Syllabus subtopic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Prelims and Mains focus: about NPR and the controversy around its implementation

News: The central government proposes to update the National Population Register (NPR), which already has an electronic database of more than 119 crore residents, by verifying the details of all respondents through house-to-house enumeration, according to an official manual for conducting the fresh NPR exercise.

Background

- The NPR exercise has become controversial because the Citizenship Rules, 2003, link the Population Register to the creation of a National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) or National Register of Citizens.
- Coupled with the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, which excludes Muslims, fears about an NPRNRC have brought lakhs of people on to the streets in protest.

About NPR

- Data for the NPR was first collected in 2010 and updated in 2015. The Modi government has proposed that the next phase of NPR be conducted, along with the census exercise, between April and September 2020.
- The enumerators, all government officials, will “modify and correct the demographic data items”. They are also tasked with collecting mobile, voter card, Indian passport and driving licence numbers from residents.
- The govt. manual requires the “inclusion of all new residents, new households found in the local area during the field work”.

Other details as mentioned in the manual

- The 2010 NPR form collected details on 15 parameters, whereas a “pretest” form that was used to collect data on a trial basis from 30 lakh people in September this year sought additional details on columns such as “place of birth of father and mother, last place of residence,” etc. It also added details
such as Aadhaar number, voter ID card number, mobile phone number and driving licence number.

- The manual states that in cases where the date of birth or age was not known, the enumerator could help the respondent by “stimulating her/his memory” with reference to historical events well known in the area such as a “war, flood, earthquake, change in political regime, etc.”
- The manual says that if the respondent does not know the age of any member of the household and probing also does not help in determining the age of that person, “you will have to estimate her/his age by using your best judgment.”
- The manual was prepared before the pretest was conducted.
- The additional details related to the place of birth of the parents of a person being enlisted, Aadhar number and last place of residence were being recorded as part of basic requirements for NPR.

**About National Population Register (NPR):**

- It is a Register of usual residents of the country.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- **Definition:** A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as 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.
- The NPR database would contain demographic as well as biometric details.
- As per the provisions of the NPR, a resident identity card (RIC) will be issued to individuals over the age of 18. This will be a chip-embedded smart card containing the demographic and biometric attributes of each individual. The UID number will also be printed on the card.