ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE IN NEPAL

ESTIMATION AND PROJECTION

Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD)

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BACKGROUND

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees the right to citizenship to all the citizens of Nepal.[1] The 2006 Nepal Citizenship Act entitles Nepali citizens who reach the age of 16 to obtain citizenship certificates.[2] The citizenship certificate is considered the most important formal legal document, and is often required to obtain other identity documents in Nepal. Without citizenship certificates, individuals cannot register on the voters' list,[3] register marriages or births, buy or sell land, appear in professional exams, open bank accounts or have access to credit for example.[4] The citizenship certificate allows a citizen to exercise his/her rights and claim State protection and social benefits.

In April 2013, the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD) published a study[5] it conducted on the estimation of people without citizenship certificate in Nepal. The study showed that, as of 16 July 2011, 23.65% of the population aged 16 and above—or 4,346,046 individuals—lacked citizenship certificates. More than four years have passed since then and the number of people without citizenship certificate has obviously changed.

As the citizenship certificate is the most important document for the various reasons outlined above, it is necessary to have an accurate understanding of the size of the Nepalese population who do not currently have citizenship certificates and project what the size of this population may be in the future when considering the current rate and practice of issuance of citizenship certificates. The current report has studied both these aspects.

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1. Article 10 (1) of the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 (2072).
2. Section 8 of Nepal Citizenship Act, 2006 (2063).
3. As per the decision of the Supreme Court of Nepal on *Sarojnath Pyakurel et.al. vs Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers et.al.* Writ no. 2067-WS- 0017 decided on 2067 Magh 24 (07 February 2011) (NKP. 2068 Vol. 1 pp. 39-62) nobody can be registered in the voters list without citizenship certificate.
4. The issuance of such documentation is covered under different laws. These laws include Birth, Death and Other Personal Events (Registration) Act, 1976; Birth, Death and Other Personal Events (Registration) Rules, 1977; Children's Act, 1992; Children Regulation, 1995; Passport Act, 1976; Passport Rules, 2010; Local Self Governance Act, 1999; Local Self Governance Rules, 1999; Voters List Act, 1996; Voters List Rules, 1996; Nepal Citizenship Act, 2006; Nepal Citizenship Rules, 2006, Citizenship Certificate Distribution Procedures Directives, 2006; Marriage Registration Act, 1971, Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act, 2002 and the Personal Events Registration Directives, 2011.
5. FWLD, Acquisition of Citizenship Certificate in Nepal: Estimating Prevalence, April 2013, Kathmandu.
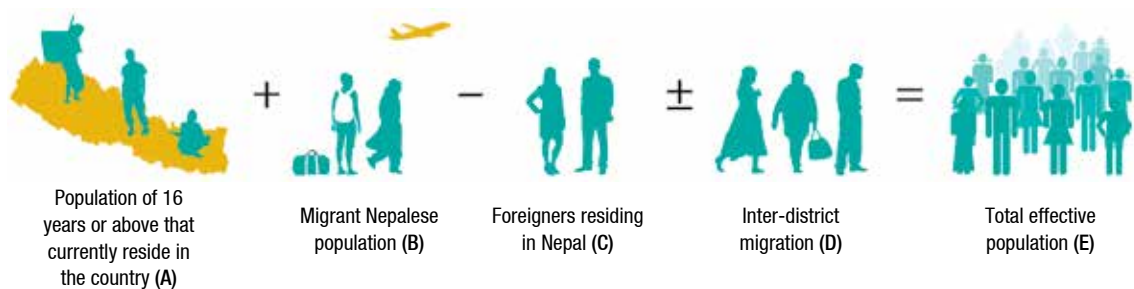
PREVIOUS STUDY

With the objective of mapping and estimating the size and presence of the population lacking citizenship certificates in Nepal, a study was conducted in 2013. The study was based on a review of prevalent data sources and records.

METHODOLOGY

The first step was to calculate the total effective population of Nepal. For the purpose of the study, the total effective population was taken as the population of Nepal above the age of 16 years. This definition was chosen as 16 is the age at which a person becomes eligible to acquire a citizenship certificate in Nepal.

- The population of those above the age of 16 for each district in Nepal **(A)** was taken from the 2011 Census. This figure did not include the migrant Nepalese population but includes foreigners residing in Nepal.

- The total number of migrant Nepalese population **(B)** for each district was also taken from the 2011 Census, and it was assumed that these migrants consisted only of those above the age of 16.

- The total number of foreigners residing in Nepal for each district **(C)** was also taken from the 2011 Census.

- The ratio of inter-district migrant Nepalese population for each district **(D)** was taken from the Population Perspective Plan (Hereinafter PPP) 2010-2031.

In the diagram below the symbol (plus +) stands for inter-district migrant population and minus (-) for the incoming population in each district. The relevant eligible population or the population above the age of 16 **(E)** was then calculated for each district, according to the formula indicated below:

| Population of 16 years or above that currently reside in the country **(A)** | + | Migrant Nepalese population **(B)** | − | Foreigners residing in Nepal **(C)** | ± | Inter-district migration **(D)** | = | Total effective population **(E)** |

The next step was to calculate the number of citizenship certificate holders, broken down by district.

- Data on citizenship certificates distributed in the fiscal year 2010/2011 (from 17 July 2010 to 16 July 2011) per district **(F)** was obtained from MoHA, with the assumption that all of those who acquired citizenship certificates in 2010/2011 had survived until the data collection for the 2011 census.

- MoHA had cumulative data on the total number of citizenship certificates distributed per district between 1952 and 16 July 2010 **(G1)**. However, this information did not take into account the number of deaths among those who had acquired citizenship certificates since 1952.

The Model Life Table[6] was used to calculate the survival ratio **(G2)**. The maximum survival ratio based on life expectancy in 2010 is 0.903189632.[7] As reliable data on life expectancy at the district level was not available, the death rate per geographical region (Mountain, Hill and Terai) was obtained from the 2001 census.[8] The maximum survival ratio was used for the more developed districts of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Morang. For all the other districts in the three different regions, the survival ratio was adjusted using the death rate of the respective regions as per the diagram below:

- To estimate the total number of citizenship certificate holders who were alive in each district on 16 July 2010 **(G)**, the cumulative data of citizenship certificate holders in each district from 1952-2010 **(G1)** was calculated using the survival ratio **(G2)**.

Cumulative data on citizenship certificate distribution 1952-2010 **(G1)**	✕	Survival Ratio **(G2)**	=	Citizenship certificate holders alive before 16 July 2010 **(G)**

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6. **Model Life Table for Developing Countries**, United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Population Studies, No. 77, New York (1982).
7. Life expectancy in Nepal for 2010 was projected as 64 years using the Model Life Table
8. As the death rate from 2011 Census has not officially been released at the time of the publication of this report, the death rate of the 2001 Census has been applied.

- To calculate the total number of current citizenship certificate holders per district (H), those who acquired citizenship certificates in 2011 **(F)** was added to the number of those who acquired citizenship certificates between 1951 and 2010 and who are estimated to be alive **(G)**.

Citizenship certificate issued in 2011 **(F)**	+	Citizenship certificate holders alive on 16 July 2010 **(G)**	=	Total number of current citizenship certificate holders **(H)**

CALCULATION OF POPULATION LACKING CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES

- To calculate the total effective population lacking citizenship certificates in each district **(K)**, the total number of citizenship certificate holders per district **(H)** was subtracted from the total effective population **(E)** per district and then added to obtain national results.

Total effective population **(E)**	—	Total number of citizenship certificate holders **(H)**	=	Total effective population lacking citizenship certificates **(K)**

Below is the comparative chart which demonstrates the formula used for estimating people without citizenship certificates in Nepal per district.

Estimating Prevalence of Population with/without Citizenship Certificate

Population of 16 years or above that currently reside in the country **(A)**

+

Migrant Nepalese population **(B)**

—

Foreigners residing in Nepal **(C)**

±

Inter-district migrant population **(D)**

= TOTAL EFFECTIVE POPULATION (E)

Cumulative data on citizenship certificate distribution 1952-2010 **(G1)**

X

Survival Ratio **(G2)**

= CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE HOLDERS WHO ARE ALIVE ON 16 JULY 2010 (G)

Citizenship certificate issued in 2011 **(F)**

+

Citizenship certificate holders alive on 16 July 2010 **(G)**

= TOTAL NUMBER OF CURRENT CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE HOLDERS (H)

Total effective population **(E)**

—

Total number of citizenship certificate holders **(H)**

= TOTAL EFFECTIVE POPULATION LACKING CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES (K)

FINDINGS

From this study, it was found that 23.65% of the population of Nepal or 4,346,046 individuals in Nepal above the age of 16 did not have citizenship certificates. The study also estimated the district-wise ratio of people without citizenship certificate. Kanchanpur had the lowest percentage of individuals without citizenship certificates (1.74%), followed by Saptari (11.18%) and Dailekh (13.70%). Manang had the highest percentage of individuals without citizenship certificates (43.39%), followed by Humla (42.50%) and Mugu (41.11%). The study also estimated the ratio of individuals without citizenship certificates on the basis of geographical region. The Hill region had 28.5% of individuals without citizenship certificates per district while the Terai region had 17.5%. The Mountain region had the largest percentage of individuals lacking citizenship certificates per district, at 34%.

Population 16 years and above (2011 census)	Migrant Nepalese population (2011 census)	Foreigners residing in Nepal (2011 census)	Total effective population	Citizenship certificate issued in 2011	Cumulative data on citizenship certificate distributed from 1952 to 2010
A	B	C	E=A+B–C	F	G1
16,593,733	1,921,494	138,910	18,376,317	685,255	17,983,229

Citizenship certificate holders alive on 16 July 2010	Total number of current citizenship certificate holders	Percentage of population who have citizenship certificate	Percentage of population does not have citizenship certificate	Population having no citizenship certificate
G=G1*G2	H=F+G	I=H/E*100	J=100-I	K=E-H
13,345,016	14,030,271	76.35	23.65	4,346,046

(For district wise details please see the full report of 'Acquisition of Citizenship Certificate in Nepal: Estimating Prevalence' published on April 2013 by FWLD)
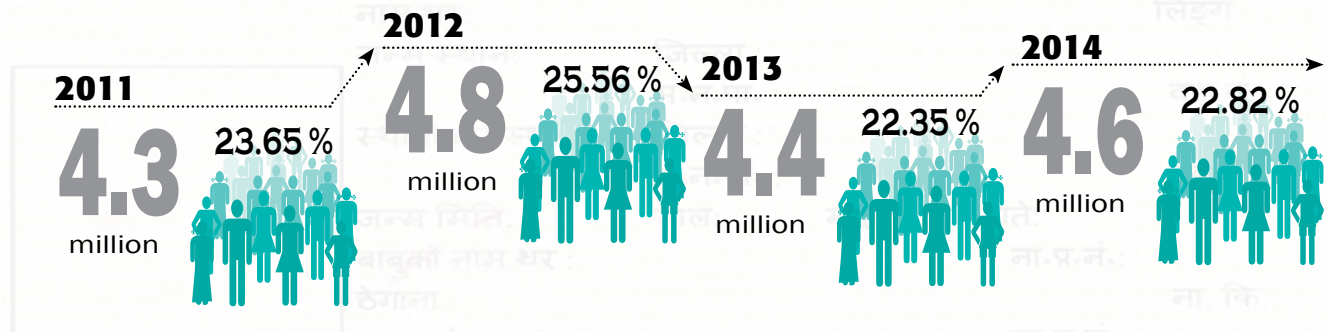
CONVERSION OF NEPALI YEARS TO WESTERN CALENDAR

The data of number of citizenship certificate distribution is based on the Nepali fiscal year. For the purpose of the estimation and projection, the Nepali years have been converted into Western calendar years in the following manner:

Nepali Fiscal Year	Western Calendar year equivalent	For the purpose of the Projection
2067-68	2011-12	2011
2068-69	2012-13	2012
2069-70	2013-14	2013
2070-71	2014-15	2014
2071-72	2015-16	2015
2072-73	2016-17	2016
2073-74	2017-18	2017
2074-75	2018-19	2018
2075-76	2019-20	2019
2076-77	2020-21	2020
2077-78	2021-22	2021

ESTIMATION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE IN NEPAL

2011
4.3 million
23.65 %

2012
4.8 million
25.56 %

2013
4.4 million
22.35 %

2014
4.6 million
22.82 %

Estimation of People Without Citizenship Certificates

	Population aged 16 and above	Population with citizenship certificate	Eligible population without citizenship certificate
2011	18,376,317	14,030,271	4,346,046
2012	19,142,837	14,250,307	4,892,530
2013	19,803,766	15,376,737	4,427,029
2014	20,496,710	15,819,657	4,677,053

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE IN NEPAL: ESTIMATING PREVALENCE

With the previous study estimating 4,346,046 people without citizenship certificates in Nepal till the year 2011, it was felt necessary to update the study to make it more relevant in the present context. Citizenship certificates have been regularly distributed in the years after 2011 with the total eligible population also having significantly changed in those years. The number of people without citizenship certificate can thus be presumed to have changed in those years.

OBJECTIVE

The study estimates the number of people with and without citizenship certificates in Nepal till the year 2014

DATA COLLECTION

The data as of 16 July 2014 regarding the number of citizenship certificates distributed was used from various agencies of the Government of Nepal, including:

- Records of citizenship certificate distribution from 2011 to 2014 from MoHA to find out the number of persons who have acquired citizenship certificates in the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014;

- The National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) 2011 (Hereinafter referred to as '2011 Census') from the Central Bureau of Statistics, which provides data of the population above 16 years of age in Nepal till 2011. This data has been used to statistically calculate the number of persons above the age of 16 in the years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for calculating the number of people without citizenship certificate for the years 2011, 2012, 2012 and 2014 is similar to the one used in the previous study published in April 2013.[9]

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9.   FWLD, Acquisition of Citizenship Certificate in Nepal: Estimating Prevalence, April 2013, Kathmandu.

The number of individuals who lack citizenship certificate has been estimated using the population growth rate determined by the census of 2011 and the total number of citizenship certificate distributed in each year.

Firstly, the annual gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate **(N)** was calculated by deducting the number of citizenship certificates distributed in that year **(M)** from the number of people who became eligible to acquire citizenship certificate **(L)** (calculated on the basis of the 2011 Census).

Number of people who became eligible in that year (L)	—	Annual distribution of citizenship certificates (M)	=	Annual Gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate (N)

The annual gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate in the years 2012 to 2014 would read as follows:-

Year	Number of people who became eligible in that year	—	Annual distribution of citizenship certificates	=	Annual Gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate
2012	L1	—	M1	=	N1
2013	L2	—	M2	=	N2
2014	L3	—	M3	=	N3

The total number of people without citizenship certificates for the year 2012 **(O1)** was then calculated by adding or subtracting the annual gap in the distribution of citizenship certificates in the year 2012 **(N1)** from the number of people without citizenship certificates in the 2011 **(K)**.

Number of people without citizenship certificates in 2011 (K)	±	Annual Gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate in 2012 (N1)	=	Number of people without citizenship certificates in the year 2012 (O1)

The number of people without citizenship certificates for the years 2013 and 2014 were subsequently calculated using the same formula which is described in the table below:-

Year	Number of people without citizenship certificates in the previous year	±	Annual Gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate in that year	=	Number of people without citizenship certificates in that year
2013	01	±	N2	=	02
2014	02	±	N3	=	03

DATA LIMITATIONS

These sources did not take into account information on post-citizenship mortality (people who survived after obtaining the citizenship certificate using the survivorship ratio). Thus, a person may have received a citizenship certificate in 2011 and passed away in 2014. However, the MoHA database would still include this individual. Therefore, the data also includes those persons who have died or might die during the years 2012 to 2014.

FINDINGS

In 2013, FWLD published a report which concluded that by July 2011 4.3 million Nepalese people aged 16 and above lacked citizenship certificates, representing 23.65% of the total population of Nepal.[10]

Below is the data of 2012, 2013 and 2014 which shows the changing number of people without citizenship certificate in Nepal.

Year	Number of people who became eligible (L)	Number of citizenship certificates issued (M)	Gap in the distribution of citizenship certificates and the number of eligible persons (N)
2011	-	685,225 (F)	-
2012	766,520 (L1)	220,036 (M1)	546,484 (N1)
2013	660,929 (L2)	1,126,430 (M2)	(465,501)[11] (N2)
2014	692,944 (L3)	442,920 (M3)	250,024 (N3)

The total number of people without citizenship certificates in the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 can be found in the table below:-

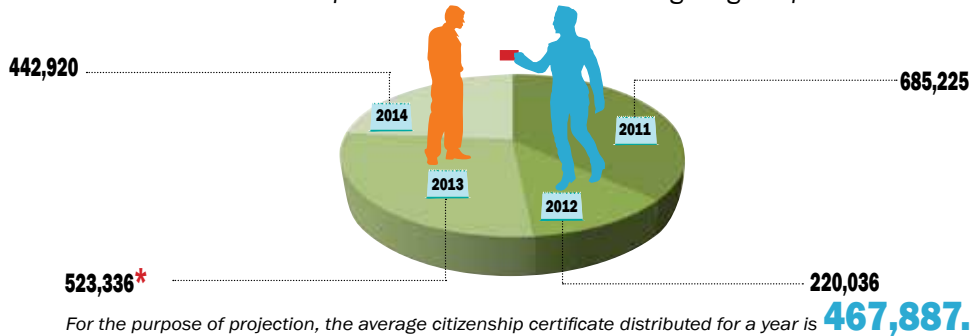| Year	Number of people without citizenship certificates in the previous year	Annual Gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate in that year	Number of people without citizenship certificates in that year
2012	4,346,046 (K)	546,484 (N1)	4,892,530 (O1)
2013	4,892,530 (N2)	(465,501) (N2)	4,427,029 (O2)
2014	4,427,029 (O2)	250,024 (N3)	4,677,053 (O3)

The special efforts of the government of Nepal to issue citizenship certificates through integrated mobile camps and citizenship certificate distribution camps in the year 2013 decreased the number of people without citizenship certificates significantly from 4.8 million **(O1)** to 4.4 million **(O2)**. The number of total eligible population to acquire citizenship certificates was thus lesser than the total number of citizenship certificates distributed in that year. However, this was organized as a onetime effort which resulted in the subsequent widening of the gap between the two variables, that led to the gap increasing from 4.4 million **(O2)** to 4. 6 million **(O3)**.

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10.   Ibid
11.   The brackets symbolize that the value is in negative. In the year 2013, the Ministry of Home Affairs distributed citizenship certificates through mobile camps across the country which was a special effort made in addition to regular distribution of citizenship certificates. In that year 603,094 people received citizenship certificates through the mobile camps, while 523,336 received certificates through regular process. This is the reason why the annual gap in distribution of citizenship certificates and the number of eligible persons is in negative value.

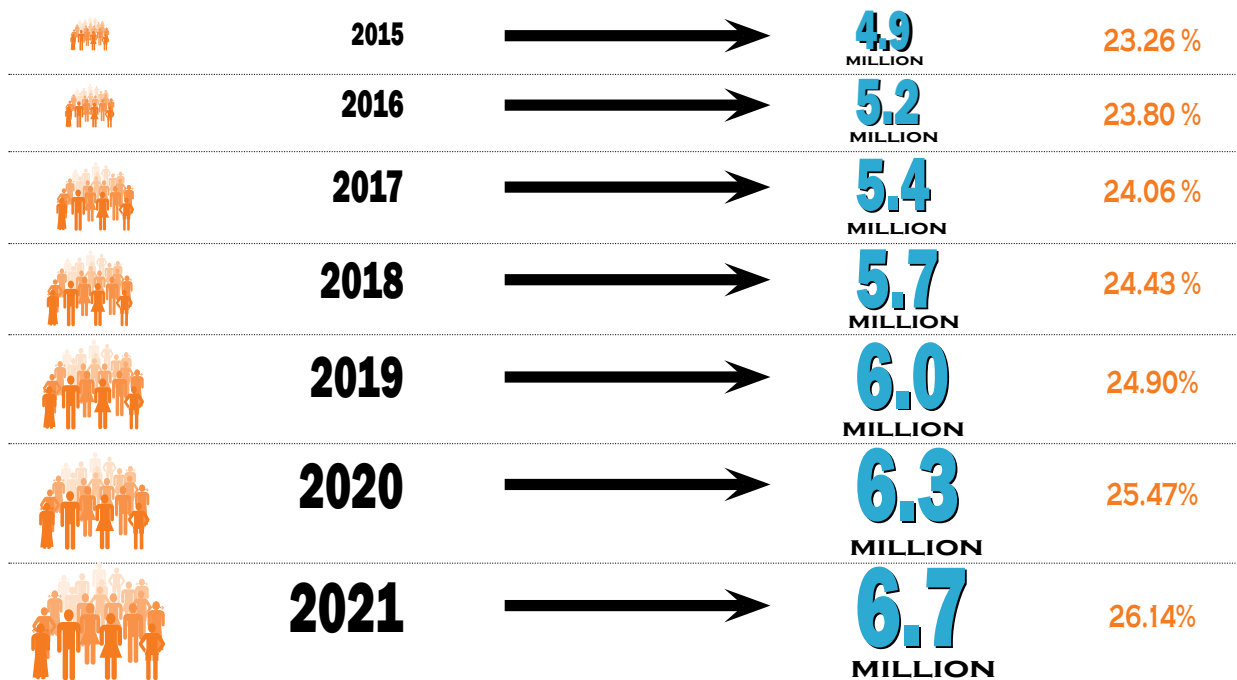# PROJECTION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE IN THE UPCOMING 7 YEARS

No. of citizenship certificates distributed through regular process

442,920   2014   2011   685,225

2013   2012

523,336*   220,036

For the purpose of projection, the average citizenship certificate distributed for a year is **467,887.**

PROJECTION OF ANNUAL INCREASE OF PEOPLE WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES

	Projected Eligible Population	Projected Population with citizenship certificate	Projected Eligible population without citizenship certificate
2015	727,203	467,887	259,317
2016	763,901	467,887	296,014
2017	693,123	467,887	225,236
2018	730,101	467,887	262,214
2019	770,028	467,887	302,141
2020	813,177	467,887	345,290
2021	859,846	467,887	391,959

PROJECTION OF CUMULATIVE POPULATION WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES IN THE UPCOMING 7 YEARS

Year	Population	Percentage
2015	4.9 MILLION	23.26 %
2016	5.2 MILLION	23.80 %
2017	5.4 MILLION	24.06 %
2018	5.7 MILLION	24.43 %
2019	6.0 MILLION	24.90%
2020	6.3 MILLION	25.47%
2021	6.7 MILLION	26.14%

*   *In the year 2013, **1,126,430** people received citizenship certificates. Out of them, **603,094** people received citizenship certificates through integrated mobile camps and citizenship certificate distribution teams in addition to the regular process, where **523,336** citizenship certificates were distributed. Citizenship certificates distributed through the regular process was only used to calculate the average citizenship certificate distribution per year for the latter years.*

PROJECTION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES

With the intent to build on to the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being adopted by the United Nations (UN). Among the goals of SDG, Goal 16 reads "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Target 16.9 further states "By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration".

Citizenship certificate is the primary document that provides legal identity to individuals in Nepal. This certificate is also essential to acquire the birth registration certificate of the child. Thus, absence of citizenship certificate would result in the absence of legal identity of a person.

With a significant proportion of the population of Nepal without citizenship certificates and the fact that the special efforts of the government are not regular, the number can be presumed to increase. Not addressing this issue would not only jeopardize the rights of these people but will also make them devoid of any kind of legal identity. If the magnitude of the problem can be projected beforehand, proper measures can be taken to address the issue at the right time itself. The projection study thus aims to understand the gravity of the problem in the subsequent years and help recommend measures to mitigate those problems.

OBJECTIVE

This study provides a projection of the potential number of people without citizenship certificates from the year 2015 till the year 2021

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for calculating the projection was based on the data acquired in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013, and 2014, and the population growth rate of Nepal, relying on which the number of people without citizenship in the following years were statistically projected based on the 2011 census.

The data from the past four years was used to calculate a projection of the number of people who may lack citizenship certificate in the coming years based on the current trend. The study based the projection of individuals receiving citizenship certificate from the year 2015 onwards on the average number of citizenship certificate distributed through regular channels (i.e. certificates issued by District Administration Offices) from 2011 to 2014. The study excluded certificates issued through the 2013 Citizenship Certificate Distribution Camps and Integrated Mobile camps (i.e. 603,094) from this average because these certificates were distributed through a one-time, extraordinary programme. This average is presumed as the projected citizenship certificates to be distributed each year from 2015 to 2021. The average so calculated is 467,887 **(P)**. Thus, it is presumed that 467,887 citizenship certificates will be distributed from the years 2015 to 2021.

Year	Number of citizenship certificates distributed by DAOs
2011	685,255
2012	220,036
2013	523,336
2014	442,920
Total	1,871,547
Average	467,887 (P)

Then the projected annual gap in the distribution of citizenship certificate **(Q)** was calculated subtracting the average annual distribution of citizenship certificates **(P)** from the annual projected population who have reached the age of 16 **(R)** which has been statistically presumed on the basis of the 2011 Census.

Projected population who attain the age of 16 (R)	—	Projected number of citizenship certificates to be issued (P)	=	Projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates (Q)

For each year, the projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates would read as follows:-

Year	Projected population who attain the age of 16 in that year (O)	—	Projected number of citizenship certificates to be issued (P)	=	Projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates in that year (Q)
2015	R1	—	P	=	Q1
2016	R2	—	P	=	Q2
2017	R3	—	P	=	Q3
2018	R4	—	P	=	Q4
2019	R5	—	P	=	Q5
2020	R6	—	P	=	Q6
2021	R7	—	P	=	Q7

The cumulative projection of persons without citizenship certificates in the year 2015 **(S1)** was calculated by adding the number of people without citizenship certificates in the year 2014 **(N4)** with the projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates in the year 2015 **(Q1)**.
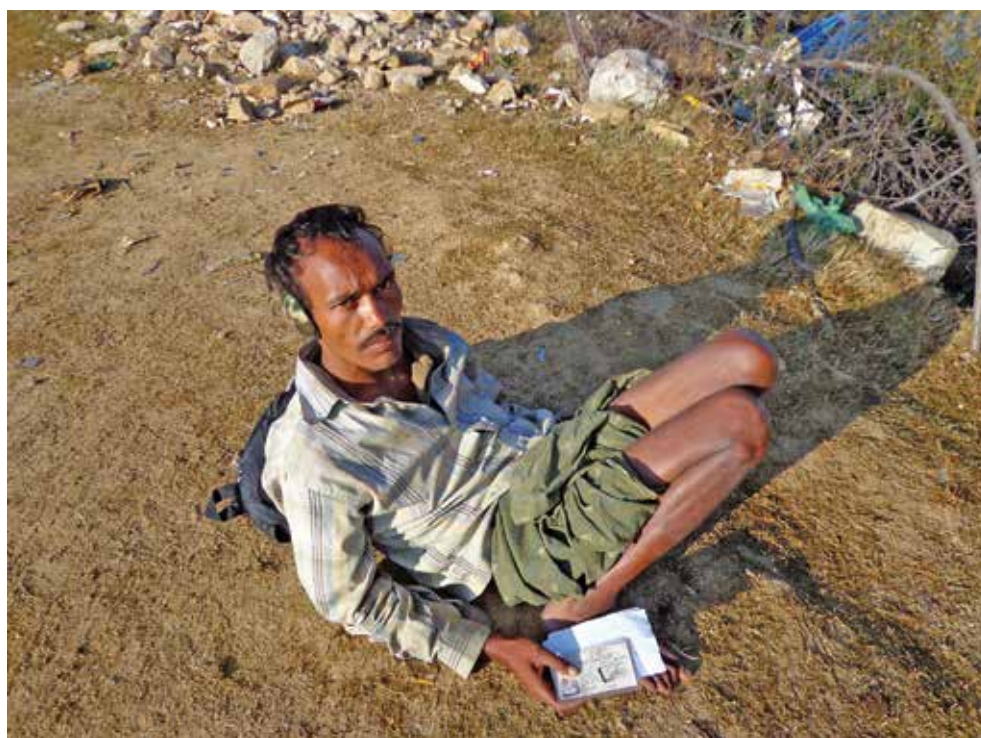
People without Citizenship certificate in 2014 (O3)	+	Projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates of 2015 (Q1)	=	Projected Total number of people without citizenship of 2015 (S1)

Subsequently, the cumulative projection of persons without citizenship certificates for the year 2016 **(S2)** was calculated by adding the number of people without citizenship certificates in the year 2015 **(S1)** with the projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates of the year 2016 **(Q2).** For the remaining years, the calculation was done as described in the table below:-

Year	People without Citizenship certificate in the previous year	+	Projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates of that year (Q)	=	Projected Total number of people without citizenship of that year (R)
2016	S1	+	Q2	=	S2
2017	S2	+	Q3	=	S3
2018	S3	+	Q4	=	S4
2019	S4	+	Q5	=	S5
2020	S5	+	Q6	=	S6
2021	S6	+	Q7	=	S7

DATA LIMITATIONS

The survivorship ratio for the people who attain the eligible age from the years 2015 to 2021, as well as the persons who acquire citizenship certificates in that duration has not been used. Thus, it does not take into account the fact that many of those persons might die during this period.

FINDINGS

EVERY YEAR GAP IN DISTRIBUTION OF CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE

The population for the coming years was calculated by using the census data and the population growth rate of Nepal. The gap figure depicted in the table below represents the difference between the number of people who attain the age of 16 and the number of citizenship certificates issued.

Year	Projected population who attain the age of 16[12] (O)	Projected number of citizenship certificates to be issued (P)	Projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates (Q)
2015	727,203 (R1)	467,887	259,317 (Q1)
2016	763,901 (R2)	467,887	296,014 (Q2)
2017	693,123 (R3)	467,887	225,236 (Q3)
2018	730,101 (R4)	467,887	262,214 (Q4)
2019	770,028 (R5)	467,887	302,141 (Q5)
2020	813,177 (R6)	467,887	345,290 (Q6)
2021	859,846 (R7)	467,887	391,959 (Q7)

12. Based on the unpublished document of Population Projection for the population of Nepal that provides estimates from 2011 to 2031, from the Central Bureau of Statistics. According to the document, population growth of population above 16 is 2.58% percent per annum.

The projection of the cumulative population without citizenship certificates reads as follows:

Year	People without Citizenship certificate in the previous year	Projected gap in distribution of citizenship certificates of that year (Q)	Projected Total number of people without citizenship of that year
2015	4,677,053 (O3)	259,317 (Q1)	4,936,369 (S1)
2016	4,936,369 (S1)	296,014 (Q2)	5,232,383 (S2)
2017	5,232,383 (S2)	225,236 (Q3)	5,457,619 (S3)
2018	5,457,619 (S3)	262,214 (Q4)	5,719,834 (S4)
2019	5,719,834 (S4)	302,141 (Q5)	6,021,975 (S5)
2020	6,021,975 (S5)	345,290 (Q6)	6,367,265 (S6)
2021	6,367,265 (S6)	391,959 (Q7)	6,759,224 (S7)

Adding the number of people without citizenship certificates in the previous year with the yearly gap of citizenship certificate distribution of that year, the study has found that the cumulative projected number of people without citizenship certificates in the year 2021 is 6.7 million **(S7).** The number is projected to increase by 1.8 million in only seven years time. The projection clearly shows that the number of people without citizenship certificates in Nepal will continue to increase unless the Government of Nepal takes some special measures to bridge the gap.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The final table that explains the findings of the previous study, the updated estimation and the projection can be found below:-

Year	Eligible population	Population with citizenship certificates	Eligible population who lack citizenship certificate	Percentage of eligible population who lack citizenship certificate	Increment in the number of people without citizenship certificate
2011	18,376,317	14,030,271	4,346,046	23.65	-
2012	19,142,837	14,250,307	4,892,530	25.56	546,484
2013	19,803,766	15,376,737	4,427,029	22.35	(465,501)
2014	20,496,710	15,819,657	4,677,053	22.82	250,024
2015	21,223,913	16,287,544	4,936,369	23.26	259,317
2016	21,987,814	16,755,431	5,232,383	23.80	296,014
2017	22,680,937	17,223,317	5,457,619	24.06	225,236
2018	23,411,038	17,691,204	5,719,834	24.43	262,214
2019	24,181,066	18,159,091	6,021,975	24.90	302,141
2020	24,994,243	18,626,978	6,367,265	25.47	345,290
2021	25,854,088	19,094,864	6,759,224	26.14	391,959

The current number of people without citizenship certificate stands at 4.6 million, 22.82% of the total population of Nepal. The calculation of the projection shows this figure will rise to 6.7 million persons, or 26.14% of the total population of Nepal, in 2021. It is important to point out that the percentage decreased significantly from 25.56% to 22.35% from 2012 to 2013 signalling a downward trend due to the special efforts of the government before the second Constituent Assembly elections. However, due to the discontinuation of the efforts, the percentage gradually increased in the coming years.

It is of grave concern that a significant number of Nepalese are not issued citizenship certificates despite being eligible to acquire them. Such population is deprived from exercising most of the rights that are provided for by the laws of Nepal. Considering citizenship certificate is the primary identity document and is the basis for acquiring other identity documents, the increase in the number of people without citizenship certificate every year is likely to be harmful to the overall development of the nation.
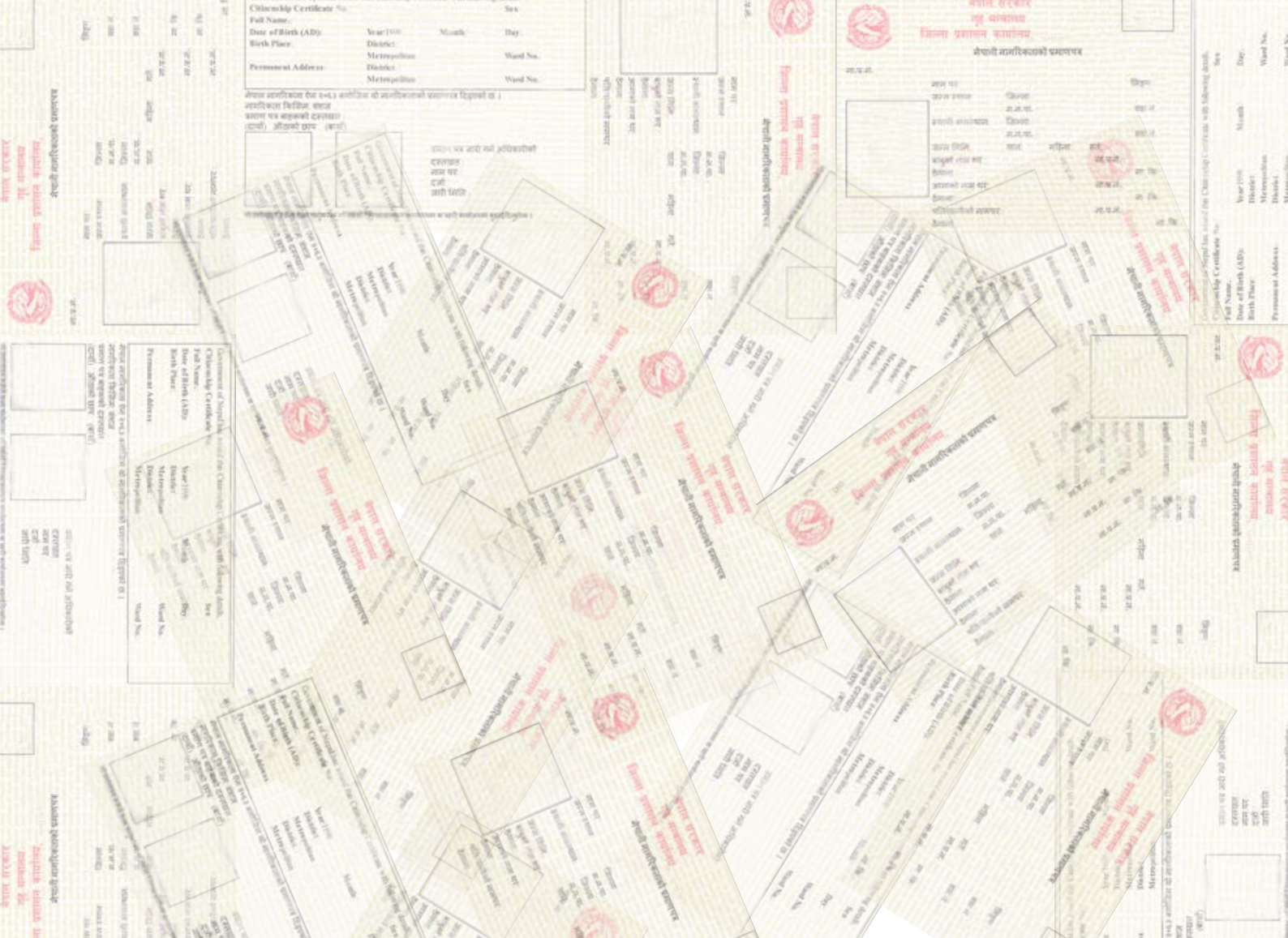
The findings clearly point out to the fact that there is a widening gap between the number of people who reach the age of 16 and thus become eligible to acquire citizenship certificate and the number of citizenship certificates distributed each year. Despite the exceptional deployment of Integrated Mobile Camps and Citizenship Certificate Distribution Camps in 2013, the number of people without citizenship remains massive.

In 2011, the total number of estimated Nepali citizens without citizenship certificates was 4,346,046, representing 23.67% of population of Nepal aged 16 and above. In the year 2013, the Government of Nepal operated the Integrated Mobile camps and Citizenship Certificate Distribution Camps, along with the regular process of distribution, thereby distributing citizenship certificates to more than 1,126,430 individuals. This effort led to a decrease in the number of people without citizenship certificates. However, only a year after the mobile camps (2014), the current estimation stands at 4,677,053. The number of citizenship certificates distributed through normal procedures does not keep up with the number of people becoming eligible to obtain citizenship certificate annually. If this trend continues, the number of people who lack citizenship certificates will continue to increase and to create serious problems of exclusion and marginalization for a large section of the Nepalese population.

The projection found that in the year 2021, there will be 6,759,224 Nepali citizens who lack citizenship certificates. The increasing number of individuals without citizenship certificate in Nepal is a major concern and this number will continue to grow unless timely and necessary measures are taken by the Government of Nepal to ensure that all the rightful citizens of Nepal can exercise the rights that have been guaranteed to them by the laws of Nepal. Considering the impending adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the specific reference to legal identity in Goal 16.9, it becomes imperative for the state to resolve this problem, in order to achieve that goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The widening gap of the increasing eligible population and the number of citizenship certificates distributed each year must be addressed by organizing more integrated mobile camps and citizenship distribution camps in the remote and geographically challenging areas of the country.

- A strong database must be maintained by the concerned government office on the number of people who have acquired citizenship certificates with extensive demographic details, and additionally the people who have died after acquiring the citizenship certificates must be removed from the records.

- The record of the people who have acquired citizenship certificates must be accessible to the common people.

- As citizenship certificates provide the basis for legal identity, awareness campaigns should be organized to sensitize people without citizenship certificates regarding the importance and process of acquisition of citizenship certificates.

- Capacity building activities must be organized for the concerned personnel in the citizenship certificate distributing offices including the District Administration Office, Municipalities and Village Development Committees (VDC), to smoothen the acquisition process.