

Who is a doubtful citizen?

January 11, 2021

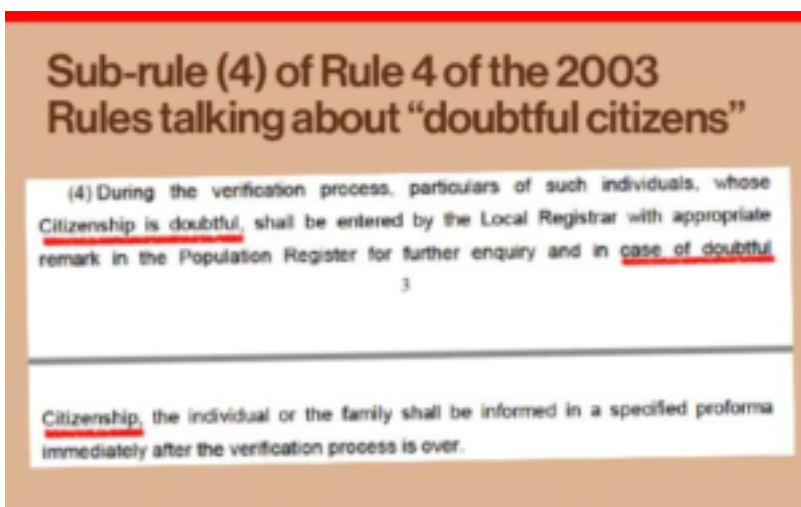
In news

A group of hundred volunteers teamed up in Assam to aware the doubtful voters of their rights

Who is a 'doubtful citizen' or 'doubtful voter'?

The term refers to persons whose citizenship was doubtful or was under dispute and were categorized as 'D- Voters' during the preparation of the National Register of Citizens in Assam.

A provision for this "doubtful citizenship" has been given in the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 (2003 Rules) under which the NPR is being prepared.



Sub-rule (4) of Rule 4 of the 2003 Rules – reproduced below – says that "during the verification process of the Population Register (or NPR), a step before the NRIC is prepared, an individual or a family would be marked as "doubtful" citizen or have "doubtful citizenship".

What are the processes involved after declaring a person as a doubtful citizen?

- After declaring a family or an individual is a doubtful citizen (D-Category), they are then informed in a specified pro forma as soon as the verification process comes to an end.
- They are also given a chance to be heard by the Sub-district or Taluk Registrar of Citizen Registration before arriving at a final decision on whether their name will be included in the register.
- The Registrar has time of 90 days to finalize his findings and justify it

Referring the cases to Foreigners Tribunals by the Superintendent of Police

- These kinds of case are referred to foreign tribunals for confirmation
- The Electoral Registration Officer considers the verification report. If the Registration Officer feels that the person is not an Indian citizen, then the case is referred to the Superintendent of Police who refers it to the Foreigners Tribunal for its opinion. The Foreigner tribunals are set up under the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964. Based on the tribunal's decision, the Officer must add or delete the names of doubtful citizens.
- However, there is no mention on what grounds an individual will be considered a doubtful citizen

Consequences of categorizing a person as a doubtful voter?

- They are not eligible to cast their vote in elections as their Indian citizenship is not confirmed.
- They are also barred from contesting elections in the country.
- The marking as doubtful voter is a temporary measure and cannot be prolonged. A decision in a definite period of time must be taken.
- If the person is found to be an illegal migrant or a

foreigner, they are sent to detention camps and deported depending on the documents presented.