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" Death Registration System in Nepal"

(A Case Study of Dakshinkali Municipality - Ward No. 1)

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the respective subject teacher and external examiner for acceptance, a case study entitled **"Death Registration System in Nepal (Dakshinkali Municipality, Ward No. 1)"** submitted by **Abiral Timalsina, Nishchal Acharya, Raj Joshi, Sandip Kumar Shah, Sudip Jung Khatri, and Sulav Adhikari** for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Technology.

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ABSTRACT

This report presents a detailed study of the **Death Registration System in Nepal**, focusing on **Dakshinkali Municipality, Ward No. 1**, where the **Online Vital Registration** platform is actively implemented to manage vital records digitally. The study explores how e-governance has transformed traditional manual registration into a faster, transparent, and more reliable system for recording deaths. Field observations and interactions with ward officials revealed that the digital process has simplified data entry, verification, and certification while ensuring accuracy and easy record retrieval. Despite these advancements, issues such as limited digital literacy, inadequate internet connectivity, and low public awareness still affect the system's overall efficiency. The findings highlight that strengthening awareness programs, enhancing technical infrastructure, and providing regular staff training can significantly improve the performance of death registration services. Overall, the online system marks an important step toward modernizing local governance in Nepal, promoting efficiency, accountability, and accessible public service delivery.

Keywords: *Death Registration, E-Governance, Online Vital Registration, Civil Records, Digital Governance, Dakshinkali Municipality, Nepal*

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LIST OF ABBERVIATON

ACHS	Asian College of Higher Studies
DoNIDR	Department of National ID and Civil Registration
G2C	Government to Citizen
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
OVRS	Online Vital Registration System
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TU	Tribhuvan University

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Death registration is an essential part of civil registration systems worldwide. It provides legal proof of a person's death and is necessary for closing legal identity, transferring property, settling inheritance, claiming insurance, and updating population records. In Nepal, death registration began formally after the introduction of the **Vital Event Registration Act, 1976**, which required every citizen to register births, deaths, marriages, and migrations at the local level [2].

With the advancement of information technology, the Government of Nepal has gradually moved toward a digital registration process under the **Department of National ID and Civil Registration (DoNIDCR)** [1]. Municipalities like Dakshinkali have started implementing **Online Vital Registration**, which allows citizens to record vital events electronically without the need for multiple manual visits [1].

In Dakshinkali Municipality, Ward No. 1, this online system has become an important tool for maintaining accurate and accessible records. It connects local offices to a centralized national database, ensuring that information is securely stored and easily retrievable for future use [6].

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many families in Nepal are still unaware of the importance of registering a death even after the launch of modern online systems. Some households delay the registration process because of emotional distress, complicated documentation, or limited technical knowledge. In rural and semi-urban areas, people often rely on ward officials to complete the registration on their behalf, which sometimes results in errors, incomplete information, and delays in receiving the death certificate. [4]

The lack of uniform internet access and occasional technical glitches can interrupt smooth data entry. These challenges limit the full potential of the digital registration system and highlight the need for awareness, training, and proper implementation of e-governance tools.

1.3 Objectives

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- To study the current process of death registration in Dakshinkali Municipality, Ward No. 1.
- To analyze how the Online Vital Registration system has transformed the traditional registration process.
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and suggest practical improvements.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the tools and technologies applied in the death registration system?
- How does Online Vital Registration improve efficiency and accessibility?
- What problems are encountered by citizens and local staff in the registration process?

1.5 Rationale Importance

Accurate death registration provides legal identity closure for individuals and helps government agencies update national population records. It also supports planning for healthcare, pensions, and social services. Without timely registration, families face legal obstacles in transferring property or claiming benefits.

Digital registration ensures transparency, reduces corruption, and strengthens trust in government services. Therefore, this study holds importance as it examines how Dakshinkali Municipality is adopting technology to serve its citizens better, aligning with Nepal's broader vision of digital governance [1].

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tools and Technology Used

The death registration process in Nepal now uses the **Online Vital Registration System (OVRS)** developed by the **Department of National ID and Civil Registration (DoNIDCR)**. Key features of the system include:

- **Web-based Platform:** Citizens can fill out an online form with all necessary details of the deceased.
- **Offline Submission:** After completing the form online, citizens print it and submit the hard copy to the respective ward office.
- **Verification by Ward Staff:** Ward staff check the details, validate the submitted documents in person, and enter the verified data into the digital system.
- **Centralized Database:** All records are stored in a centralized national database, ensuring accuracy, preventing duplication, and maintaining consistency across municipalities.
- **Secure Access:** Each ward office has a secure user account to access, verify, and update records.
- **Data Synchronization:** Verified data is regularly synchronized with the central server to maintain up-to-date information for administrative, legal, and statistical purposes.

2.2 E-Governance Model

The Online Vital Registration operates on a **Government to Citizen (G2C)** model, which delivers government services directly through online platforms [1]. The digital approach minimizes paperwork and speeds up service delivery. Citizens initiate applications online, while ward offices verify entries and issue certificates upon approval [2]. This system strengthens transparency, reduces administrative burdens, and promotes digital interaction between government and citizens.

2.3 Thematic Review

Death registration forms an integral part of civil registration systems worldwide, providing legal proof of death and ensuring that families can access social, financial,

and legal entitlements such as inheritance, pensions, and insurance [1]. In Nepal, death registration is mandated under the Vital Event Registration Act, 1976, and contributes to the nation's demographic and policy planning database [2].

The adoption of OVRS has modernized the registration process, linking ward offices to a centralized database and reducing manual errors [1]. However, many deaths remain unregistered, especially in rural areas where digital literacy, awareness, and connectivity are limited [3]. Factors such as emotional distress, cultural practices, and procedural challenges also delay registration [4].

Integration with hospitals and local health centers can facilitate timely reporting and improve data accuracy [1]. International case studies from countries like India, Bangladesh, and Ghana show that linking death registration with health systems improves efficiency and reliability [1]. To close registration gaps, Nepal requires stronger awareness campaigns, digital literacy programs, staff training, and better ICT infrastructure [3][4].

2.4 Research Gap

While several studies have focused on birth registration, limited research has been done on how online systems are helping local offices handle death registration. This report fills that gap by exploring the local context of Dakshinkali Municipality and understanding how technology is applied at the ward level[6].

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on a mixed-method design that combines both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Quantitative data were collected to measure the efficiency, usage, and performance of the Online Vital Registration system, while qualitative data were gathered to understand user experiences, perceptions, and challenges. Field observations and interviews allowed the researchers to explore practical issues in real-world settings. By combining both approaches, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of the death registration system.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population includes ward staff, local officials, and citizens who recently engaged with the death registration process in Dakshinkali Municipality Ward No. 1. Respondents were chosen to represent both administrative and public perspectives, ensuring balanced insights into the usability and efficiency of the digital registration process [3].

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling method was applied to select participants with direct experience in death registration. This targeted approach ensured that respondents could accurately discuss challenges, workflows, and document requirements. Participants were chosen across gender and age groups to represent diverse community experiences [4].

3.4 Site Selection

Dakshinkali Municipality, Ward No. 1, was chosen as the study site because it represents a semi-urban area with active implementation of e-governance initiatives. The site is also accessible for field observation and interviews, allowing researchers to capture firsthand experiences of both staff and citizens. Additionally, the municipality has an established Online Vital Registration system, providing a realistic view of how digital tools function in local government offices [6].

Chapter 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Service Model

The service model of **Dakshinkali Municipality Ward No. 1** death registration office was analyzed to understand the workflow, digital process, and efficiency of the system. The death registration process at this ward follows a systematic and well-defined procedure, beginning with the submission of required documents by the deceased's family or an authorized informant. These documents include the death notification from the hospital or ward office, citizenship certificates, and relationship proof of the informant.

Once submitted, the ward office staff verify the information, confirm its authenticity, and enter it into the **Online Vital Registration System (OVRS)**. This digital platform is directly linked to the **centralized database** managed by the *Department of National ID and Civil Registration (DoNIDCR)*, ensuring that all records are securely stored and accessible for future reference [1].

The service model emphasizes transparency and accessibility. The ward office also assists individuals who face difficulty understanding the registration process or filling out digital forms, promoting inclusivity and efficient service delivery for all community members.

4.1.1 Process of Death Registration in Nepal

The following steps are required to complete death registration in Nepal [2]:

- The application should be submitted to the ward office in the prescribed format.
- The form should be filled and required documents submitted.
- After verifying the documents, the concerned authority issues the death certificate within a few days.

4.1.2 Documents Required for Death Registration

The documents required for death registration are as follows [2]:

- Death notification from hospital or health post
- Citizenship card of the deceased
- Citizenship of the informant

- Relation certificate (if applicable)
- Migration or residence certificate if migrated

4.1.3 Online Death Registration in Nepal

For online registration, the following process should be followed [1]:

- Visit https://donidcr.gov.np
- Choose the related municipality and ward number
- Click on 'Add New'
- Fill out the form and upload required documents
- Enter mobile number and submit
- A token number is sent via SMS
- Contact the ward office within 30 days for verification

  Note: The token number becomes invalid after 30 days and the process must be restarted

4.1.4 Various Conditions that May Arise During Death Registration

Different circumstances may require additional verification or guardianship procedures [4]:

- If the deceased was living alone, the ward secretary acts as guardian with witness statements.
- If death occurred abroad, the death certificate issued by the Nepali Embassy or concerned foreign authority must be submitted along with citizenship and relationship proof.
- If the body is unidentified, registration is done under the guardianship of the ward chairperson with police report and witness. These provisions ensure that no death goes unregistered regardless of circumstances

4.1.5 Fees Required for Death Registration in Nepal

- If registered within 35 days of death: Free
- After 35 days: Rs. 500 penalty applies [2].

4.1.6 Time Required for Death Registration in Nepal

The process usually takes 1 to 7 days depending on document completeness. In Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1, straightforward cases with all documents ready are often completed on the same day, demonstrating the efficiency of the digital system [6].

4.1.7 Frequently Asked Questions about Death Registration in Nepal

- Is death registration compulsory in Nepal?

  Yes, it is compulsory for legal closure of identity, property transfer, and updating national records.

- Can a distant relative register the death?

  Yes, any person who knows the details can register with proper relationship proof and citizenship.

- What if the death occurred at home without medical attention?

  A declaration from the ward office with two witnesses and police verification is required.

- Can we get a death certificate if the person died abroad?

  Yes, with an authenticated certificate from the Nepali Embassy and translation if needed.

- What is the official website for death registration?

  https://donidcr.gov.np/

4.2 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was conducted to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the death registration system at Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1.

Strengths

- Efficient Digital System: The use of the Online Vital Registration platform ensures quick data entry and retrieval, reducing the time needed for registration from days to just a few hours in most cases.
- Trained Staff: The staff at Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1 are well-trained and knowledgeable about the registration process, which enhances service delivery and builds public trust.
- Accessibility: The ward office is easily accessible to the local population, with clear instructions, SMS token system, and cooperative assistance available for registrants.

Weaknesses

- Limited Awareness: Despite the efforts to make the process accessible, there is still a lack of awareness among some community members about the importance and procedure of timely death registration.
- Bureaucratic Delays: Occasionally, bureaucratic delays can occur, especially when additional verification of documents or police reports is needed for special cases.
- Resource Constraints: The office sometimes faces resource constraints, such as limited staff during peak periods or technical issues with internet connectivity, which can affect service efficiency.

Opportunities

- Public Awareness Campaigns: There is an opportunity to conduct more extensive public awareness campaigns using radio, social media, and community events to educate residents about the 35-day free registration window.
- Technological Upgrades: Investing in advanced technology, backup servers, and stable internet infrastructure can further streamline the registration process and reduce delays.
- Policy Reforms: Implementing policy reforms that simplify document requirements for vulnerable groups and integrate hospitals for automatic death reporting can make the system more user-friendly.

Threats

- Technological Failures: Dependence on digital systems poses a risk of technological failures or server downtime, which can temporarily disrupt the registration process.
- Political Instability: Political instability and frequent changes in government policies can affect the continuity and funding of e-governance initiatives at the ward level.
- Social and Economic Barriers: Social and economic barriers, such as poverty, low digital literacy, and emotional distress after bereavement, continue to hinder some community members from accessing death registration services promptly.

Chapter 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Summary

This study aimed to analyze the death registration process in Nepal, focusing on the practical aspects observed during a field visit to the Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1 office. Through a mixed-methods research design, we combined quantitative data from government records with qualitative insights from direct observations and interviews at the ward office. The study provided an in-depth understanding of the tools and technologies used, the e-governance model, and the overall service model for death registration. Additionally, a SWOT analysis highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the current system.

Key findings from the study include:

- The Online Vital Registration system at Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1 facilitates efficient data entry and retrieval, significantly reducing processing time.
- Trained staff and accessible services contribute to the effectiveness and reliability of the registration process.
- Despite these strengths, challenges such as limited public awareness, digital literacy gaps, and occasional bureaucratic delays persist.
- There are significant opportunities for improvement through public awareness campaigns, technological upgrades, and policy reforms.

5.2 Conclusion

he death registration process at **Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1** demonstrates both the progress made and the ongoing challenges in achieving comprehensive death registration in Nepal. The digital system and trained staff are significant assets that enhance the efficiency, transparency, and reliability of the registration process. However, to achieve universal and timely death registration, it is essential to address the identified weaknesses and threats, such as limited awareness, internet dependency, and potential technological failures.

Effective death registration is crucial for closing legal identity, enabling property transfer, settling inheritance, claiming insurance, and providing accurate demographic data for national planning. This study underscores the need for continued efforts to improve the registration process, particularly through increased public education, infrastructure strengthening, and strategic policy reforms.

5.3 Implementation

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for the implementation of improvements in the death registration process:

- Public Awareness Campaigns:

  Launch comprehensive campaigns to educate communities on the importance and 35-day free registration window using radio, TV, social media, community events, and door-to-door visits in Dakshinkali Municipality Ward 1.

- Technological Upgrades:

  Invest in digital infrastructure, high-speed internet, backup servers, and uninterrupted power supply to enhance system efficiency and reliability. Implement regular maintenance and real-time monitoring tools.

- Policy Reforms:

  Simplify registration by reducing document requirements for vulnerable groups and integrating automatic death reporting from hospitals and health posts. Introduce mobile registration units for remote areas within the municipality.

- Capacity Building:

  Provide ongoing digital training to ward staff and volunteers to ensure they have updated skills. Allocate additional human resources to address staff shortages during peak periods and improve service delivery.

- Monitoring and Evaluation:

Establish a robust feedback and monitoring framework at the ward level to track registration rates, identify bottlenecks, and measure user satisfaction. Regularly update policies based on stakeholder feedback and field performance data.

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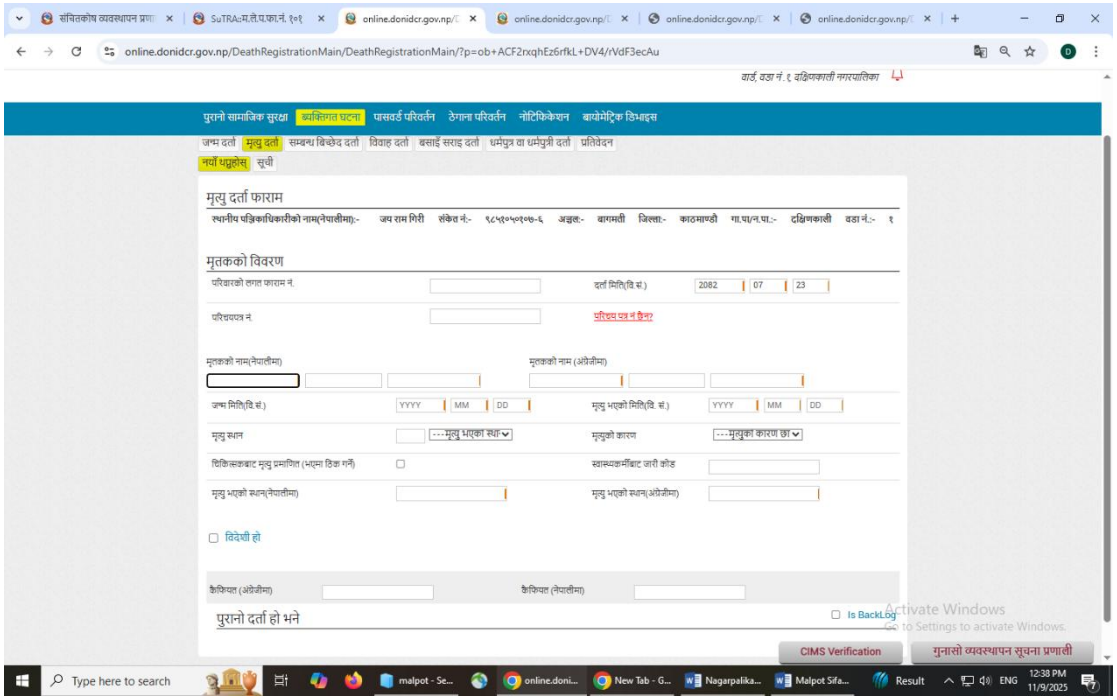
APPENDIX

Some photos from the field visit

Figure 1 Some photos from the field visit

Online Death Registration Form



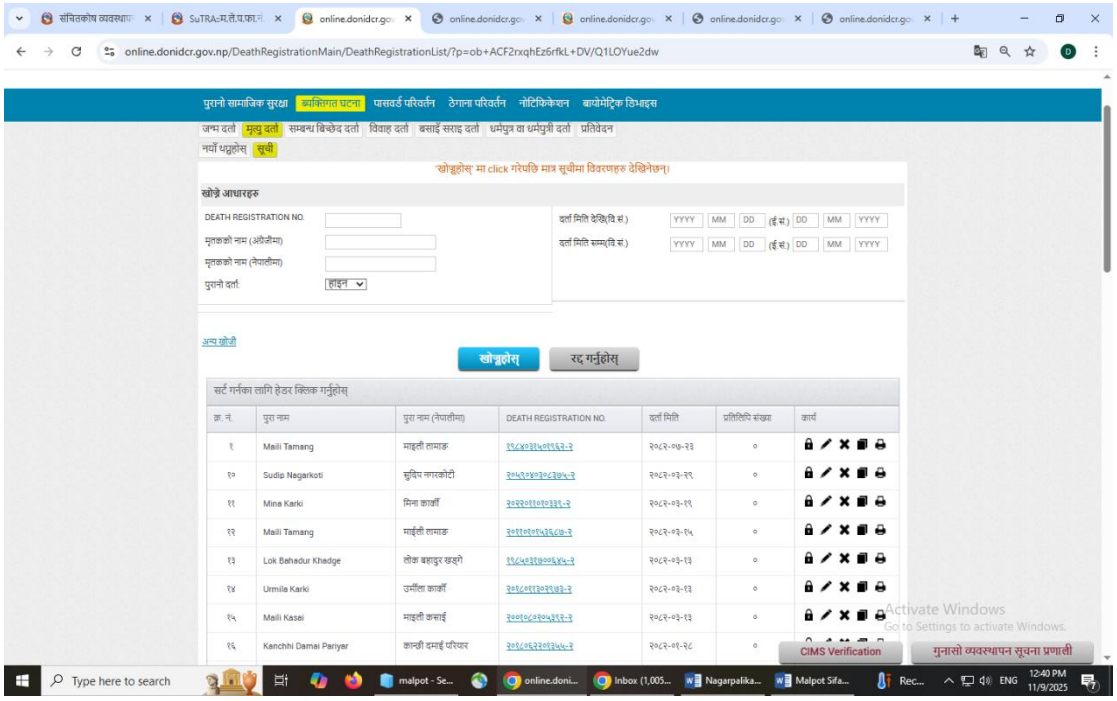


Figure 2 Online Death Registration Form (OVRS)