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

Context: Following the footsteps of West Bengal, the Kerala Government has decided to put on hold all proceedings for updating the National Population Register (NPR).

Why?
Because of the apprehensions among the general public about the conduct of NPR related activities would lead to national register of citizens (NRC) in the wake of citizenship amendment act 2019.

What is 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.

Objectives: To create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.

Who is a usual resident?
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.
Components:

- 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.

What is the controversy around it?

- Comes in the backdrop of the NRC excluding lakhs of people in Assam.
- It intends to collect a much larger amount of personal data on residents of India.
- There is yet no clarity on the mechanism for protection of this vast amount of data.

What is its requirement?

- Every country must have a comprehensive identity database of its residents with relevant demographic details. It will help the government formulate its policies better and also aid national security.
- It will 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.
- 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.