



***By extension: NRC for Tripura***

***This article is related to Paper-II (Governance)***

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***The Hindu***

***"An NRC for Tripura will risk creating new fault lines in the State"***

Just three months after the final draft of the National Register of Citizens for Assam was released, the Supreme Court has tagged a petition seeking a similar process for Tripura. The petition now tagged to the Assam case was heard by a bench headed by the Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, on Monday. The petitioners, a group of activists from Tripura, sought a process to identify illegal migrants and deport them from the State. They maintained that the influx amounted to "external aggression" and that they have turned the tribal people into a minority in their own native land. Much of the migration into Tripura occurred before the creation of Bangladesh. The petition takes recourse to the 1993 tripartite accord signed by the Government of India with the All Tripura Tribal Force that asked for the repatriation of all Bangladeshi nationals who had come to Tripura after March 25, 1971 and are not in possession of valid documents authorising their presence in the State. In fact, the petitioners go even further than the terms of the accord to demand that the cut-off date for the recognition of migrants should be July 1949, based on Article 6 of the Constitution. These demands must be contextualised in the light of the developments in Tripura over the last four decades. As early as in 1979, after years of struggle, the tribal people of the State had gained special autonomy provisions, the institution of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council and recognition of their spoken language, among other assurances. Since then, the empowerment of the council and the protection of tribal rights have steadily eroded the significant tribal versus non-tribal differences that once existed in the State.

Over the last three decades, multiple insurgent groups have ended violent struggles — either quelled by force of law or as a result of conceding vital demands for preserving the gains made by earlier tribal struggles. The judicial-bureaucratic process of hearing a petition to seek the deportation of long-settled migrants is fraught with problems, not dissimilar to those already being faced in Assam. The question of what awaits the four million people whose names did not figure in the final NRC draft, and have been given a second chance to prove their antecedents, still hangs in the balance. Notwithstanding the fact that the NRC process in Assam has an overall popular legitimacy across most political parties, there is no answer to how the deportation process could (or should) proceed. Embarking on any such bureaucratic exercise without considering its deep humanitarian impact will only create new fault lines — especially in a State like Tripura where there is no such unanimity of views on the NRC process. It will undo years of work to bring about a reconciliation between Bengali-speaking and tribal people. The Supreme Court should be cognisant of this while hearing the petition.



## National Register of Citizens

### Why in the discussion?

- Recently, the Supreme Court has issued notice to the Central Government and the Election Commission regarding the National Register of Citizens in Tripura.
- The court has issued a notice seeking response to the renewal of NRC in Tripura.
- The bench of the Supreme Court with Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice SK Kaul, KJ Joseph sent a notice to the Election Commission and the Central Government.
- Actually, a petition was filed in the court regarding NRC in Tripura, on the hearing of which the court said that notices has been issued on the implementation of the procedure the NRC.
- The Supreme Court has recently issued a notice to the Tripura government and has ordered that it should be up-to-date NRC in Tripura like Assam, which can detect the illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and they could be sent back.

### Background

- A petition was filed in the Supreme Court.
- It was argued that entry of illegal immigrants in Tripura is equivalent to "external aggression" under section 355 of the Constitution.
- These intruders being in the state of Tripura is a violation of the political rights of citizens of this state. The instructions of the Supreme Court mentioned above have been issued in this context.

### Implications of infiltration in Tripura

- Earlier, Tripura used to be a tribal state. But today it is no longer a tribal state.
- Native residents living here have become minority in their own state.
- Due to continuous infiltration from Bangladesh, there has been a widespread change in the nature of Tripura's population.

### What is it?

- In Assam, after the census of 1951, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was started, in which, if the name of the person was not there, he was considered illegal.

- Assam is the only state to adopt this system.
- According to the Assam Accord 1985, the people entering the state till midnight of March 24, 1971 are the only Indian citizens.
- After the creation of NRC in 1951, NRC was handed over to the Data Police in 1960.

### What is the matter

- NRC was last updated in 1951. At that time the names of eight million citizens in Assam were registered under this register.
- Since then, the process of identifying illegal immigrants has not only continued to be in debate, it has also become a controversial issue in the state's politics.
- Between 1979 and 1985, A.A.S.U. conducted a 6-year movement seeking identification of illegal immigrants and demanding deportation.
- The movement ceased to an end on August 15, 1985 after signing the Assam Accord.
- Between 1951 and 1961, people who came to Assam got the right of complete citizenship and to vote.
- The verification of the citizens was started in 2015 under the supervision of the Supreme Court. In it, 12 types of certificates and papers were considered to be citizenship proof.

### What did the Supreme Court say?

- The entire process is being monitored by the Supreme Court.
- On the basis of the publication of draft of the National Register of Citizens of Assam, no punitive action can be taken against anyone, as it is just a draft.
- Central government has been directed to prepare standard operating procedures for the disposal of claims and objections in the context of this draft.
- This Standard Operating Procedure will be offered for approval before 16.
- This process should be fair and all of them should get suitable opportunities, whose names are not included in this list.

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**Expected Questions (Pre Examination)**

**1. Consider the following statements regarding National Register of Citizens (NRC)-**

1. Only Assam adopted the NRC.
2. National Register of Citizens was started after Census of 1961 .

Which of the above statements is/ are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**2. Consider the following statements-**

1. NRC is being prepared for Tripura also.

2. According to Assam Accord, people residing in the state as per the Census of 1951 are Indians.

Which of the above statements is/ are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Note :**

The answer of the pre-examination (expected questions) on 12 Oct is 1(d) and 2(c) .

**Expected Questions (Mains Examination)**

- Q. "Demand for National Register of Citizens (NRC) by the people of Assam for their cultural, social and linguistic identities may exaggerate the unrest in the northeastern states." To what extent do you agree with this statement. (250 Words)**