

4. The Census of India 2027 – Economy

The Centre has issued the notification for the first phase of the Census of India 2027

About the Census in India

Concept and Definition

A Census is the systematic, official, and periodic process of collecting, compiling, analysing, and disseminating data relating to a country's population. It provides a complete count of the population along with detailed demographic, social, economic, and cultural characteristics. The Census differs from surveys in that it aims for universal coverage, not sampling.

Historical Evolution of the Census in India

Ancient and Medieval Roots – References to population counting and household enumeration are found in

1. Kautilya's Arthashastra – population data for taxation, military recruitment, and welfare.
2. Akbar's Ain-i-Akbari – land revenue, households, professions, and social classifications.

These were administrative enumerations, not modern statistical censuses.

Colonial Period and Modern Census – The first synchronous, modern Census in India was conducted in 1881, covering the entire country simultaneously. W. C. Plowden served as India's first Census Commissioner. From 1881 onwards, the Census became a decennial exercise, forming one of the longest uninterrupted statistical traditions in the world.

Evolution of Census Schedules – Census schedules evolved over time but consistently included

1. Age and sex
2. Literacy and education
3. Religion and language
4. Occupation and economic activity
5. Social categories such as caste and tribe (with variations over time)

The expansion of questions reflects changing policy priorities, from revenue administration to social justice and development planning.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

Constitutional Position – Census is a Union List subject, ensuring uniformity across the country. This avoids fragmentation of demographic data across states.

Census Act, 1948 – The Census process is governed by the Census Act, 1948.

Key provisions

1. Empowers the Central Government to conduct the Census.
 2. Authorises the appointment of a Census Commissioner of India.
 3. Provides legal backing for data collection.
 4. Ensures confidentiality of individual data.
- Census data cannot be used as evidence in courts, reinforcing public trust.

Census 2027– Key Features

Administrative Approval – The Union Cabinet has approved the Census with an estimated cost of ₹11,718.24 crore.

First Fully Digital Census – Census 2027 will be India's first fully digital Census. Key technological features

1. Enumeration through mobile applications (Android and iOS).
2. Provision for self-enumeration.
3. Real-time data validation and geo-tagging.

Census of India 2021 **Houselisting and Housing Census Schedule**

Form Number: 2802 3739

Confidential when filled

Page No. **SIDE-A**

Location Particulars: State/UT: District: Tahsil/Taluk/PS/Dev Block/City/Municipal: Town/Village:

Word Code No. (only for Town): Houselisting Block No.:

Line number **Building number** **Census house number** **Predominant material of floor, wall and roof of the census house** **Ascertain use of Census house** **Household number** **Information relating to the head of the household** **Amenities available to the household** **Assets possessed by the household** **Mobile Number**

Fill if the census house is used wholly or partly as a residence (If '1' or '2' in col. 7)

Fill columns 14 to 34 for normal households. Put dash (-) in case of institutional households and non-residential census houses

Line number: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

Note: Count the number of entries and give total

*** for col. 13** Scheduled Caste can be only from Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist and not from any other religion. Scheduled Tribe can be from any religion.

for col. 15 Do not include kitchen, bathroom, latrine, store room, passageway and verandah. Include living room, bedroom, dining room, drawing room, study room, servant's room and other similar rooms.

\$ for col. 18 Near the premises' here means within 100 meters in Urban, within 500 meters in Rural.

4. Floor Mud, 1; Wood, 2; Burnt brick, 3; Stone, 4; Cement, 5; G.I./metal/aluminum sheets, 6; Floor tiles, 7; Any other, 8.

5. Wall Grass/thatch/bamboo etc., 1; Plastic/polythene, 2; Plaster/putty etc., 3; Wood, 4; Stone not packed with mortar, 5; Stone packed with mortar, 6; Burnt brick, 7; Concrete, 8; G.I./metal/aluminum sheets, 9; Any other, 10.

6. Roof Grass/thatch/bamboo, 1; Wood/roast etc., 2; Plastic/polythene, 3; Hand made tiles, 4; Machine made tiles, 5; Burnt brick, 6; Stone, 7; Slate, 8; G.I./metal/aluminum sheets, 9; Concrete, 10; Any other, 11.

7. Use of census house Residence, 1; Residence-cum-other use, 2; Shop/office, 3; School/college etc., 4; Hotel/lodge, 5; Guest house etc., 6; Hospital/dispensary etc., 7; Factory/workshop, 8; Place of worship, 9; Other non-residential use, 10; Vacant, 11.

12. Main source of drinking water Tap water from treated source, 1; Tap water from untreated source, 2; Well, 3; Hand Pump, 4; Tubewell/borehole, 5; Spring, 6; River/canal, 7; Tank/pond/lake, 8; Packaged/bottled water, 9; Other sources, 10.

13. Type of latrine Flush/pour flush latrine connected to piped sewer system, 1; Septic tank, 2; Other system, 3; Twin Pit latrine, 4; Without slab/open pit, 5; Single Pit latrine, 6; With slab/ventilated improved pit, 7; Without slab/open pit, 8; Service latrine, 9; Night soil removed by human, 10; Night soil serviced by animals, 11; Night soil disposed into open drain, 12.

14. Availability of kitchen & LPG/PNG Connection Cooking in kitchen, 1; Doesn't have LPG/PNG Connection, 2; Cooking inside house, but not in kitchen, 3; Doesn't have LPG/PNG Connection, 4; Cooking in open/ outside house, 5; Doesn't have LPG/PNG Connection, 6; No cooking, 7.

15. Main fuel used for cooking Firewood, 1; Crop residue, 2; Cow dung cake, 3; Coal/ligite, 4; Charcoal, 5; Kerosene, 6; LPG/PNG, 7; Electricity, 8; Bio-gas, 9; Solar, 10; Any other, 11.

16. Telephone and Mobile Phone/Smartphone Landline only, 1; Mobile only, 2; Smartphone, 3; Both, 4; No, 5.

17. Bicycle and Scooter/Motorcycle/Moped Bicycle, 1; Scooter, 2; Motorcycle, 3; Moped, 4; Both, 5; None, 6.

Use only numerals as indicated here: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Signature of the Enumerator with Date:

Signature of the Supervisor with Date:

Expected benefits

1. Faster data processing.
2. Reduced human error.
3. Quicker publication of results.

Inclusion of Caste Enumeration - Caste enumeration will be included in Census 2027. Significance

1. Enables evidence-based social justice policies.
2. Provides a comprehensive socio-economic database.
3. Has implications for
 - a. Welfare targeting
 - b. Reservation policies
 - c. Political representation

The Census Conducted- The Census is carried out in two distinct but interlinked phases

1. House-listing and Housing Census (Expected- 2026)

Purpose - To capture housing conditions and household amenities.

Coverage - Every building and household is surveyed.

Information Collected

1. Type of structure (permanent, semi-permanent, temporary)
2. Ownership status
3. Number of rooms
4. Construction materials

Access to

1. Drinking water
2. Electricity
3. Toilets
4. Cooking fuel

Household assets

Significance - Provides baseline data for

1. Housing schemes
2. Urban planning
3. Infrastructure development
4. Quality of life assessments

2. Population Enumeration

Purpose - To collect individual-level demographic and socio-economic data.

Coverage - Every individual, including

1. Homeless persons
2. Migrants
3. Institutional populations

Information Collected

1. Age and sex
2. Education and literacy
3. Occupation and economic activity
4. Religion
5. Caste / Tribe
6. Disability
7. Migration history

Significance - Forms the core demographic database of the country. Basis for long-term policy planning.

3. Data Processing and Release

Data is centrally processed using digital systems. Released in stages

1. Provisional population totals
2. Final population data
3. Detailed socio-economic tables

Quality checks, audits, and cross-verification ensure accuracy.

Importance of the Census

Policy Formulation and Planning - Provides baseline data for

1. Health
2. Education
3. Nutrition
4. Employment
5. Housing

Without Census data, policies risk being misaligned with ground realities.

Resource Allocation - Determines

1. Fiscal transfers to States
2. Allocation to local bodies

3. Planning Commission / Finance Commission decisions

Impacts federal financial equity.

Political Representation – Census data underpins

1. **Delimitation of constituencies**

2. Reservation of seats for

- a. SCs
- b. STs
- c. Women (one-third reservation)

Census 2027 is especially crucial as– Delimitation has been frozen since 1976.

Social Justice and Inclusion – Caste and socio-economic data enable

1. Targeted welfare delivery
2. Evidence-based affirmative action

Reduces reliance on outdated or fragmented datasets.

Digital Governance Transformation – Digital enumeration improves

1. Efficiency
2. Transparency
3. Speed of data dissemination

Aligns Census operations with Digital India goals.

Issues and Concerns

1. **Digital Divide** – Challenges in

1. Rural and remote areas
2. Tribal regions
3. Among elderly and digitally illiterate populations

Risk of exclusion without adequate offline support.

2. **Data Privacy and Security** – Census data includes

1. Sensitive demographic
2. Social and caste information

Concerns

1. Data breaches
2. Misuse

Necessitates strong data protection frameworks.

3. **Inter-governmental Coordination** – Requires coordination across

1. All States and Union Territories
2. Local administrative machinery

Tight timelines increase execution complexity.

4. **Urban Enumeration Challenges** – Rapid urbanisation leads to

1. Informal housing
2. Floating migrant populations

Increases risk of undercounting or duplication.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Census 2027 represents a landmark moment in India's governance, blending a centuries-old administrative tradition with cutting-edge digital tools. Its success will depend on–

1. Bridging the digital divide
2. Ensuring robust data protection

3. Training enumerators effectively
4. Building public trust through transparency

If executed well, the Census will provide a comprehensive, inclusive, and timely demographic portrait of India. This will be indispensable for

1. Evidence-based policymaking
2. Strengthening federal governance
3. Aligning national development strategies with the realities of a diverse and dynamic population.

Source- <https://www.newsonair.gov.in/centre-issues-notification-for-first-phase-of-census-of-india-2027/#~~text=The%20Centre%20has%20issued%20the,specified%20by%20each%20State%20FUT>.

