IDENTIFYING CITIZENS FOR MANAGEMENT AND WELFARE : PROPOSAL FOR AN ALTERNATE SYSTEM

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PREAMBLE :

The most important objective of the government of any democratic country is to manage the citizens for the ultimate welfare of the people and the land. The first venture to do this is to know the Profile and Identify of the citizens. At present this job is done through a system involving secured "Identity Cards". This system was introduced long ago when nothing like cross-checking of information through internet, identification of the people in banks, identification in travelling and communication etc. were in use.

It is well-known that identification of the citizens serves dual purposes. These are, (i) citizen's welfare and (ii) eradication of crimes. However, the various formalities followed by the government for ensuring the security of this card quite often frustrate its very objective. Also, such project has met failure in many developing countries due to low budget and inadequate facilities. By taking the scope of the new provisions and situations, it is now possible to introduce a system of issuing Profile and Identity cards to all citizens at nominal cost. Details of this scheme have been narrated in this article.

INTRODUCTION :

Quite often the governments of the democratic countries need to know some essential information of the citizens for ensuring their welfare or for maintaining disciplined situation in the country. The most commonly used instrument for this purpose is the use of "Identity Card". This card was introduced long before modern systems like internet, instant communication through mobile phones, formalities for verification of the citizens' profile etc. were in use. As such the governments had to manufacture the National Identity Card containing photograph, signature, finger print etc. with extreme care, such that those could not be duplicated or pilfered. In these days, however, the most sophistically manufactured cards can be reproduced because the required equipments are available and technology is known.

In the secured cards, there was no provision for accommodating the natural changes like those in photograph or signature, and production of a new card was the only solution. Such a card usually has a 12 or more digit serial number, which is difficult for anyone to remember. That makes

constant carrying of the card unavoidable. As for the government, the job of registering the huge number of citizens throughout the country, producing secured cards for all, monitoring, provision for replacement etc. creates a titanic and in many cases, unmanageable task.

After the introduction of new systems like internet, instant communication through mobile phones, formalities followed in various educational, financial, government and service institutions, mass literacy etc., if planned well, it is possible to do the above jobs quite easily with help and participation of all. Even though it is possible to introduce this system in all developing countries, in this article we shall explain the proposal in the background of Bangladesh only.

PROPOSED NATIONAL PROFILE AND IDENTITY CARD :
There will be two cards for the citizens – (01) Profile Card or PC and (02) Identity Card or ID.

(01) Profile Card (PC) : The profile card will be a 'card for general introduction' of the citizens. The citizens themselves would manufacture this card in format and design prescribed by the concerned authority. The PC would contain two numbers – (a) PC number and (b) Computer serial number. It will be seen later that both of these numbers are convertible. The reason behind using two different numbers has been explained later.

The front page of the PC would contain the following information : (i) Name, (ii) Date of birth, (iii) Blood group, (iv) Father's name, (v) Mother's name, (vi) Personal (Mobile) phone (if applicable), (vii) Signature etc.

The authority would prepare the PC number for the applicant on the basis of the following : PC number = (a) Year of birth (2 digits), (b) Abbreviation of the District (3 digits), (c) Gender (1 digit), (d) First letter of the last name (1 digit) and (e) A four-digit number (4 digits). The authority would also prepare the Computer serial number for this applicant by (i) replacing the abbreviation of District by its serial number (2 digits), (b) Gender, by 1 for Male or 2 for Female and (c) First letter by its serial number in the alphabet (2 digits). In the central registration office

they would fill in the blank spaces for PC number and Computer serial number and return one copy to the applicant.

The authority would prescribe the format and design of the PC including dimension (say, 3.5 Inch by 4 inch), font size etc. The front page shall contain the following information : (i) PC number, (ii) Computer Serial number, (iii) Name, (iii) Date of birth, (iv) Blood group, (v) Thana, (vi) Village, (vii) Father's name, (viii) Mother's name, (xi) Personal (Mobile) phone   (if applicable) and signature. The front page of a sample PC has been shown in Figure no. 01.

Figure No. 01 : FRONT PAGE OF PROFILE CARD (PC)

GOVT. OF THE PEOPLES' REUBLIC OF BANGLADESH												
CITIZEN'S PROFILE CARD												
PC	**8**	**2**	**T**	**K**	**G**	**1**	**S**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	
	Year of birth		Abbreviation for district			Gender	1st letter	Serial no. in ledger			
……………..	……………………………………			Comp. Sl No.								
Last name	Other names		Birth	……………. (month)		…….. (day)	Blood group	………		
Thana	……………………….………………			Vill.	…………………………….						
Father	…………………………………………..			Tel.									
Mother	……………………………….………..			Signature. ………………………								

The reverse page will bear the following - Spouse's name, Status (Free lancer, retired, other), Telephone nos. for contact in emergency, Present address, Signature of the holder and Photograph. However, this side will be printed with blank spaces for writing these information. The 'Computer-Printing companies' would print the Card as per specification by the government authority. The Profile Card will be complete when the owner would sign in the first page, fill the blank spaces of the rear page, affix his photograph and get it laminated. The Profile card will be required to meet general purpose requirements, like, opening bank account, purchasing ticket, travelling in public vehicles etc. It is obvious that the information like blood group, contact phone number etc. are extremely important when someone is on journey or in hazardous locations. The back page of a Profile Card has been shown in Figure No. 02.

Figure No. 02 : BACK PAGE OF PROFILE CARD (PC)

PC	5	6	T	K	G	1	S	0	0	0	1

PHOTOGRAPH	Spouse's name …………………………………………… Category : Free lancer Retired Other ….. ……………… Emergency contact (Tel) …………………………………….... ……………………………………………. Present Address : ………………………………..………………… ……………………………. …………………….……….. Signature of the PC holder …………………………………….

(02) Identity Card (ID) : The citizen's may be asked to produce Identity Cards in situations demanding special security or surveillance. Also these are essential for the students, employees etc. Such cards remain the status of the owner remains valid, i.e. so long the head of the educational institutions or employer of the company can authenticate the holder's information. Naturally the ID would change with the change of educational or marital status, change of job etc. Whenever such changes take place, the owner may prepare a new ID. However, the free-lancing professionals or businessmen can produce their identity cards by authenticating their information and photograph by the manager of the bank where they maintain accounts. Theoretically speaking, the PC, specially its first page is supposed to remain valid for the entire life. In case of damage, lose or change, the owner can prepare his PC and ID, where there will be absolutely no change in their numbers.

Front page : The front page of the ID will be exactly the same as that of the PC excepting, the PC will be replaced by ID. The rear page, however, will be different and contain information like : Spouse's name, Emergency contact telephone, Status (Student, Employee, Employer etc.), Organization (Institution or Company), Present position, Name, Signature, Designation and telephone of the authenticating person and photograph. In this case also the ID will be printed with the number and information on the front page and blank spaces at the back page, such that the owner and the authenticating person can fill and authenticate the same. The back page of a sample ID has been shown in Figure no. 03.

Figure No. 03 : BACK PAGE OF IDENTITY PROFILE CARD (ID)

ID	5	6	T	K	G	1	S	0	0	0	1

PHOTOGRAPH	Category : Student ☐ Employee ☐ Employer ☐ Organization : …………………………………………………… Present position: …………………………………………..…… Authenticated by : Name ……………………………… Designation ...…………… Phone …………………… Signature (and seal) : …………… Spouse's name ……………………………Tel ………………… Emergency contact (Tel) ……………………………………... ……………………………………………………………….………

ISSUING PC AND ID, A NATIONAL PROJECT :

Now we shall discuss how a developing country, say, Bangladesh can take up and execute a national program of issuing PC and ID cards. In the program certain parameters need to be determined at the outset. These include, (i) Age range of the people under consideration, (ii) Districts of residence, (iii) Gender etc.

(i) Age : Let the program initiates in 2013 and range of age of the targeted population is between 15 to 70. In this case their years of birth will be within 1943 to 1998. In the PC or ID number the authority would use the last two digits only.

(ii) District : In Bangladesh there are 64 districts. The serial number and three-letter abbreviations for these districts have been finalized. We have shown a sample solution in Figure 04 below. We have kept reserved numbers 65 to 90 for new districts in future. It may be seen that some people have born abroad and some cannot specifically say, where they were born. For such persons the District, abbreviation and serial numbers will be like : (i) 'Foreign born – FGN – 91' and (ii) 'Floating – FLT – 92'. The Serial number, Name and Abbreviation of all these have been given in Figure No. 04.

Figure No. 04 SERIAL NUMBER, NAME AND ABBREVIATION OF DISTRICTS :

SL.	Name	Abbr.	SL.	Name	Abbr.	SL.	Name	Abbr.
01.	BAGERHAT	BGH	23.	*JESSORE*	JSR	45.	NATORE	NTR
02.	BANDARBAN	BBN	24.	JHALOKATI	JKT	46.	NETRAKONA	NTK
03.	BARGUNA	BGN	25.	JHENAIIAH	JND	47.	NILPHAMARI	NFM
04.	BARISAL	BRL	26.	JOYPURHAT	JPR	48.	NOAKHALI	NKL
05.	BHOLA	BHL	27.	KHAGRACHHARI	KGR	49.	PABNA	PBN
06.	BOGRA	BGR	28.	KHULNA	KLN	50.	PANCHAGARH	PIG
07.	BRAHMANBARIA	BNB	29.	KISHOREGONJ	KSR	51.	PATUAKHALI	PTK
08.	CHANDPUR	CNP	30.	KURIGRAM	KRG	52.	PIROJPUR	PJR
09.	CHAPAINABABGANJ	CNG	31.	KUSHTIA	KST	53.	RAJBARI	RJB
10.	CHITTAGONG	CTG	32.	LAKSHMIPUR	LMP	54.	RAJSHAHI	RJS
11.	CHUADANGA	CDN	33.	LALMONIRHAT	LLM	55.	RANGAMATI	RGT
12.	COMILLA	CML	34.	MADARIPUR	MDR	56.	RANGPUR	RNG
13.	COX'S BAZAR	CXR	35.	MAGURA	MGR	57.	SATKHIRA	STK
14.	DHAKA	DHK	36.	MANIKGANJ	MKG	58.	SHARIATPUR	SRT
15.	DINAJPUR	DNP	37.	MAULVIBAZAR	MLB	59.	SHERPUR	SRP
16.	FARIIPUR	FDR	38.	MEHERPUR	MRP	60.	SIRAJGANJ	SRG
17.	FENI	FNI	39.	MUNSHIGANJ	MSG	61.	SUNAMGANJ	SMG
18.	GAIBANDHA	GBD	40.	MYMENSINGH	MMS	62.	SYLHET	SYL
19.	GAZIPUR	GZR	41.	NAOGAON	NGN	63.	TANGAIL	TNL
20.	GOPALGANJ	GPL	42.	NARAIL	NRL	64.	THAKURGAON	TKG
21.	HABIGANJ	HBG	43.	NARAYANGANJ	NRG	91.	FOREIGN BORN	FGN
22.	JAMALPUR	JML	44.	NARSINGDI	NSD	92.	FLOATING	FLT

(iii) Gender : The deserving persons for PC / ID would belong to any of the following three genders – Male, Female. Those willing to be known differently may claim to be something like (say) 'Mixed'. They will be represented by Male- 1, Female - 2 and Mixed -3.

As for other considerations, the authority would have to consider the First letter of the last name of the applicant. In this case the name given at birth will be considered. Naturally only the maiden name of the women will be considered.

After finalizing the above considerations, the authority in charge of issuing NID would have to do the following :

(a)   They would ask the intending candidates to submit three copies of application for PC or ID in prescribed format. Something similar to what has been shown in Figure No. 01 will be included in such application. The area enclosed in this figure by thin lines will be filled in by the applicant. The registering office would fill the space enclosed by bold lines.

(b) After receiving the applications the authority would find out the PC / ID number and its corresponding computer serial number, fill the blank spaces of the application form and return one signed and sealed copy to the applicant. They would keep one copy for their record and give the remaining copy to the computer section for their use.

(c) The Registration will be done first manually, by keeping records of the furnished information along with PC / ID number and Computer serial number. Also there will little blank space for recording important change or transition, including death.

(d) Independent Volumes shall be maintained for each Year (56 years) and District (66). So in case of Bangladesh the number of volumes required will be (56 X 66=) 3630.

(e) The computer section would preserve the given information in their website in such a way that anyone will be able to find out the information by using the Computer serial number. After the number of registered citizens in any category (by Year and District) reaches a certain number (say, 5000), those would be published in bound books.

FINDING OUT PC / ID NUMBER AND COMPUTER SERIAL NUMBER. :

Let us say we are going to find out the PC / ID number of a Male person Abdus Shaheed, born in Barisal District in 1980. His PC / ID number can be written as :

No.	Year of birth		Abbreviation for Districts			Gender	First letter	Four Digit number			
PC / ID no.	8	0	B	R	L	1	S	0	0	0	To be decided
By replacing the District abbreviation of Barisal (BRL) by 04 and the letter S by 19, the Computer Serial number of the above will be :											
Computer Sl. No.	8	0	0	4	1	1	9	0	0	0	To be decided

The registration will be done on 'first come first served' basis. Thus three applications from male citizens with the same year of birth (say, 71), originating from the same district (say Bhola) and having the same letter (say, S) in their last names (say, Saheed, Safique and Sarder) will be numbered as (1) 71 BHL 1 S 001, (2) 71 BHL 1 S 002 and (3) 71 BHL 1 S 003 respectively. It will not be possible to maintain numerical serial here, because of District (1-64, 91,92) and Gender (1 or 2). However, after the computer section enters the information, they will be able to

arrange everything serially and detect duplication, if any. In case of duplication both the numbers will be cancelled and the person would have to wait for one year for making a new application.

With the provision of a 4-digit number at the end it will be possible to register as many as 19,999 persons with the same First-letter in last name in one year in one district. There is little possibility that the probable number of such persons in a district in one year would ever exceed this number in Bangladesh.

ADVANTAGES OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM :

Some of the advantages of the proposed system are the following :

(a) In the proposed system what the government authorities have to do for registration are : documenting a few information of the citizens in a number of bound volumes and computers and to arrange for display of the selected information in the website. The cards, as designed and prescribed by the authority will be produced by the commercial companies, the fixing of photograph and authentication of information will be done by the employer. Also frequent checking of the information and document will be done by the educational institutions, employers, banks, license issuing authorities, authorities issuing personal mobile phones, authorities issuing travel documents and travel permissions etc. The mobile phone companies have already introduced a system in which one number can be kept reserved for a person for entire life. Also in all cases of replacement or other complains the phone companies identify the owner by photograph. With such security checks and arrangements available around, the government does not need to produce costly and 'pilfer-proof' identity cards. All these render the job of the government extremely easy and inexpensive.

(b) Some of the information of the citizens remain unchanged throughout the life, while some other changes. In the proposed system the registration authority maintains only the permanent information recorded in first page of the card. These information are also found in the website when searched by serial number. In the proposed system there is provision for accommodating changeable information by the owner.

(c) The Identity card issued to any citizen may be lost or damaged. In such case, the owner can immediately get new cards at reasonable cost. In worst case and emergency, the owner can

get a print-out of his records from any serving company by telling his PC / ID number, which he is not supposed to forget because it contains 4 digits, most of which are zero's.

(d) Various government authorities like Taxation, Police, Crime investigation, Social welfare etc. can use the PC / ID number for their own purpose. They may record their findings, information and data for any person against his PC / ID serial number. This can be of great help in crime management, cases of tax evasion etc.

(e) It may be claimed for the sake of logic that a person may use fake photograph and wrong PC / ID number. Since the organizations like banks, schools, college, universities, license and membership giving authorities, mobile phone companies, passport and immigration authorities always check photograph and signature against the national PC / ID numbers, it will not be possible to continue such fake practice for long.

(f) Criminals and offenders are often detected by their finger prints, presence in any particular location etc. In case people are allowed to enter in places under surveillance after recording their PC / ID number instead of name, it will be easier for the investigation authority to detect such persons.

CONCLUSION :

The system of identifying people through ID cards is already in use in the developed countries. Many developing countries have met failure to introduce it in their own countries. One of the reason of this failure is, they endeavored to introduce exactly what is followed in the developed countries, but could not manage all due to non-availability of technical knowhow, skilled persons, equipments and fund. In such case, because of obvious reasons, the proposed system seems to be a better option for them. In the contemporary society various service organizations, companies, financial and educational institutions have developed their own system of authentication and the government should not have any hesitation to utilize those in the greater interest of the country. Even though this proposal has been prepared on the basis of the situation prevailing in Bangladesh, the author is hopeful, it will be suitable for all countries with similar situations.

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