

MINISTRY OF PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & REFORM

STRENGTHENING CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS IN PAKISTAN

PROGRAM BRIEF & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW- Till Dec. 2017.

CRVS is the mechanism of collecting information by civil registration system on the frequency of occurrence of specified and defined vital events (eg births, deaths, cause of deaths, marriage, migration, its compiling, processing, analyzing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in some statistical form. The significance of improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) has recently been emphasized round the globe. CRVS data is critical to support the functioning of National Health System and for a number of other government functions.

Pakistan like several other countries of the region do not have credible registration of births and deaths, and lack in reporting complete and accurate cause of death data. Unfortunately, information disaggregated by age, gender, location and/or socioeconomic status is also not available like for many developing nations.

Pakistan has been identified as one of the six priority countries by UNESCAP, which has been identified as a priority country where the CRVS strengthening would be undertaken during coming years. Given the fact that the subject of CRVS is multidisciplinary in nature, the task of overall coordination for CRVS development has been assignment to Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms. This ministry in close coordination with Provincial Departments, NADRA, the WHO country and regional offices, Plan international, UNICEF and other partners organized "Rapid and Comprehensive Assessments of the CRVS" in Pakistan mainly to realize the current status of CRVS implementation in Pakistan.

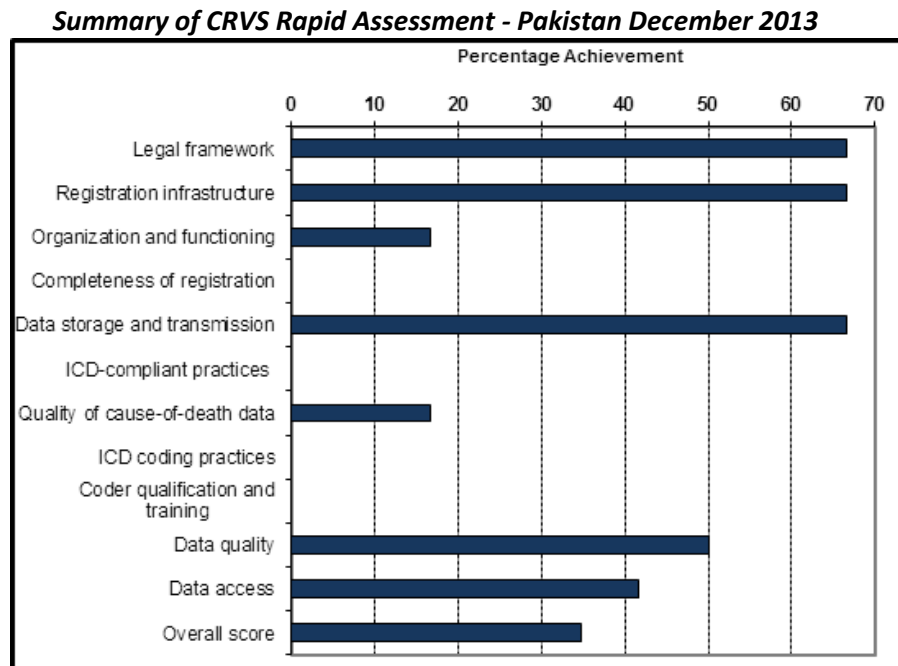
These studies have revealed serious weaknesses in our CRVS. National data for birth and death registration are exceptionally low. Where only 30% births are being recorded with almost no death registration mechanisms. Cause of death information is lacking and ICD- 10 for coding cases of deaths in hospitals is not being practices. Resultantly, very little vital statistics generated from the civil registration systems and country has thus obliged to resort to expensive and tedious community based surveys (Population census, DHS and MICs etc).

These assessments called for the promotion of CRVS in the country with formation of strong coordination mechanisms at National/Provincial levels for CRVS promotion. It also recommended development and adoption of a national uniform CRVS law, in place of currently fragmented piecemeal laws. There is need for implementation of ICD coding for cause of death with inclusion of private health care providers in loop. Study recommended promotion and training in ICD mortality coding practices. Subsequently, a national consultative workshop on CRVS Strategic Planning was also organized to thresh these recommendations and propose a national/provincial action plan.

In light with these developments Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms (vide Notification No:14(23-1,2014, 9th September, 2014) constituted a National Steering and Coordination Committee for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) comprising broad based, multiple stakeholders from Federal Ministries, provincial departments, NADRA and international partners. The first meeting of National CRVS Steering and Coordination Committee held in Hotel Marriot- Islamabad. Here are some important steps taken so far for CRVS improvement since 2012. Since then two more National CRVS Steering Committee Meetings have occurred. Here is summary of activities so far organized.

1. **CRVS RAPID ASSESSMENT**

Ministry of Health undertook this CRVS Rapid Assessment in December 2013 in partnership with international partners. Participation for this assessment was obtained from a number of Federal and Provincial stakeholders and Departments, including international partners.



As revealed in this assessment country has made significant achievement in some components of CRVS, specially in laying an adequate CRVS infrastructure. However there exist serious gaps in some other critical components, particularly for reporting number of births and death reporting with causes of deaths, use of ICD coding, data quality and coverage of reporting. Birth registration is however being scaled up through nationwide program launched by National Registration Authority.

2. **NATIONAL CRVS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT (July – August 2014)**

Ministry of Planning and Development, in collaboration with UN partners (WHO, UNICEF, Plan International UNFPA) the National Data Base and Registration Authority (NADRA) other partners organized National Review on Comprehensive Assessment and Plan Development for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS),

a. **Objective of this review;**

- To conduct a standards-based, comprehensive assessment of current CRVS status, capacities and resources.
- Formulate a multi-sectorial national CRVS action plan that addresses the range of challenges, approaches and define feasible actions.
- Define roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders for implementing CRVS plan

b. Snapshot

- Like many countries in the region, Pakistan do not have well-functioning systems
- Birth registration and death registration levels are very low.
- There is little vital statistics generated from the civil registration systems. Cause of death information is not available, or of poor quality (from hospitals but not using ICD).

c. Recommendations

- Review of the current legislation for Uniform National CRVS law.
- Technology upgrades synergy among partners for data digitalization, compilation and storage.
- A central body be identified to collect, compile, keep records and disseminate data.
- Registration for births and deaths be maintained free of charge but fee criteria for issuance of certificates.
- A uniform birth certificate be adopted (information like Include birth weight, age of parents, live births, number of fetal deaths, last live birth, date of marriage)
- Development of Inter-disciplinary National and Provincial CRVS Steering Committees
- Strengthening of LB Systems and Synergies with National Registration (NADRA) and Health Departments. Enhanced role of DCO.
- Policy be framed for collection of birth and death certificates by community within sixty days of occurrence of the event.
- For ensure legal authenticity of death certificates the following procedure may be adapted:
 - *For Deaths in Hospitals:*
MO issue DC with specific cause of death with a copy to nearby NADRA Office
 - *For Deaths in community:*
UC Secretary to issue provisional certificate using VA after verification by nearby MO.
The capacity of all cadres involved in death certificate coding should accordingly be enhanced.
- Need for immediate piloting and implementation of ICD-10 coding COD.
- Possibilities of authorizing private practitioners in CRVS System and death registration.
- DHIS Programs / WHO should facilitate on the job training of ICD Coders/ UC level staff.
- District death review committee should be constituted for monthly reviews.
- For improving data quality - regular feedback to coders/UC secretaries
- CRVS should be enhanced to estimate essential health and demographic indicators
- Use of standard denominators should be used for calculating essential vital statistics.
- Development of annual reports be promoted with causes of deaths
- Need to strengthen the analytical capacity of decision makers and data users.

3. NOTIFICATION OF NATIONAL CRVS STEERING COMMITTEE.

In light with these developments Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms (vide Notification No: "14(23-1)/HPC,2014" dated July 21, 2014) constituted a National Steering and Development Committee. This National Steering committee is headed by Federal Minister for Planning and Development and while membership drawn from following organizations

- Federal and Provincial P&D Ministry/Departments
- Provincial Departments of Health(s),
- National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA),
- Ministry of National Health Services and, Regulation.
- Ministry of Law and Justice,
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics,
- Ministry of Interior,
- Provincial Local Government and Rural Development
- Development Partners (WHO, UNICEF and Plan International)

a. Terms of Reference / Scope of Work OF National Steering Committee;

- To steer, discuss, develop and implement a Comprehensive Multi stakeholder National CRVS Strategic Plan/ National Action Framework.
- To form subgroups for specific technical work (e.g legislation, inter agency coordination, sensitization/CRVS Capacity Building, amendments in departmental procedures etc).
- To recommend Terms of reference of CVRS subgroups and oversee their performance.
- To discuss the modalities of analysis and recommendations by stakeholders and of rapid/comprehensive assessment of CRVS.
- To set National target value for each target, in conclusion with all relevant stakeholders for the comprehensive Multistakeholder national CRVS strategic plan/ national action framework.
- To assess inequalities related to CVRS experienced by subgroups of population, including among hard-to-reach and marginalized population and geographic areas..
- To oversee the overall developments and help in arranging expertise and resources.
- To develop ownership of provincial/ special area government through extensive advocacy/seminars.

4. NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS / REVIEW MEETING

In Total three Steering Committee meetings were organized by the M/O Planning Development and Reform. First meeting was chaired by the Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister, Planning, Development and Reform, Govt. of Pakistan. Following were the main decision and the recommendations of the each steering committee.

a. Decisions of 1st National CRVS Steering Committee Meeting. (November, 18, 2014)

1. The following thematic areas are formulated after endorsement of the National Steering and Coordination Committee to start work on formulation of National Strategic Plan on CRVS:
 - Legal Framework and Resources for Civil Registration
 - Registration Practices, Coverage, and Completeness
 - Death Certification and Cause of Death
 - ICD Mortality Coding Practices
 - Data Access, Use and Quality Checks
2. Health Section Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform will work out and circulate to the Committee composition of the Sub-Groups according to the Thematic Areas along with the terms of reference (ToRs)
3. The Sub-Groups will deliberate upon the thematic areas according to the ToRs and formulate Report along with the recommendations.
4. Provincial/ Special Area Governments will notify their Provincial/ Area Steering and Coordination Committees.
5. WHO/ UNICEF/ Plan International and other Development Partners support (technical and financial) will be available for the process.

a. Decisions of 2nd National CRVS Steering Committee Meeting. (April 03, 2015)

1. The thematic area "Legal Framework and Resources for Civil Registration" would be split in 02 groups: (i) Legal Framework (ii) Resources for Civil Registration Accordingly, 06 Technical Sub-Groups would be formulated for the 06 thematic areas.
2. The provincial and Area Governments would convey their nominations for the 06 thematic areas within 03 weeks (i e. upto 30-April-2015)

3. The membership of National Steering Committee would be enhanced by drawing members from National Health Information Resource Centre (NHIRC) and Provincial Bureau of Statistics.
4. Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform would improve the capacity building and institutional strengthening proposal by providing more details and clarities on institutional mechanism and term of reference of the requisite human resources.
5. Particularly for the specific capacity building studies the international partners would be asked to extend support according to their core competencies (eg WHO for cause of Death and ICD coding. UNICEF For Birth Registration and PLAN for Innovative Pilots)
6. The timeline and the plan envisaged in the proposal would immediately be pursued/ implemented once the proposal is finalized and corresponding assistance is agreed with the partners Special Areas would form and notify their Steering and
7. Provinces/ Implementation Committees and hold their meetings in line with the National Steering and Coordination Committee Meetings
8. To maintain momentum, Member Ministries/Departments would be requested to maintain a consistency of focal persons/unit representing their respective ministries/departments

b. Decisions of 3rd National CRVS Steering Committee Meeting. (March 17, 2016)

1. CRVS being a multi stakeholder and interdisciplinary subject. Provincial / Area Planning and Development Departments would take the lead.
2. CRVS development and uplift should be addressed in a holistic manner rather than through a piecemeal approach to enable synchronized system development.
3. All provincial CRVS Steering and Coordination Committees should be notified at the earliest and made functional.
4. The proposed CRVS Technical support unit at Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform should be made functional at the earliest. Technical support by UNICEF available in this regard should be mobilized.
5. As the UNICEF is fielding international CRVS consultant from April 2016, the corresponding National Technical staff should also be hired in parallel to facilitate smooth implementation of CRVs reform agenda
6. A dedicated technical sub-group on vital events registration of key populations including asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons and persons of undetermined nationality as part of the mainstream civil registration system should be formed with broad.
7. UNICEF may be requested to place national professional human resource support envisaged in the CRVS Technical support unit in parallel with the recent hiring of international consultant.
8. The provincial governments of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA shall notify their respective steering and coordination Committees and convey nominations for the o6 thematic areas identified for p formulation
9. Provincial area governments will convey nominations for the technical sub-group on vital events registration of key populations including asylum seek stateless persons and persons of undetermined national refugees.

5. ESTABLISHMENT OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT FOR CRVS PROMOTION– M/O PDR

In the light of decisions of the 2nd and 3rd National Steering Committees, a Technical Support Unit was formally established with Ministry of Planning Development and Reform named Technical Support Unit for CRVS (TSU_CRVS) since July 2017. For the initial two years this unit would be supported by UNICEF till more regular support is identified. *Following are the terms of reference (TORs) of this unit.*

- To conceptualize, develop macro and micro plans for the organization of CRVS promotional activities through wider consultative process.
- To help develop technical briefs and project proposals for funding by government and funding agencies.
- To develop scope and supervise the terms of surveys, assessment studies envisaged in CRVS Reform Plan for timely completion and dissemination of results.
- To supervise the development of CRVS training and resource material for capacity building workshops.
- To assist in identification, hiring process and agreement finalization of consultants/ partners.
- To extend technical facilitation and draft the minutes of CRVS National Review Meetings- for approval of competent authorities.
- To facilitate in organization and documentation of National Steering Group Meetings and Thematic Group Meetings.
- To participate and assist in organization of CRVS Advocacy Seminars at national /provincial levels and CRVS Provincial Steering Committees.
- Help in development and approval of CRVS National Universal Legislation.
- Develop and support CRVS investment case processing.
- To facilitate and supervise the piloting of innovative / smart registry platform project.
- To liaise with development partners for technical inputs.