

Demand for Caste Census

Why in news?

A 11-party delegation met PM to discuss the possibility of caste being included as a part of 2021 census.

What is caste census?

- Caste census is the procedure of systematically acquiring and recording the caste-wise tabulation of India's population
- The last caste census was taken in 1931 but was stopped by the British with 1941 Census, citing financial constraints
- India publishes separate data on Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), since 1951 but it does not include data on other castes.
- Socio -Economic Caste Census was conducted in 2016 but it was not made public

SECC 2016 was conducted by Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas

What is the need for demanding caste census?

- There is no proper estimate for the population of OBCs, various groups within the OBCs, and others.
 - Mandal Commission estimated the OBC population at 52% while political parties make their own estimates
- It will be a pro-poor exercise for better planning and targeting of welfare schemes
- It will help policy makers in rationalising the reservation matrix
- To debate on issues like disproportionate benefits from reservation by particular groups within each category
- Courts have often emphasized states to have adequate data on caste

Why is caste census opposed by some groups?

- Fear that caste census will widen the social rifts among different castes

- Integrity of data is questioned as ruling parties might alter the data according to their political motive
- Some groups argue that caste-based census is against the idea of a casteless society
- Vote bank politics is another major concern

Source: The Hindu

Quick Facts

OBC Commissions

- First Backward Classes Commission - 1955 - under the chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar
- Second Backward Classes Commission - 1979- under the chairmanship of Mandal
- Justice Rohini Commission - for subcategorisation of OBCs

