

Abstract

The number of people in Bangladesh who have been denied the right to birth registration is unknown, and therein lies the problem. Many countries like Bangladesh simply do not have adequate systems for keeping track. The available data suggest that many millions of citizens have slipped between the cracks-or, more accurately, the chasms- of government registries.

The countries including Bangladesh who have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Child are obliged to make clear to their citizens why it is important. In rural societies where people live their entire lives within a small radius, where the teacher is your neighbour and the health worker is your aunt, the idea that you need a piece of paper to prove your existence may be unfathomable. And to suggest that children must be registered for purpose for government planning is in some cases plainly threatening.

But the world is changing, and the circles in which people spend their lives are enlarging. In this far more complex and anonymous environment, proving nationality is not a utopian exercise in child rights. It is a practical necessity.

Non-registration has serious implications for the State. Countries need to know how many people they have and hoe many there are likely to be in future, in order to plan effectively.

The study emphasizes the crucial importance of birth registration, explores the obstacles to universal birth registration highlighting the structural factors that creating hindrances

in civil registration system, the actions-including awareness raising, legislative changes, resource allocation and capacity building- that are needed to ensure the registration of every child in Bangladesh.