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11:00 AM | BY - PRESHIKA MA'AM



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Important words used in editorial

Enumerator - surveyor, counter, interviewer, assessor, registrar

Discrepancies - inconsistencies, variations, mismatches, gaps, differences.

Legitimate - valid, justifiable, lawful, reasonable, logical.

Questionnaire - survey, form, inquiry, checklist, poll.

Reliability - dependability, trustworthiness, authenticity, credibility,
consistency.

Crucial - critical, vital, pivotal, essential, important. | significant

Efficacy - effectiveness, power, capability, potency, success.

Tangible - concrete, real, palpable, visible, substantial.

Parameters - standards, criteria, limits, guidelines, frameworks.

Reiteration - repetition, restatement, echoing, renewal, rehearsal.

Liberal - generous, open-handed, bountiful, broad-minded, tolerant

Outlay - expenditure, spending, cost, investment, disbursement.

Sensitise - make aware, educate, inform, train,

Undertake - attempt, tackle, commence, handle, initiate.

Revisit - re-examine, review, reconsider

Conclude - infer, deduce, decide, determine, finalize.

Important idioms and phrases used in the editorial

In the name of - to do something using the pretext or justification of someone or something else

Show in a poor light - to cause someone or something to appear unfavorable or incompetent.

Under the guise of - to do something by giving a false appearance or a misleading explanation.

Bring to the fore - to make something more noticeable or prominent.

Data hygiene: On the Census and enumerators Census enumerators should not face difficulties in the name of re-verification. It is disturbing that some Census 2027 enumerators in States such as Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are facing issues for extremely unusual reasons. In these two States where the first phase of the Census —Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO) — is under way, they have been advised to “revisit households and correct the data discrepancies” and “not to select options that may show the government in a poor light”. Re-verification is a legitimate part of any study or survey but this must be done to reflect reality accurately, not to manage perceptions. In Rajasthan, the issue arises from a circular of the Director of Census Operations to district-level officials regarding discrepancies identified in field data. Apparently, the objective is to ensure that data are accurately recorded, using appropriate options in the questionnaire. However, in some cases, enumerators have been told to record data based on assumptions. For example, if some households do not have toilets, enumerators have been told to check whether toilets are available nearby, on the basis of which the entry can be changed from “open defecation” to “*having+ access to latrine”. In Uttar Pradesh, the message seems to be not to present facts as they are, raising concerns about data integrity and reliability for a crucial and sensitive exercise.

The present episode brings to the fore the efficacy of programmes such as the country's long-running campaign against open defecation. While many States have made tangible progress, it would be unrealistic to conclude that the problem has been eliminated. For administrative purposes, including funding, it is reasonable to classify cities and villages on the basis of certain parameters as Open Defecation Free (ODF), ODF Plus and ODF Plus Model. But, the critical question is whether such a classification reflects reality and comes into conflict with the enumerators' work. It is the responsibility of policymakers to ensure that Census data are accurate and credible. They must also sensitise people to provide correct information, as public policies and welfare schemes are formulated on the basis of these data and ultimately benefit them. The authorities must recognise and resolve the legitimate difficulties faced by enumerators. As the significance of the Census hardly needs any reiteration, the Union government should be quite liberal in enhancing allowances for enumerators to ensure efficient and timely work. It should not only be conscious of the financial outlay involved — about ₹11,718 crore for the entire country — but also of the need to make reliable data publicly available for purposes such as targeted and inclusive policymaking. The government should send a clear message that data sanitisation must not be undertaken under the guise of re-verification.

1. Which of the following best captures the central concern expressed by the author?

- (a) ~~Census allowances are insufficient for enumerators.~~
- (b) ~~Open defecation remains widespread across India.~~
- (c) ☒ Re-verification should improve accuracy, not alter data to create a favourable impression.
- (d) ~~The Census questionnaire requires substantial revision.~~

2. The author's reference to the classification of areas as ODF, ODF Plus and ODF Plus Model primarily serves to:

- (a) Highlight the success of government sanitation campaigns.
- (b) Question whether administrative classifications always correspond to ground realities.
- (c) Demonstrate the effectiveness of Census data collection.
- (d) Criticise the funding allocated to sanitation programmes.

3. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- (a) Enumerators are ~~solely~~ responsible for ensuring data accuracy.
- (b) Census data ~~have little impact~~ on policymaking decisions.
- ☒ (c) ~~Pressure to modify responses~~ may undermine the credibility of Census findings.
- (d) ~~All States have successfully eradicated open defecation.~~

4. The tone of the passage can best be described as:

- (a) Appreciative and celebratory
- (b) Objective and detached
- ☒ (c) Concerned and cautionary
- (d) Sarcastic and dismissive

5. Which of the following assumptions underlies the author's argument?

- (a) Public welfare schemes should be discontinued until Census data are verified.
- (b) Reliable Census data are essential for targeted and inclusive policymaking.
- (c) Enumerators intentionally introduce inaccuracies into Census records.
- (d) Administrative classifications are more important than field observations.

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