



## Census 2021

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The next census of India to be conducted in 2021 with March 1, 2021 as the reference date, except for the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

- The Census 2021 **will be conducted in 18 languages out of the 22 scheduled languages (under 8<sup>th</sup> schedule) and English**, while Census 2011 was in 16 of the 22 scheduled languages declared at that time.
- It also **will introduce a code directory** to streamline the process
- The option of “Other” under the gender category will be changed to “**Third Gender**”.  
There were roughly 5 lakh people under "other" category in 2011.
- For the first time in the 140 year history of census in India, data is proposed to be collected through a mobile app by enumerators and they will receive an additional payment as an incentive.
- **The Census data would be available by the year 2024-25** as the entire process would be conducted digitally and data crunching would be quicker.  
Data from the Census 2011 is still being released. **E.g.:** The **dataset on migration was published recently.**

## Issue of Caste Data Collection

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- Earlier in 2018, the Ministry of Home Affairs had declared that the Other Backward Class (OBC) category would be included in the Census 2021.  
However, the Registrar-General of India (RGI) has said that only SC/ST will be included as the unreliable nature of caste data collection decreases the credibility of the results. **E.g.:** A person belonging to the Yadav caste writes Yadu, Yaduvanshi, etc. in the form; there is no standardisation. People sometimes even confuse caste with gotra.
- The 2011 caste data, collected as part of the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC), is yet to be released by the Centre.  
Even a committee formed under former vice-chairman of NITI Aayog, Arvind Panagariya to find a way to publish the 2011 Socio-economic and Caste Census data failed to provide any tangible outcome.

- The last caste-based census was conducted by the British in 1931.

## **Census**

- The census provides information on size, distribution and socio-economic, demographic and other characteristics of the country's population.
- **'Rig-Veda' reveals** that some kind of population count was maintained during 800-600 BC in India.
- **Arthashastr by 'Kautilya' written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC** prescribed the collection of population statistics as a measure of state policy for taxation.
- During the regime of the **Mughal king Akbar, the administrative report 'Ain-e-Akbari'** included comprehensive data pertaining to population, industry, wealth and many other characteristics.
- A systematic and modern population census, in its present form was conducted non synchronously between 1865 and 1872 in different parts of the country.
- However, **the first synchronous census in India was held in 1881**. Since then, censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once every ten years.
- India's last census was carried out in **2011 when the country's population stood at 121 crore**. The Indian Census is one of the largest administrative exercises undertaken in the world.

**Source: TH**