

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR BIRTH REGISTRATION IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES –OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.

Islam encourages the announcement of the birth of a new baby, sequel to the AQDUN NIKAAH (Marrige ceremony) leading to the birth of that child and subsequently the naming ceremony. The parents are enjoined to choose a good and beffitting names for their new born child, that he/she will be proud of in the future.

The registration of child is enjoined by Allah in the Glorious Quran Chapter 3:38, when Prophet Zakariyyah (AS) asked Allah (SWT) for a child, and Allah (SWT) named the child Yahya as recorded in the Qur'an hence Yahya was registered by Allah Himself. Allah enjoins Muslims to ensure proper documentation such as Yahaya, Maryam, Dawud, Musa and others are all registered by Allah (SWT) Himself. Infact His glorious names are registered in the Qur'an.

Allah (SWT) has chosen Ismail from the children of Ibrahim, tracing the descendants of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Documentation is enjoined by Allah (SWT). The longest verse in the Qur'an dealt with documentation i.e in Baqarah on debts. Geneology of every child is important to Islam.

Wisdom is a lost property of a Muslim (Hadith),hence documentation is part of Muslim civilizations, therefore the issue of Birth Registration in Islam is indeed by injuction as it is said "Everything that is memorized can be lost, but whatever is recorded is certain" therefore, child registration is cardinal to Islam because the geneology is geneuily traced.

OPPOTUNITIES

- Enormous oppotunities are available for creating enabling environment for birth registration in Islam .
- Islam encourages protection of lineage without which it will be difficult to trace somebody's geneology .This can be used to convince Muslim Ummah that documentation of lineage is fundamental.
- The enlightenment of women to understand maternal problems.

- The use of orphanage homes to identify and register orphans for enrolment into schools, assistance of various kinds, without such registration it will be difficult.
- Advocacy visits to traditional rulers and religious leaders to sensitize them on the importance of birth registration .
- During Khutbah and daily sermons Birth Registration messages should be included.
- The use of Traditional Birth Attendance (TBA) to capture and register births.
- The use of Islamiya schools for adequate enlightenment and capturing of unregistered children.
- During wedding and naming ceremonies, to encourage birth registration.
- During Eid – el Kabir and Fitr periods.
- The use of Faith based organisations such as FOMWAN, JNI, IZALA, MSSN, NACOMYO etc.
- Establishing cordial relationship between NPC and Mosques to capture births registration.
- Partnership with Imams of Jummat Mosques, daily prayers and during festivities to campaign on birth registration issues on continuous basis.

CHALLENGES

Certainly, challenges are bound in this enormous task, however the following areas listed out:

- Illitracy and ignorance.
- Unwillingness of the populace.
- Superstition/ taboos i.e Cultural barriers.
- Inadequate funding.
- Supports from the Islamic Communities.
- Lack of data.
- Corruptions.
- Lack of rural roads network.
- Lack of synergy.

- Lack of publicity and communication.
- Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation i.e follow-up.
- Inadequate BR centres.
- Lack of political will.

MESSAGING

1. Q19 V 94 : He does take an account of them all and had numbered them exactly (in the book)’’.

Registration of birth is an injunction in Islam, therefore register your children.

2. Q6 V 59 : And He Allah knows what is on the earth and in the Sea, no single leaf (of a tree) will fall down but with His Knowledge and no grain in darkness or depth of the earth whether fresh or day but is inscribed in a record clear.

Allah (SWI) had inscribed our names on a clear record in Q6: 59, inscribe your child’s name by registering your child now.

3. Q49 V 13 : “O Mankind, we created you from a single pair of a male and female, made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another.

Your correct lineage and geneology needs to be known to avoid distortion and this is what Birth Registration seeks to achieve.

4. Q67 V 14 : “And He (Allah) knows that which he created.

The nation needs to know your blessings (children), for better social services. Register them now with National Population Commission. To enhance proper and informed planning.

5. Q3 V 38 : **Protection of lineage. As was the case of Prophet Yahya .**

6. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world Q17 V 46.

Let us register them now as we register our wealth.

7. Q78 V 29 : “And all things, we have recorded in a book”.

The Lord has recorded our names why not you register your child?

8. Q25 V 74: “... And We helped with wealth and children and made you numerous in man-power”.

Your registered children are your strength, hurry now to register them with NpopC.