



National Population Register (NPR)

For Prelims: National Population Register, National Register of Citizens, Census, Citizenship Act 1955, CAA.

For Mains: Population and Associated Issues, Need for Updating the NPR and its Importance.

Why in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has recently highlighted the need to update the [National Population Register \(NPR\)](#) database across the country.

- This is to incorporate the changes due to birth, death, and migration for which demographic and other particulars of each family and individual are to be collected.

What is NPR?

▪ About:

- NPR is a **database** containing a list of all **usual residents** of the country.
 - A usual resident for the purposes of NPR is **a person who has resided in a place for six months or more** and intends to reside there for another six months or more.
- Its **objective** is to have a comprehensive identity database of people residing in the country.
 - It is **generated through house-to-house enumeration** during the “house-listing” phase of the [Census](#).
 - The NPR was **first collected in 2010** and then **updated in 2015**.

▪ Legal Backing:

- The NPR is prepared under the provisions of the [Citizenship Act 1955](#) and the **Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003**.
- It is **mandatory for every “usual resident of India”** to register in the NPR.

▪ Significance:

- It will **streamline data of residents** across various platforms.
 - For instance, it is common to find a different date of birth of a person on different government documents. NPR will help eliminate that.
- It will help the government formulate its **policies better** and also aid national security.
- It will help **to target government beneficiaries in a better way** and also further cut down paperwork and red tape in a similar manner that Aadhaar has done.
- It will help in implementing the idea of **‘One Identity Card’** that has been recently floated by the government.
 - ‘One Identity Card’ seeks to replace duplicate and siloed documentations of Aadhaar card, voter ID card, banking card, passport, and more.

▪ NPR and NRC:

- According to Citizenship Rules 2003, **NPR is the first step towards compilation of a**

[National Register of Citizens \(NRC\)](#). After a list of residents is created (i.e., NPR), a nationwide NRC **could go about verifying the citizens from that list.**

- However, unlike the NRC, the **NPR is not a [citizenship enumeration drive](#)** as it records even a foreigner staying in a locality for more than six months.

What is the National Register of Citizens?

- **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** is a register prepared after the conduct of the Census of 1951 in respect of each village, showing the houses or holdings in a serial order and indicating against each house or holding the number and names of persons staying therein.
- The **NRC was published only once in 1951** and since then, it has not been updated for the nation until recently.
 - It has been **[updated in Assam only](#)** for now and the **government plans to update it nationally** as well.

What is the Difference between NPR and Census?

- **Objective:**
 - The census involves a **detailed questionnaire** - there were 29 items to be filled up in the 2011 census - aimed at **eliciting the particulars of every person**, including age, sex, marital status, children, occupation, birthplace, mother tongue, religion, disability and whether they belonged to any Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe.
 - On the other hand, the **NPR collects basic demographic data and biometric particulars.**
- **Legal Basis:**
 - The census is legally backed by the **Census Act, 1948.**
 - The NPR is a mechanism **outlined in a set of rules** framed under the **Citizenship Act, 1955.**

What is the Citizenship Act, 1955?

- **About:**
 - **The Citizenship Act, 1955 provides various ways in which citizenship may be acquired.**
 - It provides for **citizenship by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation and by incorporation of the territory into India.**
 - In addition, it regulates the registration of **[Overseas Citizen of India Cardholders \(OCIs\)](#)** and their rights.
 - An OCI is entitled to some benefits such as a multiple-entry, multipurpose lifelong visa to visit India.
- **CAA 2019:** The **[Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act \(CAA\)](#)** was **introduced in 2019 to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955.**
 - It provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians**) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014.
 - It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the **Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920.**
 - The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2009)

1. Between Census 1951 and Census 2001, the density of the population of India has increased more than three times.
2. Between Census 1951 and Census 2001, the annual growth rate (exponential) of the population of India has doubled.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- One of the important indices of population concentration is the density of population. It is defined as the number of persons per square kilometre.
- The population density of India in 2001 was 324 persons per square kilometre and in 1951 it was 117. Thus, the density increased more than twice, but not thrice. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- At the beginning of the twentieth century, i.e., in 1901 the density of India was as low as 77 and this steadily increased from one decade to another to reach 324 in 2001.
- The average Annual Growth Rate in 2001 was 1.93 whereas in 1951 it was 1.25. Thus, it increased, but not doubled. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option D is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. Two parallel run schemes of the Government, viz the Adhaar Card and NPR, one as voluntary and the other as compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve developmental benefits and equitable growth. **(2014)**

Source: TH

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