard slip, copy of the deceased's national identity card, copy of son's or wife's national identity card
Information collected	Deceased's name, Sex, Date of birth of the deceased, Father's name, Husband's name, Nature of death (normal, stillbirth, dead body found), Cause of death (natural, unnatural), Applicant's name
Information collected in case of foetal death	Deceased's name, Father's name, Husband's name, Nature of death (normal, stillbirth, dead body found), Cause of death (natural, unnatural), Applicant's name
Processing	Son, or other blood relative declares the death to the union council, to be registered in their register.
Place of registration	Local Union Council
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	Registration office in every Union Council
Death certificate required for:	Inheritance
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of death registration	Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in close coordination with provincial departments, NADRA, WHO country and regional offices, Plan international, UNICEF and other partners organized 'Rapid and Comprehensive Assessments of the CRVS' (unpublished) mainly to ascertain the current status of CRVS implementation in Pakistan. These studies used the CRVS assessment developed by WHO and University of Queensland, Australia.
Process for establishing vital statistics	No vital statistics are produced from civil registration, as the coverage is too low. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is considered as the entity to generate vital statistics but there exists no legal authority to this effect.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Pakistan
Legal framework for marriage registration	Local Government Acts (Punjab/KP/Sindh LG Acts 2013, Balochistan LG Act 2010, and Gilgit Baltistan LG Act 2014).
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	Provincial local government departments implemented by union councils. However, the National Data Base Authority (NADRA) falls under the Ministry of Interior Affairs, which is the custodian of the data warehouse on national security and population.
Organizational structure	Decentralized
Legal age for marriage	Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 sets the legal age for marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for men. Punjab: The Child Marriages Restraint (Amendment) Act, 2015, sets the legal age at 16 for girls and 18 years for men. Sindh: Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013, Sindh Act No. XV of 2014: 18 for women and men.
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	Yes (art. 21 of the National Data Base Authority Ordinance 2000)
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	Married couple initially gets a manual marriage certificate ( <i>nikkah nama</i> ) from the same <i>nikkah khawan (molvi)</i> who solemnized the ceremony ( <i>nikkah</i> ) with official stamp and signature of registered <i>nikkah khawan</i> . The <i>Nikah Nama</i> is then registered with the respective Union Council office. The NADRA marriage certificate is a fully computerized document that contains both Urdu and English details of the married couple. Similar to its handling of birth certificates NADRA has also developed a special system to issue NADRA marriage certificates. NADRA does not deliver these marriage certificates directly.
Legal informant to register a marriage	Spouses/parents of spouses.
Time allowed for registration	No
Fee for marriage registration	May vary depending on the place









**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Pakistan
Fee for marriage certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	No
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	Copies of passport in cases where the bride or bridegroom is a foreign national
Requirements for marriage registration	Copy of <i>nikkah</i> nama/manual marriage certificate Copy of bride's national identity card Copy of bridegroom's national identity card Copies of the national ID cards of the fathers of the bride and bridegroom Copy of national identity card from <i>nikkah khawan (molvi)</i> Copies of passports in cases where the bride or bridegroom is foreign
Information collected	Names of bride and groom, Names of the fathers of the bride and groom, ID numbers of bride and groom, Ages of bride and groom, Place of residence of bride and groom, Marital status of bride and groom, Date of marriage, Name and ID of person marriage solemnized by.
Processing	Married couple initially gets manual <i>nikkah nama</i> from the same <i>nikkah khawan (molvi)</i> who solemnized the <i>nikkah</i> with official stamp and signature of registered <i>nikkah khawan</i> .
Place of registration	Place of solemnization of the marriage
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	Registration office in every Union Council
Marriage certificate required to:	Prove a change of name when married Register the family at NADRA
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	No
Process for establishing vital statistics	No vital statistics are produced from civil registration, as the coverage is too low. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is considered as the entity to generate vital statistics but there exists no legal authority to this effect.

## 6.8 Sri Lanka

### 'GET EVERY ONE IN THE PICTURE'

#### Implementation status

National CRVS coordination mechanism		Inequality assessment	
Comprehensive assessment		National CRVS strategy	
National targets		National CRVS focal point	
Monitoring and reporting plan		Reporting to ESCAP	

 Complete
  In progress
  Not started
  No information

**Source:** -"Get Every One in the Picture" website: <[www.getinthepicture.org/country/sri-lanka](http://www.getinthepicture.org/country/sri-lanka)>, last accessed 31 August 2018.  
 - UNICEF Country Office

#### National targets

##### Sri Lanka has not set targets

#### Development partners working in the country

UNICEF, WHO, Vital Strategies, University of Melbourne

#### Brief history of CRVS in Sri Lanka

The earliest British enactment in civil registration was Regulation No. 7 of 1815, the year in which the whole Island passed from under the rule of Britain. The legislation related to the marriages of native Protestants. This was formed by the Regulation No. 9 of 1822, which provided for the registration of marriages and births of native and of non-European residents in the maritime districts. Ordinance No. 6

of 1847, which followed, was the first attempt to provide a general system of registration, and applied to all births, deaths and marriages, other than those of the Kandyan Sinhalese and the Muslims. The ordinance was further replaced in 1867, 1877 and 1892 and 1895.<sup>57</sup>

The present law for the registration of births and deaths was passed under Act No. 17 of 1951, which incorporated most of the amendments up to that year

<sup>57</sup> International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, 'The development and organization of civil registration in Sri Lanka', Technical papers, no. 41, July 1990, <[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/crvs/documents/IIVRS\\_papers/IIVRS\\_paper41.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/crvs/documents/IIVRS_papers/IIVRS_paper41.pdf)>, last accessed 27 September 2018.

and provided for additional information to be included in the birth records. The Act was most recently amended in 2008.

The General Marriage Law was contained in Ordinance No. 2 of 1895 after having been subjected to amendment by Ordinances Nos. 10 of 1896 and 19 of 1900. It was finally replaced by Ordinance No. 19 of 1907, which was also subjected to several amendments up to 2001. The General Marriage Law is applicable to all persons other than the Kandyan Sinhalese and the Muslims.

The Kandyan Law is the old national Sinhalese law and custom as modified by statute. Prior to 1859, the Kandyans had no written laws and marriages were contracted according to customary rites and by public recognition of the unions. The practices of polygamy and polyandry were also prevalent. Ordinance No. 13 of 1859 abolished polygamy and polyandry and made registration essential to the validity of a Kandyan marriage. This Ordinance, after several amendments over the years, was finally replaced by the Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act of 1952. Amended in 2005, it provided, among other things, that persons subject to Kandyan law, could, if they so desired, marry under the General Marriage Law. The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, 1954, governs the Muslims of Sri Lanka in matrimonial matters.

The Registrar General's Department was formed for the registration of births, deaths and marriages of Sri Lankans, and legal documents pertaining to properties, with a view to safeguarding their fundamental rights. The Department was initially established in 1864 for the purpose of registration of land and entrusted with civil registration in 1867. For the purpose of registration of births, deaths and marriages each administrative district is divided into small units called registration divisions and local registrars are attached to these divisions.

## Child marriage

The legal age for marriage, without the need for court and/or parental consent, is 18 years for both men and women. However, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA), which regulates Muslim marriages, does not set a minimum age of marriage.

Sri Lanka is a member of the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage that recognizes birth and marriage registration as important for ending this practice.

According to UNICEF, 2 per cent of girls are married by the age of 15 and 12 per cent by the age of 18.<sup>58</sup>

### **Recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2018)**

*"In spite of the high rate of birth registration in the State party, a significant number of births remain unregistered among certain marginalized groups. The Committee, taking note of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration, recommends that the State party further raise awareness on the importance of birth registration and simplify the procedure, including by creating mobile registration structures, in particular for those children who were not registered within established timelines."<sup>59</sup>*

## CRVS assessment

In 2009, Sri Lanka volunteered to pilot the CRVS assessment framework developed jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the University of Queensland (UQ). The main findings were presented according to the five main components of the review framework.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children: Children in a digital world*, UNICEF, ISBN: 978-92-806-4930-7, December 2017.

<sup>59</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth and sixth periodic reports of Sri Lanka, 2 March 2018, CRC/C/LKA/CO/5-6.

<sup>60</sup> University of Queensland, 'Assessing the production, quality and use of national vital statistics: A case study of Sri Lanka', Documentation Note Series, no. 1, November 2009.

**Legal basis and resources:** The national civil and vital registration system in Sri Lanka was found to be operating fairly satisfactorily. The problems identified in implementation of the existing Act of Birth and Death Registration were addressed in amending the Act in 2008. In particular, the obligation to register a death before burial was included in the amended Act. In addition, the budget allocated to the Registrar General's Department and Department of Census and Statistics by the government was not sufficient to carry out the intended civil registration functions within specified time limits and to the satisfaction of users, particularly government planning departments. The need for allocating a separate and adequate budget for civil registration was identified. Registrars were not paid on a regular basis and their work was widely considered as a social service to society. They were not given an office space or telephone facilities by the government, and their own house was sometimes used as the office. Although there is a budget allocation for training of local registrars, training programmes were not regularly conducted (especially in rural areas) due to insufficient funds. Hence properly designed training programmes of appropriate timing and frequency were recommended.

**Registration practices, coverage and completeness:** All forms used in the registration of births and deaths were reviewed in 2006 with the amendment of the Birth and Death Registration Act and amenable to computerisation, being photocopied or application of other technologies. The coverage of registration was considered good for births but insufficient for deaths and the recommendation was made to carry out a study to estimate the coverage and completeness of death registration. Lack of awareness of the importance of registration of births

and deaths was identified as the main obstacle to improving the coverage and the completeness of vital registration.

**Death certification and cause of death:** More than 52 per cent of deaths were not medically certified, affecting the quality of mortality data and subsequently public health planning. It was recommended that the Declaration Form of Coroners be amended to obtain more meaningful information.

**ICD coding practices:** Cause of death is coded according to ICD-10 at the Vital Statistics Unit of the Registrar General's Department although the national language version of ICD was not used. More intensive training and quality control measures were recommended to improve the quality of coding.

**Data access, use and quality checks:** It was noted that the Vital Statistics Unit undertook quality checks on fertility and mortality indicators calculated from civil registration data. It was recommended that a standard method of checking the quality of data, both the consistency and the plausibility to be introduced to check the quality of mortality, fertility and cause-of-death statistics. The timeliness of the Registrar General's cause-of-death statistics was an issue that limits the usefulness of the data.

#### **Vital statistics reporting**

Vital statistics are compiled at the Statistics Branch of the Registrar General's Department from the birth and death returns provided by the Registrars of Births and Deaths. These statistics are by 'place of occurrence' and 'date of registration and some data are also tabulated by place of residence and date of occurrence as well.

## Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### BIRTH REGISTRATION

Country	Sri Lanka
Legal framework for births registration	Births and Deaths Registration Act No. 17 (1951), amended 2008
Official authorities in charge of registering a birth	<p>The Registrar General's Department was initially established in 1864 for the purpose of registration of land and legal documents pertaining to properties.</p> <p>In 1867, this Department was entrusted with civil registration – i.e., births, marriages and deaths – with a view to safeguarding the fundamental rights of the Sri Lanka populace.</p> <p>Civil registration activities have now been deconcentrated up to the divisional secretariat level and accordingly a district registrar's division is operating in all 332 Divisional Secretariats.</p>
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register the birth of a child?	Yes (section 15)
Is an official birth certificate issued as a result of birth registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a birth	Section 15: Subject to the provisions of subsection (1) of section 20, the father or mother of every child born alive, and in case the parents of the child are unable to provide the information relating to the birth hereinafter specified by reason of their death, illness, absence or other inability recognized by the Registrar-General, the occupier of the house or building in which the child was born, each person present at the birth and the person having charge of the child shall, within forty-two days of the date of the birth, give information of such of the particulars relating to the birth required under this Act to be registered as the informant possesses, to the appropriate registrar and shall, if called upon by the registrar, sign the register of births in the appropriate place in the presence of the registrar.
Time allowed for registration	3 months
Fee for birth registration	No
Fee for birth certificate	No

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Penalty for late registration	Rs50
Specific requirements or fees specific to children who are eligible for citizenship but were born outside the country	<p>Birth should be registered at the Sri Lanka Embassy/High Commission in the country where birth occurred.</p> <p>Appropriate persons for informing a birth for registration: Father, mother, guardian</p> <p>Declaration to inform about the birth can be obtained from the appropriate Sri Lanka Embassy/High Commission.</p> <p>Documents to be submitted: The completed declaration, relevant documents in proof of the birth</p> <p>A birth can be registered free of charge within a period of 3 months. A copy of the birth certificate is issued to the informant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The following charges shall be levied:</li> <li>Registration and issuance of a birth certificate is Rs3,900 or £18, US\$25, and €20, while the fee for issuance of a certified copy of a birth certificate is £10, US\$13, €11 (the cost in Sri Lankan rupees was not available).</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Registrar General Department's website: &lt;<a href="http://www.rgd.gov.lk/web/index.php/en/services/civil-registration/birth-registration.html#registration-of-births-occurred-at-a-foreign-country">www.rgd.gov.lk/web/index.php/en/services/civil-registration/birth-registration.html#registration-of-births-occurred-at-a-foreign-country</a>&gt;</i></p>
Specific requirements or fees specific to a child whose parent is a foreign national	No
Requirements for birth registration	<p>Form duly filled by the family in case of birth at home</p> <p>Hospital report issued in proof of the occurrence of the birth</p> <p>Identification of parents</p>
Information collected	<p>Date of birth, Date of registration, Name of child, Sex, Weight at birth, Type of birth (single, multiple), Place of birth, Type of place of birth (e.g. hospital, home), Number of children born alive to the mother, Father's name, Father's citizenship, Father's identification number/passport number, Father's date of birth, Father's place of birth, Father's ethnic group, Mother's name, Mother's citizenship, Mother's identification number/passport number, Mother's date of birth, Mother's place of birth, Mother's ethnic group, Mother's place of residence, Are parent's married, Date of marriage, Place of marriage, Grandparents information, Informant information.</p>



## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
	<p data-bbox="560 432 1075 461"><b>Registration of births occurring at home:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="560 483 1458 685" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="560 483 1458 551">• Inform the public official in the divisional secretariat who works at the village level (<i>Grama Niladari</i>) within 7 days of the birth.</li><li data-bbox="560 573 1401 602">• The <i>Grama Niladari</i> shall send a report to the registrar of the area.</li><li data-bbox="560 624 1458 685">• The registrar of births and deaths of the area where birth has occurred registers the birth.</li></ul> <p data-bbox="560 730 1474 797">Duly filled declaration of birth shall be submitted to the registrar of births and deaths of the area. Declaration of birth can be obtained from the registrar.</p> <p data-bbox="560 842 1401 909">Persons required to give information are either the father, mother, each person present at the birth, or person in charge of the child</p> <p data-bbox="560 954 1358 983"><b>Registration of birth that occurred in a rural or private hospital:</b></p> <p data-bbox="560 1028 1422 1133">The registrar of births and deaths of the area where the birth occurred registers the birth. If the birth has occurred at a rural hospital, inform the Registrar of that area for registration of such birth.</p> <p data-bbox="153 1178 284 1207">Processing</p> <p data-bbox="560 1178 1430 1283">Appropriate persons for informing of a birth for registration are either the father, mother, person who was present at the birth, or medical officer of the hospital.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1328 1434 1395">Obtain the relevant declaration from the Registrar of births and deaths for informing the birth.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1440 1466 1507">Documents to be submitted: Duly filled declaration, hospital report issued in proof of the occurrence of the birth.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1552 1267 1581"><b>Registration of birth that occurred in a general hospital:</b></p> <p data-bbox="560 1626 1355 1693">Inform the registrar of births and deaths at the General Hospital for registration of birth.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1738 1430 1843">Appropriate persons for informing of a birth for registration are either the father, mother, person who was present at the birth, or medical officer of the hospital.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1888 1469 1955">Obtain the relevant declaration from the Registrar of births and deaths at the General Hospital for informing the birth.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Processing (Continued)	<p>Documents to be submitted: Duly filled declaration, hospital report issued in proof of the occurrence of the birth.</p> <p><b>Registration of birth that occurred in a registered estate:</b></p> <p>Inform the estate superintendent within 7 days from the birth is occurred. Persons required to submit information are either the father, mother, each person who was present at the birth.</p> <p>The estate superintendent will certify the application and send to the divisional secretariat through the district medical officer.</p> <p>The district registrar registers the birth and the certificate of birth is sent to the estate superintendent.</p>
Place of registration	Place of occurrence of the birth
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	938 district registrar divisions operating in all 332 divisional secretariats.
Birth certificate required for:	Citizenship, issuance of passport, admission to schools, accessing widows/widowers and orphans pension scheme, intestate succession.
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of birth registration (apart from DHS or MICS surveys).	Gamage, Saman et al, 'Assessing the Production, Quality and Use of National Vital Statistics: A case study of Sri Lanka', <i>Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub Documentation Note Series No. 1</i> , Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 2009.
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>Vital statistics are compiled at the statistics branch of the Registrar General's Department from the birth and death returns provided by the registrars of births and deaths. These statistics are by 'place of occurrence' and 'date of registration', and some data are tabulated by 'place of residence' and 'date of occurrence' as well.</p> <p>Each registrar has to furnish a monthly return to the divisional secretary. Monthly returns should be sent at the end of every month. The divisional secretary collects all the returns and forwards them to the Land and District Registry for data entry. The Land and District Registrar forwards the data to the Registrar General. The Registrar General processes the data and releases the vital statistics relating to the births and deaths of the entire island.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### DEATH REGISTRATION

Country	Sri Lanka
Legal framework for deaths registration	Births and Deaths Registration Act (1954), amended 2008
Official authorities in charge of registering a death	<p>The Registrar General's Department was initially established in 1864 for the purpose of registration of land and legal documents pertaining to properties.</p> <p>In 1867, this Department was entrusted with civil registration – i.e., births, marriages and deaths – with a view to safeguarding the fundamental rights of the Sri Lanka populace.</p> <p>Civil registration activities have been deconcentrated up to divisional secretariat level and accordingly a district registrar's division is operating in all 332 divisional secretariats.</p>
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal obligation to register a death?	Yes (section 29)
Is an official death certificate issued as a result of death registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a death	<p>Close relation present at the death or in attendance during the last illness of the deceased;</p> <p>Medical officer of the hospital;</p> <p>If there is no relation as given above, a relation who resides in the area of the registrar division where the death occurred;</p> <p>If there is no relation as given above, a person who was present at the death or an occupier of the place where the death occurred.</p> <p>If there is no person as given above, the person who cremated or buried the body.</p>
Time allowed for registration	3 months

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Fee for death registration	No
Fee for death certificate	No
Penalty for late registration	Rs 50
Specific registration requirements or fees specific for people who have died who were residents in the country and also of foreign nationality	No
Requirements for death registration	Duly filled declaration Hospital report issued in proof of the occurrence of the death, if death occurred in a hospital
Information collected	Date of registration, Place of registration, Type of death (normal, sudden), Date and time of death, Type of place of occurrence (e.g. home, hospital), Cause of death, Name of the deceased, Citizenship, Date of birth, Sex, Race, Place of residence, Occupation, Father's name, Mother's name, Informant's details For women under 49 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnant at the time of death</li> <li>• Has given birth in the last 6 weeks</li> <li>• Abortion has taken place</li> <li>• Number of days after birth/abortion</li> </ul>
Information collected in case of foetal death	All perinatal deaths in both government and private hospitals should be reported to the head of the facility by the medical officer confirming the death (at obstetric or paediatric unit) using the form 'Audit on Perinatal Deaths (H-26)' within 24 hours. A copy of the H-26 should be kept with the obstetrician or the paediatrician/neonatologist (in specialized institutes) or the highest level of medical officer (in non-specialized/peripheral hospitals) for future reference and to be used at monthly hospital perinatal death audits.  Information collected:  Date and place of stillbirth, Race, Sex, Father's and mother's names, Rank or profession, Mother's age, Number of weeks of pregnancy at the time of the stillbirth.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Processing	<p><b>Death occurred at home:</b></p> <p>Inform the public official in the divisional secretariat (Grama Niladari) within 7 days of the death is occurred.</p> <p><i>Grama Niladari</i> shall send a report to the registrar of the area.</p> <p>The registrar of births and deaths of the area where death has occurred registers the death. Declaration of death can be obtained from the registrar.</p> <p>Persons required to give information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close relation present at the death.</li><li>• Close relation who looked after at the deceased at the time of death.</li><li>• If there is no relation as given above, a relation who resides in the area of the registrar division where the death occurred.</li><li>• If there is no relation as given above, a person present at the death or an occupier of the place where the death occurred.</li><li>• If there is no person as given above, the person who cremated or buried the body.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Death occurred in a rural or private hospital:</b></p> <p>The registrar of births and deaths of the area where death occurred, registers the death. If the death has occurred at a rural hospital, inform the registrar of that area for registration of such death.</p> <p>Appropriate persons to inform the appropriate registrar of a death for registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Person present at the time of occurrence of the death</li><li>• Person who was treating the deceased at time of death</li><li>• Medical officer of the hospital</li></ul> <p>Obtain the relevant declaration for informing on the death from the registrar of births and deaths.</p> <p>Documents to be submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Duly filled declaration</li><li>• Hospital report issued in proof of the occurrence of the death</li></ul>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Processing (Continued)	<p><b>Death occurred in a general hospital:</b></p> <p>Inform the registrar of births and deaths at the general hospital for registration of the death.</p> <p>Appropriate persons for informing of a death for registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Person present at the time of occurrence of the death</li><li>• Person who was treating the deceased at time of death</li><li>• Medical officer of the hospital</li></ul> <p>Obtain the relevant declaration for informing on the death from the registrar of births and deaths at the general hospital.</p> <p>Documents to be submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Duly filled declaration</li><li>• Hospital report issued in proof of the occurrence of the death</li></ul>
	<p><b>Death occurred in a registered estate:</b></p> <p>Inform the estate superintendent within 24 hours of the death.</p> <p>Persons required to give information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relation of the dead person</li><li>• Each person present at the death</li><li>• Occupier of the building where the death occurred</li><li>• Each person who will engage in the cremation</li></ul> <p>Documents to be submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical reports of the dead person, if any</li><li>• Clinical reports of the dead person, if any</li></ul> <p>The estate superintendent records the death, certifies the application and sends it to the divisional secretariat through the district medical officer.</p> <p>The district registrar registers the death and the certificate of death is sent to the estate superintendent.</p> <p>The informant can obtain the certificate of death from the estate superintendent, free of charge.</p>

**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Place of registration	Place of occurrence of the death.
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	938 District Registrar's Division operating in all 332 Divisional Secretariats.
Death certificate required for:	Widows/widowers and orphans pension scheme, intestate succession, remarriage
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of death registration.	<p>Gamage Saman et al, <i>Assessing the Production, Quality and Use of National Vital Statistics: A case study of Sri Lanka</i>, Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub Documentation Note Series No. 1, Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 2009.</p> <p>The Department of Census and Statistics conducted a rapid assessment after the Tsunami disaster in 2005 with a district level breakdown of deaths. Since then the Disaster Management Centre has taken up this role and conducts such rapid assessments during natural disasters, most recently after floods in 2016 and 2017.</p>
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>The Statistics Branch of the Registrar General's Department compiles vital statistics from the birth and death returns provided by the registrars of births and deaths. These statistics are by 'place of occurrence' and 'date of registration', and some data are tabulated by 'place of residence' and 'date of occurrence' as well.</p> <p>Each registrar has to furnish a monthly return to the divisional secretary. Monthly returns should be sent at the end of the every month. The divisional secretary collects all the returns and forwards them to the Land and District Registry for data entry. The Land and District Registrar forwards the data to the Registrar General. The Registrar General processes the data and releases the vital statistics relating to the births and deaths of the entire island.</p>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

### MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Country	Sri Lanka
Legal framework for marriages registration	<p>Marriage Registration Ordinance, 1908, amended 2001</p> <p>Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, 1954</p> <p>Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act, amended 2005</p>
Official authorities in charge of registering a marriage	<p>The Registrar General's Department was initially established in 1864 for the purpose of registration of land and legal documents pertaining to properties. In 1867, this Department was entrusted with civil registration – i.e., births, marriages and deaths – with a view to safeguarding the fundamental rights of the Sri Lanka populace.</p> <p>Civil registration activities have been deconcentrated up to the divisional secretariat level and accordingly a district registrar's division is operating in all 332 divisional secretariats.</p>
Organizational structure	Centralized
Legal age for marriage	18 years for both men and women (Section 15, General Marriage Ordinance), but the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA), which regulates Muslim marriages, does not set a minimum age of marriage.
Legal obligation to register the marriage?	<p>Yes,</p> <p>Section 34-(5), Marriage Registration Ordinance: The minister shall, within seven days from the date of the solemnization of the marriage, separate from the register book the duplicate statement of the marriage and transmit the same to the district registrar within whose district the marriage was solemnized together with stamps of a value equal to the amount of the fee payable to such registrar for the registration of such marriage.</p> <p>Section 17-1, Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act: Save as otherwise hereinafter expressly provided, every marriage contracted between Muslims after the commencement of this Act shall be required, as hereinafter provided, immediately upon the conclusion of the <i>Nikah</i> ceremony connected therewith.</p> <p>Kandyan Section 16 of the Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act: Every prospective Kandyan marriage shall be notified to the appropriate Registrar hereinafter specified by the service of notice thereof on such Registrar.</p>



**Continued:** Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Is an official marriage certificate issued as a result of marriage registration?	Yes
Legal informant to register a marriage	Spouses, person who solemnized the marriage
Time allowed for registration	Immediately

	No.	Duty	Payable to Whom	Payable by Whom	Amount (Rs)	Payment Type
2	Entering a notice of marriage at additional district registrar's office or district registrar's office, or at any other place	Additional District Registrar or District Registrar	Applicant	100	Cash	
3	Issuing registrar's certificate on a notice of marriage	Registrar	Parties to marriage	100	Cash	
4	Issuing registrar's certificate on a notice of marriage	Additional district registrar or district registrar	Parties to marriage	100	Cash	
5	Solemnizing marriage in registrar's office	Registrar	Parties to marriage	750	Cash	
6	Solemnizing marriage in additional district registrar's or district registrar's office	Additional district registrar or district registrar	Parties to marriage	750	Cash	
7	Solemnizing marriage outside the registrar's office under section 38(1) or 38(2)	Registrar	Parties to marriage	750	Cash	
		Additional district registrar or district registrar	Parties to marriage	50	Cash	
8	Solemnizing marriage outside the additional district registrar or district registrar's office under section 38(1) or 38(2)	Additional district registrar or district registrar	Parties to marriage	750	Cash	
		Additional district registrar or district registrar	Parties to marriage	50	Cash	
9	Obtaining a special license under section 27(3)	Government	Parties to marriage	100	Cash	
10	Registration of marriage solemnized in registered place of public worship	District registrar	Parties to marriage	750	Cash	

**Source:** Government of Sri Lanka Information Centre website: <[www.gic.gov.lk/gic/index.php?option=com\\_info&id=352&task=info&lang=en](http://www.gic.gov.lk/gic/index.php?option=com_info&id=352&task=info&lang=en)> Last accessed 28 October 2018.

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Fee for marriage certificate	Rs100
Penalty for late registration	No
Additional registration requirements or fees if one spouse was born outside the country or has dual citizenship	No
Requirements for marriage registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement of residence of the parties in the relevant division. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residence of parties in the relevant division within 10 days preceding submission of the marriage notice.</li> <li>• Residence of parties in different divisions within 10 days preceding submission of the marriage notice.</li> <li>• If one party was not living in Sri Lanka within 10 days preceding submission of the marriage notice, residence of the other party in Sri Lanka for such 10 days.</li> <li>• If neither of the parties was living in Sri Lanka within 10 days preceding submission of the marriage notice, residence of one party for 4 days in Sri Lanka.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attainment of age 18 years at previous birthday, by both parties.</li> <li>• The parties should not be involved in any kind of relationship prohibited in law.</li> <li>• No party should have entered into any legal marriage that is valid at the time.</li> </ul>
Information collected	Names, Civil condition, Race, Profession, Age, Place of residence, Duration of residence of bride and groom; Witnesses names, professions and places of residence
Processing	<p><b>Registration of marriage (General):</b></p> <p>Marriage notice should be written and attested in duplicate and handed over to the registrar of marriages of the division.</p> <p>Persons authorized to attest the marriage notice;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registrar of marriage of the division</li> <li>• Justice of the peace</li> <li>• Notary public</li> <li>• A minister</li> </ul>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Processing (Continued)	<p>14 days should be lapsed since submission of marriage notice for registration of a marriage (general). Possibility prevails to register general marriage before lapse of such 14 days.</p>
	<p>Request may be made to register a marriage outside the office.</p>
	<p><b>Registration of a marriage by a Christian Minister</b></p>
	<p>Christians can register their marriages at their Churches.</p> <p>Marriage notice should be written and attested in duplicate and handed over to the registrar of marriage of the division.</p>
	<p>Persons authorized to attest marriage notices;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registrar of marriage of the division</li><li>• Justice of the peace</li><li>• Notary public</li><li>• A Minister</li></ul>
Processing (Continued)	<p>Certificate of the registrar should be obtained from the district registrar or additional district registrar.</p>
	<p>The said certificate should be given to the minister of the church where the marriage is to be solemnized.</p>
Processing (Continued)	<p><b>Registration of a Kandyan marriage</b></p>
	<p>Areas where kandyan law is applied,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Central Province</li><li>• North Central Province</li><li>• Uva Province</li><li>• Sabaragamuwa Province</li><li>• Chuniyachedkulam Korale East and West and Kilakkumale Korale South of Vavuniya District in the Northern Province</li><li>• Bintenna Pattu, Wegam Pattu and Panam Pattu of Batticola District and Kadukkulam Pattu of Trincomalee District in the Eastern Province</li><li>• Kurunegala District and Demala Hathpattu of Puttalam District in the North Western Province</li></ul>

## Continued: Main features of registration of births, deaths and marriages

Country	Sri Lanka
Processing (Continued)	<p>Notice of marriage should be written and attested in duplicate and handed over to the registrar of marriages. The registrar of marriage of the division has authority to attest marriage notices.</p> <p>Request may be made in order to register a marriage outside the office.</p> <p><b>Registration of a Muslin marriage</b> Declaration by the bridegroom substantially in form II set out in the First Schedule and a declaration by the Wali of the bride substantially in form III set out in the First Schedule</p>
Place of registration	Place of occurrence of marriage
How widespread are the registration points throughout the country. Regional and urban/rural gaps in the coverage of registration points.	938 district registrar's divisions operating in all 332 divisional secretariats.
Marriage certificate required for:	Issuance of passport for wife with the husband's surname, for registration of children in schools, for the birth registration, intestate succession.
Recent studies conducted to assess the coverage and quality of marriage registration.	No
Process for establishing vital statistics	<p>Vital statistics are compiled at the statistics branch of the Registrar General's Department from the birth and death returns provided by the registrars of births and deaths. These statistics are by 'place of occurrence' and 'date of registration', and some data are tabulated by 'place of residence' and 'date of occurrence' as well.</p> <p>Each Registrar has to furnish a monthly return to the divisional secretary. Monthly returns should be sent at the end of every month. The divisional secretary collects all the returns and forwards them to the Land and District Registry for data entry. The Land and District Registrar forwards the data to the Registrar General. The Registrar General processes the data and releases the vital statistics relating to the births and deaths of the entire island.</p>

# 7 Conclusion and recommendations

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Despite many recent improvements in the performance of civil registration systems, South Asia countries still face important challenges to reach a fully functioning civil registration system, ensuring full coverage of the basic vital events (live births, marriages and deaths). This explains their commitment to achieve a shared vision that by 2024 all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems.

Given factors that constitute barriers to civil registration, it is important to consider interventions to:

- Strengthen the legal frameworks in compliance with international standards, in particular regarding the information collected in the registration process, permitting marriage registration for any person regardless of age;
- Improve implementation of the legal framework;
- Strengthen joint advocacy activities with political authorities;
- Strengthen the coordination of civil registration programmes and activities;
- Establish new civil registration centres;
- Set up civil registration offices and/or services in main health facilities, where most births and deaths occur;
- Strengthen the logistical capacity of civil registration centres;

- Strengthen the technical capacity of civil registry officials;
- Intensify awareness-raising campaigns;
- Strengthen the coordination and monitoring of the activities of the civil registration centres;
- Strengthen the partnership between civil society organizations (NGOs, associations), government actors and development partners;
- Set up a system for monitoring the bottlenecks in order to improve the registration system.

For development partners and governments, it is essential to consider the civil registration system as a whole, including all vital events, instead of focusing only on birth registration, for example. A system that would register only births but not deaths would be of little interest, as nobody would exit the system. In addition, especially considering the mandate of UNICEF, monitoring child mortality and child marriage requires reliable information on deaths and marriages.

Sustainability is key in civil registration. Birth registration campaigns have had an impact in raising awareness but they did not help to build sustainable CRVS systems. It is important to focus international assistance on building strong, reliable and sustainable civil registration systems. In that regard, coordination among development partners is essential to avoid short-term operations and assist countries in developing their CRVS system in a long-term perspective.

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