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Caste based survey

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Why is in news? Bihar caste survey data released: A look at the complicated history of caste surveys

Findings of the survey:

The Bihar government has released the results of its recently concluded survey of castes in the state, which reveals that **Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) constitute more than 63% of the population of Bihar.**

The Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) constitute the largest social group, comprising 36.01% of Bihar's population, totaling 4,70,80,514 individuals.

Other Backward Classes (OBCs) make up 27.12% of the population, with a total of 3,54,63,936 members.

Scheduled Castes (SCs) account for 19.65%, numbering 2,56,89,820 individuals.

Scheduled Tribes (STs) form a minority, representing only 1.68%, with 21,99,361 members.

The **"unreserved" category**, often referred to as "forward" castes, comprises 15.52% of the population, totaling 2,02,91,679 individuals.

The overall population of Bihar, according to the survey, is 13,07,25,310, an increase from the 2011 census figure of 10.41 crore.

Hindus form 81.9986% of the population and Muslims 17.7088%. The population of Buddhist, Sikhs, Jains and other religious denominations are minuscule.

About:

Census in India was **started in 1872** under British Viceroy Lord Mayo, but the **first complete census was taken in 1881 under Lord Ripon.**

Since 1881, the Census has been **undertaken every 10 years**; in 2011 the Census of India was conducted for the 15th time.

The Census of India was **conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

All the censuses since 1951 were conducted **under the 1948 Census of India Act**. The last census was held in 2011.

Caste Census:

Caste based census or the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) is a comprehensive study that examines the **socio-economic status of rural and urban households**, and it also gather information about the caste

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distribution within the population.

Every Census in independent India **from 1951 to 2011** has published data on **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.**

Before that, **every Census until 1931 had data on caste.**

However, in 1941, caste-based data was collected but not published.

SECC 2011 was the first caste-based census since 1931 Census of India.

Difference between Population Census and SECC:

The Census provides a **portrait of the Indian population**, while the SECC is a **tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.**

Since the Population Census is carried out under **Census Act, 1948**, all the population data under it is considered confidential.

Whereas, personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/ or restrict benefits to households.

About SECC-2011:

The **Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC)** was **conducted for the 2011 Census of India.**

The SECC 2011 was conducted in all states and union territories of India.

SECC 2011 was also the first paperless census in India conducted on hand-held electronic devices by the government in 640 districts.

The **Rural development ministry** has used the SECC data in its programmes such as MGNREGA, National Food Security Act, and the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana. SECC 2011 data will also be used to identify beneficiaries.

SECC 2011 has **three census components** which were conducted by **three separate authorities**, but under the overall coordination of the Department of Rural Development in the Government of India:

Census in Rural Areas has been conducted by the Department of Rural Development.

Census in Urban areas is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

Caste Census is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs: Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.

Caste census means **inclusion of caste-wise tabulation of India's population belonging to all castes**, primarily the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and not just SCs and STs.

In 1952 census the first separate data on Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) was published.

What is the importance of caste census?

India runs the world's largest **affirmative welfare programme** based on caste identity. Reservation in educational institutes and government jobs are provided on the basis of caste identities.

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The absence of fresh caste census data means that the caste estimates of 1931 are being projected for formulating welfare policies in 2021.

The highest reservation mandate for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) at 27 % is caste based as the **BP Mandal Commission** ascertained the backwardness of the class on the basis of caste.

Arguments in favour of Conducting Caste Census:

Those at the lower levels of the Social System are **not just disadvantaged socially but also economically**, therefore it is important to identify them to ensure their welfare.

Caste data will **promote independent research** into the question of who does and does not need affirmative action.

The faith of our citizens cannot be restored until credible exercises of data collection are undertaken regarding caste.

A caste census, which will generate exhaustive data will allow policymakers to develop better policies, and implementation strategies, and will also enable a more rational debate on sensitive issues.

The **Justice Rohini committee** was appointed in 2017 to look into the sub-categorization of the OBC communities; however, in the absence of data, there can be **no data bank or any proper sub-categorization**.

All commissions have had to depend on data from the last caste census conducted in 1931. Therefore, the data has to be updated.

India needs to be bold and decisive in tackling caste questions through data and statistics in the way the US does to tackle race issues, by collecting data around race, class, language, and inter-race marriages, among other metrics.

Argument against conducting caste census:

The data will suffer in **respect of “completeness and accuracy”**, as Caste data collected in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 is “unusable” for official purposes as they are far from accurate and also misleading.

Many people may not register themselves in the census to hide their caste identity.

It is too late now to add caste to the Census 2021, as the Planning and preparations for the census exercise started almost four years earlier and the preparations for Census 2021 are almost done.

This could further divide Indian society. The government had said that the total number of castes surveyed in 1931 was 4,147, while the SECC 2011 figures show that there are more than 46 lakh castes in India.

Earlier attempts failed as the entire exercise was corrupted because the enumerators had used different spellings for the same castes. In many cases, the respondents had refused to reveal their castes.

CENSUS 2011

15TH CENSUS OF INDIA SINCE 1872

Cost ₹ 22,000 Mn

Cost per person ₹ 18.19

No. of census functionaries 2.7 Mn

No. of languages in which schedules were canvassed 16

No. of languages in which training manuals were prepared 18

Paper utilised 8,000 MTs

Material moved 10,500 MTs

● The population of India at 1210.2 million is almost equal to the combined population of USA, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Japan

● The population has grown by more than 181 million during the decade 2001-2011

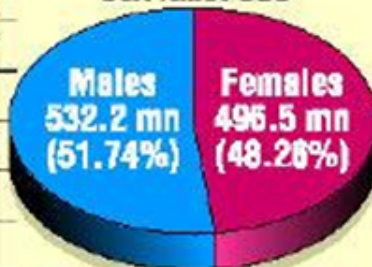
● 2001-2011 is the first decade (with the exception of 1911-1921) which has added lesser population compared to the previous decade

● Overall sex ratio at the national level has increased by 7 points since Census 2001 to reach 940

GENDER COMPOSITION

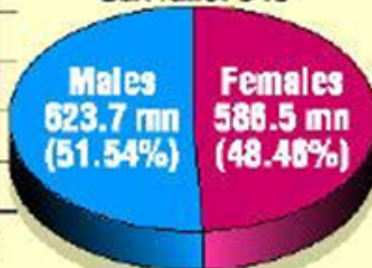
Census 2001

Sex ratio: 933



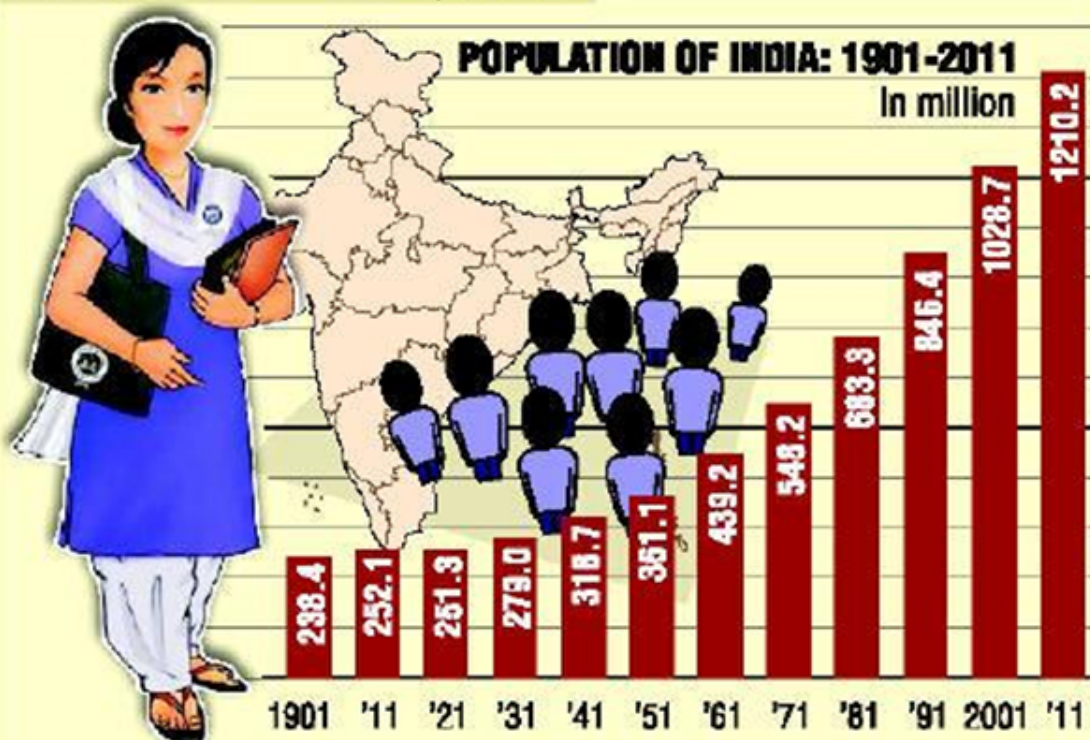
Census 2011

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POPULATION OF INDIA: 1901-2011

In million



2011 population figures are provisional

KBK Infographics