

Census Act, 1948

1. Short title and extent.
2. Rule of construction respecting enactments not extending to Jammu and Kashmir.
3. Central Government to take census.
4. Appointment of census staff.
5. Status of census authorities as public servant.
6. Discharge of duties of census-officers in certain cases.
7. Power to call upon certain persons to give assistance.
8. Asking or questions and obligation to answer.
9. occupier to permit access and affixing of numbers.
10. Occupier or manager to fill up schedule.
11. Penalty.
12. Sanction required for prosecutions.
13. Operation of other laws not barred.
14. Jurisdiction.
15. Records of census not open to inspection nor admissible in evidence.
16. Temporary suspension of other laws as to mode of taking census in municipalities.
17. Grant of statistical abstracts.
18. Power to make rules.

An Act to provide for certain matters in connection with the taking of census.

Whereas it is expedient to provide for the taking of census in India or any part thereof whenever necessary or desirable and to provide for certain matters in connection with the taking of such census;

It is hereby enacted as follows:

1. Short title and extent.— (1) This Act may be called the Census Act, 1948.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

2. Rule of construction respecting enactments not extending to Jammu and Kashmir.— Any reference in this Act to the Indian Penal Code or the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, shall, in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, be construed as a reference to the corresponding enactment in force in that State.

3. Central Government to take census.— The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare its intention of taking a census in the whole or any part of the territories to which this Act extends, whenever it may consider it necessary or desirable so to do, and thereupon the census shall be taken.

4. Appointment of census staff.— (1) The Central Government may appoint a Census Commissioner to supervise the taking of the census throughout the area in which the census is intended to be taken, and Directors of Census Operations to supervise the taking of the census within the several States.

(2) The State Government may appoint persons as census-officers to take, or aid in, or supervise the taking of, the census within any specified local area and such person, when so appointed, shall be bound to serve accordingly.

(3) A declaration in writing, signed by any authority authorized by the State Government in this behalf, that any person has been duly appointed a census-officer for any local area shall be conclusive proof of such appointment.

(4) The State Government may delegate to such authority as it thinks fit the power of appointing census-officers conferred by sub-section (2).

5. Status of census authorities as public servant.— The Census Commissioner, all Directors of Census operations and all census-officers shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code.

6. Discharge of duties of census-officers in certain cases.— (1) Where the District Magistrate, or such authority as the State Government may appoint in this behalf, by a written order so directs,—

(a) every officer in command of any body of men belonging to the navel, military or air forces, or of any vessel of war, of India,

(b) every person (except a pilot or harbour-master) having charge or control of a vessel,

(c) every person in charge of a lunatic asylum, hospital, workhouse, prison, reformatory or lock-up or of any public, charitable, religious or educational institution,

(d) every keeper, secretary or manager of any sarai, hotel, boarding-house, lodging-house, emigration depot or club,

(e) every manager or officer of a railway or any commercial or industrial establishment, and

(f) every occupant of immovable property wherein at the time of the taking of the census persons are living,

shall perform such of duties of a census-officer in relation to the persons who at the time of the taking of the census are under his command or charge, or are inmates of his house, or are present on or in such immovable property or are employed under him as may be specified in the order.

(2) All the provisions of this Act relating to census-officers shall apply, so far as may be, to all persons while performing such duties under this section, and any person refusing or neglecting to perform any duty which under this section he is directed to perform shall be deemed to have committed an offence under Section 187 of the Indian Penal Code.

7. Power to call upon certain persons to give assistance.— The District Magistrate, or such authority as the State Government may appoint in this behalf for any local area, may, by written order which shall have effect throughout the extent of his district or of such local area, as the case may be call upon,—

(a) all owners and occupiers of land, tenure-holders, and farmers, and assignees of land revenue, or their agents,

(b) all members of the district, municipal, panchayat and other local authorities and officers and servants of such authorities, and,

(c) all officers and member of staff of any factory, firm or establishment,

to give such assistance as shall be specified in the order towards the taking of a census of the persons who are, at the time of the taking of the census, on the lands of such owners, occupiers, tenure-holder, farmer and assignees, or in the premises of factories, firms and other establishments, or within the areas for which such local authorities are established, as the case may be, and the persons to whom an order under this section is directed shall be bound to obey it and shall, while acting in pursuance of such order, be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code.

8. Asking or questions and obligation to answer.— (1) A census-officer may ask all such questions to all persons within the limits of the local area for which he is appointed, as by instruction issued in this behalf by the State Government and published in the Official Gazette, he may be directed to ask.

(2) Every person of whom any question is asked under sub-section (1) shall be legally bound to answer such question to the best of his knowledge or belief:

Provided that no person shall be bound to state the name of any female member of his household, and no woman shall be bound to state the name of her husband or deceased husband or of any other person whose name she is forbidden by custom to mention.

9. occupier to permit access and affixing of numbers.— Every person occupying any house, enclosure, vessel or other place shall allow census-officers such access thereto as they may require for the purposes of the census and as, having regard to the customs of the country, may be reasonable, and shall allow them to paint on or affix to, the place such letters marks or numbers as may be necessary for the purposes of the census.

10. Occupier or manager to fill up schedule.— (1) Subject to such order as the State Government may issue in this behalf, a census-officer may, within the local area for which he is appointed, leave or cause to be left a schedule at any dwelling-house or with the manager or any officer of any commercial or industrial establishment, for the purpose of its being filled up by the occupier of such house or of any specified part thereof or by such manager or officer with such particulars as the State Government may direct regarding the inmates of such house or part thereof, or the persons employed under such manager or officer, as the case may be, at the time of the taking of the census.

(2) When such schedule has been so left, the said occupier, manager or officer, as the case may be, shall fill it up or cause it to be filled up to the best of his knowledge or belief so far as regards the inmates of such house or part thereof or the person employed under him, as the case may be, at the time aforesaid, and shall sign his name thereto and, when so required, shall deliver the schedule so up and signed to the census-officer or to such person as the census-officer may direct.

11. Penalty.— (1) (a) Any census officer or any person lawfully required to give assistance towards the taking of a census who refuses or neglects to use reasonable diligence in performing any duty imposed upon him or in obeying any order issued to him in accordance with this Act or any rule made there under, or any person who hinders or obstructs another person in performing any such duty or in obeying any such order, or

(b) any census-officer who intentionally puts any offensive or improper question or knowingly makes any false return or, without the previous sanction of the Central Government or the State Government, discloses any information which he has received by means of or for the purposes of, a census return, or

(c) any sorter, compiler or other member of the census staff who removes, secretes, damages or destroys any census document or deals with any census document in a manner likely to falsify or impair the tabulations of census result, or

(d) any person who intentionally give a false answer to, or refuses to answer to the best of his knowledge or belief, any question asked of him by a census-officer which he is legally bound by Section 8 to answer, or

(e) any person occupying any house, enclosure, vessel or other place who refuses to allow a census-officer such reasonable access thereto as he is required by Section 9 to allow, or

(f) any person who removes, obliterates, alters or damages any letters, makes or numbers which have been painted or affixed for the purposes of the census, or

(g) any person who, having been required under Section 10 to fill up a schedule, knowingly and without sufficient cause fails to comply with the provisions of that section, or makes any false return there under or.

(h) any person who trespass into a census, officer, shall be punishable with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees and in case of a conviction under Part (b) or (c) shall also be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months.

(2) Whoever abets any offences under sub-section (1) shall be punishable with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees.

12. Sanction required for prosecutions.— No prosecution under this Act shall be instituted except with the previous sanction of the State Government or of an authority authorized in this behalf by the State Government.

13. Operation of other laws not barred.— Nothing in this Act shall be deemed to prevent any person from being prosecuted under any other law for any act or omission which constituted an offence under this Act:

14. Jurisdiction.— No Court inferior to that of a Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of the second class shall try, whether under this Act or under any other law, any act or omission which constitutes an offence under this Act.

15. Records of census not open to inspection nor admissible in evidence.— No person shall have a right to inspect any book, register or record made by a census-officer in the discharge of his duty as such, or any schedule delivered under Section 10, and notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, no entry in any such book, register, record or schedule shall be admissible as evidence in any civil proceeding whatsoever or in any criminal proceeding other than a prosecution under this Act or any other law for any act or omission which constitutes an offence under this Act.

16. Temporary suspension of other laws as to mode of taking census in municipalities.— Notwithstanding anything in any enactment or rule with respect to the mode in which a census is to be taken in any municipality, the municipal authority, in consultation with the Director of Census Operation or with such other authority as the State Government may authorise in this behalf, shall, at the time appointed for the taking of any census cause the census of the municipality to be taken wholly or in part by method authorized by or under this Act.

17. Grant of statistical abstracts.— The Census Commissioner or any Director of Census Operations or such person as the State Government may authorise in this behalf may, if he so thinks fit, at the request and cost (to be determined by him) of any local authority or person, cause abstracts to be prepared and supplied containing any such statistical information as can be derived from the census returns for India or any State, as the case may be, being information which is not contained in any published report and which in his opinion it is reasonable for that authority or person to require.

18. Power to make rules.— (1) The Central Government may ¹[by notification in the Official Gazette] make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, the Central Government may make rules providing for the appointment of census-officers and of persons to perform any of the duties of census-officers or to give assistance toward the taking of a census, and for the general instructions to be issued to such officers and person.

²[(3) Every rule made under this section shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no

effect as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule].

1 Ins. By Delegated Legislation Provisions (Amendment) Act 4 of 1986, Schedule *Vide* Serial No. 23 (w.e.f. 15th May, 1986).

2 Ins by Act No. 4 of 1986 (w.e.f. 5th May, 1968).