

Be counted in Census - 2011

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The Census of Population and Housing is an exercise of national importance. It requires the participation and cooperation of every person in the country. The best way to cooperate is to provide accurate information at the shortest possible time. Further every person in the country should be enumerated and each person should be enumerated only once. If a red label with a number on it, is not pasted on your main door frame or any other prominent place of your house, during the month of April contact the *Grama Nilahari* of your area to get a number and ensure that your house is listed so that you will be counted in the Census of Population and Housing to be taken in the third Quarter of the year 2011.

The fourteenth Census of Population and Housing of Sri Lanka, is conducted during this year by the Department of Census and statistics. In its most basic form, a population census is a count of the number of inhabitants in a country. Census taking has its beginning in ancient times and was undertaken primarily for taxation purposes.

From these early population counts, the modern census evolved from around the seventeenth century, with the characteristics of universal coverage, wide scope of inquiry and provision of information for statistical and planning purposes. Only a census provides the unique opportunity to collect information on

each person at a fixed time and to obtain data on age, sex, nationality, educational attainment, marital status, sources of livelihood, occupation, living conditions, condition of buildings, dwellings etc. This stands out as the main advantage of the population and housing census. This is the only means to take a momentary photograph of the country's population and housing structure.

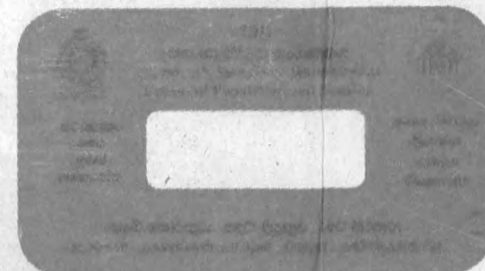
First census

The decision to conduct the census in 2011 is in line with the recommendation of the United Nations (UN) that a national census be taken at least once in every 10 years. The value of census data is increased if it can be compared internationally. Therefore, the UN has recommended that countries may wish to undertake a census in years ending in '0' or as near to those years as possible. The first Census of Population in Sri Lanka had been conducted in 1871. Thereafter, censuses have been taken in 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1946, 1953, 1963, 1971, 1981 and 2001. The population of these census years have been 2.4, 2.8, 3.0, 3.6, 4.1, 4.5, 5.3, 6.7, 8.1, 10.6, 12.7, 14.8 and 18.8 millions respectively. The Second World War delayed the 1941 census till 1946. Due to the unsettled conditions, census could not be taken in 1991. The last census was conducted in 2001 but as a result of prevailing unsettled conditions out of 25 districts of the country, census could be taken only in 18 districts. Therefore, the 14th census which is con-

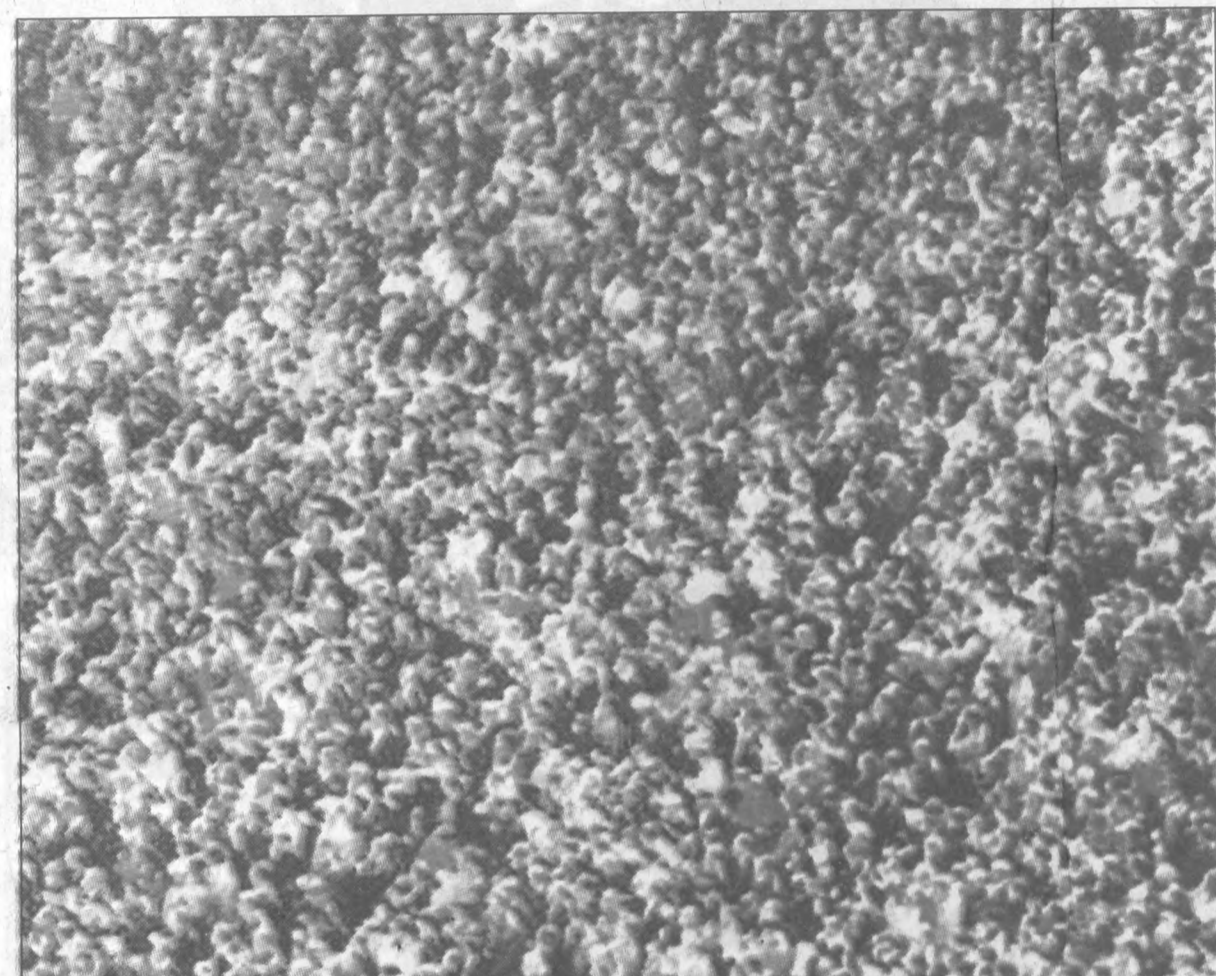
ducted in this year, will be a very important one as it is the first time a census is taken after thirty years covering the entire country.

Generally the planning for a census requires about 3-4 years. There are three main stages of the census taking operation. The first stage is mapping. That is preparation of complete and up to date maps marking the Grama Niladhari

The second stage is the listing operation. This operation is carried out during the month of April 2011. The Grama Niladhari is the key person in this operation and they have been appointed as listing officers. Either the Grama Niladhari or any other person designated by the Divisional Secre-



A red label is pasted on the front door frame or other prominent place so that it is visible to the census enumerators



A census requires participation and cooperation of everyone

division boundaries and small enumeration areas known as Census Blocks. Each Grama Niladhari Division is divided into a few census blocks and the criterion used here is to have about 150 housing units in a census block. The whole country is divided into about 65,000 census blocks. This stage has now been completed.

tary who have been appointed as Deputy Census Commissioner, visits all permanent, semi-permanent and temporary housing units and other buildings in his/her GN division. They list these units by census block. Starting from an easily identifiable location, all these units are serially numbered. In each census block, numbering starts

with 1. This number is written on a red label and pasted on the front door frame or other prominent place so that it is visible to the census enumerators. This label has to be there at least until counting is over.

Key information

In addition to numbering, some key information is also collected during list-

ing operation. This includes name of the head of the household, number of persons normally living in the unit, whether there are agricultural operators, people engaged in fishing as their primary or secondary economic activity and whether any other economic activities are carried out within the premises. A list consisting of these particulars of all housing units is called a frame. One might wonder why information on agriculture, fishing and other industrial activities are also collected in this census.

The information collected by this operation will be the base for several other censuses, surveys and other studies that will be conducted by the department as well as other institutions to gather information on various demographic and socio-economic aspects of the country until the next census is conducted. The Census of Population and Housing will be followed by the Census of Agriculture and Census of Industries. As such, the reliability and accuracy of findings of these censuses, surveys and other studies largely depend on the accuracy and completeness of the information collected through the listing operation.

The third stage is counting. An enumerator is assigned to each census block.

This enumerator visits all housing units in the census block listed during the listing operation. A questionnaire designed to get information on all the individuals in the unit, structure of housing etc, is recorded for each and every housing unit of the census block. Counting will be carried out in two rounds based on the 'census moment'.

The mid night of the day prior to the census day is called census moment. The first round of counting will be done during the period of three weeks prior to the census moment.

The second round of counting is called Revision Round which will be carried out during the period of two days after the 'cen-

sus moment'. During the second round data already collected in first round will be revised for the 'census moment' by considering births, deaths etc.

The census questionnaire has been designed to obtain comparable information at smallest geographical level, providing a wealth of inter-related information on households and individuals on a consistent basis across Sri Lanka. The effort and cost of taking a census is only worthwhile when results meet needs and are delivered effectively. A key strategic aim to archive this is to ensure that the content of the census questionnaire meets the requirements of data users.

The department is grateful for the significant input from users, without which the department would not have been able to develop effective questionnaire for the 2011 census. Prior to the first phase of user consultation, the department developed a substantial list of possible census topics, mainly based on previous Census experience underlying changes in the society and ensuring minimum burden on the public in responding to the questionnaire.

Electronic form

Important statistics on population and housing of the country will be compiled based on the information collected from the census.

These statistics will be released as publications as well as in electronic form to meet the needs of the modern world. It is expected to establish a Geographic Information System consisting of spatial data and other attributes on the Population and Housing of Sri Lanka at Grama Niladhari Division Level. Such a system was a long felt need in deciding urban and other socio-demographic features of localities.

The Census Ordinance, under which the Census of Population and Housing is conducted, guarantees the confidentiality of census data. Accordingly every person is required to pro-

vide the information asked for in the census and every census officer is required to discharge his/her duties to the best of his/her ability. The law on statistics provides that statistical data is confidential and could be used only for statistical purposes and disseminated only when aggregated. Listing officers have to sign a written oath not to disclose information collected from respondents to unauthorized persons.

The district administration plays a major role in conducting the census. Special gazette notifications have already been issued appointing District Secretaries as Census Commissioners; Additional District Secretaries and Divisional Secretaries as Deputy Census Commissioners; Assistant District Secretaries and Assistant Divisional Secretaries as Assistant Census Commissioners. All Grama Niladaris have been appointed as Listing Officers.

The census is an exercise of national importance. It requires the participation and cooperation of every person in the country. The best way to co-operate is to provide them with accurate information at the shortest possible time when the data collectors visits your house. The information of each person provides is aggregated to provide the basic demographic, social and economic situation in the country.

Such information is vital for the development process. Every person in the country should be enumerated and each person should be enumerated only once.

If a red label with a number on it, is not pasted on your house during the month of April 2011, contact the Grama Niladhari, to get a number and ensure that you are counted in the census of Population and Housing 2011. Department of Census and Statistics request the public not to remove these labels at least until the end of the year 2011. Be counted in census 2011.

