

6. Multipurpose National Identity Card (MPNIC)

Prelims: Governance- Policies, Institutional Reforms

Mains: GS-II- Important aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability, e-governance- Applications, Models, Successes, Limitations, and Potential; Citizens Charters, Transparency & Accountability and Institutional and Other Measures.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ Announcing that the 2021 census exercise would be carried out digitally, Union Home Minister Amit Shah suggested **one card for all utilities** in future.
- ▶▶ The Home Minister's suggestion resembles the so-called Multipurpose National Identity Card (MPNIC) that was first suggested in 2001.

Background:

- ▶▶ The Multipurpose National Identity Card (MPNIC) was first suggested by a 2001 report on "Reforming the National Security System" by an empowered Group of Ministers (eGOM) during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.
- ▶▶ The eGOM report itself was a response to the K Subrahmanyam-led Kargil Review Committee, which was instituted in the wake of the Kargil conflict of 1999.
- ▶▶ The eGOM recommended MPNIC in relation to the growing threat from illegal migration.
- ▶▶ It said that all citizens should be given a Multi-Purpose National Identity Card (MPNIC) and non-citizens should be issued identity cards of a different colour and design.
- ▶▶ This should be introduced initially in the border districts or maybe in a 20 Kms border belt and extended to the hinterland progressively.

Highlights of Home Minister's Statement:

- ▶▶ Home Minister has clarified that there is no specific scheme that is in the offing. But the government would want to link various databases if it intends to create a card that works as a single point of access to various accounts held by an individual.
- ▶▶ He hinted at the **possibility of linking the registration of birth and death with the country's voter list**, this way no one would have to apply for a voter card when they reach the voting age – it would happen on its own. Similarly, if someone dies, the voter list would be updated on its own.
- ▶▶ Home Minister clarified that it was possible to get rid of excess processes and cards such as the Aadhaar card, the voter card, the identity card etc.

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- ▶▶ He further argued that if this Census was done properly and in the right format, it was possible that there could be just one single card in which all the other cards could reside. In other words, a single card that has your bank card, voter id card, Aadhaar card, and passport.

