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India: Birth registration in the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital

Introduction

The following note describes the procedure for birth registration in the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital. In doing so, the note will briefly touch upon some general aspects of birth registration along with formal specifications for the Indian birth certificates. The note will also introduce the Indian aadhaar number and identity card, which has been in the process of implementation since 2011.

The note is based on information that the Danish National ID Centre (NIDC) received at a meeting with a registrar and sub-registrar from the Municipal Office at the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital in April 2018, an Indian training manual from 2012 used to educate civil functionaries as well as open sources.

Background

The National Registration Act from 1969 made registration of births and deaths compulsory.¹ Although birth registration is compulsory, India's geographic size makes it difficult for the authorities to effectively register births and deaths throughout the country.²

The registrar at the Municipal Office at the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital estimated in 2018 that 60-70 % of the combined Indian population is registered, and that his office processes around 40,000 birth certificates a year.³

As of April 2018, a digital registration system was in the process of implementation, meaning that the certificates were issued through the online platform, <https://crsorgi.gov.in/>, concurrent with manual issuance at a registrar's office.⁴

¹ The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, May 1969, Article 8, 13 and 23.

² New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

³ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

⁴ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

Administrative structure

The public administration in India is decentralised and birth registration is considered a local assignment. Issuance of Indian birth certificates is handled on four levels: national-, state-, district-, and local level.⁵

The registrar general is the highest national authority in the issuance of birth and death certificates. The registrar general is in charge of distributing information and guidelines about registration of births and deaths in India and to coordinate and unify the work of the chief registrars of state. Furthermore, the office submits an annual status report on the registration of births and deaths.



The chief registrar of state can be appointed by the general registrar, and is the highest state authority. The chief registrar of state is required to unify the work with registration at state level. It falls to the chief registrar of state to provide the annual report to the registrar general.



The district registrar oversees the births and deaths registrations and is responsible for the execution of law in their district. The district registrar also performs practical assignments, such as the inspection of the registrars' offices and the examination of the archives, thus identifying potential problems. Furthermore, the district registrar is required to train the registrars and their employees.



The registrars' offices perform the actual registration and issuance of birth and death certificates. All Indian hospitals and public institutions are connected to a registrar's office, which is responsible for registering births and deaths at each institution. The registrar can appoint a sub-registrar to act in his place. The Municipal Office at the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital registered births and deaths from three nearby hospitals.

Issuance procedure at the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital

An informant is required to fill in a birth report after witnessing a birth. This must be done at the hospital/institution where the event has taken place or sent to the Registrar's Office of the municipality where the birth took place (see page 5 for additional information about the birth report). The informant can be a member of the medical staff, and in case the birth takes place outside of the hospital, the informant may be the head of the family. The information is confirmed at the hospital at the bottom of the report by a representative of the registrar's office, and the hospital keeps part of the form, containing information about the child and the birth, so the information can be used later when a birth certificate or a validation of birth is requested.⁶

⁵ Office of the Registrar General, India, 2012, p. 13.

⁶ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

A birth, stillbirth or death should be registered no later than 21 days after the event.⁷ After 21 days, registration is subject to payment of fees, but is still possible with special permissions. A birth may be registered after 21 days, but before 30 days after the event when the fee of two rupees has been paid. Registration of a birth after 30 days, but before one year after the event, may be registered with a written permission from the officer prescribed. An affidavit must further be made before a notary for a fee of five rupees. After one year, the registrar's office is no longer authorised to issue a birth certificate, however, the birth may still be registered based on an order made by the magistrate of first class. The payment fee is ten rupees.⁸

The first copy of the birth certificate is issued free of charge, but issuance of more copies costs the applicant 10 rupees. If an applicant wants more copies of his/her birth certificate, a separate form is required, where it is stated how many copies are needed and why.⁹

Application for Birth Certificate
जन्म प्रमाण-पत्र के लिए प्रपत्र

पंजीकार/The Registrar
जन्म एवं मृत्यु/Birth & Death
छावनी सार्वजनिक चिकित्सालय/Cantonment General Hospital
दिल्ली छावनी/Delhi Cantonment

महोदय/Sir

कृपया मेरे/Please Issue.....के जन्म प्रमाण पत्र
को/Birth certificate for my.....प्रतियां जारी करें/How much copy

1. जन्म तिथि/Date of Birth.....
2. लिंग/Sex.....
3. पिता का नाम/Father's Name.....
4. माता का नाम/Mother's Name.....
5. जन्म स्थान/Place of Birth.....
6. आवास का पता/Home Address.....

Yours Faithfully
भवदीय

तारीख/Date.....

प्राथी के हस्ताक्षर
Signature of the Applicant

नाम/Name.....

Image 1: Example of separate form required for the application of more than one copy of the birth certificate (NIDC reference material).

There is no national and uniform format for the birth certificate, which is why the design and format may differ in the different districts and municipalities. For this

⁷ Office of the Registrar General, 2012, p. 34.

⁸ Office of the Registrar General, 2012, p. 41-42.

⁹ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

reason, assessing the authenticity of a certificate solely based on reference material is difficult.¹⁰

The registrar's office currently stores the physical registrations in an archive at the office in the Delhi Cantonment.¹¹

According to the registrar at the New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, birth certificates have not been manually filled in and issued in the last decade.¹²

Stamps and signatures on the birth certificate

In order for an Indian birth certificate to be legally valid, it should be stamped twice. The first stamp portrays the national symbol with the name of the local office while the second stamp is the personal seal of the sub-registrar.

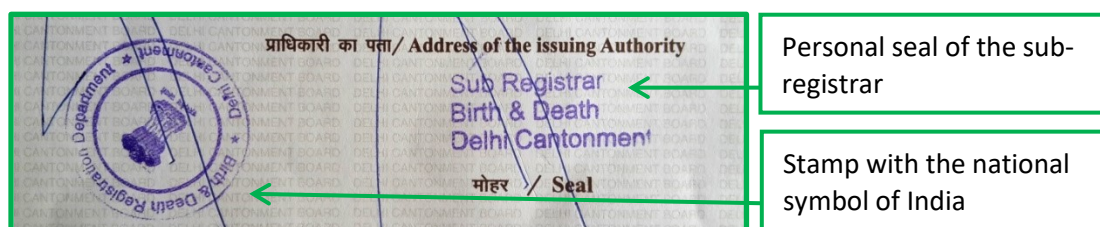


Image 2: Example of stamps on an Indian birth certificate (NIDC reference material).

The two stamps, the national symbol and the symbol of the local office are present on all Indian birth certificates.¹³

Only the registrar or the sub-registrar in his place are authorised to sign the certificates.¹⁴



Image 3: Example of symbols on an Indian birth certificate (NIDC reference material).

The Birth Report

The birth report is filled in with details of the child, the birth and information about the sociocultural status of the parents. The information in the form is filed in by the informant, and hereafter confirmed by the registrar or sub-registrar in the bottom part of the form.¹⁵

¹⁰ Landinfo, 23 April 2012, p. 8.

¹¹ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

¹² New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

¹³ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

¹⁴ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

¹⁵ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

The first column of the form is kept by the registrar's office, and is consulted when someone applies for copies of the birth certificate. It contains the following information:

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Name (optional)
- Father's full name and aadhaar number
- Mother's full name and aadhaar number
- Current address of the parents
- Permanent address of the parents
- Place of birth (name of the hospital/institution or address of the house where the child was born)
- Informant's name, address and signature/thumb mark
- Date of report

The second part of the form contains information obtained for statistical purposes. Upon registration, this part of the form is sent to the office of the chief registrar of state. It contains the following information:

- Town or village where the mother lives
- District of the village/town
- State
- Religion of the family: Hindu, Muslim, Christian etc.
- Father's level of education
- Mother's level of education
- Father's occupation
- Mother's occupation
- Mother's age at the time of marriage
- Mother's age at the time of giving birth to the child in question
- Number of children alive by this mother, including the newborn.
- Type of delivery: institutional, governmental, private or non-governmental, doctor/nurse or trained midwife, traditional birth attendant, relatives or others
- Method of delivery: Natural, Caesarean, Forceps/vacuum
- Birth weight
- Duration of pregnancy (counted in weeks)
- Informant's signature

The first part is kept by the registrar's office

The second part is sent to the office of the chief registrar of state

The form is a detailed birth report from the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It contains the following sections:

- Part I: To be filled by the informant**
 - 1. Name of mother (in Hindi and English)
 - 2. Name of father (in Hindi and English)
 - 3. Name of the child (in Hindi and English)
 - 4. Date of birth (in Hindi and English)
 - 5. Place of birth (in Hindi and English)
 - 6. Sex of the child (in Hindi and English)
 - 7. Weight of the child (in Hindi and English)
 - 8. Duration of pregnancy (in Hindi and English)
 - 9. Signature of the informant (in Hindi and English)
- Part II: To be filled by the Registrar**
 - 10. Name of the child (in Hindi and English)
 - 11. Date of birth (in Hindi and English)
 - 12. Place of birth (in Hindi and English)
 - 13. Sex of the child (in Hindi and English)
 - 14. Weight of the child (in Hindi and English)
 - 15. Duration of pregnancy (in Hindi and English)
 - 16. Signature of the Registrar (in Hindi and English)

The bottom part of the form contains the registrar's confirmation of the information provided by the informant

Image 4: Example of a birth report (NIDC reference material).

Error correction

Errors in a certificate may be corrected at the initiative of the applicant or at the registrar's office. The registrar's office will correct a mistake discovered at their own initiative, if the mistake has no bearing on the identity of the person in question. This would include spelling mistakes or the mother being registered by her nickname instead of the full name.¹⁶

If the registrar's office detects a mistake, it will seek to correct it and notify the Chief Registrar of State. The correction will be made directly to the original certificate. A new certificate will not be issued.¹⁷

If the applicant detects a mistake and wishes to have it corrected, he/she is required to give a written statement of the nature of the error and how it should be corrected. The applicant will also have to fill in and sign a sworn statement, stating that the information is true to the best of his/her knowledge. If the information given is

¹⁶ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

¹⁷ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

later proved to be wrongful, the applicant may face a punishment of up to seven years imprisonment.¹⁸

As verification of the new information, the applicant is required to present two witnesses.¹⁹ Both witnesses are required to state their names and aadhaar number.²⁰ Correction of mistakes in the information in a birth certificate upon request from the applicant may take up to six months to process.²¹

The aadhaar number

The aadhaar number is a unique and individually assigned 12-digit number. It was introduced in 2011 as a means of registering the population, and is controlled by a centralised institution, *The Unique Identification Authority of India* (UIDAI).²² It is also referred to as the *unique identification number*.²³

Through the aadhaar system, any municipal office in India can verify an identity by contacting the Unique Identification Authority.²⁴ Originally, the aadhaar registration was intended to be voluntary, but has since 2016 been mandatory in order to receive governmental services.²⁵

The aadhaar registration leads to the issuance of a unique identification number as well as an identity card. This identity card can be issued as both a physical and a digital card. It contains information regarding the holder's name, date of birth, gender, address, and parents or guardians. Sensitive information about religion and caste does not appear on the card.²⁶

In order to have an aadhaar number and card issued, the applicant must be able to prove identity and address. The UIDAI will collect biometric information from the applicant in connection with the application in the form of iris scan, ten fingerprints and facial photos.²⁷

Currently hospitals in the state of Haryana insist on the children getting an aadhaar number before they issue a birth certificate.²⁸

¹⁸ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

¹⁹ Office of the Registrar General, 2012, p. 47.

²⁰ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

²¹ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

²² Unique Identification Authority of India, year of issue n/a.

²³ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

²⁴ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, 13 January 2018; Aadhaar Act of 2016, chapter III.

²⁶ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018.

²⁷ New Delhi Cantonment General Hospital, New Delhi, April 2018; Unique Identification Authority of India, year of issue n/a.

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, 13 January 2018.

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