Caste-Based Survey

Why in news?

The Patna high court has halted the ongoing caste-based survey in Bihar.

Why is Bihar conducting a caste census?

- To channel welfare policies and implement schemes effectively.
- Since Bihar's coalition government comprises mainly Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and they have been undermined in the current reservation system.
- Potential political benefits that would help identify the true population of the Bihar's OBCs.
- Even though UPA government in 2011 conducted a caste census it was not released due to various reasons.
- Survey would facilitate in preparing state budget tailored for welfare of oppressed classes.

What exactly Patna high court said?

- The court said that the state government had no power to conduct a census as it would infringe on the legislative powers of the parliament.
- **Difference between survey and census** - Census is a collection of accurate facts and verifiable details.
- Whereas a survey is intended at collection and analysis of opinions and perceptions of the general public, which may be aimed at a specific community.
- So the present exercise by Bihar is a census done in the name of survey.
- **Right to privacy** - Certain entries in the survey such as conditions of the labor work affects the right to privacy.
- **Data security** - Certain entries in the survey contains birth and death which may lead to data security.
- **Principle of voluntary disclosure** - Data should be entered only after each and every individual, who is a native of Bihar and not resident within the state, at the time of survey and not from the head of the family.

> *According to UDISE+ data OBC children comprise 45 per cent students in primary schools, SCs 19 % and STs 11 %.*

What is the data are the enumerators collecting?

- The total number of ***households*** in the state are being counted in the first phase.
- In the second phase the following data will be collected

    - Castes, religions and economic backgrounds and
    - The number of family members living in and outside the state.
- The exercise covers an estimated population of 12.7 crore across 38 districts and will only enumerate caste and ***not sub-caste***.

What is meant by caste census?

- Caste census means inclusion of caste-wise tabulation of India's population belonging to all castes, primarily the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and not just SCs and STs.
- In 1952 census the first separate data on Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) was published.
- The first caste census data was released in 1931.
- The 2011 census even though had caste census the data was not released.

What is the importance of caste census?

- India runs the world's largest affirmative welfare programme based on caste identity.
- Reservation in educational institutes and government jobs are provided on the basis of caste identities.
- The absence of fresh caste census data means that the caste estimates of 1931 are being projected for formulating welfare policies in 2021.
- The highest reservation mandate for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) at 27 % is caste based as the BP Mandal Commission ascertained the backwardness of the class on the basis of caste.

What is the socio economic and caste census (SECC) 2011?

- A study of socio economic status of rural and urban households.
- Allows ranking of households based on predefined parameters.
- SECC 2011 was conducted by ministry of rural development.
- This is the first time such a comprehensive exercise has been carried out for both rural and urban India.

Socio economic census	Caste census
• Conducted across all the household without any special focus.	• Conducted at a particular community.
• SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.	• Caste census provides a portrait of certain caste population.
• The data collected is not confidential and available the website.	• The data collected is confidential
• Conducted for the first time since 1931.	• Conducted for the first time since 1931.

Quick facts

- Article 162 provides that the executive power of a State shall extend to the matters with respect to which the Legislature of a State has power to make laws.
- In the 1931 census, the population of OBCs was estimated to be 52 %.
- According to SECC 2011
    - Total Households in the Country (Rural plus Urban) is 24.49 Crore.

- Households considered for deprivation is 10.74 Crore.

References

1. The Indian Express | The Patna High Court Order
2. India Today | Importance Of Caste Census