

Dalit nation

The findings of Census 2011 provide remarkable insights into the lives of Dalits across the country, clearly demonstrating that the government must go the extra mile if it is serious about inclusive growth. By **RAMESH CHAKRAPANI**

THE Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 has stirred up a controversy after the government refused to release some findings from the data. But months before it became the eye of a storm, the government had released thorough and insightful statistics on how people belonging to the Scheduled Castes (S.C.s) live, which went practically unnoticed.

The data, from Census 2011, give a clear picture of the socio-economic situation of the S.C.s, with details on the States where they are in significant numbers, their presence in rural and urban areas, the condition of their dwellings, their access to drinking water, the presence or absence of toilets, the type of fuel used for cooking, and the number of households availing themselves of banking services and owning assets such as radios, televisions, telephones, computers, two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

Of the 4,42,26,917 S.C. households in the country, 3,29,19,665 or over 74 per cent live in rural areas and 1,13,07,252 in urban areas. The distribution is similar in most States, with the exception of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Gujarat is the odd man out among all States, with more S.C. households in urban areas (5.04 lakh) than in rural areas (4.91 lakh). In Maharashtra, which has a total of 33.11 lakh households, 17.77 lakh are located in rural areas and 15.34 lakh in urban areas.

A look at the distribution of Dalits across States shows that 60 per cent of the entire S.C. population is concentrated in six States: Uttar Pradesh (76.49 lakh households), West Bengal (51.40 lakh), Tamil Nadu (37.59 lakh), (undivided) Andhra Pradesh (36.71 lakh), Maharashtra (33.11 lakh) and Bihar (32.30 lakh).

According to the findings, more than 91 per cent of all the households

while 1,29,80,745 access tap water from a treated source, together accounting for 70 per cent of all S.C. households in the nation.

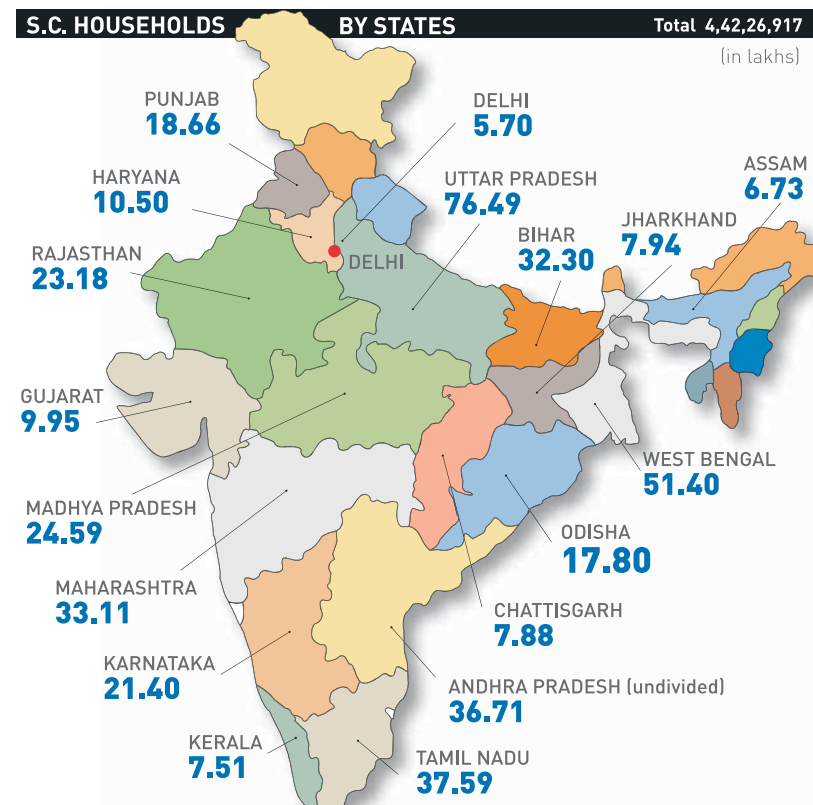
The main source of lighting is electricity in 2,61,04,596 households, or 59 per cent of the total, which may be a measure of how successful the government's electrification programme has been. One must note that even with universal electrification, kerosene is still the chief source of lighting for 1,74,64,007 households all over India, 1,61,36,903 of them in rural areas. The data are an illustration of how electricity is yet to reach millions of marginalised people in rural areas.

A crucial metric of quality of life is the availability of toilets within the premises, and on this count S.C. households still lag behind, with only 1,49,75,126, about 34 per cent of the total, falling under this category. It is distressing to note that 1,82,616 households still dispose night soil into an open drain, while 64,111 depend on a human to remove night soil.

According to the census data, for more than 50 per cent of all people belonging to S.C. communities

live in good or livable residences, an encouraging sign of the progress in their living conditions over the years. It is also encouraging to note that 3,98,20,398 households, over 90 per cent, live in own residences. However, data on the number of dwelling rooms present a distressing picture. Of the total, 2,06,16,913 households live in houses with just one dwelling room and 1,39,24,073 get by with just two rooms, and they account for 78 per cent of all S.C. households in the country. Only about 30 lakh households have at least four rooms at home.

The data also show that some 1,75,35,781 households depend on handpumps for drinking water,



HOUSEHOLDS: OWNERSHIP

Category	All India total	Rural total	Urban total
In own house	4,42,26,917	3,29,19,665	1,13,07,252
In rented house	3,98,20,398	3,14,92,648	83,27,750
Others	32,61,670	7,94,435	24,67,235
Others	11,44,849	6,32,582	5,12,267

HOME STATUS

Category	GOOD	LIVABLE	DILAPIDATED
ALL INDIA	4,42,26,917	1,90,13,387	2,16,49,238
RURAL	3,29,19,665	1,26,50,937	1,73,09,458
URBAN	1,13,07,252	63,62,450	43,39,780

SOURCE OF WATER

Category	All India Total
All India Total	4,42,26,917
Rural	3,29,19,665
Urban	1,13,07,252
Treated tapwater	1,29,80,745
Rural	63,48,622
Urban	66,32,123
Untreated tapwater	52,75,072
Rural	42,19,829
Urban	10,55,243
Covered well	4,58,388
Rural	3,34,181
Urban	1,24,207
Uncovered well	31,97,862
Rural	27,76,334
Urban	4,21,528
Handpump	1,75,35,781
Rural	1,56,97,566
Urban	18,38,215
Tubewell-borehole	33,83,488
Rural	24,85,558
Urban	8,97,930
Spring	1,09,611
Rural	92,671
Urban	16,940
River-canal	2,13,400
Rural	1,91,181
Urban	22,219
Tank-pond-lake	3,37,214
Rural	2,84,633
Urban	52,581
Other sources	7,35,356
Rural	4,89,090
Urban	2,46,266

HOUSEHOLDS: DWELLING ROOMS

NO EXCLUSIVE ROOM	1 ROOM	2 ROOMS	3 ROOMS	4 ROOMS	5 ROOMS	6 ROOMS	Total
20,98,143	2,06,16,913	1,39,24,073	45,47,237	19,42,269	5,60,838	5,37,444	4,42,26,917

(2,42,76,493 households), firewood is the main fuel used in cooking. While liquefied petroleum gas has reached only 74,84,864 households, it is heartening to note that 39,729 households use electricity and 87,166 depend on the eco-friendly biogas for their kitchen fuel needs.

Given the government's major push to make banking services available universally, it would do well to start with the S.C. communities, of whom

more than 50 per cent remain outside the purview of banks. Census 2011 data show that 2,25,29,047 households make use of banking services, less than half of the total, a pointer to how far the government has to go.

On the assets front, it is most disturbing to note that 99,95,804 households do not own any of the following assets: mobile phone or landline, radio, TV, computer, two-wheeler and four-wheeler.

HOUSEHOLDS USING BANKING SERVICES & OWNING ASSETS

Category	All India Total
All India Total	4,42,26,917
Using banking services	2,25,29,047
Radio	70,06,096
Television	1,73,14,236
Mobile only (Urban)	69,35,634
Computer-Laptop	28,70,693
Two-wheeler	53,05,083
Four-wheeler	8,05,808
None of those listed above	99,95,804

TOILET FACILITIES

Category	All India Total
All India Total	4,42,26,917
Toilets within the premises	1,49,75,126
No toilets within the premises	2,92,51,791

Category	Count
Night soil disposed into open drain	1,82,616
Night soil disposed by humans	64,111
Night soil serviced by animals	78,362
Dependent on public toilet	17,99,243