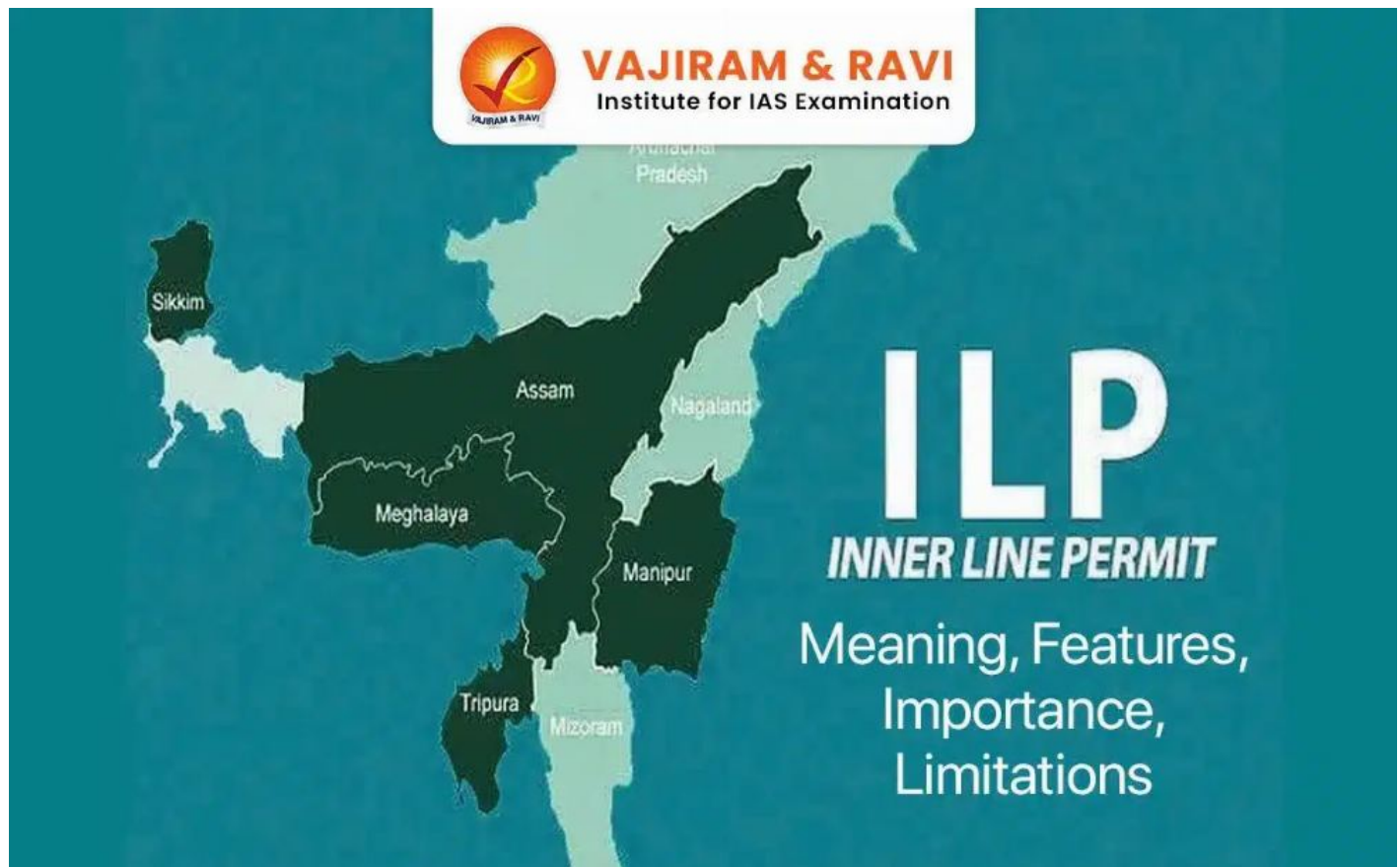


Inner Line Permit, Meaning, Features, Importance, Limitations

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The Inner Line Permit (ILP) system is an offshoot of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, by which an “Inner Line” was prescribed for the tribal areas. It is an official document issued by the state governments of ILP states for visiting any restricted or protected areas of these states, as defined by the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order of 1958. Currently, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur are the ILP states.

ILP was introduced in India to protect the indigenous tribes from exploitation in the name of tourism and to preserve the rich heritage of their traditions and cultures.

ILP and the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order

The Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, to give effect to the Foreigners Act, 1946, defines the ‘Inner Line’ throughout India starting from Jammu and Kashmir to Mizoram. It is the last point, up to the international border, where a foreign traveller can visit on a visa and Indian citizens can visit without the requirement of any special permit. Beyond this point, the visitor needs to have the Special Permit.

- **Protected and Restricted Areas:**

- Under the **Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order of 1958**, all areas falling between the 'Inner Line' and the 'International Border of the State' have been declared as "**Protected Areas**," whereas, areas falling between the 'Inner Line' and the 'Territory occupied by indigenous tribes' as "**Restricted Areas**".
- Currently, **Protected Areas are located** in the following States/UT:
 - Whole of Arunachal Pradesh
 - Parts of Himachal Pradesh
 - Parts of Jammu & Kashmir
 - Parts of Rajasthan
 - Whole of Sikkim (partly in Protected Areas and partly in Restricted Areas).
- Under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963, Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Entire UT) and Sikkim (Part of the State) are included as '**Restricted**' Areas.
- **Inner Line Permit:** The Inner Line Permit is the travel document that must be availed by **domestic tourists** to visit these Protected and Restricted Areas of the ILP states, for a limited period.
 - **ILP States:** Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur.
- **Protected Area Permit:** For foreign tourists (except Bhutanese), the permit is known as the Protected Area Permit.
 - Protected areas are broader than the Inner Line areas.
- **Entry permit to Lakshadweep:** According to the **Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands (Restriction on Entry and Residence) Rules, 1967**, every person, who is not a native of these islands, shall have to obtain a permit from the Competent authority, to enter into and residing in these islands.

Inner Line Permit System Features

The concept of ILP goes back to the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation**, also known as the **Inner Line Regulation, 1873**. It was the **British's first administrative policy** in the North East. After Independence, the Indian government replaced "British subjects" with "Citizens of India" in 1950 and brought the ILP system.

- **Types of ILP:** There are different types of ILPs, one for tourists and another for people who plan to stay for an extended period, often for work.
- **Further Demands:** The three states with the highest migration rates are **Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya**, none of which have an ILP system.
- Demand for the overall implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) exists in all NE states.

Inner Line Permit System Importance

The Inner Line Permit was created to preserve the indigenous character of all tribes living in the restricted areas of the country's northeastern regions.

- The influx of a large number of illegal migrants is one of the reasons for the introduction of this system.
- Other reasons for its introduction include the protection of their religious, social, and customary laws, the ownership and transfer of land, the administration of civil and criminal justice, and so on.

Inner Line Permit System Criticism

The British, following **isolationist policy**, established an inner line to preserve the strategic British stranglehold on areas, enable commercial purposes and acquisition of land for plantations. Despite its benefits, the system has been criticised for various reasons.

- **Impact on Tourism:** The permit creates a regulatory barrier to tourism. An instrument designed to protect tribals has inadvertently become a means of isolating them. The ILP system is detrimental to tourism, which is the primary economic activity of the region.
 - Some states, such as Arunachal Pradesh, have devised novel solutions, such as granting an e-ILP, which streamlines the process.
- **Impact on the economy:** The ILP system is fundamentally opposed to the social integration, development and technological advancement of the region.
 - ILP in a state bars people from other North-Eastern states also. This hampers labour and small traders' movement which is necessary for access to local markets, coal fields, and various types of work in the neighbouring states.
 - Further, it hampers the investment in these regions.
- **Illegal Migration:** Even after the inner line permit is implemented, the menace of illegal migration has not stopped in northeastern states.

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