



CURRENT AFFAIRS



Argasia Education PVT. Ltd. (GST NO.-09AAPCAI478E1ZH)
Address: Basement C59 Noida, opposite to Priyagold Building gate, Sector 02,
Pocket I, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201301, CONTACT NO:-8448440231

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REPORT ON STATUS OF UNDERTRIALS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Report on Status of Undertrials". This Topic has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Undertrials in India?

For Mains:

GS 2: Governance

Key Recommendations of the report?

Why in the news:

A Parliamentary Panel on Home Affairs has put forward suggestions to tackle the problem of prison overcrowding in India.

About Undertrials in India:

- The situation concerning undertrials in India is a cause for serious alarm. In the year 2021, a striking 77% of the entire prison population in India consisted of undertrials, signifying that these individuals had not been formally convicted of any criminal offense. This represents a notable escalation from the 68% of undertrials recorded in 2019 and establishes the highest proportion of undertrials in any country globally.

Key Recommendations of the report:

Use of Ankle Trackers or Bracelets for Inmates:

- The Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs has put forth a suggestion to address prison overcrowding by introducing ankle trackers or bracelets. These tracking devices would be designed to be cost-effective and would be worn by individuals who have been granted bail and are temporarily released from prison.
- The primary objective behind these trackers is to closely monitor the movements of these individuals and ensure their compliance with the conditions of their bail. This proposal stems from the recognition that bail is often denied for three reasons: concerns about undertrial prisoners potentially influencing witnesses, attempting to leave the country, or engaging in further criminal activities while on bail.

Voluntary Use and Informed Consent:

- The report emphasizes the importance of upholding human rights and ethical principles in the use of ankle trackers.

- To prevent potential human rights violations, the panel recommends that the use of ankle trackers should be entirely voluntary.
- Inmates should provide informed consent before wearing these tracking devices.

Overcrowding and Delayed Justice:

- The committee acknowledges the significant issue of overcrowding in Indian prisons, which has led to delays in the delivery of justice for both prisoners and the overall criminal justice system.
- To alleviate this problem, the report suggests the transfer of prisoners from overcrowded facilities to other jails with available cells.
- Transfers can occur either within the same state or in jails located in different states.

Lack of Signal Jamming Technology:

- The panel has identified a technological deficiency in many State prison departments.
- This deficiency pertains to the absence of signal jamming technology or the possession of devices that can only block 2G and 3G network signals.
- The lack of effective signal jamming technology has allowed mobile phones to become a significant contraband item that is frequently smuggled into prisons.

Prison Statistics :

- According to data sourced from the National Crime Record Bureau for the year 2021, the report provides an alarming picture of India’s prison situation. India boasts a total of 1,319 correctional facilities designed to accommodate 4,25,609 inmates. However, the actual number of incarcerated individuals surpasses this capacity, with a staggering count of 5,54,034 inmates, resulting in an occupancy rate of 130.2%. Within this inmate population, 4,27,165 individuals are undertrial prisoners, while 1,22,852 have been convicted.
- The report also draws attention to the growing number of female prisoners and a critical staffing shortage issue. Prisons are operating with a workforce that is roughly 30% below the required staffing levels, which adds to the complexity of the situation.

Source:

<https://aninews.in/news/national/general-news/parliamentary-committee-on-home-affairs-recommends-mha-to-give-clear-definition-of-young-offenders20230922155522/>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding undertrials:

1. The number of Undertrials in prison is greater than the number of Convicted.
2. It is mandatory for undertrials to wear ankle bracelets in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

Q.2 India’s prison system faces a multitude of challenges, from severe overcrowding to ethical concerns surrounding the treatment of inmates. Analyze.

NATIONAL AND STATE PARTIES

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "National and State Parties". This topic has relevance in the "Polity and Governance" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What are the criteria for National and State Parties?

For Mains:

GS2: Polity and Governance

Why in the news?

Official records obtained through the Right to Information show that many recognised national and state parties still use the assigned land in New Delhi even though they were not supposed to.

National Parties:

- A national party in India is typically understood as a political party with a presence across the entire nation, as opposed to regional parties confined to specific states or regions.
- However, being a national party does not automatically guarantee significant national political influence.

Criteria for Recognition as a National Party:

According to the Election Commission of India (ECI), a political party can be recognised as a national party based on the following conditions:

- **State Party Recognition:** The party must be recognised as a state party in at least **four states**.
- **Vote Share and Seats:**
 - The party should have obtained a **minimum of 6% of the total valid votes in any four or more states** during the previous Lok Sabha or Assembly elections, with **at least four members of parliament** in the last Lok Sabha polls.
 - Alternatively, the party must have **won at least 2% of the total Lok Sabha seats in at least three states**.

Criteria for Recognition as a State Party:

To be recognised as a state party, a political party must meet **one of the following requirements:**

- **Minimum Vote Share and Members:**
 - The party should have obtained **at least 6% of the valid vote share** in the last Assembly elections and have at least **two members in the legislative assembly**.
 - Alternatively, the party should have **secured at least a 6% vote share** in the last Lok Sabha elections from the state, with at least **one member of parliament**.
- **Minimum Seats:** The party should have won a **minimum of 3% of the total seats** in the last Assembly elections, or at least three seats, whichever is higher.
- **Proportional Representation:** The party should have at **least one member of parliament for every 25 members allotted to the state** in the Lok Sabha, or any fraction thereof.
- **Minimum Vote Share:** The party should have obtained **at least 8% of the total valid votes** in the last Assembly election or Lok Sabha election from the state.

Advantages of Obtaining National Party Recognition:

Being recognised as a national party entails several benefits, including:

- **Exclusive Election Symbols:** National parties have reserved election symbols that their candidates across the country can use.
- **Land Allotment:** They can receive land in Delhi to establish a party office.
- **Increased Star Campaigners:** National parties are allowed up to 40-star campaigners, who play a crucial role in elections, compared to the 20 allowed for registered unrecognised parties. The expenditure on the campaign and travel of star campaigners is not added to the candidate's spending limit.
- **Broadcast/Telecast Facilities:** They can access broadcast and telecast facilities on Akashvani/Doordarshan during general elections.
- **Filing nominations:** The recognised national and state parties require only one proposer.

Current Status:

- As of May 2023, there are 6 national parties, 54 state parties, and 2,597 unrecognised parties in India
- **National Parties in India include:**
 - AAP: Aam Aadmi Party
 - BSP: Bahujan Samaj Party
 - NPP: National People's Party
 - BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
 - CPI-M: Communist Party of India (Marxist)
 - INC: Indian National Congress

Sources:

[BJP, Congress squatting in Lutyens' Bungalow Zone: What perks are recognised national, state parties entitled to](#)

Q1. With reference to political parties in India, consider the following statements:

1. A political party can be recognised as a national party if it is recognised as a state party in at least three states.
2. To be recognised as a state party, a party should have at least one member of parliament for every 25 members allotted to the state in the Lok Sabha
3. A party can be recognised as a state party if it has secured at least a 6% vote share in the last Lok Sabha elections from the state, with at least one member of parliament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. National parties have reserved election symbols that their candidates across the country can use.
2. In the case of a registered unrecognised political party, the recognised national and state parties require only one proposer instead of a hundred electors.

3. The expenditure on the campaign and travel of star campaigners is also added to the candidate's spending limit.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (a)

Q3. Analyse the criteria used by the Election Commission to recognise parties as national or state parties. How does the national party tag affect the visibility and influence of a political party?

Gaurav Nikumbh



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