



# CURRENT AFFAIRS



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## EFFECTS OF REGISTERING PARENTS RELIGION AT BIRTH

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2023". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIETY, POLITY AND ETHICS" SECTION OF GS1 AND GS2 IN THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a significant move, the **Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023**, which received parliamentary approval on August 11 of the previous year, brings about a requirement for the **recording of parents' religious affiliations** during birth registrations, as highlighted in the latest headlines on April 5.

This Act now mandates the **establishment of a centralized national birth and death database**. This database will serve as a mechanism for updating multiple systems, including but not limited to the National Population Register (NPR), electoral rolls, Aadhaar number, ration card, passport, driving license, property registration, and any others specified in subsequent notifications. The Amendment stipulates that if the parents of the child adhere to different religious beliefs, their **respective religions must be recorded and documented alongside the child's religion** in the registration records.

### NEGATIVE IMPACT OF RAISING IDENTITY CONSCIOUSNESS ON A CHILD BEHAVIOR

Legally, the term "adult" typically pertains to physical attributes, whereas **religion resides in a quasi-metaphysical realm**. Bundling religious affiliation with the child's inherited DNA imposes constraints on their autonomy and potentially impedes their development.

Studies indicate that a staggering 80 percent of a child's brain development occurs within the initial 1,000 days of life. During this critical period, the prevailing cultural and familial environment plays a pivotal role in shaping the child's enduring attitudes and values. However, this influence isn't always conducive to fostering a balanced perspective or nurturing individual growth.

That's Why identity consciousness have these negative impacts:

- **Limited Self-Expression:** Imposing a specific identity on a child may inhibit their ability to freely express themselves and explore their individuality. This can lead to feelings of frustration, confusion, and even identity crisis.
- **Social Alienation:** Being confined to a predetermined identity may isolate the child from peers who do not share the same characteristics or beliefs. This can result in social ostracization and feelings of loneliness or marginalization.

- **Psychological Strain:** Forced conformity to a particular identity can cause psychological stress and internal conflict, as the child may struggle to reconcile their true self with the imposed identity. This can manifest in anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues.
- **Stifled Growth:** Identity restrictions may impede the child's personal and intellectual growth by limiting their exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences. This can hinder their ability to develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and tolerance towards others.
- **Resentment and Rebellion:** Children subjected to identity restrictions may develop resentment towards authority figures or the societal norms that impose such limitations. This can lead to rebellious behavior, defiance, or withdrawal from social interactions.
- **Inhibited Creativity:** Confining a child to a rigid identity framework may stifle their creativity and innovation. They may feel constrained in exploring new ideas, interests, or pursuits that deviate from the prescribed identity, resulting in missed opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment.

## **REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND DEATH AMENDMENT ACT, 2023**

The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023 aims to make changes to the existing Registration of Births and Deaths Act of 1969. This act primarily deals with the regulation and registration of births and deaths across the country.

Under the Concurrent List, both the Parliament and state legislatures have the authority to enact laws pertaining to the registration of births and deaths. The proposed amendment seeks to address any shortcomings or updates necessary in the original act to ensure more effective regulation and administration of this crucial aspect of civil documentation.

### **FEATURES OF THE ACT:**

The Digital Birth Certificates provision within the Bill introduces a modernized approach to documentation, aiming to streamline the process by offering comprehensive digital certificates that serve multiple purposes, thereby reducing the necessity for numerous documents to validate birth details.

Moreover, the proposed legislation suggests integrating Aadhaar details of parents and informants into birth certificates, expanding the scope of Aadhaar inclusion to encompass various reporting authorities, such as medical officers, jailors, and institution managers.

Furthermore, the establishment of a centralized database is proposed to manage birth and death records, enhancing service efficiency and ensuring the accuracy and currency of information. This centralized repository will not only update birth certificates but also synchronize with the National Population Register (NPR), ration cards, and property registrations.

Additionally, the Bill mandates States to register births and deaths on the Centre's Civil Registration System (CRS) portal and share the data with the Registrar General of India, an entity operating under the Union Home Ministry, ensuring a unified and coordinated approach to civil registration across the nation.

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## INDIA'S WINTER ARCTIC EXPEDITION

**THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "INDIA'S WINTER ARCTIC EXPEDITION". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.**

### Why in the News?

Recently, the Union Minister of Earth Sciences initiated India's inaugural winter scientific mission to Himadri, the country's Arctic Research Station located in Ny-Ålesund, part of the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in the Arctic region. The expedition aims to explore the Arctic's profound influence on global climate, sea levels, and biodiversity and will also focus on studying the radio frequency environment in the Svalbard region of the Arctic.

### HISTORY OF INDIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARCTIC-

- In its early stages, India's involvement with the Arctic began in 1920 when it signed the Svalbard Treaty in Paris. India stands out among a limited number of nations for establishing a permanent station in the Arctic dedicated to scientific research.
- The Indian involvement in the Arctic research began with the establishment of the Indian Antarctic Station at the Indian-Antarctic base in the Antarctic Peninsula in 1983. This marked the beginning of India's foray into polar research. Subsequently, India established its first Arctic research station, Himadri, in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, in March 2013.
- In 2014, India installed IndArc, a multisensory observatory situated in Kongsfjorden.
- In 2016, India established its northernmost atmospheric laboratory at Gruvebadet, aimed at investigating clouds, precipitation, long-distance pollutants, and various fundamental atmospheric factors.
- Since 2013, India has held observer status in the Arctic Council, and this designation was extended for an additional five years in 2019.
- The Indian government introduced an Arctic policy in March 2022.
- This policy outlines India's involvement in the Arctic region, focusing on climate research, environmental surveillance, maritime collaboration, and energy security.



### Why the Winter Arctic Expedition is Important for India-

- **Growing China's Interest-** India is becoming increasingly worried about China's escalating investments in the Arctic. Russia's move to grant China greater access to the Northern Sea Route has intensified these concerns. India's heightened interest in the Arctic coincides with rising tensions in the region, exacerbated by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- **Global Warming-** The melting of Arctic ice has led to the opening of sea routes such as the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route. These routes offer shorter paths between Europe, Asia, and North America compared to traditional routes through the Suez Canal or Panama Canal. Consequently, this has sparked interest among shipping companies and nations looking to capitalise on these more efficient routes for trade and transportation.
- **Research Advancement-** It provides an opportunity to conduct scientific studies in extreme Arctic conditions, enabling researchers to gather valuable data on climate, biodiversity, oceanography, and other relevant fields.
- **Understanding Climate Change-** Given the Arctic's vulnerability to climate change, studying it during winter provides insights into seasonal variations and long-term trends, contributing to a better understanding of global climate dynamics.
- **Resource Exploration-** Exploration during winter can offer unique insights into the region's natural resources, such as oil, gas, and minerals, potentially aiding in sustainable resource management.



- **Environmental Importance-** Despite their geographical separation, the Arctic and the Himalayas are interconnected and face similar environmental challenges. The ongoing meltdown in the Arctic serves as a valuable learning opportunity for understanding glacial retreat in the Himalayas, often referred to as the 'third pole' due to its substantial freshwater reserves after the North and South poles. Consequently, the study of the Arctic holds significant relevance for Indian scientists.
- **International Collaboration:** Participation in Arctic expeditions fosters collaboration with other Arctic nations and indigenous communities, promoting diplomatic ties and knowledge exchange. Norway, currently holding the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, maintains strong relations with India. Since the late 1980s, these two nations have partnered to study evolving conditions in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

### Challenges in Arctic expeditions-

- **Extreme weather conditions:** The Arctic region is characterised by extreme cold, high winds, and snowstorms. These harsh conditions can make it difficult for researchers to carry out their work, as they need to wear specialised clothing and equipment to protect themselves from the freezing temperatures and harsh environment.
- **Limited resources:** Conducting research in the Arctic can be expensive due to the need for specialised equipment, transportation, and logistics. Additionally, the remote locations of some Arctic research stations can make it difficult to access essential supplies and resources.
- **Remote locations:** The Arctic region is vast and sparsely populated, with many research stations located in isolated areas. This can make it challenging for researchers to travel to and from the region, as well as to access essential resources and support.
- **Safety concerns:** The Arctic is known for its unpredictable weather, which can create dangerous conditions for researchers. Additionally, the remote locations of some research stations can make it difficult for rescue teams to reach stranded or injured scientists.
- **Multiple State Jurisdiction:** Due to the presence of multiple state jurisdictions in the Arctic, there is restricted availability of land for the establishment of autonomous research stations.
- **Logistical Challenges:** Transporting equipment, supplies, and personnel to remote Arctic locations involves intricate planning and coordination. Limited transportation options, particularly during winter when sea routes may be impassable, add to the logistical complexity.

### Way forward for India in Arctic region-

- **Enhanced Scientific Research:** India can continue to invest in Arctic research initiatives, expanding its scientific footprint in areas such as climate change, biodiversity, oceanography, and glaciology. Collaborative research projects with Arctic nations can facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** India can forge strategic partnerships with Arctic countries, leveraging existing collaborations and exploring new avenues for cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as climate resilience, sustainable development, and maritime security.
- **Infrastructure Development:** India can invest in the development of Arctic infrastructure, including research stations, icebreakers, and satellite monitoring systems, to support its scientific endeavours and ensure a sustained presence in the region.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** India can actively engage in Arctic governance forums, such as the Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization, to contribute its perspectives on Arctic issues and advocate for the interests of non-Arctic states.

- **Develop a long-term research plan:** India should develop a comprehensive long-term research plan for its Arctic research program, outlining specific objectives, timelines, and resource allocation. This plan should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that the country remains at the forefront of Arctic research.

### **Prelims based Question-**

#### **Q1. Consider the following statements about the Arctic Council:**

1. It is an intergovernmental body established in 1996 through the Ottawa Declaration.
2. India holds the Observer status in the Arctic Council.

#### **Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:**

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

**ANSWER: C**

### **Mains based Question-**

**“Discuss the significance of India’s winter scientific expedition to the Arctic region and analyse the challenges associated with conducting research in extreme Arctic conditions.”**

**[Vikas Agarwal](#)**