



Caste-Census in Bihar

For Prelims: [Other Backward Classes\(OBCs\)](#), [Extremely Backward Classes\(EBCs\)](#), [Census, Socio-Economic Caste Census\(SECC\)](#), [Rohini Commission](#), [Sub-Categorization](#)

For Mains: Impact of Caste Census in improving governance and mobilization of resources for the marginalised sections.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Government of the State of Bihar released findings of the [Caste Survey, 2023](#) which revealed that [Other Backward Classes \(OBCs\)](#) and [Extremely Backward Classes \(EBCs\)](#) together **constitute 63 %** of the state's total population.

- The findings are supposed to have wider connotations in the State and National Elections and also in the identification of intended beneficiaries for various welfare schemes.

What are the Key Findings of the Bihar Caste Survey?

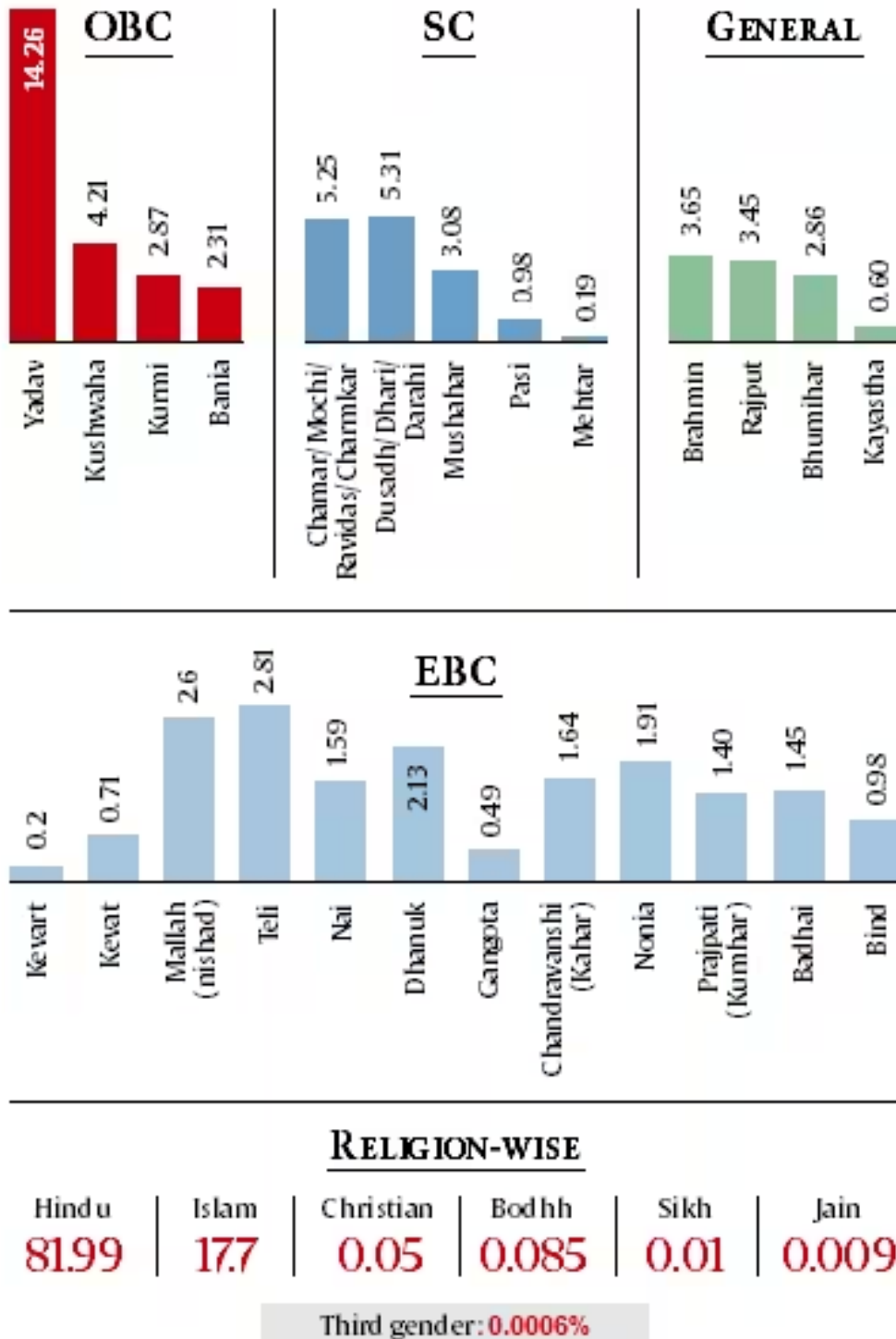
Different Castes and Communities (Bihar)	Percentage Population (%)
Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs)	36.01 %
Other Backward Classes (OBCs)	27.12 %
Scheduled Castes	19.65 %
Scheduled Tribes	1.68%
Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs and Jains	< 1 %
Total Population (Bihar)	13.07 crores

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TELLING NUMBERS

How major groups stack up in Bihar

(figures in%)



What was the procedure adopted in the Caste Survey?

The survey was carried out in **two phases**, which each had its **own criteria and objectives**.

▪ **First Phase:**

- During this phase, the **number of all households** in Bihar were counted and recorded.
- Enumerators were given a **set of 17 questions** which were to be mandatorily answered by the respondent.

▪ **Second Phase:**

- During this phase data on people living in the **households, their castes, sub-castes, and socio-economic conditions** were collected.
- However, filling **the Aadhaar** number, caste certificate number and ration card number of the head of the family, were optional.

What is the Significance of the Bihar Caste Survey Findings?

▪ **Increasing the OBC Quota:**

- The survey results will amplify the clamour for increasing the **OBC quota beyond 27%**, and **for a quota within quota for the EBCs**.
 - The [Justice Rohini Commission](#), which has been examining the question of [sub-categorisation of OBCs since 2017](#), submitted its report and recommendations are not yet made public.

▪ **Redrawing of 50% Reservation Ceiling:**

- The survey data will also reopen the debate over the **50%** ceiling on reservation imposed by the Supreme Court in its landmark ruling in [Indra Sawhney v Union of India \(1992\)](#).
 - Depending upon the population of OBCs, **the demand for increase in reservation quota in proportion to that of the population** can arise from different quarters of the caste groups.

▪ **Fulfilment of Constitutional Obligations:**

- Caste Survey will help attain the objectives as enunciated in [Directive Principles of State Policies \(DPSPs\)](#) as mentioned in [Part IV](#) of the constitution.
 - This will majorly help achieve the socio-economic objectives as outlined by the Constitution drafters.

▪ **Realisation of Sarvodaya:**

- Caste Census can be properly utilised to develop targeted measures so as to reduce rampant inequality across the State and promote equity and social justice In the long term.

What are the Issues With the Caste Census?

▪ **Repercussions of a Caste Census:**

- Caste has an emotive element and thus there exist the political and social repercussions of a caste census.
- There have been concerns that counting caste may help solidify or harden identities.
- Due to these repercussions, nearly a decade after the [SECC](#), a sizable amount of its data remains unreleased or released only in parts.

▪ **Caste is Context-specific:**

- Caste has never been a proxy for class or deprivation in India; it constitutes a distinct kind of embedded discrimination that often transcends class.
- For example:
 - People with Dalit last names are less likely to be called for job interviews even when their qualifications are better than that of an upper-caste candidate.
 - They are also less likely to be accepted as tenants by landlords.
 - Marriage to a well-educated, well-off Dalit man still sparks violent reprisals among the families of upper-caste women every day across the country.

When was the last Caste Census Conducted in India?

▪ **Caste Census of 1931:**

- The last caste census was **conducted in 1931**, and data was made publicly available by the British Government of the day.

- This caste census became the basis for the implementation of [Mandal Commission Reports](#) and subsequent reservation policies by the government for **Other Backward Classes**.
- **Census of 2011:**
 - The Census of 2011 became the first time to collect Caste-based data after independence.
 - However, the data related to caste were not made public due to fear of political favouritism and opportunism.

What is the Census?

- **Origin of Census:**
 - The origin of the Census in India **goes back to the colonial exercise of 1881**.
 - Census has evolved and been used by the government, policymakers, academics, and others to capture the Indian population, access resources, map social change, [delimitation exercise](#), etc.
- **First Caste Census as SECC (Socio-Economic and Caste Census):**
 - SECC was **conducted for the first time in 1931**.
 - SECC is meant to canvass every Indian family, both in rural and urban India, and ask about their:
 - **Economic status**, so as to allow Central and State authorities to come up with a range of indicators of deprivation, permutations, and combinations of which could be used by each authority to define a poor or deprived person.
 - It is also meant to ask every person their **specific caste name** to allow the government to **re-evaluate which caste groups** were economically worse off and which were better off.
- **Difference Between Census & SECC:**
 - The Census provides a **portrait of the Indian population**, while the SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.
 - Since the **Census falls under the Census Act of 1948**, all data are considered confidential, whereas according to the SECC website, “all the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.”

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q1. Consider the following statements: (2009)

1. Between Census 1951 and Census 2001, the density of the population of India has increased more than three times.
2. Between Census 1951 and Census 2001, the annual growth rate (exponential) of the population of India has doubled.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Project Udbhav

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [Indian Army](#) in partnership with the [United Service Institution of India \(USI\)](#), wrapped up a hybrid-panel discussion as part of **Project Udbhav**.

- The discussion focused on "**The Evolution of Indian Military Systems, Warfare, and Strategic Thinking: Current Research and Future Directions.**"

What is Project Udbhav?

- Project Udbhav is an initiative set in motion by the Indian Army to **rediscover the profound Indic heritage** of statecraft and strategic thoughts derived from ancient Indian texts of **statecraft, warfare, diplomacy and grand strategy**.
 - It focuses on a broad spectrum including **Indigenous Military Systems, Historical Texts, Regional Texts and Kingdoms, Thematic Studies, and intricate Kautilya Studies**.
 - At its core, Project Udbhav seeks **to bridge the historical and the contemporary**.
- The project goes beyond rediscovering historical narratives; **it aims to develop an indigenous strategic vocabulary** deeply rooted in India's multifaceted philosophical and cultural heritage.
 - The ultimate objective is to integrate ancient wisdom into modern military **pedagogy**, allowing the Indian Army to draw from centuries-old principles in today's complex strategic landscape.
- In connection with Project Udbhav, the USI will conduct a **Military Heritage Festival on 21st and 22nd October, 2023**.

United Service Institution of India

- USI is a **national security and defense services think tank** based in New Delhi, India.
 - It describes its aim as the "**furtherance of interest and knowledge in the art, science and literature of the defense services**".
- It was founded in 1870 by a soldier scholar, **Colonel (later Major General) Sir Charles MacGregor**.

Toto Language

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The **Toto language**, spoken by only 1,600 people in West Bengal, is on the brink of extinction.

- However, a **trilingual dictionary (Toto-Bengali-English)** called "**Toto Shabda Sangraha**" is set to be released in Kolkata on 7th October 2023, to help preserve the toto language.

What is the Toto Language?

- The Toto language is a **Sino-Tibetan language** spoken by the **Toto tribal people** in parts of West Bengal bordering Bhutan.
 - [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#) lists it as a **critically endangered** language.
- The Toto language is **primarily spoken orally** and even though prominent community member [Padma Shri-decorated Dhaniram Toto](#) developed a script as recently as in **2015**, most people either **write it in Bengali script or write in Bengali language**.

Toto People

- The Toto is a primitive and isolated tribal group residing only in a small enclave called Totopara in the Jalpaiguri of West Bengal, India.
- The total population of Totos is **less than 2000 according to the 2001 census**, all living in Totopara.
- The Totos are considered **Mongoloid people**.
- They are generally **endogamous and marry within their own tribe**.
- The Toto family is **patrilocal**(social system in which a **married couple resides with the husband's parents**) in nature and dominated by **nuclear type**. However, joint families are not rare. **Monogamy** is a common form of marriage among the Toto but **polygamy is not prohibited**. There is **no custom of divorce among the Totos**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. With reference to India, the terms 'Halbi, Ho and Kui' pertain to (2021)

- (a) dance forms of Northwest India
- (b) musical instruments
- (c) pre-historic cave paintings
- (d) tribal languages

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- Odisha has a unique place in India due to its vast population of tribals residing in the state. 62 tribal communities live in Odisha which is 22.8% of the total population of Odisha.
- Odisha's tribal language is divided into 3 main language families. They are Austro-Asiatic (Munda), Dravida and Indo-Aryan. Every tribe has its own language and language family. The languages include:
 - Austro-Asiatic: Bhumij, Birhor, Rem (Bonda), Gatah (Didyai), Gutab (Gadaba), Sora(Saora), Gorum (Parenga), Khadia, Juang, Santali, Ho, Mundari, etc.
 - Dravida: Gondi, Kui-Kondh, Kuvi-Kondh, Kisan, Koya, Olari, (Gadaba) Parja, Peng, Kudukh (Oraon) etc.
 - Indo Aryan: Bathudi, Bhuyan, Kurmali, Sounti, Sadri, Kandhan, Aghria, Desia, Jharia, Halbi, Bhatri, Matia, Bhunjia, etc.
- Out of these languages only 7 have scripts. They are Santali (Olchiki), Saora(Sorang Sampeng), Ho (Warangchiti), Kui (Kui Script), Oraon (Kukhud Tod), Mundari (Bani Hisir), Bhumij (Bhumij Anl). Santali language has been included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Tiger Deaths Raise Concerns in Nilgiris Biodiversity

For Prelims: [Biosphere Reserve](#), [Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve](#), [Tiger](#)

For Mains: Significance of Tiger Conservation, Related initiatives

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

The Nilgiris District in Tamil Nadu is home to a rich biodiversity and a large population of [tigers](#). However, in the past two months, **10 tigers have died** in the district due to various reasons.

- This has raised concerns among conservationists and officials about the welfare and survival of the big cats.

What are the Reasons for Tiger Deaths in Nilgiris?

- **High Density of Tigers:**
 - The **high density of tigers in the [Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole complex](#)** of the [Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve](#) is pushing populations into the surrounding habitats in the **Mukurthi National Park, Nilgiris and Gudalur forest divisions** leading to more **negative human-animal interactions**.
 - The rise in tiger numbers puts pressure on prey species like **spotted deer, and [Indian gaur](#)**.
 - Scarcity of natural prey could lead tigers to **target livestock, exacerbating conflicts and resulting in more deaths**.
- **Starvation and Infection:**
 - Tiger cubs, believed to be two weeks old, found dead in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve's buffer zone.
 - Postmortem suggested possible causes as **starvation or umbilical infection**.

Why are Conservationists Concerned About Tiger Population Threats?

- **Poaching Threat:** Recent poaching incidents in the Nilgiris district, underscore the persistent threat to tigers.
 - Poachers target tigers for their valuable body parts, **such as skins, bones, and organs**, posing a grave risk to the population.
- **Lack of Tracking and Protection:** Concerns arise from the apparent challenges in **tracking and protecting tiger populations effectively**.
 - The **inability to monitor and safeguard** these majestic animals contributes to conservationists' worries.
- **Lack of Prey Management:** Inadequate **prey population management** in protected areas may lead to imbalances.
 - Ensuring sufficient prey for tigers is essential for their survival.
- **Habitat Degradation:** Degraded habitats offer limited resources, forcing tigers to roam in search of food.
 - Human activities, deforestation, and encroachments contribute to habitat loss.

TIGER

Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is the National animal of India.

Subspecies of Tiger

- * The continental (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
- * The Sunda (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

Habitat

Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas



Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found

- Found only in 13 Tiger Range countries- India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
- As per the latest report by IUCN, tiger has gone extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

Protection Status

- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITES: Appendix I
- WPA 1972: Schedule I

Threats

- Habitat loss
- Poaching and illegal trade
- Human-Wildlife conflict

Conservation Efforts

- International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA):** For conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma (launched by India)
- Tx2 campaign:** Launched by WWF; stands for 'Tiger times 2' signaling the goal to double the tiger population by 2022
- National Tiger Conservation authority (NTCA):** Constituted under the WPA, 1972
- Project Tiger:** Launched in 1973
- Tiger Census:** Every 4 years

Tigers In India

- India has the largest population
 - As of 2022, India has 3167 tigers
 - Largest population has been found in Central Indian Highlands & Eastern Ghats Landscape
- Tiger Reserves:** India now has 53 tiger reserves
 - Ranipur in UP is the latest
 - Nagarjun Sagar (Andhra Pradesh) is the largest while Orang (Assam) is the smallest (Core area)



Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

About:

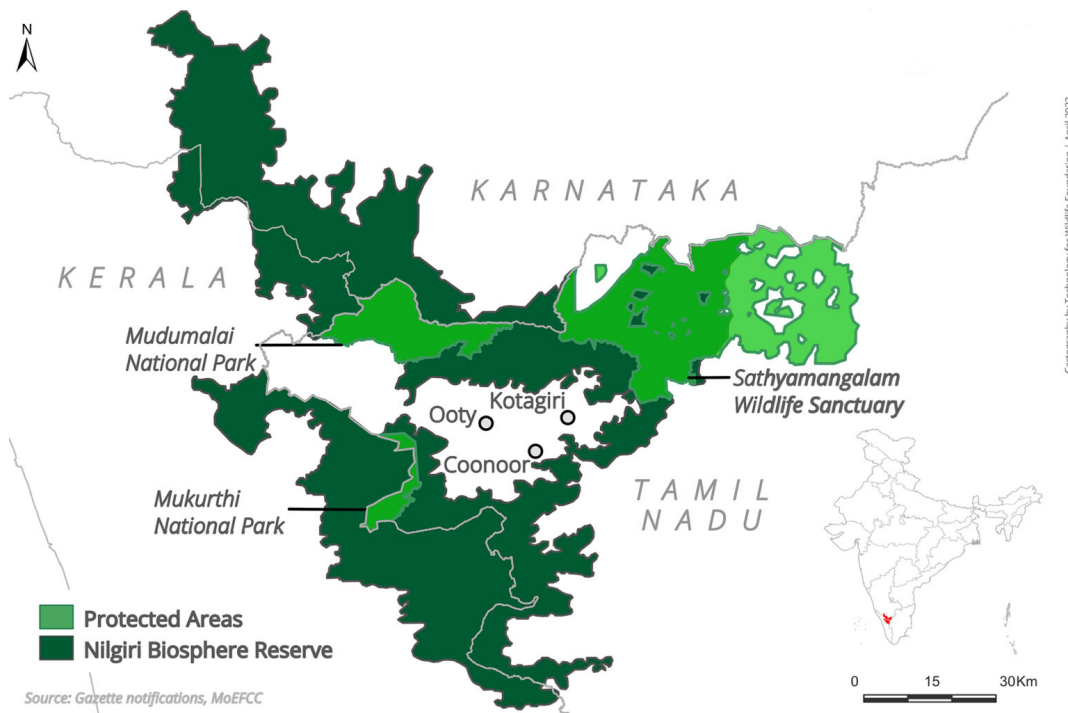
- The very name **Nilgiris'** with literary meaning **'blue mountains'** has originated from the appearance of **blue flower clad mountains (Neelakurinji flowers)** of the Nilgiris plateau within the State of Tamil Nadu.
 - The reserve spans across three Indian states: **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala.**
- It was the **first biosphere reserve in India established in 1986.**
- It is the **India's first biosphere reserve under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.**
- Home to several tribal groups such as the **Adiyan, Aranadan, Kader, Kurichian, Kuruman, and Kurumbas.**
- It portrays the confluence of **Afro-tropical and Indo-Malayan biotic zones** of the world.

Fauna:

- Animals like **Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri langur, slender loris, blackbuck, tiger, gaur, Indian elephant and marten** are found here.
- Freshwater fishes such as **Nilgiri danio (Devario neilgherriensis), Nilgiri barb (Hypselobarbus dubuis)** and **Bowany barb (Puntius bovanicus)** are endemic to this Biosphere Reserve.

Protected Areas in NBR:

- The **Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Mukurthi National Park and Silent Valley** are the protected areas present within this reserve.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Among the following Tiger Reserves, which one has the largest area under “Critical Tiger Habitat”? (2020)

- (a) Corbett
- (b) Ranthambore
- (c) Nagarjunasagar-Srisaïlam
- (d) Sundarbans

Ans: (c)