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LOK SABHA

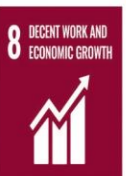**Agenda:** Conducting Comprehensive Caste based Census for combatting the prevailing Reservation System.

Participants:
Students of Grades 9-12
Committee Strength: 40

📱 9050151185, 9812302331

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CASTE CENSUS

Background Guide

Lok Sabha

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

Agenda : Conducting Comprehensive Caste based Census for combatting the prevailing Reservation System.

Letter from the Executive Board

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to GISMUN'24.

The following Background Guide has been formulated keeping in mind various aspects of the agenda to be discussed in committee. Though this Background Guide lists out the broad facets of the agenda that we would like to see being debated upon in committee, let us highlight the fact that this piece of document is NOT exhaustive and that further reading on part of the delegates are essential in order to steer the debate in the right direction. Also, not under any circumstances can the Background Guide be quoted or used as substantial proof in committee sessions. Members are expected to build their research upon the topics highlighted in the following pages, though further research would also be appreciated.

We are most looking forward to seeing what you, members of the committee, can bring to the table, both in terms of your ideas in debate and your creativity in crafting solutions.

Regards,
Executive Board

Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha, also known as the House of the People, is the lower house of India's bicameral Parliament. As a crucial part of the legislative process, it holds significant power in shaping India's laws and policies. The Lok Sabha consists of representatives who are directly elected by the people of India, making it the more populous house compared to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house.

Each member of the Lok Sabha represents a specific geographical constituency and is elected for a five-year term. The Lok Sabha can have a maximum of 552 members, including up to 530 representatives of the states, up to 20 representatives of the Union territories, and not more than two members from the Anglo-Indian community, nominated by the President of India if he/she believes that the community is not adequately represented.

The Speaker, elected from among its members, presides over the Lok Sabha. The Speaker's role is pivotal in maintaining order during debates, ensuring the rules of procedure are followed, and representing the house in its relations with the President and the Rajya Sabha.

The Lok Sabha has several functions, including law-making, controlling the executive branch, representing the people's views, and scrutinizing the functioning of the government. It holds the executive accountable through mechanisms like Question Hour, Zero Hour, and

various parliamentary committees. Bills, especially money bills, must be passed by the Lok Sabha to become law.

The Lok Sabha's meetings are often lively and reflect India's diverse and dynamic democracy. It plays a vital role in ensuring that the voices of India's citizens are heard and acted upon, making it a cornerstone of the country's democratic structure. Its power and influence underscore its importance in the governance and political landscape of India.

Introduction

The demographic recording is an activity which is conducted in different parts of the world to keep the record of demographic data in form of a Census, they hold these kinds of activities within different countries. Likewise, India is also conducting these censuses to record the data of the citizen. These censuses were being done for a long time but major developments took place during the colonial period when collection of data was done for the anthropological study of India and data was being collected based on religion and caste, the first census was conducted in the year 1872 on basis of "caste" and "religion" but later in 1891 "tribe" was also incorporated . Census done in 1931 was the last census which openly showcased the "caste" caste of citizens, later after the independence Government of India scrapped the idea of caste-based census until 2011 when UPA II led government conducted Socio-Economic and Backward caste Census in 2011 to find out the population of all the castes in India.

Key terms:

i.   Socio- Economic and Caste Census: The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) is an extensive survey conducted in India to gather detailed data on the socio-economic status and caste composition of the population.

ii.   Reservation System: The Reservation System, known as "reservations" or "quotas," is a form of affirmative action to address historical injustices and discrimination faced by certain social groups, particularly the Scheduled Castes (SCs),

Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Implemented through the Constitution of India, it reserves a percentage of seats in educational institutions, government jobs, and legislatures for these underrepresented communities.

Historical Role

The division of Indian society based on basis of caste was being crafted by the Britishers they started conducting a census to create a taxonomy since Britishers believed that societies in India belonged to primordial categories. Although the terms were not being defined for the longest time it was used to record and classify these based on mutual groups, and caste was considered as a dynamic and mobile category of Indian society. As once said by J.H Hutton in 1931 who was the census commissioner of 1931 census where he expressed that-

"a caste which had applied in one province to be called Brahman (priestly caste) asked in another to be called Rajput (warrior caste) and there are several instances at this census of castes claiming to be Brahman who claimed to be Rajput ten years ago"

The census of 1931 was the last census conducted by the Britishers and this was also the last which recorded the data for all the caste in India. In India, the last caste-based census which counted all the castes of India was conducted in the year 1931 and 1941 but the data of 1941 was not published.

Mandal Commission

The Mandal Commission report had extrapolated from the caste/community wise population figures of the 1931 census and estimated the combined population of Hindu and non-Hindu OBCs to be 52% of India's population. The commission had also arrived upon a crucial conclusion, that "caste is also a class of citizens and if the caste as a whole is socially and educationally backward, reservation can be made in favour of such a caste on the ground that it is a socially and educationally backward class of citizens within the meaning of Article 15(4)."

Therefore Mandal Commission found out that there nearly 52% OBC and suggested that they should be given around 27% per cent of reservation in Jobs and later in Education. After implementation of suggestions by Mandal Commission in 1990 demands have been raised for caste-based census again and again since 2001 different debates have been taken place in the country related to the Caste-based census.

Uneven Burden of Poverty

The main objective of the reservation which was brought in back when constitution was being written was to provide an platforms/kickstart to the social and economically backward classes/castes which have been historically discriminated.

According to one of the recent survey conducted, the many caste groups are grouped into four major categories: SC, ST, OBC, and Others. While SC includes Dalit communities, the category 'Other' include higher castes. The SC and ST communities have tended to be the most disadvantaged subgroups in India, followed by the OBC community.

As per a report from Oxfam India realised in the year 2020 it was showcased that 10% of the Indian population owns about 74.3 % of the total wealth, on the other hand, the middle class 40% and the lower class 50% owns 22.9% and mere 2.8% of the wealth respectively. This data showcases how there is such a widespread class based on inequality in society.

This trend also shows us that there is clearly a lot of inequality in the distribution of wealth among different castes of society, with Brahmins and upper dominating the segment with least in the hands of SC, ST and OBCs. This wealth structure showcases the same hierarchal pattern as the caste system. To make proper policies to short this gap we are necessary for of caste-based census because this caste-based distribution of wealth could lead to oppression and suppression of the lower caste.

Landmark Legal Cases:

1. State of Madras v. Champakam Dorai Ranjan:

In this case, where a seven-judge bench of the Supreme court struck do for classification of people based on caste, race and religion for acquiring admission in educational institutions by stating that article 15 does not consist of any clause such of article 16(4) and therefore classification can be held constitutional. After which in the year 1951 the 1st amendment of the Constitution was being done and Article 15(4) was added which said that reservation for socially and educationally backward classes of the society could be done by the state and hence it could not be held unconstitutional.

2. <u>M.R Balaji vs State of Mysore:</u>

   In this case, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India observed that the Indian society consists of many socially and economically backward classes and the government should make special provisions for these classes for their upliftment.

3. <u>Indra Sawhney v. Union of India:</u>

   In the case, Supreme Court introduced the concept of "creamy layer" and also held that "states can create their own OBC caste list" it recently turned into legislation by the parliament after the 105th Constitutional amendment. But the major problem is coming while figuring out the castes of the people since caste distribution of people based on caste has been done elaborately during the British period it made a lot of confusion for people to find their castes

Further Points to be Discussed

1. How has the Indian reservation system evolved since its inception, and what impacts has it had on society?

2. What are the primary arguments for and against the continuation of the reservation system in its current form?

3. How would a comprehensive caste-based census improve the effectiveness of existing affirmative action policies?

4. In what ways can the data from a caste-based census be utilized to address socio-economic disparities?

5. What challenges might arise in the implementation of a comprehensive caste-based census, and how can they be overcome?

6. How do other countries with similar affirmative action policies gather and use demographic data to inform their policies?

7. What role does public perception play in the success or failure of caste-based policies and census initiatives?

8. How can technology and modern data collection methods enhance the accuracy and reliability of a caste-based census?

9. What are the ethical considerations and potential privacy concerns related to conducting a caste-based census?

10. How can policymakers ensure that the findings of a caste-based census are used equitably and effectively to promote social justice?

Links for further research: (*Only for research purpose*)

1. BHAGAT, RAM B., 'Census and Caste Enumeration: British Legacy and Contemporary Practice in India.', 2006 Genus, vol. 62, no. 2,

2. GULAM JEELANI, 'Caste-based census in India: Why is there a growing demand?', (Money control.com, AUGUST 25, 2021),

3. Sandeep Saurav, 'Why a Caste Census Is the Need of the Hour', (thewire.in 05 September 2021),

4. Constitution of India, Constitution, 26 January 1950 (India)

5. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/explained-the-case-for-caste-census-in-india/article67411718.ece

6. Pradhan, Itishree & Kandapan, Binayak & Pradhan, Jalandhar. (2022). Uneven burden of multidimensional poverty in India: A caste based analysis. PLOS ONE. 17. e0271806. 10.1371/journal.pone.0271806.

7. Singh, Mihir, Do We Need a Caste-Based Census? (March 2, 2022). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4048034 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4048034

8. Cases:
   - State of Madras v. Champakam Dorai Ranjan 1951 AIR 226
   - M. R. Balaji and Others vs State of Mysore 1963 AIR 649
   - Indra Sawhney v. Union of India AIR 1993 SC 477

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