



National Population Register

For Prelims: [National Population Register](#), [Census](#), [House listing](#), [Citizenship Act 1955](#), [NRC](#), [Citizenship](#).

For Mains: National Population Register.

Why in News?

For [Census](#) 2021, the Government has made the [National Population Register \(NPR\)](#) mandatory, allowing citizens to self-enumerate, for individuals who wish to fill out the census form themselves instead of relying on government enumerators.

- Self-enumeration refers to the **completion of census survey questionnaires** by the respondents themselves. Self-enumeration will **be provided to only those households that have updated NPR online**.
- During self-enumeration, [Aadhaar](#) or **mobile number** will be mandatorily collected.

What set of Questionnaires have been Finalized for the Next Census?

- The upcoming Census will be the **first digital one**, allowing respondents to complete the **questionnaire from their homes**.
- The set of questions for the **Houselisting and Housing Schedule phase** has been finalized, while the questions for the Population Enumeration phase are yet to be notified.
 - The comparison between the [2011 Census](#) and the next one reveals new inquiries on travel time and metro rail usage for commuting.
- The question on **disabilities includes additional categories** like acid attack, intellectual disability, chronic neurological disease, and blood disorder.
- The next Census will **also gather information on whether individuals living** in rented houses own residential property elsewhere or do not own any.
- Clarifications are provided on the **availability of drinking water within specific distances** from the premises.

What is the National Population Register?

- **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](#).
 - NPR was first collected in 2010. It was updated in 2015 and already has details of 119 crore residents.

- In March 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) amended the Census Rules framed in 1990 to capture and store the Census data in an electronic form and enabled self-enumeration by respondents.

▪ **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.**
 - 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.

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, 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.

▪ **Comprehensive Identity Database:**

- The NPR, unlike the Census, is a **comprehensive identity database of every “usual resident”** in the country and the data proposed to be collected at the family level can **be shared with States and other government departments.**
- Though Census also collects similar information, the [Census Act of 1948](#) bars sharing any individual’s data with the **State or Centre and only aggregate data at the administrative level** can be released.

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)**

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