

CENSUS 2021 TO COLLECT OBC DATA, USE MAPS

Relevant for: Indian Society | Topic: Population and associated issues incl. Tribes

Census 2021 will for the first time collect data on Other Backward Classes (OBC), the Centre said on Friday.

The decennial exercise will involve 25 lakh trained enumerators and the use of “maps/geo-referencing at the time of house listing is also under consideration,” a statement issued by the Home Ministry said.

A senior Minister said the decision to count the OBCs in the next Census was to get a correct perspective on the social status in the country.

The 2011 caste data collected as part of the Socio-economic Caste Census (SECC) is yet to be released by the Centre. The National Commission for Backward Classes says there are 2,479 entries on the Central list of the OBCs. “We are committed to giving the correct social perspective of the country. We will know how much a community has progressed and who has not,” the Minister said on condition of anonymity. He refused to elaborate whether this was being done to extend reservation benefits to the OBCs in the future.

The 2011 Census collected information in 29 categories that included a separate column for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes. A senior Home Ministry official said the OBCs would be an option in the column in 2021.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the functioning of the Office of the Registrar-General and the Census Commissioner on Friday.

“It was emphasised that improvements in design and technological interventions be made so as to ensure that the Census data is finalised within three years after conducting of Census. At present it takes seven or eight years to release the complete data,” the statement said.

The enumerators will start “house listing” in 2020 and the headcount will begin from February 2021. “It was also informed that nearly 25 lakh enumerators are trained and engaged for the gigantic exercise and accurate collection of data will be ensured in Census 2021.”

The Home Minister also emphasised the need for improvement in the Civil Registration System, especially on registration of birth and death in remote areas, and strengthening sample registration system for estimating the data namely, infant mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio and fertility rates,” the statement said.

Ad-hoc basis

The Census Organisation was set up on an ad-hoc basis for each Census till the 1951 Census when the Census Act was enacted in 1948 to provide for the scheme of conducting population census with duties and responsibilities of census officers. As per the 2011 Census, the country’s population stood at 1.21 billion, almost equal to the combined population of the U.S., Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Japan put together [1214.3 million].

Earlier, the Home Ministry issued notification that the data collected during 2021 Census would be stored electronically, also a first.

Presently, the “schedules” (a tabular form containing details of individuals), carried by enumerators to households was being stored in a physical form at government’s storehouse in Delhi. It is based on these schedules that the relevant statistical information on population, language, occupation, etc, are sorted from and published.

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