

Competition Cosmos

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019

The bill was first time introduced in the Lok Sabha on 19 July 2016 and was referred to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on 12 August 2016. The committee submitted its report on 7 January 2019.

The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on the next day i.e. January 8, 2019, but the bill was not introduced in the Rajya Sabha at that time. As per the parliamentary procedure, if a bill gets a nod from Lok Sabha but couldn't pass in Rajya Sabha then it will be re-introduced in both the houses

The Modi government has passed this bill in a cabinet meeting on December 04. Now, this bill will go to the Lok Sabha and then to the Rajya Sabha. Opposition parties are upset with some amendments in the bill and calling it anti-minority.

There can be a fierce fight in the parliament between government and opposition parties like it has happened on Article 370 and Triple Talaq bills. Opposition parties have given a clear indication that it will not be easy for the government to pass the bill in Parliament.

What is Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019?

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill-2019 will provide Indian citizenship to the six minority communities from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. These six communities are - Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, Christian and Sikhs.
- At present, it is mandatory for a person to stay here for at least 11 years to get citizenship of India.

- The bill will reduce this period to six years. It will enable people from these communities to get Indian citizenship in six years.
- It will make some amendments to the Citizenship Act 1955 to provide legal aid for citizenship.

The biggest concern of the opposition parties is that it specifically targeted the Muslim community. Opposition parties said that this is a violation of Article 14 of the Constitution, which speaks of the right to equality.

Who are illegal migrants?

According to the Citizenship Act, 1955, illegal migrants cannot get citizenship of India. The people, who have entered India without valid travel documents like passports and visas or have come to India with valid documents but stay here longer than the period mentioned therein, are considered as illegal migrants under this law.

What are the provisions for illegal migrants?

According to the Citizenship Act, 1955, illegal migrants can either be kept in jail or sent back to their country under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passports (Entry into India) Act, 1920. But in 2015 and 2016, the central government has made some amendments in the laws of 1920 and 1946. It exempted Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to stay in India. It means that if people belonging to these communities live in India without valid documents, then they can neither be imprisoned nor deported. This exemption has given to those religious groups who have reached India on or before 31 December 2014.