



First Digital Census in India

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Context: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the proposal for conducting Census of India 2027.

Salient Features of Census 2027

First-time Milestones

First Digital Census in India

First caste enumeration since Independence

Census-as-a-Service (CaaS) initiative launched

Data Collection & Technology

Data collection via mobile applications

Real-time monitoring through:

Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) portal

Enhanced dissemination through:

Customised visualisation tools

Census

A **decennial, comprehensive enumeration** of population and housing, providing official demographic, social and economic data of the country.

Genesis

- First **non-synchronous census** conducted in **1872** (during British rule G.G Lord Mayo period).
- First **synchronous census** conducted in **1881**, establishing the decennial tradition. (G.G. Ripon period)

Conducting Authority

- Conducted by the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (RGI)**.
- Functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

Legal / Statutory Framework

- Governed by the **Census Act, 1948**.
- Provides for:
- Appointment of census officers
- Confidentiality of individual information

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- Penalties for non-compliance or false information
- Census data **cannot be used as evidence in courts.**

Frequency

- Conducted **once every 10 years** (decennial).

Coverage / Parameters Collected

- **Demographic:** Population size, age, sex, marital status.
- **Social:** Religion, caste (SC/ST), literacy, education.
- **Economic:** Occupation, workforce participation.
- **Housing:** Housing condition, amenities, assets.
- Provides **micro-level data** up to **village and ward level**, crucial for planning and policy.

Last Census

- **Census 2011:** 15th Census of India and 7th after Independence.
- **Census 2021:** Postponed due to the **COVID-19 pandemic** (yet to be conducted).

National Population Register vs National Register of Citizens

| Aspect | National Population Register (NPR) | National Register of Citizens (NRC) |
|------------------|---|--|
| What it is | Register of usual residents of India | Register of Indian citizens |
| Objective | Create a comprehensive identity database of residents | Identify and document citizens of India |
| Legal Basis | Citizenship Act, 1955 & Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 | Citizenship Act, 1955 & Citizenship Rules, 2003 |
| Prepared by | Registrar General of India (RGI) | Registrar General of India (RGI) |
| Conducted by | Ministry of Home Affairs | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| Coverage | Includes citizens and non-citizens | Includes only citizens |
| Nature | Administrative database | Citizenship determination exercise |
| Proof Required | Generally no documentary proof of citizenship required | Documentary proof mandatory |
| Mandatory? | Yes (for usual residents) | Not conducted nationwide yet |
| Current Status | Prepared in 2010 and updated in 2015; proposed update aligned with Census | Conducted only in Assam (2019) |
| Outcome | Basis for National Identity Cards (future) | Identification of citizens & exclusion of illegal immigrants |
| Link with Census | Collected along with Census house-listing | Independent of Census |