# National Population Register (NPR)

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*__Source__: The Hindu*

**Manifest pedagogy:** NPR is an important exercise carried out to create the database of residents which are great utility in issues of immigrants and demography. The issue having both pros and cons is an important area of preparation from both society and geography perspective.

**In news:** Government has notified the next round of recording biometric and family-tree details of Indian citizens under the National Population Register (NPR).

**Placing it in syllabus:** Demography of India

**Dimensions:**

- What is National Population Register (NPR)
- What data are collected as per NPR
- National Register of Indian Citizens
- Implications of NPR and related issues

**Content:**

The next round of recording biometric and family-tree details of Indian citizens under the NPR will be conducted in September 2020, according to a government notification. The exercise is different from the decennial Census and is not linked to the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)**. Earlier, the roll out of NPR had slowed down due to overlapping with that of Aadhaar.



The reason for excluding Assam is because of the ongoing

exercise of NRC in the state. When the draft NRC was published in Assam on July 30,2018 there was a huge controversy over the exclusion of 40.7 lakh people from it. The draft included the names of 2.9 crore people of the 3.29 crore applicants. In addition to those excluded, the names of over a lakh people were left out in a list published in July,2019.

**National Population Register (NPR):**

- The National Population Register (NPR) is a Register of usual residents of the country.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under 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.
- A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.
- The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
- The **database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.**

**Data collected under NPR:**

<u>The following demographic details of every individual are required for every usual resident:</u>

- Name of person
- Relationship to head of household
- Father's name
- Mother's name
- Spouse's name (if married)

- Sex
- Date of Birth
- Marital status
- Place of birth
- Nationality (as declared)
- Present address of usual residence
- Duration of stay at present address
- Permanent residential address
- Occupation/Activity
- Educational qualification

The data for the NPR was collected in 2010 along with the houselisting phase of Census of India 2011. Updation of this data was done during 2015 by conducting door to door survey.

**National register of Indian citizens(NRIC):**

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register containing the names of all genuine Indian citizens.
- The register was first prepared after the 1951 Census of India.
- The NRC is now being updated in Assam to include the names of those persons (or their descendants) who appear in the NRC, 1951, or in any of the Electoral Rolls up to midnight on 24 March 1971 or in any one of the other admissible documents issued up to midnight on 24 March 1971, which would prove their presence in Assam or in any part of India on or before 24 March 1971.
- The update process of NRC started in the year 2013, when the Supreme Court of India passed orders for its update.
- Since then, the Supreme Court (bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Rohintan Fali Nariman) have been monitoring it continuously.
- The entire project is headed by the State Coordinator of National Registration, Assam, under the strict monitoring of Supreme Court of India.
- The purpose of NRC update is to identify Indian citizens from amongst all the residents of Assam thereby leading

to identification of illegal migrants residing in Assam, who entered Indian territories after midnight on 24 March 1971 and to determine the citizenship of applicants who have applied for inclusion of their names in the updated NRC.

- The next round of recording biometric and family-tree details of Indian citizens under the NPR will be conducted by September 2020.
- Once NPR is completed, it is expected to be the basis for preparing the **National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC)**, a pan-India version of Assam's NRC.

**Implications of NPR and related issues:**

There are several databases in India like electors list, driving licenses, passports, PAN cards (Income Tax), list of persons below the poverty line, ration cards, farmers cards to name a few. All these have a limited reach and are stand alone databases. In order to **avoid duplication, save costs and allow interoperability**, a standard database covering the entire population is an urgent necessity.

The fundamental purpose of the NPR is to provide a credible database for identification of the individual and avoid all the shortcomings in the existing databases. This would, apart from the implications on improving the internal security of the country, would greatly enhance the targeting of various beneficiary oriented schemes of the Government and non Governmental agencies.

Given the size and complexities, creating the base database is a costly exercise but is very much in the realm of the possible. The challenges lie in developing a system which would update the database dynamically and keep it live at all points of time. This would mean capturing every event of birth, death and migration on a real time basis across the length and breadth of the country.

The next task would be to communicate this information on an anytime, anywhere basis. This would require the establishment and maintenance of a massive ICT infrastructure throughout the country. Privacy issues would add to the pressure. With the availability of committed resources along with the will to accomplish the task, sustainability of such a system is also feasible.

**Whether the Register would replace the Census in due course?**

The decadal population Census in India gives a snapshot of the population at a particular point in time — the reference date. It also gives out data on the age profile, the sex composition, religion, social status, mother tongue, language, educational status, occupation, migration, fertility etc.

In addition, the Housing Census also throws up a large number of indicators like type and quality of housing stock, amenities available to households, certain assets owned and services available. The cross tabulation of various indicators give policy planners and others robust inputs for programme planning and implementation on a full count basis.

*The Register coupled with sample surveys would allow the generation of many of the indicators but would not present as comprehensive a picture as the Census.*

An additional argument in favour of the Census is that the individual respondent is given an assurance that the information collected is confidential and that no individual information would be revealed to any third party. As anonymity is assured, the information is free of biases. Register based information, is by its nature, not confidential and hence may be prone to other influences.

Hence India has decided to canvass a separate schedule for collection of information for the creation of NPR and the two operations, the census and NPR, have also been separated by a week to ensure the integrity of the two datasets.

The NPR though would not completely eliminate the need for a comprehensive Census it would definitely shorten and simplify the existing Census and thereby enhance its qualitative aspects. This would also enable the conduct of Census at more frequent intervals instead of once in a decade.