Government has revived National Population Register (NPR) project at a time when National Register of Citizens has been published in Assam.

**National Population Register (NPR):**

- The NPR is a list of “usual residents of the country”. The exercise is conducted at the local, sub-district, district, state and national levels.
- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, a “usual resident of the country” is one who has been residing in a local area for at least the last six months, or intends to stay in a particular location for the next six months.
- It is mandatory for every “usual resident of India” to register in the NPR.
- The data for the NPR were first collected in 2010 along with the houselisting phase of Census 2011. In 2015, this data was further updated by conducting a door-to-door survey.
- It will be conducted in conjunction with the houselisting phase, the first phase of the Census, by the Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) under the MHA for Census 2021.

**How is NPR different from NRC?**

- Unlike the NRC, the NPR is not a citizenship enumeration drive, as it would record even a foreigner staying in a locality for more than six months.
- Only Assam will not be included, given the recently completed NRC.

**Controversy around it**

- It comes in the backdrop of the NRC excluding 19 lakh people in Assam.
- With the government insisting that the NRC would be implemented across the country, the NPR has raised anxieties around the idea of citizenship in the country.
- Even as a debate continues on Aadhaar and privacy, the NPR intends to collect a much larger amount of personal data on residents of India.
- The idea of conducting a nationwide NRC would only happen on the basis of the upcoming NPR.
- After a list of residents is created, a nationwide NRC could go about verifying the citizens from that list.

**Is the NPR a new idea?**

- The idea actually dates back to the UPA regime and was put in motion in 2009.
- In fact, at that time it had clashed with Aadhaar (UIDAI) over which project would be best suited for transferring government benefits to citizens.
- The MHA had then pushed the idea of the NPR being a better vehicle because it connected every NPR-recorded resident to a household through the Census.
- Back then, the Home Ministry push had even put the UIDAI project on the backburner.
• The exercise to update the 2015 NPR with additional data has begun and will be completed in 2020.

What kind of data will NPR collect?

• The NPR will collect both demographic data and biometric data.
• There are 15 different categories of demographic data, ranging from name and place of birth to education and occupation, that the RGI is supposed collect in the NPR.
• For biometric data it will depend on Aadhaar, for which it will seek Aadhaar details of the residents.
• Apart from this, in a test run going on across the country, the RGI is seeking details of mobile number, Aadhaar, PAN card, Driving Licence, Voter ID card and passport (in case the resident is Indian).

Why does the government want so much data?

Identifying own citizens:

• The first is the assertion that every country must have a comprehensive identity database of its residents with relevant demographic details.
• It says it will help the government formulate its policies better and also aid national security.

Streamlining data:

• The second, largely to justify the collection of data such as driving licence, voter ID and PAN numbers, is that it will only ease the life of those residing in India by cutting red tape.
• Not only will it help target government beneficiaries in a better way, but also further cut down paperwork and red tape in a similar manner that Aadhaar has done.

Preventing duplication of data:

• It is common to find different date of birth of a person on different government documents. NPR will help eliminate that.
• With NPR data, residents will not have to furnish various proofs of age, address and other details in official work. It would also eliminate duplication in voter lists, government insists.