

# **Census 2025**

Posted at: 30/11/2024

## Census 2025 as a Comprehensive Citizen Registry

**Context:** The **2025 Census**, along with updating the **National Population Register (NPR)**, is the first step towards the **National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC)**. The NRIC aims to differentiate citizens from non-citizens, strengthening governance and security. However, it raises concerns about its implementation, data privacy, and possible exclusion.

#### **Historical Background**

The NRIC originates from the **Citizenship Act of 1955**, inspired by the **1951 Census**. It gained momentum after the **Kargil War (1999)** when the **Subrahmanyam Committee** highlighted the need for a citizen database for national security. This led to **Section 14A**, making citizen registration mandatory.

#### **Objectives and Benefits**

- 1. **Strengthening National Security:** Maintains a verified registry to counter illegal immigration and identity fraud.
- 2. **Streamlining Identity Verification**: Simplifies legal and administrative processes by unifying citizenship proof.
- 3. Targeted Welfare Delivery: Ensures subsidies and welfare programs benefit eligible citizens, reducing misuse.

#### **NPR-NRIC Process**

The NRIC process involves:

- Collecting demographic data during Census operations.
- Verification and appeals to ensure accuracy and transparency.
  Unlike Aadhaar, which includes all residents, the NRIC specifically verifies citizenship.

#### Challenges

- 1. **Documentation Issues**: Many lack proper citizenship documents, especially in rural and marginalized communities.
- 2. Data Privacy: Managing sensitive data poses risks of misuse and surveillance.
- 3. Exclusion Fears: Vulnerable groups risk being left out, causing unrest.

### **Lessons and Moving Forward**

The **Assam NRC** experience shows the need for fairness and transparency to avoid errors and exclusion. Addressing privacy concerns and engaging citizens through awareness campaigns will be essential for successful implementation.

#### Conclusion

The **NRIC initiative** has the potential to enhance governance and security. However, overcoming challenges of documentation, data protection, and inclusivity will be critical to its success. Lessons from past implementations can guide a fair and effective rollout.

