



SC's Concern Over Voter Limit Increase

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, [Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna](#) emphasised that "**no voter should be turned down**," indicating the court's commitment to ensuring accessible voting for all citizens.

- Earlier, [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) has pushed the maximum limit per polling station from 1,200 (in rural) and 1,400 (urban) to a uniform 1,500 voters, which has raised concerns regarding potential disenfranchisement.
- A **petition challenged the ECI's decision**, arguing that it **would lead to overcrowded polling stations and longer wait times**.
 - A voter takes around 90 seconds to cast their vote, allowing 45 voters per hour. Over 11 hours, a polling station can accommodate only 495 voters (660 voters with maximum efficiency).
 - The petition highlights that ECI's rationale for increasing the **limit lacks fresh data** like updated [census](#).
- **Rules for Setting up Polling Station:**
 - [Representation of People Act, 1951](#) mandates the Election Commission to provide for a 'sufficient number of polling stations for every constituency'.
 - A polling station should be located so that voters typically travel **no more than 2 kilometers** to vote, with exceptions for sparsely populated hilly or forest areas.
- **ECI Programs to Increase Voter Turnouts:**
 - [SVEEP](#)
 - [Voter Helpline App](#)

Read More: [Increasing Voter Turnouts](#)

DNA Profiles and Levirate Marriages

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, during [DNA profiling](#) for an [organ transplant](#), it was discovered that a father was not the biological parent of his son, revealing a case of **levirate marriage**.

- The exposed sensitive family information, raising concerns about **genetic privacy** and the unintended consequences of [DNA analysis](#).
- **DNA profiling:** [DNA profiling](#) is a technique to **identify individuals** based on unique variations in their **DNA** sequences.
 - While 99.9% of human DNA is identical, the 0.1% variation, especially in [Short Tandem Repeats \(STRs\)](#), forms the basis of DNA profiling, enabling precise identification.
- **Levirate:** Levirate marriage is a custom where the **brother of a deceased (or physically incapacitated) man** can marry to **his brother's widow**, ensuring the continuation of the family line.

- It has been practiced in India by several tribes, including the **Santhal** and **Munda**.
- During **Vedic times**, **niyoga**, the practice of a younger brother or kinsman marrying the **widow of an elder brother**, was practiced but **later disallowed** during the **Gupta** and earlier periods.
- **Sororate** is the custom of a man marrying his wife's sister if his wife dies.

Read More: [DNA Profiling in the Justice System](#)

NMCM and Monuments of National Importance

For Prelims: [National Mission on Cultural Mapping](#), [Monuments of National Importance](#), [Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts](#), [Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar](#), [Article 49](#), [Archaeological Survey of India](#), [National Monuments Authority](#)

For Mains: Government initiatives for cultural preservation and empowerment, National Mission on Cultural Mapping, Cultural mapping as a tool for rural economic development

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Culture highlighted the progress made under the [National Mission on Cultural Mapping \(NMCM\)](#) and India's efforts to protect [Monuments of National Importance \(MNI\)](#).

- These initiatives aim to document the country's rich cultural heritage, revitalize rural economies, and ensure the preservation of historical sites for future generations.

What is the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)?

- **About:** The NMCM, launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Culture, aims to **document, preserve, and promote India's cultural heritage** by creating a comprehensive **database of cultural assets, artists, and art forms** to enhance cultural vibrancy nationwide.
- **Key Objectives:** Define and document the unique cultural characteristics of each village.
 - Launch cultural awareness programs like **"Hamari Sanskriti Hamari Pahchan" (Our Culture, Our Identity)**.
 - Utilise cultural mapping to empower rural communities and boost economic development.
 - Establish a **National Cultural Working Place (NCWP) portal** for information sharing, participation, performance, and awards across all art forms.
 - Identify locations for **Kala Grams, Craft Melas, and other cultural hubs** for idea exchange and promotion of cultural tourism.
- **Implementation:** NMCM is administered by the Ministry of Culture and executed under the guidance of the [Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts \(IGNCA\)](#).
 - **Common Services Centres (CSC) e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC)**, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under the **Ministry of Electronics & IT (Meity)**, is given the task by the Ministry of Culture to carry out the NMCM.
- **Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD):** NMCM in 2023 as part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**, launched the [Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar \(MGMD\) portal](#) that documents the cultural heritage of 6.5 lakh villages in India.
 - Under the MGMD, information is collected in **seven broad categories**.
 - Arts and Crafts Village,

- Ecologically Oriented Village,
- Scholastic Village linked with Textual and Scriptural Traditions of India,
- Epic Village associated with the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and/or Puranic legends,
- Historical Village connected to Local and National History,
- Architectural Heritage Village,
- Any other characteristics that may need highlighting, such as fishing villages, horticulture villages, shepherding villages, etc.
- Currently, **4.5 lakh villages live on the portal**, showcasing elements like oral traditions, art forms, food, festivals, and local landmarks.
- The initiative strengthens cultural identity, empowers rural communities, and promotes economic development through the documentation and promotion of cultural assets.

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited

- CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, SPV set up under the **Companies Act, 1956** oversees the implementation of the CSC scheme, providing a framework for service delivery to citizens.
 - The vision of CSC is to create an Information technology (IT)-enabled network connecting **local populations with essential services**, promoting a socially, financially, and digitally inclusive society, especially in rural areas.

Cultural Mapping

- Cultural mapping records the unique cultural aspects of a region, including **local stories, rituals, arts, languages, heritage, and cuisines, defining local culture**.
 - It documents both **tangible and intangible assets** to create cultural resource mapping.

What are Monuments of National Importance?

- **Monuments of National Importance:** Monuments are remnants of India's rich past, showcasing culture, art, and architecture.
 - They include a variety of sites such as **prehistoric locations, rock-shelters, temples, churches, mosques, tombs, forts**, and more, representing our diverse cultural heritage across the country.
 - The **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958 (amended in 2010)**, provides for the declaration, conservation, and protection of ancient and historical monuments, archaeological sites, and remains of national importance.
 - A monument or site must **be at least 100 years old to be considered for this status**.
- **Process of Declaration:** The Central Government notifies its intention to declare a site of national importance, inviting public objections within two months. After considering objections, it may officially declare the site through a gazette notification.
- **MNI in India:** Currently, there are **3697 ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains declared** as of national importance in the country.
- **Efforts to Protect MNI:**
 - **Directive Principles of State Policy: Article 49 of the Indian Constitution** mandates that the State should protect monuments, places, and objects of national importance from destruction, disfigurement, removal, or export, as per laws made by Parliament.
 - **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) :** The **ASI** under the Ministry of Culture, is responsible for conserving and maintaining MNIs.
 - A 100-meter radius around the monument is a '**prohibited area**' with a construction ban, while the **next 200 meters is a 'regulated area'** with construction restrictions.
 - The **ASI can delist monuments (Section 35 of AMASR Act, 1958)**, if it is no longer nationally important, which means they **will no longer be protected or maintained**.

- Once delisted, construction and urbanisation activities can proceed around the site.
- **National Monuments Authority (NMA):** The [NMA](#), established under the **AMASR Act, 2010**, grants permissions for construction in the prohibited and regulated areas around centrally protected monuments to ensure their protection and preservation.

India's Other Initiatives Related to Art and Culture:

- [Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana](#)
- [Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage.](#)
- [Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.](#)
- [Dekho Apna Desh Initiative](#)
- [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)
- [Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive \(PRASAD\)](#)
- [Adopt a Heritage Programme](#)
- [Project Mausam](#)

Drishti Mains Question:

Examine the role of the National Mission on Cultural Mapping in promoting India's cultural heritage and rural empowerment.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q.1 Safeguarding the Indian Art Heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. **(2018)**

Q.2 Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss. **(2020)**

One Rank One Pension (OROP)

For Prelims: [One Rank One Pension \(OROP\) scheme](#), [Supreme Court](#)

For Mains: Key Features of OROP, Challenges and Implications of OROP

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister commemorated the implementation of the [One Rank One Pension \(OROP\) scheme](#). The scheme was **officially implemented on 7th November 2015**, with **benefits effective from 1st July 2014**.

- OROP aims to **provide uniform pension benefits to armed forces personnel** based on their **rank and length of service**, reaffirming the government's commitment to veterans and

their families.

What is OROP?

- **Background:**
 - **The K.P. Singh Dev Committee (1984)** recommended addressing 'One Rank One Pension', based on the established pension principles for [Supreme Court](#) and [High Court judges](#).
 - **The 4th Central Pay Commission** found equalizing pensions challenging, requiring major administrative efforts without ensuring consistent benefits for all pensioners.
 - **The 5th Central Pay Commission opposed 'One Rank One Pension'**, arguing that additional benefits shouldn't extend to pensioners due to changes in job roles and qualifications.
 - **The Cabinet Secretary Committee (2009)** rejected 'One Rank One Pension', but suggested measures to reduce the pension disparity between retirees.
 - **The Rajya Sabha Petition Committee** recommended the implementation of 'One Rank One Pension' for all Defence Forces personnel.
- **Definition:** OROP ensures that **all armed forces personnel retiring at the same rank receive the same pension**, regardless of their retirement date. Eg, a General who retired in the year 1980 will be receiving the same pension as a General who retired in the year 2015.
 - OROP addresses long-standing demands from veterans for equitable pension distribution, recognising their sacrifices and service to the nation.
- **Key Features of OROP:**
 - **Pensions are determined by rank and length of service**, ensuring fairness among retirees, while also protecting those already receiving above-average amounts.
 - **Pension Revision:** The pension will be **re-fixed every five years** to account for changes in salaries and pensions of serving personnel. The first revision took place on **1st July 2019**.
 - **Financial Implications:** The estimated cost for implementing OROP revisions is approximately **Rs 8,450 crore annually**.
 - **Beneficiaries:** Over **25.13 lakh armed forces pensioners** and their families will benefit from this scheme.
 - Includes provisions for **family pensioners, war widows, and disabled pensioners**.
 - **Uttar Pradesh and Punjab** have the highest number of OROP beneficiaries.
- **Supreme Court Ruling on OROP:**
 - The [Supreme Court](#) in **Indian Ex-Servicemen Movement v Union of India Case**, **affirmed the constitutional validity of the OROP** scheme, determining that different pensions for personnel of the same rank based on their retirement dates are not arbitrary.
 - It emphasized that differences in pensions arise from various factors such as **Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP)** and base salary calculations.

10 years of OROP



A Milestone for Empowering Ex-Servicemen



Total Financial Implication for 2024-2025 -
₹4,468.83 Crore (From July 2024 to February 2025)

Disbursement to Pensioners till 30 September, 2024 -
₹895.53 Crore

OROP EXPENDITURE SERVICE PENSIONERS :LAST 10 YEARS



What are the Socio-Economic Implications of OROP?

- **Welfare Enhancement:** OROP significantly **improves the financial security of veterans** and their families, contributing to their overall well-being.
- **Economic Impact:** Increased pensions can lead to **higher disposable income** for veterans, stimulating local economies through increased spending.
- **Social Recognition:** Implementing OROP serves as a public acknowledgment of the sacrifices made by armed forces personnel, fostering a sense of pride and respect within society.
- **Uniform Pension:** Ensures equal pensions for personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service, irrespective of retirement date.
 - Pension is **re-fixed every five years** to keep up with current standards.

10 years of OROP

एक-रैंक एक-पेंशन
ONE RANK ONE PENSION



A Milestone for Empowering Ex-Servicemen

Total OROP-III Beneficiaries- 21.56 lakhs

Total Rs 1,24,000 Cr additional funds expended since 2014 on account of OROP

	OROP -I Wef 1.7.2014	OROP -I Wef 1.7.2014	OROP-III Wef 1.7.2024
No of Armed Forces Pensioners/family pensioners Beneficiaries.	20.60 Lakh	25 Lakh (includes 4.52 lakh New Retirees from 1.7.2014- 30.06.2019)	21.56 Lakh (includes 3.54 lakh New Retirees from 1.7.2019- 30.06.2024)
Average annual expenditure	Around Rs 12,000 Crore		

OROP Phases	Beneficiaries	Average Annual Expenditure	Total Service pensioners exp	Total family Pensioners exp
OROP-I	Around 25.14 lakh	Around Rs 12,000 Crore	82203.08	10046.82
OROP-II			23953	7368.98
OROP-III			1076.51	325.95
			82203.08	10046.82
		Grand Total	1,24,974.34	

(All Amount in Rs Crore)

What are the Issues in Implementation of the OROP Scheme?

- **High Cost:** Implementation cost is significantly higher than initially estimated, impacting the exchequer.
 - **Example:** Initially estimated at Rs. 500 crore, the actual cost is between Rs. 8000-10000 crore.
- **Administrative Challenges:** Difficulties in retrieving and verifying past records for eligible personnel.
 - **Example:** Challenges in accessing historical service records to provide accurate benefits.
- **Complex Implementation:** Administrative, financial, and legal complications in executing the scheme effectively.
 - **Example:** Legal and logistical issues in ensuring seamless delivery of pension benefits to all eligible individuals.

Drishti Mains Question:

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

Prelims

Q. As per the NSSO 70th Round “Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households”, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. Rajasthan has the highest percentage share of agricultural households among its rural households.
2. Out of the total agricultural households in the country, a little over 60 percent belong to OBCs.
3. In Kerala, a little over 60 percent of agricultural households reported to have received maximum income from sources other than agricultural activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: c

Q. In a given year in India, official poverty lines are higher in some States than in others because (2019)

- (a) poverty rates vary from State to State
- (b) price levels vary from State to State
- (c) Gross State Product varies from State to State
- (d) quality of public distribution varies from State to State

Ans: (b)