

# National Register of Citizens

October 15, 2020

## In News

The passing of the **Citizenship Amendment Act** set off protests across the country, with many fearing that the controversial legislation which **grants to select minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh Indian citizenship** will be used in conjunction with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to deem minorities as illegal immigrants. The NRC first gained national prominence with its implementation in the northeastern state of Assam, but the citizens' registry is fuelling fear and panic in the nation.

## Features of National Register of Citizens

- At its core, the NRC is an **official record of those who are legal Indian citizens. It includes demographic information about all those individuals who qualify as citizens of India as per the Citizenship Act, 1955.**
- The register was **first prepared after the 1951 Census of India** and since then it has not been updated until recently.
- So far, **such a database has only been maintained for the state of Assam.** However the Home Minister during a parliamentary session has declared that the register would be extended to the entire country.

## Citizenship of India

As per the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, every person born in India:

- on or after the 26th day of January 1950, but before the 1st day of July 1987;
- on or after the 1st day of July 1987, but before the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 and either of whose parents is a citizen of India at the

time of his birth;

- on or after the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, where:

. both of his parents are citizens of India; or

. one of whose parents is a citizen of India and the other is not an illegal migrant at the time of his birth, shall be a citizen of India by birth.

### More About NRC

- Ever since the implementation of the NRC in Assam, there has been a growing demand for its nationwide implementation.
- It effectively suggests **bringing in a legislation that will enable the government to identify infiltrators** who have been living in India illegally, detain them and deport them to where they came from.
- While in Assam, citizens were asked to submit the proof of citizenship themselves to NRC Seva Kendras set across the state, it is not sure how the same model will be implemented across the entire country.
- Also, the Assam NRC was mandated through a **special exception for the state in the Citizenship Act, 2003 and the process was overseen by the Supreme Court.**
- Non-inclusion of a person's name in the NRC does not by itself amount to him/ her being declared a foreigner, such individuals will have the option to present their case before **foreigners' tribunals**. If one loses the case in the tribunal, the person can move the high court and, then, the supreme court.