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PUBLICITY PLANS FOR REGISTRATION PROMOTION

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FOREWORD

An essential process in improving the completeness of birth and death registration is making the public aware of their legal responsibility in the registration of vital events, and to motivate them to register these events. All the developing countries are concerned, or should be concerned, with this problem.

This Technical Paper deals with the registration promotion program of the Office of Registrar General, India, a paper presented at the XXIIIrd Basic Training Program for the Registration Officials in the States and Union Territories held September 4-8, 1989. It would appear that India has done as much as any country to reach the public through the various media with the message on the need to register births and deaths. Having to prepare texts in as many as 13 languages tells us something of the problem facing a country like India. We are indebted to the Office of Registrar General, India for permission to publish this paper.

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PUBLICITY PLANS FOR REGISTRATION PROMOTION

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The registration of births and deaths is compulsory throughout the country under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. It has great social importance, and the Planning Commission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Central Statistical Organisation, etc. and a number of international organisations are also attaching great importance to it.

The registration of births and deaths is an integrated system of population statistics and useful for socio-economic planning. But these statistics are incomplete. The improvement in the registration of births and deaths is the demand of the day, and this needs to be done through registration promotion.

One of the obstacles to complete registration is the large illiterate population living in scattered villages who are not aware about the need for registering births and deaths occurring in their households.

Publicity can definitely play an important role in improving the registration of births and deaths. The office of the Registrar General is conducting a promotional campaign. Some of the measures adopted are as follows:

Publicity through Akashvani

A 15 seconds radio spot has been produced on the importance of registration of births and deaths in Hindi and regional languages, and is being broadcast from time to time from 29 commercial channels of the Akashvani. The text of the radio spot is as follows:

Property partition or school admission. Problems may arise if you do not realise. Ensure prompt registration of births and deaths in your family with the Local Registrar. It is legally compulsory too.

A 10 minutes sponsored programme "Jeevandhara" has been produced in Hindi only which consists of 10 short plays on the importance of registration of births and deaths. It was also broadcast once from 16 commercial channels of the Akashvani.

Publicity through Doordarshan

A 10 second coloured video T.V. spot on the

importance of registration of births and deaths was produced in nine languages (viz. Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Bengali, English and Telgu) and telecasted from different Doordarshan Kendra. The text of the T.V. spot is as follows:

"Please register births and deaths in your family. Remember registration of births and deaths is also compulsory."

A 20 second coloured video T.V. spot on the importance of registration of births and deaths has been produced in Hindi and English and is being telecast from Delhi Doordarshan once a week alternating in Hindi and English. The text of the T.V. spot is as follows:

Property partition or school admission problems may arise if you do not realise. Ensure prompt registration of births and deaths in your family with the Local Registrar. It is legally compulsory too.

A quickie "Pate ki Baat" of 2 minutes 46 seconds has been produced on the importance of registration of births and deaths in Hindi and dubbed in 10 languages (viz. Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telgu, Malayalam, Assamee, Bengali, Urdu and Kannada). It is being telecast from different Doordarshan Kendra.

Another quickie "Apni Suvidha Apne Haath" of short duration (1 minute 54 seconds) on the importance of registration of births and deaths has also been produced and dubbed in 12 more languages (viz. English, Telgu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Oriya, Punjabi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali, Assamee and Malayalam).

Publicity through cinema slides

Recently, the Office of the Registrar General, India has produced with the cooperation of DAVP about 8000 cinema slides in 13 languages (viz. Hindi, English, Urdu, Telgu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Assamee, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati and Gurmukhi) and sent to Chief Registrars of Births and Deaths of States/Union Territories.

Cinema film

A film "Promptness Pays" was produced in Hindi

awhile back on the importance of registration of births and deaths and was dubbed in regional languages. Film prints (35 mm and 16 mm) have been provided to Chief Registrars of Births and Deaths of States/Union Territories.

Publicity through newspapers/magazines

Newspapers/magazines are also very powerful media of publicity. From time to time, the Office of the Registrar General, India with the cooperation of DAVP advertises in newspapers/magazines in almost all the regional languages of India. The text of the advertisement is as follows:

BIRTH
OR
DEATH
When this happens in your
FAMILY
Do register with your
LOCAL REGISTRAR
IT HELPS

A Birth Certificate is proof of age for:

- * Admission to school
- * Getting employment
- * Right to vote
- * Obtaining a driving licence
- * Taking insurance policy
- * Obtaining a passport

A Death Certificate is needed:

- * To inherit property
- * To get insurance money
- * To settle property claims

Do register in time and get the
Certificate free of charge

Registration of Births and Deaths is compulsory
under the law

Delayed Registration is also permissible

REGISTRAR GENERAL, INDIA

Publicity through postal stationery

Postal stationery like postcard, inland letter card, money order form, post office savings bank passbook, etc. is also a powerful media of publicity. From time to time, the Office of the Registrar General is getting an "ad" on these items. The text of the various "ads" are as follows:

- "Ensure Prompt Registration of Births & Deaths in Family with your Local Registrar. It is Legally Compulsory too."
- "Registration of Births & Deaths is compulsory. Ensure Registration of Births & Deaths in your Family."

- "Prompt Reporting of Births & Deaths is a Service to the Individual, the State and the Nation."
- Register Births & Deaths:
It is Useful and Compulsory.

Mail cancellation

The department of posts has got the facility of cancellation of mail with slogans. Our office has also availed of this facility once with the slogan "Registration of Births & Deaths is compulsory."

Use of rubber stamp

Every office is sending daily a number of letters to other departments. The cheapest way of publicity is to put a rubber stamp slogan on all the envelopes of outgoing letters. The text of the message may be as follows: "Registration of Births & Deaths is Compulsory."

Publicity through printed materials

Wall posters, wall hangers, folders, etc. have their own importance in the field of publicity. The Office of the Registrar General, India has provided all these materials to the Chief Registrars of Births and Deaths of all the States/Union Territories. In addition, the Office of the Registrar General has introduced a number of schemes for the improvement of the Civil Registration System in India.

Compulsory production of a birth certificate at the time of school admission

The Third Conference of the Chief Registrars of Births and Deaths held in New Delhi in November, 1980 recommended the production of a birth certificate at the time of school admission. Recognising the deficiencies in the existing registration system and further realising the importance of universalization of primary education in the country, the scheme of compulsory production of a birth certificate at the time of school admission has to be implemented carefully causing least inconvenience to the public. The scheme has to be introduced in collaboration with the State Directorate of Education, in all its phases.

The scheme may be introduced, to begin with, in such areas where adequate registration facilities exist and the school enrolment is considered to be fairly high. These areas may be metropolitan cities, capital towns, large municipal areas, areas having reputed institutions of learning, areas developed by way of industrialisation, etc. The scheme may be extended thereafter through a programme to cover the municipal towns with a population of 30,000 and above in the next 2 to 3 years and then

further extended to cover the remaining smaller towns subsequently in another 2 years or so. The idea is to cover the entire urban area within a reasonable period of time, say, 5 years. The manner in which this has to be accomplished in phases needs to be worked out by the States. The extension of the scheme in a phased manner would call for ensuring better registration arrangements on the part of registration authorities.

Adequate publicity through local newspapers, etc. should be given to the effect that the production of a birth certificate, at the time of school admission, is compulsory. This would serve the dual purpose of creating the awareness about registration among the public and motivating them to obtain the birth certificate if the same is not already available. While these publicity measures may continue for some time, they need to be intensified particularly before the time of school admission. Failure to produce a birth certificate should not lead to denial of admission. Provisional admission may be made and the parents/guardians may be asked to produce the birth certificate within a reasonable period of time, say, two months, if the place of birth of the child is the same as the place of institution of learning where the admission is being sought. In other cases, a period of, say, four months may be prescribed for the production of the certificate.

In cases where the birth was not registered earlier, the parents/guardians may be informed of the procedure of obtaining the certificate for registering such delayed events.

The State Director of Education may issue necessary instructions to the school inspectors to provide information in their inspection reports regarding the extent of admission made on the strength of the certificates. Similarly, the Chief Registrar, in collaboration with the State Director of Education, may also organise inspection in a sample of schools.

Production of birth certificate at the time of addition of newborn child in ration card

The rationing system has spread out to large parts of the country and the ration cards are supplied to households by the state Civil Supply Department. It is possible that the head of the household may be interested in claiming additional ration for a newborn child particularly for an item like sugar, the price of which is quite high in the open market. The production of a birth certificate can serve as a proof of the birth for including the name of a newborn child in the ration card. This would impel the households to realise the need for registration of births. It would also be worthwhile to print a message on the ration cards to the effect

"Registration of Births and Deaths is compulsory".

Inclusion of material on registration of births and deaths in school textbooks

The Third Conference of the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths held in New Delhi in November, 1980 recommended incorporation of the subject on civil registration in school textbooks. A brief material in this regard is as follows:

The population census provides a picture of the population and its characteristics once in ten years and the system of registration of births and deaths provides a continuous picture of the population growth. The practice of collecting statistics on births and deaths is an ancient one in our country.

In the life of a citizen, birth is an event of joy and death is one of sorrow. When sharing these joys and sorrows of life with their near and dear ones, the citizens could and should share those human moods also with the nation, by simply registering these events of births and deaths with the State.

The registration of births and deaths has been put on uniform comprehensive legal footing throughout the Union of India with the enactment of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. This act is implemented in your State since.....and State Government had made it compulsory for registering births and deaths under enforcing the State rules with the effect from.....

The head of the household or his/her nearest relative is responsible for registering births and deaths occurred in the household, maternity home or similar institutions. The Medical Officer in charge or a person authorised is responsible for getting the births and deaths registered which occurred in the hospital/health centre/maternity centre or in any such institutions. Every birth and death needs to be reported to the nearest registration centre. It is located in gram Panchayat Office in rural areas, in zonal offices of the Executive Health Officer of municipality or corporation, in cantonments in the office of the Chief Executive Officer. Information relating to births should be given within 14 days and of deaths within 7 days to the local Registrar. Permission of delayed registration is also granted as a special measure. A copy of an extract relating to birth/death is given free of charge to the person who gets the event registered.

There are various benefits of registering births/deaths. To establish the date of birth and proof of age, which is required for:

- Admission to school
- Right to vote
- Employment in Government or private service
- Claiming social security benefit
- Addition of name of newborn child on ration cards
- Obtaining driver's license
- Taking out an insurance policy
- Obtaining a passport
- Enlistment in the Army
- Other purposes where maximum or minimum age limits are prescribed

A death certificate is necessary to prove the fact of death and facts about death in the following ways:

- Settlement of insurance and pension
- Administration of estates
- Establishing the date of death
- Planning public health programmes
- Assessing and comparing the general levels of health conditions in different areas
- Sensing the prevailing mortality pattern for undertaking preventive measures and for related medical research
- Preventing infant and maternal deaths by probing into their causes

Thus, prompt reporting of births and deaths is a service to the individual, the State and the nation. Remember, registration of births and deaths is compulsory. Ensure registration of births and deaths in your family.

Instituting an award for good registration areas in States/Union Territories

The scheme 'instituting an award for good registration areas in States/Union Territories' was started for the first time during 1981-82. The intention of this scheme is not to grant cash awards but to give awards either in the form of trophies or such other things as could provide incentive and create a spirit of competition among the registration authorities for better registration. The recipient of the award would not be the individual but the institution.

The States/Union Territories have been divided into four zones on the basis of population and geographical conditions and it is proposed to select two States/Union Territories from each zone for the award. It is proposed to institute awards to 20 percent of the districts in each State/Union Territory. Within each district, it is proposed to give awards to two rural registration units and one municipality.

Three sets of criteria for different levels have been evolved: (1) periphery - rural registration centre/municipality, (2) district level, and (3) State/Union Territory level. The criteria may need periodic review as the constituents of the items of criteria may progress differently over the years.

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