

Dual Citizenship

By IASToppers | 2023-12-29 15:35:00



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The Minister of **External Affairs** recently stated that providing **dual citizenship** to Indians residing abroad poses various **economic and security challenges**.



[Ref- The Week]

What is Dual Citizenship?

- Dual or multiple citizenship **grants an individual legal status** as a citizen of two or more countries simultaneously.
- People can **possess passports** from both countries and enjoy **social and legal rights** equivalent to other citizens.
- They have the **privilege to participate in the political affairs** of both countries, obtain visa exemptions for travel, and engage in employment in either nation.
- **Countries that offer dual citizenship:** United States, Finland, Albania, Israel, and Pakistan allow dual citizenship.

Is dual citizenship possible in India?

- The **Constitution of India** does not allow the holding of Indian citizenship with that of a foreign country simultaneously for nationals.
- India offers the **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)** program to **Persons of Indian Origin (PIO)**, excluding those who migrated to Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Who is eligible for an OCI card?

- Individuals seeking **OCI registration** must submit applications to the Indian Mission/Post in their country of residence using the prescribed form.
- The **High Commission of India** accepts the application after necessary documentation.
- He/she (**foreign national**) needs eligibility as:
 - A citizen of India at the time of, or at any time after 26th January, 1950.
 - Eligible to become a citizen of India on 26th January, 1950.
 - Belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15th August, 1947.
 - A child, grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen.
 - A minor child of such persons or whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the

parents is a citizen of India.

- PIOs of a **certain category** who migrated from India and acquired foreign citizenship (other than Pakistan and Bangladesh), are eligible for OCI if their home countries allow dual citizenship under their **relevant national laws**.

Can an OCI be granted Indian citizenship?

- A person who is registered as an **OCI for 5 years** and has been **residing in India for 1 year** (from above 5 years), is eligible to apply for Indian Citizenship.
- But **once the citizenship is granted**, they will have to **surrender** any other citizenship they may hold.

What are the benefits for OCI cardholders?

- An OCI card holder enjoys **multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visa** to visit India.
- Exemption from reporting to **police authorities** for any length of **stay in India**.
 - While a **PIO cardholder** must register with local Police authority for any stay **exceeding 180 days** in India on any single visit.
- **Parity with NRIs** in financial, economic, and educational fields except in the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.
- **Exception:** Persons registered as OCI do not have the right to vote or be elected to the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha/Legislative Assembly/Council.
 - **They are not eligible for** constitutional posts (President, Vice-President, Judge of Supreme Court/High Court etc) or hold employment in the Government.