



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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Nepal Citizenship Amendment Act

Why in the news?

Nepali President Bidhya Devi Bhandari had sent back the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2006 back to the Pratinidhi Sabha i.e. the House of Representatives or the lower house of the Nepal Parliament, urging the members to reconsider the Act, which is claimed to be violating the principles of gender justices.

Why is this citizenship act needed?

1. Nepal was earlier a monarchy but it transitioned into a democracy beginning with the fall of the monarchy in 2006 and thus subsequent election of the Maoist government in 2008.
2. After the emergence of the multiparty system there was an adoption of the new constitution on 20 September 2015
3. All the Nepali citizens who were born before 20 September 2015 got citizenship through naturalization but their children remained without citizenship as for that there was need of a federal law which by that time had not been framed.
4. This amendment Act is expected to pave the way to citizenship for many such stateless youth as well as their parents.

What are the issues with Nepal Citizenship Amendment Act?

1. **GENDER INJUSTICES**: It has been criticized on the fact that it goes against the parameters of Gender injustices. It is described as follows:

- **Article 11(2b):** According to this , a person born to a father or a mother with Nepalese citizenship can get citizenship by descent.
- **Article 11(5):** According to this a person who is born to a Nepalese mother (who has lived in the country) and an unidentified father will also get citizenship by descent but this section is **humiliating for a mother as she has to declare that her husband is unidentified** , for the child to be eligible for citizenship.
- But in this case the Nepali father, he will not have to make such declaration.
- It places a condition of permanent residency on the mother (and the child) which will determine the grant of citizenship for the child.

2. CONTRAVENTION WITH THE PRESENT LAW:

- **Article 11(7):** According to this , a child born to a Nepalese mother and a father holding a foreign citizenship can get “naturalized citizenship” in accordance with the laws of Nepal which appears to contradict Article 11(2b).

Why has the amendment been framed?

- **Undermining of the culture:** There is always a concern among the orthodox sections of Nepal that Nepalese men, particularly from the Terai region that if continue to marry women from northern India then Nepalese cultural and social identity would be undermined because of this “Roti-Beti Ka Rishta” i.e Nepalese men marrying Indian women .
- **Cooling of period:** Many women could not become citizens of Nepal as they were legally subjected to the seven-year cooling off period before they could apply for citizenship in Nepal.
- As such women were stateless, children of such families were also often found to be without Nepalese citizenship.
- The new amendments have done away with the cooling off period for these stateless women.
- This will not only benefit the children of such families where the mother and children remained stateless for years but would also ensure a social egalitarian society.

Way Forward

- The reconsideration in the act is needed at this point of the hour but a real balance is to be required to maintained with the cultural identity as well. This will ensure both the goal of culture and social justice.

Samarth singh

'MISSING' SCIENTIFIC TEMPER IN INDIA

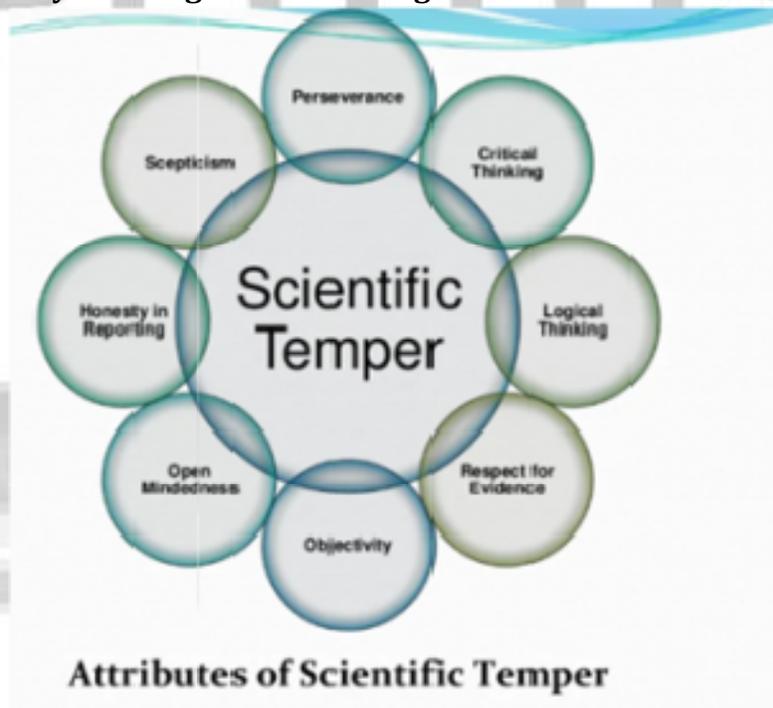
On the 75th independence day PM gave us the mantra to be a developed country by 2047. He also emphasised on the scientific temper and inculcation of that attitude in the society.

Scientific temper is not a new term to Indians as well to our highest law of the land i.e., the Constitution. It forms the very psyche of the rational and modern value based society which believes in science and its potential. The term holds much significance in the prevalence of some unscientific practices like witch hunting, irrational treatment of the disease and others. In this article I will try to explore more.

WHAT IS SCIENTIFIC TEMPER?

The term is also difficult to define as like to follow. It is a modest temper which is ready **to accept** new values, ideas and practices based on scientific clarity **even if** they are against the established norms and culture. It is a broad term which **demand**s analytical inquiry of the facts and then putting them on the burner of the science to test. The result is, no doubt, a more rational and humanistic approach.

Former PM Nehru famously said "scientific approach or temper and, or should be, **a way of life, a process of thinking, a way of acting and associating** with our fellowmen".



DOES CONSTITUTION RECOGNISE IT?

Indian constitution being a '**Living document**' has ample space for rational and scientific society. It was added by **42nd** constitutional amendment as the **Part IVA** of the constitution. Part IVA deals with the citizenry duties and to make the Indian state an active citizen participating society.

There it mentions , in article 51A, "*It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.*" Thus it shall be the duty of every citizen to follow it in every sphere of life.

ARE WE FOLLOWING THIS DUTY?

Indian society as a mix of various cultures and values, practices inherently holds the value of scientific temper and humanism. The societal values of equality, rights, donation and other practices are indicative of duty bound citizens. Our school books and even religious textbooks also promote the spirit of inquiry and value of reform on which our child builds a culture of scientific achievements such as IPRs, various tech inventions and many supertech officers are Indians.

BUT,

Any duty is partially corrupt. Though we follow scientific temper by laws and on its face value, the following in its spirit still seems a distant dream. Take for example, even in the Government offices we still do 'Pooja' of the instruments and infrastructure which does not have any scientific rationality as such. Even in elections some jinx's are famous as Noida Jinx. Such a state promoted irrationality in the affairs which citizens considered then legitimate.

Even lack of scientific temperament is still prevalent by the untouchability (against Art 17), discrimination based on religion and work and social boycott for inter-caste marriage and witch hunting are examples of societal violations of the duty.

On an individual level we still think of ourselves as more rational and full of scientific temper. But here also seems some discrepancy as it's common family practice to keep menstruating women isolated though science says against it. We still change the root if black cat cuts in between. Even we see our results on specific PC or in a café or on mobile as if the result would change on others. Don't we do it?

HOW TO FIND – A MISSING ?

The scientific temper is **not the need but the necessity**. Active efforts are needed to put rational temperament in the society. Short term and long term measures can be put in place. As laws and regulations act against superstitions in states like Maharashtra and awareness in the society for rational values. State also needs to rectify its approach that should send the correct signal.

In the long run, **education is the best tool to change the world (Nelson Mandela)**. Our Gen Z and generations to come must be value based and scientifically oriented to contribute positively towards national development. Thus, it is our legal as well as humanly duty to follow scientific temper, humanism and continue the ignited flame of inquiry to make this great nation great again.

Akshay gurubhaiye

SGB Scheme 2022

SGB Scheme Series-II 2022-23

Why in News: SGB Scheme 2022-23 (Series II). In terms of Government of India Notification dated June 15, 2022, SGB 2022-23 (Series II) will be opened for subscription during the period August 22-26, 2022 with Settlement date August 30, 2022.

Sovereign gold bond scheme (SGB Series-II): The issue price of the Bond during the subscription period shall be Rs 5,197 (Rupees five thousand one hundred ninety seven only) per gram, as also published by RBI in their Press Release dated August 19, 2022.

Government of India in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow a discount of Rs 50 (Rupees Fifty only) per gram from the issue price to those investors who apply online and the payment is made through digital mode.

For such investors the issue price of Gold Bond will be Rs 5,147 (Rupees five thousand one hundred forty seven only) per gram of gold.

New issue of the government-backed gold bond scheme has opened and the scheme will remain open for subscription till 26th August 2022. The Reserve Bank of India ((RBI) on behalf of the center has fixed issue price at ₹5,197 per gram. The bonds will be sold through banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices and recognized stock exchanges — NSE and BSE. The tenor of the bond will be for a period of 8 years with an exit option after the 5th year to be exercised on the next interest payment dates.

According to market experts, one should subscribe to the second tranche of the sovereign gold bond scheme as it provided an alternative to gold investment giving an additional return in the form of interest income. They said that is opportune for the investors as the outlook for gold price is positive in the wake of rising global inflation.

Advising gold investors to subscribe to the new tranche of sovereign gold bond scheme 2022, Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President — Commodity & Currency Research at Religare Broking said, “The latest and the second tranche of Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23 is open for subscription from today onwards and would last for five days till August 26.SGB is a great alternative to investing in gold as it not only provides additional returns in the form of interest income, but is also free from default risk, and issues like maintenance, security, and purity. So yes, SGB would be the right choice for investors, who look for steady and hassle-free investment in gold.”

Echoing Sugandha Sachdeva’s views, Megh Mody, Commodities & Currencies Research Analyst at Prabhudas Lilladher said, “Gold is considered a hedge against inflation and in India, demand for gold is going to stay. Long term investors will buy gold whether it is physical or sovereign gold bond. With geopolitical worries and inflation still not controlled across the globe, one can subscribe to the new tranche of sovereign gold bond scheme 2022.”

Sovereign gold bond scheme benefits

Giving ‘subscribe’ tag to sovereign gold bond scheme, Nirpendra Yadav, Sr. Analyst — Commodity Research at Swastika Investmart listed out the following benefits of the gold bond scheme:

- 1] You will receive 2.5 per cent interest rate every year;
- 2] No expenses or other charges like ETF and Mutual funds; and
- 3] Guaranteed by the Government of India.

“Apart from the above-mentioned benefits, Sovereign Gold Bond prices are linked with Gold prices which most of the time rise on uncertainty, War, Pandemic, or any natural calamity. So investors get the benefit of Gold prices along with interest on their investment,” said Nirpendra Yadav of Swastika Investmart.

“It is an opportune time to invest in Sovereign Gold Bonds, as the overall outlook for gold is positive with elevated inflationary pressures worldwide working as a key tailwind for the precious metal. Besides, worries about a global economic slowdown and lingering geopolitical risks will keep gold in

demand for its safe haven status. Even as there may be short-term volatility in prices owing to the concerns about the monetary tightening path of the US Fed, the US central bank is likely to slow down the pace of rate hikes, considering its impact on the economic growth that will underpin gold prices.

Rising central bank gold purchases and upcoming festival demand will further support gold prices," said Sugandha Sachdeva of Religare Broking adding, "Considering the macro-economic backdrop, gold is a safe and steady investment and a great tool to diversify one's portfolio for better risk-adjusted returns over the long run."

On gold price outlook, Megh Mody of Prabhudas Lilladher said, "MCX Gold has an overhead supply placed at ₹52,500, the yellow metal can plunge below ₹50,000 and reach in the zone of ₹48,500 levels. In the next one year it is likely to remain in the range of ₹48,500 to ₹52,500 levels. Comex Gold has a crucial support placed at \$1,680 per ounce levels. Breaching of this level can sink prices near to \$1,560 levels. For a couple of years it will be below \$1,700 and can remain in a range of \$1,450 to \$1,550 levels."

Sovereign gold bond scheme details:

The minimum permissible investment limit in sovereign gold bond schemes is 1 gm of gold whereas maximum limit of subscription is 4 KG for individuals, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal (April-March).

The central government, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, has decided to offer a discount of ₹50 per gram, less than the nominal value, to those investors applying online and the payment against the application is made through digital mode.

The price of the bond is fixed in Indian currency on the basis of a simple average closing price of gold of 999 purity, published by the India Bullion and Jewelers Association Limited for the last 3 working days of the week preceding the subscription period.

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme: Was launched by Govt in November 2015, under Gold Monetization Scheme. Under the scheme, the issues are made open for subscription in tranches by RBI in consultation with GOI. RBI Notifies the terms and conditions for the scheme from time to time. The subscription for SGB will be open as per the following calendar. The rate of SGB will be declared by RBI before every new tranche by issuing a Press Release.

As per RBI instructions "Every application must be accompanied by the 'PAN Number' issued by the Income Tax Department to the investor(s)" as the PAN number of the first/ sole applicant is mandatory.

Features

- To be issued by Reserve Bank India on behalf of the Government of India.
- The Bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram.
- The tenor of the Bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option in 5th, 6th and 7th year, to be exercised on the interest payment dates.
- Minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold.
- The maximum limit of subscribed shall be 4 KG for individuals, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal year (April-March) notified by the Government from time to time. A self-declaration to this effect will be obtained. The annual ceiling will include bonds subscribed under different tranches during initial issuance by the Government and those purchased from the Secondary Market.
- In case of joint holding, the investment limit of 4 KG will be applied to the first applicant only.

- RBI will issue a Press Release stating issue price of the Bond before new Issue. Price of Bond will be fixed in Indian Rupees on the basis of simple average of closing price of gold of 999 purity published by the India Bullion and Jewelers Association Limited (IBJA) for the last 3 business days of the week preceding the subscription period.
- Payment for the Bonds will be through cash payment (up to a maximum of Rs. 20,000/-) or demand draft or cheque or electronic banking.
- The Gold Bonds will be issued as Government of India Stocks under Government Security Act, 2006. The investors will be issued a Holding Certificate for the same. The Bonds are eligible for conversion into Demat form.
- The redemption price will be in Indian Rupees based on the simple average of closing price of gold of 999 purity of previous 3 working days published by IBJA.
- All the branches of the State Bank of India are authorized to accept the subscription
- The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 per cent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value.
- Bonds can be used as collateral for loans. The loan-to-value (LTV) ratio is to be set equal to ordinary gold loans mandated by the Reserve Bank from time to time. The lien on the bond shall be marked in the depository by the authorized banks.

Note: The loan against SGBs would be subject to the decision of the bank/financing agency and cannot be inferred as a matter of right.

- Bonds will be tradable on stock exchanges within a fortnight of the issuance on a date as notified by the RBI.

Puneet Bhatia

Aadhaar and voter ID linking

Aadhaar and voter ID linking

Why in news?

The Election Commission has stated that filling out Form 6B's Aadhaar and Voter ID connection is entirely optional.

What past attempts have been made in this regard?

In the districts of Nizamabad and Hyderabad in 2014, the Election Commission of India (ECI) ran two pilot projects to integrate voter identification with Aadhaar.

The National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme (NERPAP) was introduced by the ECI in April 2015.

However, the initiative was stopped by a Supreme Court decision in August 2015.

Why is Aadhaar linked to voter identification?

The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which aims to connect the Aadhaar to voter ID, was approved by the Lok Sabha.

The primary goal of the linkage is to prevent mistakes like duplicate voters on the electoral roster.

It is required to clean up the voting records due to the rise in migrant populations in urban sprawls, demographic changes brought on by the arrival of more eligible voters, and the death of elderly persons.

If the citizen has an Aadhaar ID card, the Ministry of Law and Justice modified Form 6 to make providing an Aadhaar number mandatory. Form 6 is used to authenticate the electoral roll.

But the Government has claimed that this process will be optional, as have later ECI authorities.

What objections have been raised to the linking?

- **Unconstitutional:** Activists point out that since an Indian citizen just needs to show proof of citizenship in order to receive a voter identification card, the rule may be deemed unconstitutional.
- Given the proportionality requirements that had to be completed in order to limit the right to privacy, linking Aadhaar and voter IDs may also infringe citizens' basic rights.
- **Not necessary**—only adult citizens who reside in India are eligible to vote, but Aadhaar is intended to be provided to residents.
- Linking Aadhaar is useless because voters can register using documents attesting to their age and present address.
- A recent study by the comptroller and auditor general noted that about 5 lakh Aadhaar cards were removed for being duplicates, which has led to an increase in fraud instances.
- **Voter profiling:** By connecting Aadhaar to voter IDs, organisations may abuse their access to create voter profiles based on collected data, which may then be used to drive more focused campaigning.
- **Security issues** – This potential is also made more likely by the lack of a data protection regulation.
- **Issues with data quality:** Linking Aadhaar might compromise the integrity of the voter ID database.
- Data from the Internet Freedom Foundation demonstrate that the Aadhaar database has more self-reported mistakes than the electoral database does.
- **Disenfranchisement:** After voter IDs in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were linked to Aadhaar numbers, nearly 55 lakh voters had their names removed from the voter list.
- According to Article 326 of the Constitution, the right to vote cannot be curtailed unless in cases of ineligibility, insanity, crime, or corrupt or illegal activity.
- Utilizing data for elections will be made simpler for political parties in power by online trends on election day and voter microtargeting using their data.

Vivek Raj