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What is the National Register of Citizens?

- 'National Register of Citizens (NRC)' is a record of names of all genuine citizens of India in the state of Assam. It was first prepared after the 1951 Census of India.
- The NRC is now being updated to include the names of citizens of India or their decedents whose name appears in the NRC,1951 or in any of the electoral rolls till 24 March 1971 or in any one of the other admissible documents issued up to midnight of 24 March 1971, which would prove their presence in Assam or in any part of India on or before 24 March 1971.
- The purpose of NRC is to identify illegal immigrants who migrated to India on or after 24 March 1971 and to verify the 'D-Voters' who have applied for inclusion of their names in the NRC.

Merits :-

- India has already become a resource-scarce country. We are unable to deliver the basic necessities to the genuine Indian citizens, and a large number of additional immigrants will further worsen the conditions. The efficient NRC will help us in identifying the illegal immigrants and some steps can be taken for their deportation.
- Curbing their voting rights can be beneficial to us. As it will avoid the illegal immigrants from swinging elections in favour of those who promise them legitimacy.
- Will send a strong message that illegal immigrants are not welcome here.

Demerits :-

- The present process lacks impartiality, transparency and equality. Updating or maintaining an NRC with such a huge population, and that too people with less income and low literacy is a very tedious task. And all efforts should be made to minimize injustice to anyone.
- The NRC body and the Foreign Tribunals in Assam are functioning behind the curtains and its functioning is clearly signalling towards ruling party's agenda of getting rid of

Minorities. Earlier retired judges were carefully selected for Foreign Tribunals but now any lawyer who is above 50 on 25 April 2015 and has 10 years of experience can volunteer for FT and gets a seat. Various online sources have reported that the FT is full of people sharing ruling party's ideology and are asked to perform well.

- This 'performance pressure' has led to bad justice. People are tired of showing their documents, proving their identities but the FT is never satisfied. Minor clerical mistakes have resulted in the listing of Indian citizens as Foreigners. At times FT has gone beyond scope of its power and ordered arrest, detention, revoked ration cards etc. thus, troubling a poor Indian.
- Increased feeling of alienation in the Muslims and animosity in orthodox Hindus, leading to communal unrest which is already on the rise since the BJP came to power.
- The government is ready to exempt illegal Hindu immigrants, leading to unequal treatment.
- If this continues India will soon lose its credibility on the international forum while voicing against China and Pakistan as both the countries follow the same ideology of exploitation and polarization of minorities and India will soon join their league.
- With the faltering mechanism, these already poor and helpless genuine Indians will lose their right to work, to healthcare and education, and housing.

Conclusion :-

We exactly don't know what was government thinking when it thought of this step. What will the government do with these illegal immigrants? Will it keep them in detention centres? Or will it send them to Bangladesh?

Bangladesh will certainly not accept them as it has already told India that there has been no illegal immigration since 1971. So, will these people spend the rest of their lives in detention centres? What will their children do? Do they not have the claim to Indian citizenship? Will the government start splitting families?

The world is already viewing this step as against the Muslims and government's Citizenship Amendment Bill guarantees citizenship to illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who are Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain or Parsi but excludes those who are Muslim, will further reinforce their beliefs. Thus, making India a very different country than what it and ideologies were.

Your Turn...

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