



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# Caste-based survey

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**Why is in news?** Bihar: Hearing on caste-based survey is underway on fifth consecutive day in Patna High Court

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:

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

SECC 2011 was **not conducted under the 1948 Census of India Act**, which made **information disclosure voluntary for citizens, and not a mandatory disclosure.**

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.

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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.

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 2021 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.

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# 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

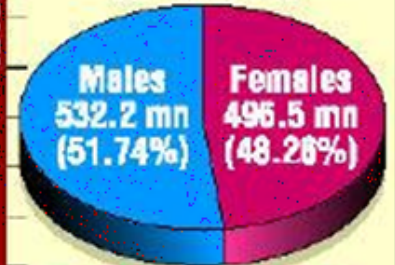
● 2001-2011 is the first decade (with the exception of 1911-1921) which has added lesser population compared to the previous decade

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

## GENDER COMPOSITION

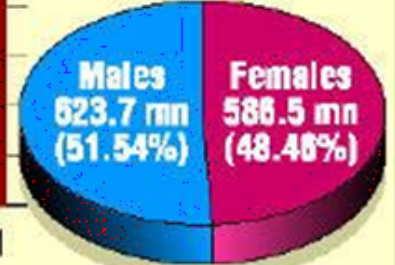
### Census 2001

Sex ratio: 933



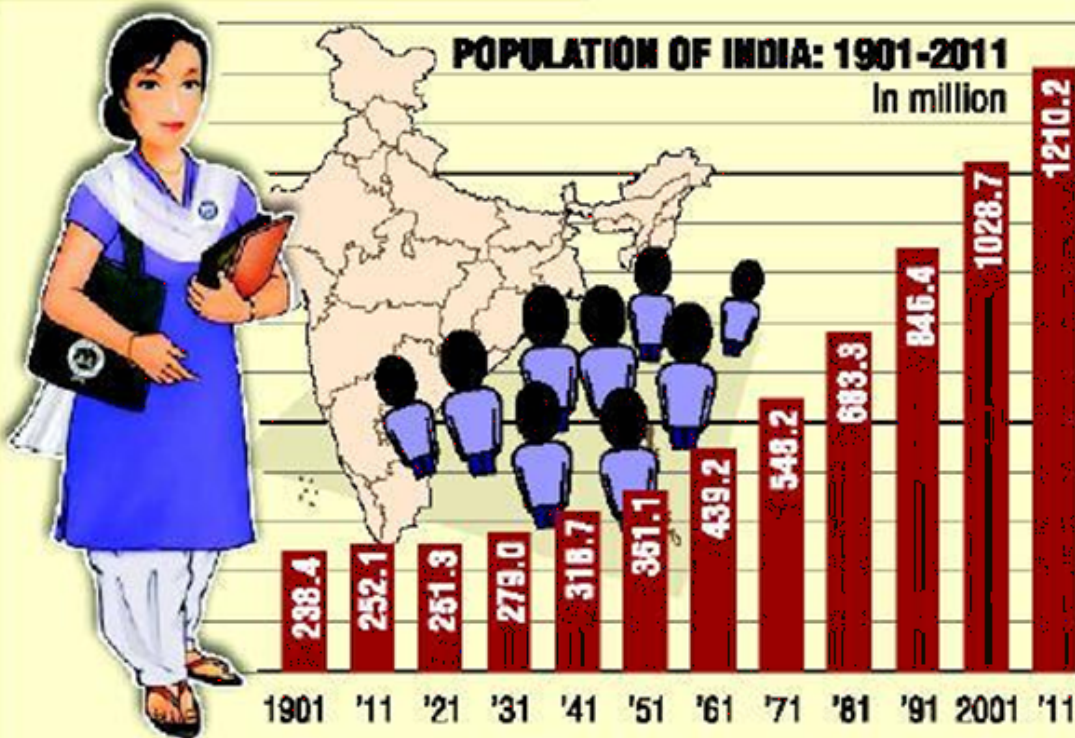
### Census 2011

Sex ratio: 940



## POPULATION OF INDIA: 1901-2011

In million



2011 population figures are provisional

KBK Infographics