Registration of Birth and Death (Amendment) Bill 2023

Why in news?

Registration of Birth and Death (Amendment) Bill 2023 was tabled in Lok Sabha recently.

What is Registration of Birth and Death Act 1969?

> The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023 seeks to amend the 1969 Act.

- It is an Act to provide for the regulation of registration of births and deaths and for matters connected therewith.
- Aim - To promote uniformity and comparability in the registration of Births and Deaths across the country
- **Power-**It made registration of birth and death mandatory with the power to the *State government.*
- **Hierarchy**

Authority	Jurisdiction
Registrar General of India	At central level
Chief Registrar	At state level
District Registrar	At district level
Registrars	At local level

- **Registration**- Births, stillbirths and deaths are to be registered within 21 days of occurrence.
- **Penalty-** Violating the provisions is a punishable offence, incurring a fine of Rs 5.
- **Individual database-** The States and Union Territories has to maintain individual databases on the Civil Registration System.
- It comes under the operational control of the *Registrar General of India (RGI).*
- **Increased registration-** There has been increase in the registration due to population growth, awareness, and interconnected welfare services.
    - Example- To obtain Aadhaar card, birth certificate is required.

> *Registrar General of India is an office established under the Ministry of Home Affairs.*

What is the need of the amendment?

- The U.N. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has highlighted

that streamlining birth and death registration processes contributes “to higher registration rates and increased coverage”.

- **Case study of Bihar**- Study of Civil Registration System found registration challenges like lack of investment, poor delivery of services at the registration centres, limited computer and internet services.
- **NFHS-5 data**-Death registration for females is lower than males, poor compliance creates a data gap this leads to misguided policies.
- **Flawed death rate during COVID-**Lack of complete and timely death registration data on India’s COVID-19 deaths prevented accurate measures of mortality.
- It masked the true extent of its impact in some States more than others.
- **Delay in census**- Unable to find the estimates of poverty, hunger, education, healthcare access.
- **Preparation of database-**To ensure efficient and transparent delivery of public services.
- **Birth certificate as a single document-**
    - Admission to an educational institution,
    - Issuance of a driving licence, preparation of a voter list,
    - Aadhaar number, registration of marriage or appointment to a government job.
- **Citizen friendly**-To keep in pace with societal change and technological advancements there is a provision of digital registration.
- **Avoid multiplicity of documents**- It will provide for issuance of a passport, Aadhaar number etc., as determined by the central government to enhance the public convenience.

What are the new features of the Bill?

Features	Existing Act	New Act
Registration of birth and death	Registrar General of India will provide guidelines for registration.	Maintain database • At central level- Registrar General of India. • At state level- Chief Registrars
Death certificate	The registrar of State Government may require death certificate.	It is made mandatory for the registrar to obtain the death certificate.
Providing Registration details	After registration, the Registrar must provide extracts of the prescribed information to the person who registered it, for free.	The registrar must provide the certificates to the person who registered it within 7 days.
Provision of electronic certificates	Any person may obtain extract of the birth or death certificates from registrar as per rules	Electronic certificates is provided instead of extracts

What are the other amendments?

- **Centralised database-** The States need to compulsorily share granular, real-time data, by giving the RGI access to the Application Programming Interface.
- **360 degree surveillance-**The central data reservoir will be updated in real-time, without any human interface and independent of location.

- **Update other portals-** the centralized database will be used to update
    - National Population Registrar
    - Electoral Registrar, Driving license
    - Aadhaar, Ration card, Passport
    - And other national level database as may be notified.
- **Birth certificate as mainstay-** It assigns individuals a unified marker governing their mobility, allowing access to basic services.
- **Aadhaar integration-** Aadhaar number of parents, family members is required to be collected by the necessary authorities for providing birth and death certificates.
- **Child adoption**- It seeks to collect Aadhaar details to facilitate registration in non institutional adoption centres.
- **Appeal** - Any person aggrieved by any order of the Registrar or District Registrar may appeal to the *District Registrar or Chief Registrar*, respectively.
- Such an appeal must be made *within 30 days* from receipt of such action or order.
- The District Registrar or Chief Registrar must give their decision *within 90 days* from the date of appeal.

What are the issues?

- **More decentralisation**- It leaves people vulnerable to exploitation by those facilitating the registration process.
    - The 2022 survey in Bihar found that CRS staff demanded bribes for providing certificates which are available free of cost.
- **Inaccurate data -** Linking Aadhaar to voter-ID card resulted in deleting 55 lakh voters from the system.
    - 5 crore workers name found missing from MGNREGA scheme.
- **Security-** India doesn't have a robust security surveillance, there is a concern over absence of data bill.

References

1. The Hindu| Proposed Amendments
2. Times of India| Government introduced the bill

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