



## Passport Revocations of Goans

**For Prelims:** [Overseas Citizenship of India \(OCI\)](#), [PIO](#), [Passport Act of 1967](#), [Citizenship](#)

**For Mains:** [Citizenship](#), [Portuguese Rule](#), [Role of Indian Diaspora](#)

**Source:** [IE](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, a **memorandum** issued by the [Ministry of External Affairs \(MEA\)](#) has led to the **revocation of passports** of more than 100 people from Goa in the past few months.

- These people, who may not have known about the memorandum, are accused of **hiding important information** when they tried to surrender their passports after becoming citizens of Portugal.

### Why are the Passports Being Revoked?

- **Goan's Portuguese Connection:**
  - Goa is a former [Portuguese colony](#), which was under Portuguese rule for approximately 450 years, **from 1510 to 1961**.
  - According to **Portuguese law**:
    - Those born in Goa **before 19<sup>th</sup> December 1961** (the day Goa was liberated from Portuguese rule) **and two future generations** have the option to register as Portuguese citizens.
    - Many Goans have transcribed their births in the **Central Registry in Lisbon** and acquired Portuguese citizenship.
    - A Portuguese passport provides **visa-free entry** to several countries, including the UK and the [European Union](#).
    - The allure of **overseas employment** and educational opportunities has driven Goans to seek Portuguese citizenship.
- **The 2022 Memorandum of MEA:**
  - The MEA issued a **memorandum** on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, specifically addressing the "surrender of Indian passport on account of acquisition of foreign nationality by an erstwhile Indian citizen."
  - The memorandum categorizes cases related to passport surrender certificates, and one particular category has resulted in the revocation of passports for some Goans.
    - Under **section 10 (3) (b) of the [Passport Act of 1967](#)**, passports obtained by hiding the fact of having another country's [citizenship](#) can be cancelled even if they were not used for travel.
  - Before this MEA memorandum, **passport authorities used to impose a penalty for surrendering an Indian passport** and issuing a surrender certificate, which was declared invalid by a 2020 Kerala [High Court](#) judgment, stating that **passport authorities cannot impose penalties but can only prosecute for violations of the**

## Passports Act.

### ▪ Revocation of Pasport and Issue of OCI Card:

- **Dual Citizenship:** Since India does not allow [dual citizenship](#). Therefore, Goans acquiring official Portuguese passports must relinquish their Indian citizenship.
- **OCI Status:** The **revocation of Indian passports** has left these individuals unable to apply for [Overseas Citizenship of India \(OCI\)](#).
  - A '**surrender certificate**' issued by passport-issuing authorities has so far been a requirement for those who want to apply for **OCI cards**.
    - However, on account of the **revocation of their passport**, these **individuals couldn't avail this option**.
  - Current memorandum of MEA, instructing passport authorities to issue '**revocation certificates**' instead of **surrender certificates** in cases where Indian passports were obtained by concealing information.
    - This will allow Indian nationals from former Portuguese territories who acquired Portuguese citizenship to apply for [Overseas Citizenship of India \(OCI\)](#).
- OCI status **permits foreign citizens** of Indian origin to live and work in India indefinitely.

## Portuguese Rule in Goa

- Goa, situated on the west coast of India, was a Portuguese colony from **1510 to 1961**.
- The small coastal area was **conquered by Afonso de Albuquerque** and became a vital trade hub for the Eastern spice trade.
- Remarkably, Goa served as the capital of the entire Portuguese Empire east of the Cape of Good Hope for 450 years.
- In the 1940s, as India moved closer to independence from British rule, the fight for freedom in Goa began.
- Finally, on 19th December 1961, more than four centuries after its colonisation, Goa was freed from Portuguese rule.

## What is Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Card?

### ▪ About:

- The concept of OCI was introduced in response to demands for **dual citizenship** by the [Indian diaspora](#), particularly in developed countries.
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** defines an OCI as a person who:
  - was a [citizen of India](#) on or after 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950; or
  - was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950; or
  - is a **child or grandchild of such a person**, among other eligibility criteria.
- According to **Section 7A of the OCI card rules**, an applicant is not eligible for the OCI card if he, his parents, or grandparents have ever been a **citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh**.
- The Government of India via the [Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act, 2015](#), merged the **Person of Indian Origin (PIO) category with the OCI category in 2015**.

### ▪ Historical Background:

- The **OCI Card scheme** was launched during the [Pravasi Bharatiya Divas](#) in 2005.
- It was introduced as an **acknowledgement** of the persistent emotional attachment of the Indian diaspora to their country of origin and to acknowledge role of diaspora in nation's development.

### ▪ Benefits of the OCI Card:

- Multiple entry, multi-purpose lifelong visa to visit India.
- Exemption from registering with the **Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO)** regardless of the duration of their stay.
- Parity with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in financial, economic, and educational fields.

### ▪ Limitations and Restrictions:

- They do not have the right to vote.

- They cannot purchase agriculture or farmland.
  - All activities except **research work** for which special permission is required from the Indian Mission/Post/ FRRO concerned.
  - Holders **cannot participate** in elections or hold public office, reflecting the government's stance on maintaining clear boundaries between citizenship and overseas citizenship.
- **Current Scenario:**
- The OCI card scheme has been a key element of the Indian government's effort to deepen its relationship with its diaspora.
  - As of March 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs had issued over 3.5 million OCI cards.
    - The vast majority were issued to foreign nationals in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada.

A PERSON OF INDIAN ORIGIN (PIO)	PIO VS OCI	OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA (OCI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Means a <b>foreign citizen</b> (except a national of Pakistan, Afghanistan Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal)</li> <li>➤ A <b>foreign citizen whose one of the parents/ grandparents/ great grandparents was born and a permanent resident of India</b></li> <li>➤ Who is a <b>spouse</b> of a citizen of India or a PIO</li> </ul>	<p>A <b>foreign national</b>, who was <b>eligible to become citizen of India on 26.01.1950</b> or was a citizen of India on or at anytime after <b>26.01.1950</b> or belonged to a territory that became part of India after <b>15.08.1947</b> is <b>eligible for registration as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)</b>. Minor children of such person are also eligible for OCI. However, if the applicant had ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh, he/she will not be eligible for OCI.</p>	
<p><b>BENEFITS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PIO card holders <b>do not require a visa to visit India</b> for a period of 15 years from the date of issue of the PIO card.</li> <li>2. They are <b>exempted from registration at FRRO/ FRO</b> if their <b>stay does not exceeds 180 days</b>. In case if the stay exceeds 180 days, they shall have to register with FRRO/ FRO within the next 30 days</li> <li>3. They <b>enjoy parity with NRIs in economic, financial and educational benefits</b></li> <li>4. All <b>future benefits that would be exempted to NRIs</b> would also be available to the <b>PIO card holders</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>BENEFITS</b></p> <p>OCIs are <b>entitled to a multipurpose, multiple entry, lifelong visa</b> allowing them to visit India at any time, for any length of time and for any purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Exempted from police reporting</b> for any length of stay in the country</li> <li>➤ <b>Have also been granted all rights in the economic, financial and education fields in parity with NRIs</b> except, the right to acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties</li> </ul>	

**Drishti Mains Question:**

Q. Discuss the role and impact of the Indian diaspora on India's socio-economic development and its influence on India's foreign policy. How has the diaspora contributed to India's soft power and global standing?

**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**Prelims:**

**Q. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2021)**

1. There is only one citizenship and one domicile.
2. A citizen by birth only can become the Head of State.
3. A foreigner once granted citizenship cannot be deprived of it under any circumstances.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 2 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)**

1. Aadhaar card can be used as a proof of citizenship or domicile.
2. Once issued, Aadhaar number cannot be deactivated or omitted by the Issuing Authority.

**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)**

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**Mains:**

**Q. Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries. Comment with examples. (2020)**

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