



# Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

3–4 April 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

## Enhancement of birth and death registration through the improvement of CRVS system monitoring in Bangladesh

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## Introduction/Motivation

The Bangladesh government views civil registration as the foundation of rights, protections, entitlements, and services from cradle to grave. As per its declaration to the Regional Action Framework on civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, Bangladesh has pledged to achieve 100% birth and 50% death registration within one year of occurrence by the end 2024<sup>1</sup>. To achieve these targets, Bangladesh has established the Office of the Registrar General in July 2016, and since then stakeholders have been developing and scaling a pro-active model of civil registration that engages community-based frontline health workers and other cadres, to facilitate the notification and registration of birth and death<sup>2</sup>. The Office of the Registrar General also developed and implemented a digitalised civil registration system at national scale. The government further established various governance structures to coordinate all the stakeholders involved in the CRVS system. Given that the central civil registration authority does not have direct jurisdiction over the front-line civil registrars, measures needed to be taken to ensure a high level of performance of the civil registration officers in the communities. Therefore, birth and death registration completeness targets were defined for the central authority and civil registration has been included in the government's Annual Performance Agreement (APA) of relevant officials. The implementation of this APA was initiated in the fiscal year 2021-22. Overall, the APA is a legal framework for relevant government officials and specifically, performance indicators related to civil registration were defined for officials supervising the implementation of birth and death registration. The targets of the APA are aligned with high-level targets of the government, including the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2041 of Bangladesh.

## Methods/Work performed

To roll out the APA based monitoring system, seminars on birth and death registration were organized in all 8 Divisions of Bangladesh to onboard all stakeholders towards the obligations under this compliance measure. Further, a monitoring system to regularly track birth and death registration completeness against targets set in the APA, was established. Specifically, gradually increasing targets for the next few years were set based on population numbers and crude birth and death rates published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Using the monitoring system, birth and death registration completeness is being monitored on a monthly and quarterly basis for every civil registration office and compared to pre-defined targets. Using the observed birth and death registration completeness, a performance ranking is calculated for all sixty-four Districts of Bangladesh and this ranking is disseminated to all relevant senior supervisors and registrars.

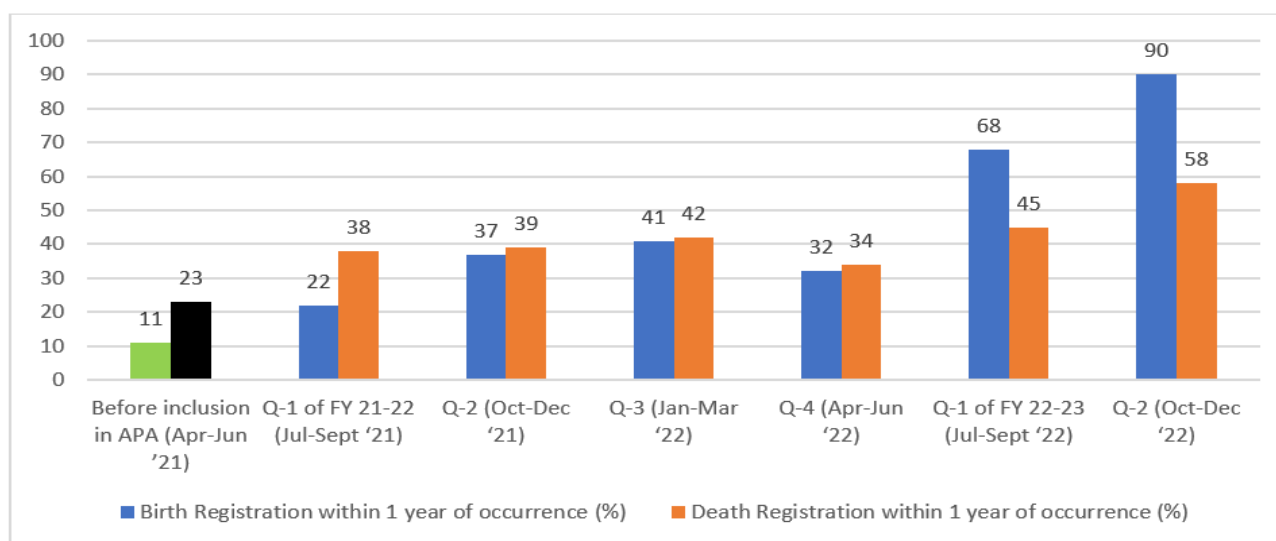
## Discussion

As a result of the substantial system changes and by implementing a strong monitoring system which assesses civil registration completeness as part of the performance evaluation of government officials, remarkable improvement of the national civil registration completeness is being observed (see Figure 1). Specifically, in the quarter prior to the introduction of the monitoring system, birth registration completeness was 11% and death registration completeness was 23%. In the annual evaluation of the first year of the APA (financial year

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2021-22), birth and death registration completeness rates were found to be 33% and 38%, respectively. In the half-yearly evaluation of the second year of the APA (first 6 month of the financial year 2022-2023), these rates increased to 79% and 52%, respectively. The trend indicates that Bangladesh is making progress towards achieving the UNESCAP targets.



**Figure 1: Birth and death registration completeness in Bangladesh before and after the introduction of the performance monitoring system for local government officials.**

Birth registration completeness (green and blue bars for before and after the introduction of the monitoring system, respectively) and death registration completeness (black and orange bars for before and after the introduction of the monitoring system, respectively) are shown for the quarter before the implementation of the performance monitoring system in mind-2021 to the end of 2022.

Further, it is observed that, the ranking of performance with regards to civil registration completeness, has created a healthy competition among all relevant stakeholders to achieve the targets assigned for them.

Experience from the work-in-progress of the CRVS system strengthening efforts in Bangladesh, which include a robust performance monitoring component based on civil registration completeness, is able to demonstrate the potential for timely improvements to these systems. The emerging lessons learned, further demonstrate that routine monitoring of civil registration completeness as part of the performance assessment of government officials, appears to positively contribute to the strengthening of CRVS systems. This experience with the compliance measures described here may be valuable for other countries – particularly in settings with similar circumstances of decentralised authority for civil registration.



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