

A newsletter from East View highlighting census data from around the world

INDIA'S AMBITIOUS CENSUS PLAN: COUNTING BILLIONS IN NINE MONTHS

India's 16th national census (the 8th since independence) is scheduled for 2027, after a six-year delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The forthcoming census is already shaping up to be one of the most ambitious in the country's long history. The census is set to be conducted in two phases, culminating on March 1, 2027. With 3.5 million workers surveying over 240 million households, it will be the largest peacetime digital data collection effort. The use of mobile apps and a self-enumeration portal is expected to speed up results—delivered within nine months—while improving accuracy, transparency, and public participation.

India's upcoming census is set to be transformative, combining cutting-edge digital tools with a major policy shift: the inclusion of caste data for the first time in more than 70 years.

Yet what makes this census truly historic is not just how the data will be collected, but what it will now include. For the first time since 1951, the government will gather comprehensive information on caste, including data on the vast and diverse Other Backward Classes (OBCs). This marks a major policy shift driven by regional demands and rising political focus on caste identity, especially ahead of key state elections. Supporters say the data will help create fairer public policies, while critics warn it could deepen social divisions and politicize identity in dangerous ways.

No. 33.—Statement showing the Numbers of the Largest Hindu Castes, and the Proportion which each bears to 10,000 of the Hindu Population.

CASTE.	Numbers.	Proportion.	CASTE.	Numbers.	Proportion.
Gwalia	3,992,940	878	Jaliya	281,540	83
Brahmin	2,734,100	605	Teor	249,117	76
Kaibartba	2,160,379	462	Dom	243,246	75
Koch	1,648,412	362	Jogi	240,542	74
Chandal	1,576,076	346	Pod	225,755	71
Kayasth	1,450,543	318	Madak	208,821	67
Rajput	1,409,324	310	Hari	286,169	62
Chamar	1,408,007	309	Nuniya	279,861	61
Tei	1,298,922	285	Kol	237,803	56
Kurmi	1,213,422	266	Kewat	224,873	56
Koeri	1,204,884	265	Tatwa	245,904	54
Dossadh	1,134,358	249	Pan	241,478	53
Babhan	1,031,561	226	Sonar	241,322	53
Napit	941,652	207	Bhumij	226,167	49
Baniya	904,526	199	Barui	218,812	48
Bagdi	756,879	166	Mali	216,108	47
Kumhar	698,247	153	Sonthal	203,264	43
Tanti	673,343	148	Kharwar	195,242	42
Lohar	672,947	148	Kalwar	190,968	41
Khandait	617,017	135	Sudra	186,407	41
Kanda	608,919	133	Kalu	170,782	37
Kahar	604,828	133	Pasi	164,505	36
Sunri	589,621	129	Gond	160,722	35
Baishnab	568,632	124	Bind	156,812	30
Sadgop	567,947	122	Rajwar	150,448	28
Dhobi	553,453	121	Kapali	127,658	27

India, 1881. Census Report. Bengal. v01, p. 134.
<https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2544810B0.1.151>

Looking to the Past to Understand India's Future

For the world's most populated country, an accurate census is a high-stakes endeavor that will have far-reaching policy impact. While the preparations for 2027 are underway, it is a good time to dig into archives and look at India's past censuses on the Global Census Archive platform. For example, the 1951 census, the first after the country's independence, recorded 361,088,090 people and was critical in understanding the impact of the partition. The 1961 census, on the other hand, was notable in its analysis of languages, recording 1,652 native tongues. Sometimes, censuses are also notable for what they omit, as in 1991 when India's census was not conducted in Jammu and Kashmir due to armed conflict, leaving a data gap in a strategically sensitive region. These historical records, preserved and accessible through the Global Census Archive, offer invaluable insights into how India has measured and managed its vast and evolving population—making the archive an essential tool for researchers, policymakers, and anyone seeking to understand the country's demographic journey.

Top: India, 1951. *Census Results. v08. Punjab, Pepsu, Himachal Pradesh, Bilaspur, Delhi. pt02-A. General Population, Age, & Social Tables*, p. 331. <https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2545494B0.1.339>

Bottom: India, 1961. *Census Results. v01. India. pt02-C(ii). Language Tables*, p. xix. <https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2545568B0.1.28>

TABLE D—V

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(i) DISPLACED PERSONS BY YEAR OF ARRIVAL IN INDIA, AND
(ii) DISPLACED PERSONS BY LIVELIHOOD CLASSES.

This table shows the number of displaced persons from Pakistan enumerated in India. The definition of 'displaced person' was as under :—
'Displaced person means any person who has entered India having left or been compelled to leave his home in Western Pakistan on or after the 1st March, 1947, or his home in Eastern Pakistan on or after the 15th October, 1946, on account of disturbances or on account of the setting up of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan.'

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STATEMENT I

Showing percentage change in each decade (1911-1961) of a language which had a strength of more than 50,000 in the case of a State and 10,000 or more in the case of a Union Territory in the Census of 1951—contd.

Language	1961	1951	1931	1921	1911
1	2	3	4	5	6
S. MADRAS*					
1 Badaga (a)	85,371	67,285	42,521	39,749	38,687
(b)	+26-88	+58-24	+6-97	+2-75	
2 Hindi (a)	38,974	65,013	10,732	2,876	481
(b)	(-)-40-05	+505-79	+273-16	+497-92	
3 Hindustani (a)	602	69,216	392,528	314,748	322,550
(b)	(-)-99-13	(-)-82-37	+24-71	(-)-2-42	
4 Kannada (a)	853,211	803,092	749,912	633,815	647,901
(b)	+6-24	+8-39	+13-32	+0-91	
5 Malayalam (a)	399,206	405,147	135,787	91,955	108,853
(b)	(-)-14-47	+198-37	+47-67	(-)-15-32	
6 Marathi (a)	51,431	53,697	48,060	42,204	50,185
(b)	(-)-4-22	+11-73	+13-88	(-)-15-90	
7 Saurashtra (a)	155,392	124,278	103,243	84,762	92,302
(b)	+25-04	+20-37	+21-80	(-)-8-17	
8 Tamil (a)	28,011,099	24,722,335	18,964,908	17,574,608	16,935,835
(b)	+13-30	+30-36	+7-91	+3-77	
9 Telugu (a)	3,362,579	3,400,635	3,080,860	2,914,594	2,800,509
(b)	(-)-1-09	+10-38	+5-70	+4-07	
10 Urdu (a)	615,503	426,816	N.A.	138	7
(b)	+44-21	+1,871-43	

Further reading on India's next census:

- "India will soon start its delayed census, including asking questions about caste": <https://apnews.com/article/india-census-caste-politics-bihar-welfare-population-2a49a372c4f9bd79c4b0a11ed514c8a2>
- "Census data to be ready within nine months? Govt bets on tech to speed up 2027 exercise": https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/census-data-to-be-ready-within-nine-months-govt-bets-on-tech-to-speed-up-2027-exercise/articleshow/121796381.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst
- "Key facts as India surpasses China as the world's most populous country": <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/02/09/key-facts-as-india-surpasses-china-as-the-worlds-most-populous-country>



The East View **Global Census Archive®** (GCA) is an innovative program to collect official data and publications issued by the national census authorities of more than 200 countries, from the early 19th century to the present day, providing a key resource for scholars and analysts to find current and historical census data to support critical research into our changing world. GCA provides a single platform experience to explore the world's census publications: all countries and regions, the complete depth of published census materials, including original census publications in e-book form, as well as modern tabular data in Excel format and GIS files for advanced users.