

History and Development of Census in India with special reference to changes included in census 2011

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Introduction: -

The word “census” is derived from the Latin word “censere” which mean to value or to tax. A census of the population means the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analyzing & publishing the demographic, Economic & social variables, pertaining to specific time, of all people of the country. In other words, it can be said that census is the enumeration of the entire population of the country or a region within a well-defined time period is known as the Census.

Historically Development: -

India is one of the very few countries in the World, which has a proud history of holding Census after every ten years. Historical records show that it is being held from time immemorial. The earliest literature ‘Rig Veda’ reveals that some kind of Population count was maintained during 800-600 BC. Kautilya’s Arthashastra, written around 321-296 BC, mentions that state was being conducted for the purpose of taxation. However, history is evident that census was also being held during Mughal Period. During the regime of Mughal king Akbar the Great, the administrative report ‘Ain-e-Akbari’ included comprehensive data pertaining to population, industry, wealth and many other characteristics. In ancient Rome, too, the census was conducted for the purpose of taxation.

The first attempt to obtain the detailed size of the population in India by the British was made in 1865, & the Govt. had agreed with the principles that a general population census would be taken in 1871 & this modern census is known as the Census of 1872. The 1872 census covered the basic information of Demographic including sex, Religion, age, caste, class, education, occupation, etc. In 1881 census three more components added Migration, Nuptiality & mother tongue. In 1891 census special emphasis was given to caste structure of the people. In 1901 census, they gave more importance to English literature & collect the data about how many people knew their mother tongue , others tongue & foreign languages & they want to improve the communication skill of the Indian people. The next three censuses collect the same information as previous. In 1931 census data, they included the Divorce column to know the marital status of the people. The 1941 census was the last census under British rule, In this census, children ever born was asked first time in 1941 census. The Govt. gave special emphasis to the growth of population & this was a big concern because the population was expanding very fast & govt. made some efforts to control it.

The first Post-independence census was undertaken in 1951 & the census was not completely re-constructed & only a few administrative changes were made. The major changes come in 1961 census & the responsibility to conduct the census was given to Ministry of Home Affairs of the Union. In 1961 the census got permanent administrative office under the Ministry of Home Affairs & the office was named as Office of the Register General Of India (ORGI) In 1961. After Independence the

Govt. puts more efforts to take good quality of data because this data is used for the planning in the five years plans for the upliftment of weaker sections of society. The census 1961 is regarded as the milestone in the history of Indian census & generated tremendous interest in the field of academic ,anthropology & social studies. A hundred year of the Indian census was celebrated in the Indian census history after the completion of 1971 census operation & gave a modern shape in the census history. In this census operation of 1971, Place of birth & place of the last residence, in migration history were included the first time. In 1981 census data, the horizon of the variables with regards to workers & their categorization into main, marginal & non-workers on the basis of days of work was widened.

In 1991 census data, technology was brought into the system. However, the horizon keeps on widening by including other dimensions of Household like types of cooking fuel used, availability of toilets facilities in the rural as well as urban areas. They also take the data regarding Ex-service man & their status pensioners & Non-pensioners. In this census, they used micro-computer attached to the mainstream computers for data analyses. Data dissemination through diskettes & CD-ROMS was first used in this census. The 2001 census was fully computerized & added a lot of additions question in the questionnaires. The 2001 census of India was the first step towards the complete & unduplicated list of all the geographical entities of the country which includes state, districts, tehsils, town & villages. The census operation was carried out in two phases—the house listing & house numbering operations. The house listing operations which consists of systematically listing out all structure, house & households throughout of the country were carried out during the period April to September 2000. The information on the availability of amenities & assets to the household was also collected along with the house listing operations. The census operations of 2001 were printed in 16 languages. In 2001, the customization of the data started . Most of the enumerators are from the primary school teachers & firstly they are trained & then they send to the field for enumerations. For the processing & analyzing the data, master trainers are prepared for it.

One important innovation introduced in the 2001 census was the established the census helpline number to provide technical assistance to the enumerators & one can register their complaints & also their suggestion. Another important advancement of the 2001 census was the introduction of the permanent location number.

Some of the important new items included in the house list schedule in 2001 census of India are as:-

- Conditions of residential census household--- good, liveable or dilapidated as per respondent.
- A number of married couples in the household.
- Information of their drainage pattern, i.e., wastewater, whether they have “closed, open or no. drainage.
- Information on availability of bathroom & kitchen within the house or not
- Availability of certain assets like T.V, Radio, Mobile , Cycle , car/ jeep, etc.
- Information’s whether they have Banking services.
- Age at marriages was also calculated for males.
- Types of educational institutions attended.

- Questions regarded to agriculture production & work were introduced in this 2001 census of India. Only five crops, tea, coffee, Rubber, coconut & betel have been classified as the plantation crops
- The question seeking/available for work were asked to the workers, marginalized worker & non-workers.
- No. of children born currently married women during the last one years was collected both for males & females, children, separately.
- A new question was added that how much distance a person travels for his/ her work in a day & frequency of travel & how much cost he/she paid for travel purpose.
- The sig. or thumb impression of the respondent has been taken & the relationship of the respondent with the head of the household first time in the Indian Census history.

In the 2001 census , more emphasis was given to the gender-related issues because of declining sex ratio in the country & a special cell was created within the census organization. Post Enumeration Survey (PES), earlier was Known as the Post Enumeration Check has been a regular feature of the census of India since 1951. The main objective of the PES AS (I) To get an estimate of under coverage of the census household & population. (2) to provide an estimate of the content error with respect to certain selected data items.

The 15th Indian Census was conducted in two phases, house listing, and population enumeration. House listing phase began on 1 April 2010 and involved the collection of information about all buildings. Information for National Population Register was also collected in the first phase, which will be used to issue a 12-digit unique identification number to all registered Indian residents by [Unique Identification Authority of India](#) (UIDAI). The second population enumeration phase was conducted between 9 and 28 February 2011. Census has been conducted in India since 1872, and 2011 marks the first time biometric information was collected.

However, in the census 2011 caste data was collected which will be used for the welfare of lower sections of the society. information on caste was last collected during the [British Raj](#) in 1931. During the early census, people often exaggerated their caste status to garner social status, and it is expected that people downgrade it now in the expectation of gaining government benefits. There is only one instance of a caste-count in post-independence India. It was conducted in Kerala in 1968 by the Communist government under [E M S Namboodiripad](#) to assess the social and economic backwardness of various lower castes. The census was termed [Socio-Economic Survey of 1968](#), and the results were published in the Gazetteer of Kerala, 1971.

Census data was collected in 16 languages, and the training manual was prepared in 18 languages. In 2011, this was the first ever census which India and Bangladesh conducted jointly along with the areas along their border.

The house listing schedule in 2011 included 35 items which are as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building number • <i>Census house number</i> • Predominant material of floor, wall, and roof of the census house • Ascertain use of actual house • Condition of the census house • Household number • Total number of persons in the household • Name of the head of the household • Sex of the head • Caste status (SC or ST or others). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership status of the house • Number of dwelling rooms • Number of married couples the household • Main source of drinking water • Availability of drinking water source. • Main source of lighting • Latrine within the premises. • Type of latrine facility • Wastewater outlet connection • Bathing facility within the premises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of kitchen • Fuel used for cooking • Radio/Transistor • Television • Computer/Laptop • Telephone/Mobile phone. • Bicycle. • Scooter/Motor cycle/Moped • Car/Jeep/Van • Availing Banking services.
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The population enumeration schedule of 2011 includes 30 questions which are as under:

Name of the person	Other languages were known	Seeking or available for work
Relationship to head	Literacy status	Travel to place of work
Sex	Status of attendance (Education)	Birthplace
Date of birth and age	Highest educational level attained	Place of last residence
Current marital status	Working any time during last year	Reason for migration
Age at marriage	Category of economic activity	Duration of stay in the place of migration
Religion	Occupation Nature of industry	Children surviving
Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe	Trade or service	Children ever born
Disability	Class of worker	Number of children born alive during last one year
Mother tongue	Non-economic activity	

The National Population Register household schedule contained 9 questions which are as under:

Name of the person and resident status
Name of the person as should appear in the population register
Relationship to head
gender
Date of birth
Marital status
Educational qualification
Occupation/Activity
Names of father, mother, and spouse

Other Changes in Data Collection - Census 2011

Several changes have been incorporated in Census 2011 for better capturing and analysis of data. The following is the list of changes incorporated:

- i) Gender: New category Other introduced in addition to Male and Female.
- ii) Date of Birth question introduced along with Age.
- iii) Current Marital Status: Separate codes Assigned for Separated and Divorced.
- iv) SC/ST: New filter Question on SC/ST Introduced – Is this person SC/ST?
- v) Disability: The 2001 Census had categorized the disability into five types. Census 2011 is collecting information on eight types of disabilities, namely: Disability
 - a. In Seeing
 - b. In Hearing
 - c. In Speech
 - d. In Movement
 - e. Mental retardation
 - f. Mental Illness
 - g. Any Other
 - h. Multiple Disability
- vi) Literacy Status: Literacy status for 'Other' sex added in addition to existing Male and Female.
- vii) Status of Attendance in Schooling: New Codes have been introduced for Not Attending viz., Attended before, Never attended.

- viii) Work: In the previous censuses, workers were categorized as 'Main workers' - those who worked for more than 6 months and 'Marginal workers' - those who worked for less than 6 months. At the Census 2011, 'Marginal workers have been classified into two categories viz.,
- ix) worked for 3 months or more but less than 6 months
- x) worked for less than 3 months.
- xi) A separate code-5 has been included under Non-economic activity for rentiers.
- xii) Migration: Provision to specify the present name of the Village/Town of the Birth Place as well as the Place of Last Residence introduced.
- xiii) Name of the Institutional Household is also being recorded.

Importance of census & its series

The population census is the primary sources of data required for administrative purposes & for many aspects of economic & social planning and research. It provides the information of the growth, density, distribution, age, mortality, fertility, urbanization & sex structure of the population. In the census data, there are series like ABCDF. In series "A" we get the general populations tables like total population, density, growth, sex ratio, etc. In "B" series, we get the economics tables of the population which are totally based on the economic activities of the people in any region of the country. In "C" we get the data regarding social-cultural aspects. This includes data from different social groups of the country like SC, ST'S & others social groups. Regarding the migration data, we get it from the series "D" of the census, where we get a place of birth, place of enumerations & the place of the last residence. However, the fertility tables are in the "F" series of the census. Other than these series of general information. Census provides data at the grass root through primary Census Abstract (PCA) in the form of village & town Directory. This type is basically the village and town level data of different indicators. Thus, the census is one of the precious resources if it is being utilized judiciously then our country will become heaven on earth. However, this data should be based on real data, and then it can be used for the welfare of society in India.

Conclusion: -

From the above discussion & analyses of the census history, it is evident that a lot of new changes had occurred in the history of the census from decade by decade. The 2001 census was the period of computerization & customization of the data. It brought revolution in the history of the census in India. After it, All the new innovations including adoptions of the modern technology & generations of the new variables were there in the census. The 2011 census data is totally modern census & It covers more & less each & every aspect of the population which is more important for making policies as well as for the research purposes in this modern times. One department of the census was opened at Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2012 which will help the Students to use the data for research purposes.

References: -

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