

Census 2021 goes digital

August 12, 2021

In news- Recently, The Home Ministry announced that the Census 2021 exercise is going to be all digital this year.

About Census 2021

- As per the Ministry, this will be the first time that the counting exercise will be held digitally.
- Census 2021 will be carried out **using a mobile phone app**.
- It will be used to collect data by school teachers who will double up as enumerators during the Census exercise.
- A Census portal for management and monitoring of various related activities has been developed.
- There will also be a provision for self-enumeration.
- **This is going to be the 16th Census** since the enumeration exercise began in the 1860s.
- The Union government in its Budget, announced **Rs. 3,378 crore for digital Census**.
- Till now, the process involved visiting every household and filling up forms.
- This year, workers going door-to-door will have tablets or smartphones that will let them enter information digitally.
- The census will have its reference date as March 1 this year, but for snow-bound Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, it will be October 1, last year.
- As per the Home Ministry, it will be conducted in 16 languages.
- The Government decided to conduct Census 2021 under the Census Act, 1948 in two phases, viz., (a) House listing & Housing Census during April-September, 2020 and (b) Population Enumeration during 9th to 28th

February, 2021.

- However, Census related field activities have been postponed till further orders due to Covid-19 pandemic.

How is the digital Census conducted?

- The Census portal which has been developed by the central government, will require the mobile phone numbers and other details of individuals for logging in.
- **In case of self-enumeration, the individual will fill in the required details** with the help of relevant codes for each field.
- After self-enumeration is done, an identification number will be sent on the registered number provided by the individual.
- The same ID number can be shared with the enumerator, which will help the official to sync the data automatically.

Current process of Census

- Till now, the enumerators used to visit every household with a set of questions and enter the details in a form.
- The questions included were about the amenities available in a household, source of drinking water and power, occupation and the languages spoken by the family members.

Digital census across the world

- Vietnam and Swaziland are first to take this leap along with India.
- In other two countries, Census officials had trained graduate students for about a year to double up as enumerators.
- India will be using an estimated 30 lakh enumerators for the Census.

History of Census in India

- Census began from 1872 when the first census was conducted in India non-synchronously in different parts.
- The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- Census Organisation was set up on an ad-hoc basis for each Census till the 1951 Census.
- Later, this office was also entrusted with the responsibility of implementation of Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 in the country.
- The Census Act was enacted in 1948 to provide for the scheme of conducting population census with duties and responsibilities of census officers.