

CIVIL REGISTRATION REPORTS – POLITY

NEWS: Recently, the Registrar General of India (RGI) published reports on registered births and deaths after a five year gap.

- The reports are – Vital Statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System for the year 2021 and the other report on the Medical Certification of the Cause of Death 2021

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Definition and Purpose of Civil Registration Reports

- Civil Registration Reports are official documents and datasets that capture the registration of births and deaths in India through the Civil Registration System (CRS).
- They help the government monitor demographic changes, assess public health trends, and implement evidence-based policy planning.
- These reports also track vital statistics such as birth rate, death rate, age-specific mortality, and causes of death—both natural and disease-related.

Nodal Ministry and Legal Framework

- Nodal Ministry: The Civil Registration System in India is overseen by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Legal Basis: The system is governed by the Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Act, 1969, which mandates compulsory registration of every birth and death occurring in the country.

Key Objectives of Civil Registration Reports

- Population Monitoring: Tracks trends in population growth, fertility, and mortality.
- Health Planning: Provides critical input for planning maternal and child health policies and family welfare programmes.
- Mortality Analysis: Offers insights into cause-specific mortality and age-specific death patterns through medical certification.
- Policy Formulation: Assists policymakers in refining government interventions in public health, sanitation, nutrition, and social services.

Major Civil Registration Reports

- Vital Statistics of India based on CRS: Provides yearly data on the total number of registered births and deaths across states and union territories.
- Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report: Offers estimates of birth and death rates—including unregistered events—by conducting sample-based demographic surveys.
- Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD): Records medically certified causes of death among registered deaths, aiding in health surveillance and disease burden analysis.

About the Registrar General of India (RGI)

- Institutional Head: The Registrar General of India is the statutory authority overseeing the Civil Registration System and the national Census.
- Administrative Control: Functions under the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (ORGI), which is part of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- Year of Establishment: Created in 1949 to manage large-scale demographic and census-related tasks.
- Designation: The RGI is a civil servant of Joint Secretary rank, responsible for managing population data systems.
- Key Responsibilities:
 - Conducts the decennial Census of India.
 - Enforces the RBD Act, 1969 to ensure the legal registration of births and deaths.
 - Conducts demographic, linguistic, and socio-economic surveys to capture India's diversity and population dynamics.

Key Findings from Recent Reports

Report 1: Vital Statistics of India based on CRS, 2021

- Registered Deaths in 2021: 102.2 lakh (10.22 million), marking a sharp 26% increase from 81.2 lakh in 2020.
- Trend:
 - 2019: 75.9 lakh deaths registered.
 - 2020: 81.2 lakh.
 - 2021: 102.2 lakh.
- Observation: The jump in death registration indicates either better coverage or a real spike in mortality—likely due to the COVID-19 second wave.

Report 2: Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD), 2021

- COVID-19 Impact:
 - Certified COVID-19 deaths rose from 1,60,618 (2020) to 4,13,580 (2021).

- Total medically certified COVID deaths in both years: 5,74,198.
- Medical Certification Trends:
 - Total medically certified deaths in 2021: 23.95 lakh—an increase of 5.83 lakh compared to 2020.
- COVID-19 as Cause of Death:
 - Ranked as the third leading cause of death in 2020.
 - Became the second leading cause of death in 2021.

Birth Registration Trends (2021)

- Slight Decline in Births: Registered births marginally decreased by 0.1%, from 242.2 lakh (2020) to 242 lakh (2021).
- Implication: A nearly stagnant birth registration trend, possibly affected by pandemic-related disruptions or demographic transitions.

States with Major Rise in Death Registrations (2021)

- Significant Increase Noted in:
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Gujarat
 - Maharashtra
 - Tamil Nadu
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Karnataka
 - Bihar
 - Andhra Pradesh
 - Kerala

- These states contributed substantially to the overall increase of 21 lakh more deaths in 2021 compared to 2020.

Conclusion

- The Civil Registration Reports are vital tools for demographic governance, health system preparedness, and disaster response.
- The data from 2021 reveals how public health shocks like COVID-19 dramatically influence mortality figures.
- Strengthening the coverage and accuracy of birth and death registrations—especially the medical certification of causes—remains essential for evidence-driven policymaking and meeting SDG targets on health and well-being.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/new-govt-data-reveals-covid-19-deaths-undercount-9992289/>