

Census in India

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Why in news?

- The Census enumeration scheduled to take place in 2021 has been pushed to 2024-25 until further orders.
- In a letter sent to all states and Union Territories last month, the office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) has extended the deadline for freezing administrative boundaries to January 1, 2024.
 - The Census enumeration can begin only a few months after administrative boundaries are frozen.
- With this, the exercise related to **National Population Register** (NPR) would also get delayed.
 - NPR is to be updated with the first phase of Census 2021.

What is Census in India?

- Population Census provides basic statistics on state of human resources, demography, culture and economic structure at local, regional and national level.
- Beginning in the year 1872, when the first census was conducted non-synchronously, the census enumeration exercise in India is carried out in every 10 years.
 - The first synchronous census was taken under British rule in 1881, by W.C. Plowden, Census Commissioner of India.
- The responsibility of conducting the decadal census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, Ministry of Home Affairs.

What is the Legal/Constitutional basis of Census in India?

- Population census is listed in **Union List (entry 69)** of Seventh Schedule in Indian Constitution.
- Census is conducted under the provisions of the **Census Act, 1948**.

What is the Process of census enumeration?

- The Census Operations in India have been carried out in two phases:
 - Houselisting and Housing Census and
 - Population Enumeration.
- The Population Enumeration follows the Housing Census within a gap of six to eight months.
- In Population Enumeration phase each person is enumerated and her/his individual particulars like Age, Marital status, Religion, mother tongue etc.

Some of the features of upcoming census

- The ensuing decadal Census of India will be the 16th in series and 8th after independence.
- In the history of Indian Census, for the first time, the **Census data will be collected digitally** i.e., on Mobile App in the ensuing census.
- Also, self-enumeration facility will be provided for the first time in the forthcoming Census.

What is National Population Register (NPR)?

About

- The NPR is a register of usual residents of the country. It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
 - According to the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, a usual resident is:
 - a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more; or
 - a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.
 - It includes both Indian citizens as well as a foreign citizen.
- The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
- The first National Population Register was prepared in 2010 and updating this data was done during 2015 by conducting door to door survey.

- The next National Population Register shall be held along with the Census 2021.
- Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the work of NPR updation and other related field activities got postponed.
- NPR is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) under the Home Ministry.

What is the Legal basis of NPR?

- NPR is prepared under Rule 3 of the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
 - These rules were framed under the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The NPR is different from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which excludes the foreign citizens.
 - NRC is a register containing details of Indian Citizens living in India and outside India.

News Summary: Census to be delayed again, deadline for freezing administrative boundaries pushed to January 1, 2024

- The deadline to freeze the administrative boundaries of districts, tehsils and towns, among others, has been extended till December 31, 2023.
- This rules out the Census exercise before the 2024 General Elections.
 - The decennial Census exercise that was to be conducted in 2021 was postponed indefinitely, initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Requirements before Census exercise

- Before every Census, every state is required to provide information to the Registrar General of India (RGI) on changes in the number of notified districts, villages, towns and other administrative units since the previous Census.
 - The Registrar General of India is the head of the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner.
 - It is responsible for conducting the **decennial Census** of India and **maintaining the Civil Registration System in the country**.
 - The Registrar General of India serves as the principal advisor to the Government of India on all matters related to the registration of births, deaths, and marriages.
 - The office also collects and analyzes demographic and socio-economic data for policy planning and implementation purposes.
- Boundaries of administrative units are frozen three months before the Census exercise begins.
 - As per **Rule 8(iv) of Census Rules, 1990**, the boundaries of the administrative units shall be frozen from the date intimated by the Census Commissioner, which shall not be earlier than one year from

the Census reference date.

- In this period, the data is compiled and shared with RGI for preparatory work on the Census.
- Also, Census work is preceded by the house-listing enumeration.

Q1) What is the importance of census enumeration exercise?

Census is the basis for reviewing the country's progress in the past decade on socio-economic parameters, monitoring the ongoing schemes of the government and plan for the future.

Q2) Who are usual residents of India?

According to the Citizenship Rules, 2003, a usual resident is: a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more; or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more. It includes both Indian citizens as well as a foreign citizen.

Source: [Census to be delayed again, deadline for freezing administrative boundaries pushed to January 1, 2024](#) | [Census Division](#) | [Office of Registrar General and census Commissioner](#) | [The Hindu](#)

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