

Introduction

1. The first census of the third millennium and twenty first century the Census of India, 2001 was the 14th continuous and uninterrupted Indian census since 1872. Thus, 2001 Census will provide data on population and its characteristics marking transition from one century and millennium to another. This data will form the benchmark for framing of the welfare and development policies for billion plus human resources living in this country.

2. The Census Act, 1948, forms the basis for the conduct of population censuses in independent India. The Census of India, 2001 was conducted in two distinct but inter-related phases. The first phase, the Houselisting Operation was conducted between April to September, 2000 in different states and union territories as a prelude to the exercise of undertaking the decennial Population Census. The houselisting exercise provided the basis for uniform and unambiguous frame to undertake the population enumeration with the ultimate objective of achieving as full a coverage as is humanly possible without any omission of an area or household. During this Houselisting Operation, data on housing conditions, amenities and assets available to the households were also collected. The second phase of census i.e. Population Enumeration, was undertaken between February, 9 to 28th February (both days inclusive) with a revisional round from 1st to 5th March, 2001. The Census moment was **00.00 hours of 1st March, 2001**, the referral time at which the snapshot of the population of the country was taken. This was a departure from the earlier census tradition, as until the 1991 Census (except 1971), the sunrise of 1st March of the relevant Census year was the census moment. The enumeration of houseless population was carried out on the night of February, 28, 2001.

3. In certain inaccessible and snow bound areas of the country, population enumeration was preponed for administrative and technical convenience and carried out non- synchronously. Thus in Jammu & Kashmir and certain snow bound areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal the population enumeration was conducted during 11th – 30th September, 2002 with the revisional round from 1st to 5th October, 2002. In Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, the population enumeration had to be deferred due to flash floods in August, 2000 and was conducted from 12th to 31st May, 2001 with reference date as 1st June, 2001. In Jammu and Kashmir, due to certain constraints, the enumeration period was extended from 1st October, 2000 to 15th November, 2000 with a reference date of 16th November, 2000 in the six districts viz., Srinagar, Badgam, Anantnag, Baramulla, Kupwara and Pulwama of Kashmir Valley and four blocks namely, Banihal, Ramso, Marwa and Wardwan of Doda district in Jammu Division. It was further extended in Srinagar town and Pulwama districts until 15th December, 2000 with reference date being 16th December, 2000.

4. Further, due to the devastating earthquake in Gujarat on 26th January, 2001 just two weeks prior to the commencement of the nation wide population enumeration, this schedule in the affected areas of Gujarat had to be postponed. These included the entire district of Kachchh, the taluk of Morvi, Maliya-Miana and Wankaner in Rajkot district and Jodiya taluka in Jamnagar district. The population enumeration in these areas was undertaken during 9th-28th February,

2002 with 1st March, 2002 as the reference date. Although enumeration in certain areas of the country have been undertaken at different points of time and with different reference dates, no adjustments have been made to the enumerated population so as to bring all of them to the common reference date of 1st March, 2001. This, if at all, will have a very minor, almost negligible bearing on the population totals for the country or state or even the districts in most cases.

5. This gigantic operation, (considered by many to be the single largest and complex peace time administrative exercise in the world) was made possible due to the door to door universal canvassing of the Household Schedule by about 2 million enumerators and supervisors covering 593 districts, 5,470 sub-districts, 5,161 towns and 638,588 villages. The comprehensive Household Schedule which replaced the individual slip had three parts and two sides A and B. Part I contained the Location Particulars; Part II related to the Individual Particulars and Part III contained questions for Household engaged in Cultivation/Plantation (Annexure-I). The part II of the Household Schedule had 39 columns and 23 questions all of which were universally canvassed and no sampling was resorted to during enumeration. To facilitate quick tabulation for bringing out Provisional Population Totals, provision for page totaling were made in the schedule itself for a few items namely population, males, females, population aged 0-6 years by sex, literates and workers and their categories by sex. The provisional population totals were put in the public domain on 26th March, 2001 within three weeks of the completion of the enumeration. Provisional Population Paper-I of 2001 and Supplement to Provisional Population –I of 2001 provided the basic statistics of the population, literates upto district level classified by sex. The Directorates of Census Operations also released provisional data at the district, sub-district and town levels for their respective States/UTs through the publication of Paper I, II and III of Provisional Population Totals. Subsequently, the distribution of population by rural and urban areas and economic activity characteristics of the population by rural and urban areas at district/sub-district/town level were also released in electronic format at the national level and print form at the state level. All the provisional population totals released so far are also available on census website : <http://www.censusindia.net>.

6. In addition to the provisional population totals, the final results of the Houselisting Operations were released in April, 2003 which provided valuable information on the housing stock, amenities and assets available to the household. Houselisting data is available in the hard copy form in 'Tables on Houses, Household Amenities and Assets by India and States'. Similar publications are also available for the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe households separately. This data is also available in hard copy and electronic format for India and all the states/union territories at district, sub-district and town level. The Houselisting data is immensely useful to the policy makers, planners and administrators to improve the quality of life for countrymen as well to the corporate sector for formulating marketing strategies in reaching the rural masses.

Data Processing

7. A quantum leap was made in the technology front while processing the Census 2001 data both for Houselisting and Population Enumeration. The Schedules for both the phases were scanned through high speed scanners in fifteen data centres across the country and hand-written data from the schedules

were converted into digitized form through Intelligent Character Reading (ICR) software for creation of ASCII records for further processing. The designing and formatting of the Household Schedule had to be done very carefully using specialized software so as to ensure uniformity, which was an essential prerequisite for scanning. The selection of appropriate state-of-art technology in data processing has made it possible to produce all the Houselisting as well as Population Enumeration tables on full count basis for the first time in the history of Census. For Census 2001, about 202 million schedules consisting of about 1028 million records were scanned and processed within a span of only 10 months starting October, 2002.

Task Force on Quality Assurance

8. After the data is processed, it is expedient on the part of the data producing agency to satisfy itself about its quality before putting the same in public domain. This has to be done mainly through the process of internal consistency, comparison with similar data in the past and also through validation with likewise data if available, from external sources. Quite often the local knowledge and perception has to be brought into play to understand both the existing and the new emerging trends of population distribution and characteristics. The other very important aspect of the data quality is to ensure complete coverage of all geographical areas specially for the population enumeration phase where the data is disseminated right up to the village level in the rural areas and the ward level in the urban areas. Thus ensuring the complete coverage and correct geographical linkage of each enumeration block was one of the major planks of the quality control, especially for small area population statistics.

9. A very comprehensive check and edit mechanism was put in place to objectively examine the preliminary Census 2001 Population Enumeration results and finally clear them for use. The responsibility of the final clearance of data was with the Task Force on Quality Assurance (TFQA), headed by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India. The other members of the TFQA were the Heads and senior officers of the Census Division, Data Processing Division, Map Division, Demography Division and Social Studies Division. The Directors of Census Operations were co-opted as members whenever the TFQA discussed the data for their states/union territories. The Directors and their senior officers were required to make detailed presentations of data for their own state both in respect to the quality and coverage and only after the full possible satisfaction of the TFQA, the population data has been cleared.

10. There has been a major departure in Census 2001 from the past in respect of the procedure followed for finalization of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes population. In the earlier censuses, the total Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population were finalized at the time of the manual compilation of the Primary Census Abstracts (PCA) through the Regional Tabulation offices which were specially set up for this purpose. The individual Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population for each state were finalized much later based on manual coding done by the coders. In 2001 Census, each individual Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe have been coded directly on the computers by the operators through a process known as Computer Assisted Coding (CAC) and taken up along with the processing of PCA data. The CAC process involves pulling down, from the relevant dictionary of the Scheduled

Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, on the computer screen and coding from the dictionary by referring to the image of the specific individual entry in the Household Schedule appearing on the screen. The CAC of the response on Religion wherever required, was also undertaken along with the processing of PCA. This is because the Scheduled Castes status had to be determined in relation to the religion of an individual. Two Special Task Forces, one on Religion and the other on Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes were constituted for scrutiny and appropriate classification of these responses.

11. The main task of the Special Task Force on Religion was to appropriately merge or group the new responses encountered and code it into the appropriate religious community based on available literature and local knowledge. The Special Task Force on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes examined the different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes entries encountered and classified these into appropriate category of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes principally based on the Presidential Notification and the available literature. Thus a very systematic and scientific mechanism was operationalised to firm up the individual religion and the individual Scheduled Castes/Tribes returns. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes population in 2001 Census, is thus being finalized by aggregating the population data for individual Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at appropriate geographical levels.

12. The entire work relating to the data validation and scrutiny was completed by all the States/Union territories under the overall supervision and monitoring of the Census Division of the Office of the Registrar General, India with active cooperation and support of the Social Studies Division, Data Processing Division, Data Dissemination Division and Map Division. In this volume the final population figures are being released as a precursor to the Primary Census Abstract which will be released subsequently. These final figures relating to the total population including the houseless and institutional population, the Scheduled Caste population and the Scheduled Tribe population for the country/State/Union Territories/Districts/Towns by sex and residence will be of immense use to the data users. The data will be presented in the Table titled : Final Population Totals-1 (FPT-1) - Total Population, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population by sex and place of residence-state/district/tahsil/town : 2001. It may be noted that the total population includes the population of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.