Assam NRC draft released on August 31, 2019

What is the issue?

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is an exercise to identify Indian citizens living in Assam to check illegal migration from Bangladesh.
- The previous draft was published in July 2018 and included 2.89 crore of the 3.29 crore applicants excluding around 40 lakh people.

What are these district-wise figures?

- The Assam government recently released the district-wise figures of people excluded from the draft NRC.
- It used the above data to argue that the process of NRC was flawed.
- The release of district-wise data came weeks ahead of the scheduled publication of the final NRC on August 31, 2019.
- These figures show how many people in each district were included and excluded in the draft NRC.

What did the state government say?

- According to the data, 12.15% applicants' names were excluded from the final draft.
- In districts adjacent to the Bangladesh border, like South Salmara, 7.22% applicants were excluded from the draft NRC. This figure in Dhubri is 8.26% and in Karimganj is 7.67%.
- But districts where indigenous people live like Karbi Anglong, the figure is 14.31% and in upper Assam's Tinsukia, this figure is 13.25% where sons of the soil have been living for ages.

Why do district figures matter?

- The government has argued that the inclusion rate is higher in districts associated with migration and lower in other districts.
- The argument is based on the assumption that districts close to the border with Bangladesh are bound to have a high percentage of undocumented or illegal migrants.
- The data presented also show that Muslim-majority districts (not border districts) like Morigaon, Nagaon and Barpeta garnered high exclusion rates

15.04%, 14.12% and 13.4% exclusions respectively.

Why has BJP tabled these now?

- Last month, the government and the state BJP had demanded a sample revivification of a sample of names in the draft.
- This appeal was dismissed by the Supreme Court. Now, the government has cited these data to justify this appeal.
- The Centre and the state had both moved the SC demanding re-verification of 20% names included in the draft in border districts and of 10% of the names in other districts.
- However, the NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela told the court that the re-verification had already happened.
- After the draft NRC was published in 2018, those left out had filed claims for inclusion.
- He told the court that in the course of consideration of these claims, re-verification of 27% of the names was done, which dismissed the government's appeal based on Hajela's submission.
- In renewing the demand based on the data it presented, the government said it did not think this incidental verification was enough to ensure an error-free NRC.
- It questioned the NRC process and Hajela's role.

Source: The Indian Express

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