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Important words used in editorial

Petition - appeal, plea, suit, entreaty, application

Stall - delay, obstruct, hinder, impede, postpone

Enumeration - counting, census, calculation, computation, listing

Deride - mock, ridicule, sneer, taunt, disparage

Reinforce - strengthen, bolster, support, fortify, consolidate, *buttress*

Dismantle - demolish, deconstruct, tear down, destroy

Discrimination - bias, prejudice, bigotry, unfairness, partisanship

Paradox - contradiction, anomaly

Manifestation - expression, indication, exhibition, demonstration,
reflection

Overdue - delayed, late, belated, tardy, unpunctual

Considerable - substantial, significant, sizeable, appreciable, ample

Render - make, leave, cause to become, turn, drive

Detract - divert, distract, diminish, lessen, reduce

Ossify - harden, rigidify, freeze, stagnate, petrify

Annihilation - destruction, eradication, elimination, wiping out,
Extirpation

Turnaround - reversal, about-turn, shift, u-turn, flip-flop

Important idioms and phrases used in the editorial

Caste away - to reject, discard, or cast aside completely

Account for - to consider, explain, justify, include, or give a reason for

Have a bearing on - to have an effect or influence on something, to be relevant to

Grapple with - to struggle to deal with or overcome a difficult problem

Clamour for - to demand something loudly and insistently

Caste away: On the Court and caste count People must have the option to state that they are casteless in the Census. The Supreme Court was not wrong to dismiss a petition that sought to stall the caste census, which is part of the ongoing Census 2027. The Chief Justice of India remarked, in support of the caste count, that "any government of the day must know how many people are backward and how many need welfare". In April 2025, the Narendra Modi government had made a turnaround to announce caste enumeration alongside the fresh census, the first such exercise since 1931. Mr. Modi had earlier derided the idea as a sign of "urban Naxal" thinking, and the RSS had warned that such surveys were attempts to fracture Hindu society. The Congress, too, had made a dramatic turnaround in its historical position to demand a caste census. Early governments of independent India decided not to enumerate caste with the census. The dominant thinking then was that counting caste communities would only reinforce the institution of caste that the state wanted to dismantle. On the one hand, state policies sought to create a casteless society, while on the other, they also accounted for caste identities for positive discrimination in legislative representation and employment. This dual approach to caste that was baked into the nation's founding principles has created a paradox that continues to this day. The clamour for a caste census is the latest manifestation of it.

The Census itself has been long overdue. The decennial population survey was originally due in 2021 but was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and logistical hurdles. The caste enumeration will take place in the second phase and will involve asking every individual their caste, rather than merely recording whether they belong to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, as in previous Censuses. The delay in the Census has a bearing on planning of all sorts. In India, a considerable portion of state policy is directly or indirectly linked to the caste profile of the target group. The one attempt at a post-Independence national caste count came in 2011. The open-ended caste identification process of the Socio-Economic and Caste Census produced over 46 lakh distinct caste names and 8 crore data errors, rendering the dataset unusable. Most of its findings remain unpublished. The Modi government is still grappling with the challenge of finding the appropriate methodology for an accurate enumeration of caste communities. A caste census detracts from the effort to eradicate caste as it ossifies identities, but is helpful if viewed alongside other socioeconomic indices to better target welfare measures and ensure representation. The annihilation of caste must remain a goal, and people must be allowed to classify themselves as casteless if they so wish.

Yadav Yadava Yadviji

1. Which of the following best captures the central paradox discussed in the passage regarding caste in India?
- A. The State seeks to eliminate caste while simultaneously using caste as a basis for welfare and representation.
 - B. Political parties oppose caste enumeration but secretly support it during elections.
 - C. Welfare policies are designed without considering social inequalities.
 - D. Census exercises have completely failed to identify backward communities.

2. According to the passage, the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 became largely unusable primarily because:
- A. it excluded Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from enumeration
 - B. the government refused to publish any findings from the survey
 - ☒ C. the open-ended identification process led to massive inconsistencies and data errors
 - D. the Census was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

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

- A. ~~The Supreme Court~~ believes caste identities should permanently define welfare policy.
- B. The author views caste census solely as a threat to social unity.
- ☒ C. Accurate caste data may improve welfare targeting if combined with socioeconomic indicators.
- D. ~~Independent India has consistently supported caste enumeration since 1951.~~

4. The phrase **“ossifies identities”** in the passage most nearly means:

- A. strengthens rigid social classifications
- B. ~~legally abolishes social distinctions~~
- C. ~~modernises traditional institutions~~
- D. ~~politically mobilises minority groups~~

5. Which of the following statements is **NOT** supported by the passage?

- A. The caste enumeration in Census 2027 will ask individuals to specify their caste.
- B. The delay in conducting the Census affects governance and policy planning.
- ☒ C. The RSS and Narendra Modi government always maintained identical views on caste census.
- D. The author argues that individuals should have the freedom to identify as casteless

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