Syllabus subtopic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims and mains focus: about the key features of the Cab and the controversy around it, about NRC, ILP

News: The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) that seeks to give citizenship to refugees from the Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh and Zoroastrian communities fleeing religious persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Govt.'s stand

- Under the principle of reasonable classification citizenship can be granted and there is no violation of Article 14. India can’t be a mute spectator to the religious persecution of minorities happening in our neighbouring countries. We have given refuge to everyone without exception at various points of time in history.
- The Muslim population had grown to 14% from 9.8%. This Bill will not affect Indian Muslims or their rights at all.
- Other neighbouring countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka were not mentioned as those were not theocratic states.
- This is a simple amendment but hits at illegal migrants.
- This will benefit the Bengali refugees the most. There is no need to fear now. Anyone who has or does not have document is welcome.
- Refugees need not fear but those coming here illegally are not welcome.
- The northeast would not be touched. The majority of parties representing the northeastern States supported the Bill, as their concerns had been taken care of.

ILP for Manipur

Union Home Minister told the Lok Sabha on Monday that Manipur would be brought under the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system, thereby exempting it from the provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

Nagaland and Mizoram are protected by the ILP and it will continue to remain protected.

As per the Bill, the amendments to the Citizenship Act, 1955, if approved, will not apply to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland that are protected by the ILP system. The addition of Manipur to the list of ILP-protected States means that the Bill will only be applicable in some parts of Tripura and Assam.

Citizens of other States require the ILP to visit the protected areas as per the Bengal Eastern
Frontier Regulation, 1873. This means that the illegal migrants from the six minority communities who will become Indian citizens as per the proposed amendment will not be able to take up jobs, open businesses or settle down in these areas and will require a permit to enter the States.

The ILP can be extended to Manipur through an executive order. Such an arrangement existed before.

Several northeastern States, including the BJP-ruled Manipur, have erupted in protests against the Bill. There is a fear that “outsiders” could settle in these areas, affecting the indigenous communities and local tribes.

About NRC

The NRC is the list of Indian citizens and was prepared in 1951, following the census of 1951.

The process of NRC update was taken up in Assam as per a Supreme Court order in 2013.

In order to wean out cases of illegal migration from Bangladesh and other adjoining areas, NRC updation was carried out under The Citizenship Act, 1955, and according to rules framed in the Assam Accord.

The Assam government released the final draft of NRC on July 30, 2018. The list incorporates names of 2.89 crore people out of 3.29 crore applicants. The names of 40.07 lakh people have been left out.

Why is it being carried out?

Crisis of identity: Influx of immigrants has created a crisis of identity among the indigenous. Locals fear that their cultural survival will be affected, political control weakened and employment opportunities undermined because of immigrants.

Environmental degradation: Large areas of forest land were encroached upon by the immigrants for settlement and cultivation. The state experienced declining percent of land area under forest from 39% in 1951-52 to about 30% now.

Increase financial burden: Immigration has increased pressure on the part of state government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities to the immigrants.

Assam agitation:

The failure of government to respond the issue of illegal migration led to the agitation by the Assamese under the leadership of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and All Assam Student’s Union (AASU). Assam witnessed governmental instability, sustained civil disobedience campaigns and worst cases of ethnic violence. Assam accord was the result of this agitation.
Illegal voters: Most of the Bangladeshi immigrants have got their names enlisted in the voting list illegally, thereby claiming themselves as citizens of the state. The immigrant’s population act as a vote bank for the political parties in Assam.