



Citizenship (Amendment) Bill

Description

Theme :-

- In January, Lok Sabha passed Citizenship amendment bill, 2016 which seeks to amend Citizenship act 1955.
- This bill seeks to provide citizenship to illegal migrants who belongs to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian religious communities and from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan. The bill prevents these illegal migrants from being imprisoned and deported.
- It proposes to grant permanent citizenship to these migrants after staying in India for 6 years as opposed to earlier rule of 11 years.
- The Bill allows cancellation of Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) registration for violation of any law. This creates panic among Overseas Citizens of India.

In Favor :-

- India has a moral obligation to provide homeland to those who are rendered stateless . Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan are India's neighbour countries, which have a history of persecuting religious minorities. Several migrants from these regions appealed to India for citizenship, because it will be very difficult for them to get citizenship in any other country.
- Indian government made it clear that these migrants can stay anywhere in India and not just in northeast.
- Government promised to take steps to protect and promote Assam's indigenous people's interests, language & culture. Formation of a high-level committee is proposed.
- Indian government is also proposing to give scheduled tribe status to 6 Assamese ethnic communities. This will eventually give tribal status to Assam, which provides special benefits

Against :-

- This bill puts pressure on Assamese natural resources and employment opportunities. It threatens to dilute the culture and language of indigenous people of Assam



- Though government mentioned that the migrants of particular religions can stay anywhere in India and not just the northeast, it didn't take steps to distribute the migrant populations in the states of India. In the absence of steps from government, the migrants tend to stay in Northeastern states because of the familiarity and because of the fear of staying in unknown region.
- It discriminates people of only one religion, that is Muslims. This is against the secular nature of India. Many leaders struggled hard in the past to not let India become a Hindu country. But the present steps taken by Indian government may make the past leaders' effort go into vain. This may also make Indian Muslims insecure.
- When India is trying to provide homeland to refugees, why is it giving homeland to only people from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh and why not to people of Myanmar, Nepal, Srilanka etc.? India's stance on Rohingya muslim refugees from Myanmar was not positive.
- This bill violates Article 14, which guarantees equality to everyone irrespective of their religion whether they are citizens of India or not.
- Several protests in the past about the influx of migrants from Bangladesh resulted in 'Assam Accord of 1985', which states that illegal migrants from Bangladesh that came after March 1971 would be deported. Citizenship amendment bill is against to Assam Accord of 1985.
- This bill threatens the federal nature of Indian constitution, because it was passed though the North eastern states are not supporting it.

Conclusion :-

Though the intention of providing homeland to refugees is noble, its implementation should not create panic among other people. India is a democratic country and hence the government should consider the interests of everyone.

Instead of assigning the responsibility of migrants to only Northeastern states, government should effectively take steps to distribute the people among all states of the country. This bill will further alienate the Northeastern states from the rest of the country because their interests are not taken into proper consideration. And discriminating against a particular religion is against to the secular nature of our country and is not at all right.

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