STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

What is CAA, NRC and SIR?

Polity & Governance

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What is CAA, NRC and SIR?

What Is NRC? (National Register of Citizens)

The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a government record that identifies legal Indian citizens.

Its purpose is:

- To create an official list of all Indian citizens
- To detect illegal immigrants living in India without valid documents
- NRC requires people to prove their citizenship using documents that show they or their ancestors lived in India before a specific cutoff date.

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How NRC Works?

To be included in NRC, individuals must provide documents like:

- Birth certificate
- Land records
- School certificates
- Ancestral documents
- Electoral rolls
- Citizenship papers
- The idea is to verify that the person or their parents/grandparents lived in India before a chosen cutoff date.

Assam NRC (2019) – What Happened?

The NRC was implemented only in Assam, not in the rest of India.

- 3.3 crore people applied
- 19 lakh were excluded (labelled “doubtful citizens”)
- Many were poor and lacked old documents
- This created major social, political, and humanitarian concerns.

Nationwide NRC?

The government has not implemented a nationwide NRC.

It has said:

- A nationwide NRC is not currently planned
- If it is ever done, rules will be announced publicly first
- However, political debate continues because NRC is seen as a powerful citizenship-filtering tool.

What Is CAA? (Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019)

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is a law passed in 2019 that aims to give fast-track Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities from:

- Pakistan
- Bangladesh
- Afghanistan
- It applies only to six religious communities:

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1. Hindus
2. Sikhs
3. Buddhists
4. Jains
5. Christians
6. Parsis

CAA applies only to immigrants, not existing Indian citizens.

It reduces the residency requirement for these groups from 11 years to 5 years.

What CAA Does NOT Do?

- Does not remove anyone’s citizenship
- Does not apply to any Indian citizen—Muslim or non-Muslim
- Does not ask for documents from Indian residents
- Is not connected to Aadhaar, voter ID, or passport

- It only provides citizenship to people who entered India before 31 December 2014 due to religious persecution in the 3 specified countries.

Why Are CAA and NRC Discussed Together?

This is the core political debate.

- Opposition fears:
- If NRC (citizenship verification) is implemented in the future, people without documents may be excluded.
- CAA, however, allows non-Muslim immigrants to get citizenship even if they lack documents.

So critics claim:

Non-Muslims without documents may be protected by CAA

Muslims without documents may be at risk under an NRC-like process

This is why some say CAA + NRC could discriminate, even though the government denies this interpretation.

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Government's position:

- CAA is only for foreign immigrants, not Indians
- NRC is not planned, and rules are undecided
- No Indian citizen—Muslim or otherwise—will lose citizenship because of CAA or NRC
- Both laws serve different purposes

Feature	CAA	NRC
Purpose	Give citizenship to persecuted minorities from 3 countries	Identify legal Indian citizens
Applies to	Foreign immigrants	Everyone living in India
Who is affected?	Immigrants who came before 2014	All residents if NRC is implemented
Documents needed	Proof of persecution & entry year	Proof of Indian ancestry
Impact on citizenship	Grants citizenship	Can confirm or question citizenship

Feature	CAA	NRC
Religious criteria	Yes (6 religions)	No religious criteria

What is Special Intensive Revision (SIR)?

Special Intensive Revision is a focused, time-bound exercise carried out by the Election Commission to:

- Clean up electoral rolls
- Add new eligible voters
- Correct existing voter data
- Remove dead/duplicate/shifted voters
- It is conducted when the ECI feels a regular annual revision is not enough to ensure accuracy.

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Why SIR Is Done?

SIR is launched when:

- Large numbers of young voters need enrollment
- Errors or duplicate entries increase
- Boundaries/booths change
- A major election is approaching
- Population shifts occur in urban areas
- It ensures the voter list is clean, updated, and accurate.

What Happens During SIR?

During Special Intensive Revision, the ECI conducts:

1. Door-to-door verification : Booth Level Officers (BLOs) visit households to check voter details.
2. Addition of new voters : People who turned 18 or missed earlier revisions can register.
3. Correction of voter details : Correction of name, address, age, gender, photo, etc.
4. Deletion of invalid entries : Removing Duplicate voters, Dead voters, Those who moved away
5. Claims & Objections period : Public can request:

    - Additions
    - Changes

- Objections to wrong entries

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