

Tablet PCs for caste enumerators

FIRST ATTEMPT Once responses from the household members are recorded, a hard copy of it will be given to them for their record

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PATNA: The forthcoming socio-economic and caste census set to begin from next month would not only be a mammoth exercise covering around two crore households but also see the use of modern gadgets in the survey work.

Each of the enumerators assigned the task of recording the socio-economic profile of state's ten crore population would be given a tablet PC, a sleek handheld personal computer which can be operated through a touch screen.

The surveyors would be recording the response of the household members as per the questionnaire in the PC on the spot. Once it is done, a hard copy of the responses entered in the PC would be given to the members of the household so that they can keep it as a record.

The ECIL (Electronics Corporation of India ltd) will be providing the tablet PCs to the state government for the survey.

There are some more innovations in the format of the caste census to be held in the country after 81 years. The last caste survey was done in 1931.

"The entire survey would be videographed. Each enumerator is to be assigned three to four blocks and would be accompanied by a data operator and a cameraman, who would shoot the entire process of collecting responses from each household. This will bring in more transparency in the exercise," said a senior officer, who is in the know of the matter.

The UPA-II government had given its nod for a socio-economic and caste census following a demand made by several regional parties including the RJD and Samajwadi Party, which advocated, that it would throw up the true picture of the socio-economic profile of 1.20 billion people of the country.

Once completed, the census work is likely to have its political impact in Bihar and give a new dimension to the state's polity.

Nonetheless, the rural development department, which is



RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, WHICH IS STEERING THE CENSUS WORK, IS STRESSING HARD ON MAKING THE SURVEY WORK 'ERROR FREE' FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS

steering the census work is stressing hard on making the survey work 'error free' for administrative reasons as the data-base to be collected would be used to update the BPL list, which is used to provide benefits to poorest of poor sections under welfare schemes.

Officials claimed, the new methods of conducting the survey would check lot of wrong practices like enumerators filling up entries with ghost names by sitting at one place instead of visiting households physically.

"We had received a lot of complaints regarding surveyors indulging in such wrong practice in the last general census in 2010," said another officer, seeking anonymity.

Significantly, the census this time would be done in a staggered manner in phases at the block level in a bid to tide over the shortage of enumerators, who would be mostly junior level government officials.

Sources said each enumerator would be assigned three to four blocks who would be visiting households so that he/she do not undergo excessive strain during the survey.

Teachers of primary schools would not be engaged in the work.

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