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Bangladesh, with a population of over 160 million on a landmass of 1,47,570 square kilometers, is among the most densely populated countries in the world. Its economy has grown around 6% per year since 1996 despite various impediments like political instability, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, insufficient power supplies, slow implementation of economic reforms, and the 2008-09 global financial crisis and recession. It is making steady progress towards becoming a middle income country by establishing economically inclusive and politically accountable society and realizing the dream of Digital Bangladesh by 2021. United Nations (UN) Ex. Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, in his address at Dhaka University on 15 November 2011, commended Bangladesh on development efforts saying –

“You are already a leader on what must be the world’s number one priority for the 21st century: sustainable development.”

Bangladesh has put people at the core of its activities and plans to realize its vision and various goals. In realizing these goals, improving service delivery system through digitalization and process simplification to ensure better and more effective services for the people has been one of the major priorities of the government since 2008. It is developing the environment for pro-people digital government. Optical fiber cable line network upto Upazila level; National Enterprise Architecture (NEA) and other ICT infrastructure; world’s largest government web portal; e-filing systems; e-textbooks, multimedia classrooms etc. in education sector; online birth and death registration, passport and NID application etc. are few examples in this regard. It is now marching on its planned path to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and become a developed country by 2041.

One of the tools Bangladesh is using for its development effort is Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS). Since 2010, the govt. has started to establish CRVS system in country. Implementing CRVS has been given a special importance as it offers an opportunity to streamline and synchronize the civil registration processes being administered by different government agencies with the the national statistical agency and revolutionize govt. service delivery system for the people of

*CRVS is actually a combination of two different systems i.e. (i) Civil Registration; and (ii) Vital Statistics. Civil registration is permanent and continuous registration of various vital events i.e. birth, death, marriage, divorce, enrollment etc. of a person’s life, while vital statistics is production of appropriate and diverse statistics i.e. birth rate, population growth rate, mortality rate etc. based on CR required for policy making.*

*A well-functioning CRVS system ensures timely and accurate reporting to the national statistics system; enhances the credibility of national and local administrators and their capacity to deliver services by helping them to identify what services are needed and by whom. Fortunately, the government of Bangladesh recognizes the importance of CRVS system alike other countries of the world. Strengthening CRVS will enable reaching the unreached, and ensure universal access to services and social*

the country. A ‘whole-of-government’ approach has been adopted to realize this opportunity. Bangladesh wants to establish a robust and effective CRVS process based on a Unique ID (UID) system. Along with the six standard components (birth, death, marriage, divorce, adoption and cause

of death) of CRVS enrolment in the education system, and migration (cross border) are taken as major components of CRVS in Bangladesh. These CR components will be integrated and then be linked with other service delivery processes especially with the Social Protection Programs through an Integrated Service Delivery Platform (ISDP). This innovative model is known as ‘CRVS+’ (CRVS and beyond).

Each and every person of the country must be addressed through govt. processes to ensure that no one is left behind and everyone gets into the picture of development. In order to do that each and every person must be identified and registered through CR processes by maintaining authentication of identity and de-duplication to avoid double/multiple counting. Identifying each and every person requires following three things:

- a) Unique ID number: each and every person should have single unique ID number that will be used for identifying him by all service providers.
- b) Biometric identification: along with unique ID number, a person’s multiple biometric identifications should be available to de-duplicate and authenticate him.
- c) ‘One source of truth’: a database or a set of databases that should be managed and maintained to act as one source of truth for authentication and de-duplication purposes to avoid forgery and confusions.

In Bangladesh, different agencies perform as CR authorities and each one has its own registration process and ID system.

**Table 01: Civil Registration Authorities in Bangladesh**

Vital event	CR authority	Comments
<b>birth, death</b>	Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration, Local Government Division	Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004 (amended in 2013). There is an online birth registration system called BRIS (Birth Registration Information System). There is a 17 digit BRN (Birth Registration Number) used during birth registration.
<b>marriage, divorce</b>	Directorate of Registration, Law and Justice Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974</li> <li>• Hindu Marriages Registration Act, 2012</li> <li>• The Christian Marriage Act, 1872</li> </ul> Registration of marriage and divorce is a paper based manual system. There is no ID system in this process.
<b>primary education</b>	Department of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Each school uses its own student identification system called the ‘Roll Number’. Then the DPE creates a student database for the PSC Exam with its own ID system.
<b>secondary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS)</li> <li>• Different Education Boards</li> </ul>	BANBEIS has its own student database using its own ID system. And then the education boards also registers student for different public exams and providing different IDs to the students for each board and each exam.
<b>voter enlistment</b>	Election Commission (EC) of Bangladesh	The EC prepares voter list periodically. All citizens of 18+ years of age of Bangladesh are

Vital event	CR authority	Comments
		enlisted as a voter of the country. However, it also provides each 18+ citizen of the country with a NID (National Identity). Earlier it used to use a 17 digit unique ID system as NID. NID database is so far the most credible citizen database of the country having biometric information of the citizen. Now it uses a 10 digit UID and the NID.
<b>health services</b>	Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the EPI (Extended Program of Immunization) vaccination each and every child is enlisted in a paper based register through a manual process.</li> <li>• There is no ID system involved here. But the DHIS-2 (District Health Information System) provides each service recipient with its own unique ID.</li> <li>• The SHR (Shared Health Record) system also provides the service recipient with its own unique ID.</li> <li>• There is a possibility of duplication in the sense that the same service recipient can have two different unique IDs simultaneously.</li> </ul>

Unfortunately, the existing multiple citizen databases and ID numbers (such as NID, BRN, Health ID, student IDs etc.) have their own specific and limited scope and uses. They are not interconnected and interoperable with each other. As a result, the following problems have emerged in the socio-economic life of the country –

- (i) The same citizen can have different names, addresses, occupations, parents, and in laws simultaneously;
- (ii) Dozing and avoidance of taxes, responsibilities, punishments of the courts etc.;
- (iii) Abuse of, overlapping, corruption, misappropriation, denial of services etc. are prevalent especially in the social safety net programmes; and
- (iv) Misuse, wastage and duplication usage of precious public funds for the same purpose is also common.

Interestingly, in spite of these systems prevailing, a significant portion of the population of the country do not have any ID numbers or not under any ID system. The large and ever increasing number of internal migrants living in the slums and squatters in various cities, the students of the Qaumi Madrasa system etc. are striking example of it. This fragmented ID ecosystems do not provide a comprehensive and continuous civil registration process. Multiplication of ID systems wastes human and financial resources, and sometimes creates competing issues between and among agencies.

To resolve this very significant and crucial flaw the CRVS Secretariat, Cabinet Division has devised a 10 digit unique ID (UID) system for the country. Instead of discarding all the existing ID systems and replace them with one single ID system, Bangladesh has adopted a different and difficult route in this regard. All the ID systems are being converged to the UID system gradually. Although all CR and service providing agencies can have their own ID system for their respective MIS and registry management system all of them will use the same 10 digit UID to identify the person in their respective registry system. The legal document or

*The UID for citizen is a pre-generated 10 digit number where first 9 digit is a random number + 1 digit checksum. The random number also has few exception rules like there can be no number with leading "0", all same digits (222 222 222), etc. Therefore, during the process system deleted around 13 crore number out of 99 crore. CRVS stakeholders can also add one digit prefix if required (i.e. "9" by health, "8" by home ministry for migrations etc.). The checksum uses Luhn algorithm for the UID, however for other ID (Certificate, registration etc.) we will be using Verhoeff algorithm.*

123 147 167 9  
9 Digit Random Number ↓  
1 Digit Checksum

certificate can have its own number like the BRN (Birth Registration Number) to manage certificate but the person will be identified with the UID. The same UID will be used by other CR and service providers to identify person and use their own numbering system for their document management. For example, with the birth of a person, he will get a UID as a result of birth registration, during primary enrolment this UID will also be treated as the student ID, at the age of 18 this will automatically turned into his NID, during his marriage it will be treated as his bridegroom ID, and finally the UID will end with his death registration.

The good fact is that the Election Commission of Bangladesh has started using this UID as the NID. In the new smart card being provided to the citizens of the country, the earlier 17 digit NID is no longer in use. Now, the Office of the Registrar General for birth and death registration is preparing to use the UID in its birth and death registration. The existing BRIS (Birth Registration Information System) is being modified and improved and hopefully it will be implemented within 2018. All the ID systems are being converged into this UID step by step. Very soon, NID of the parents will be verified during birth registration, BRN will be verified for in case of the student and NID will be verified for the parents during student enrolment in education system, BRN and NID will be during marriage and divorce registration. This way all the IDs will be interlined together and the person will be identified with the UID everywhere.