

# Caste census not divisive, it will strengthen social justice: Scheduled Caste rights panel chief

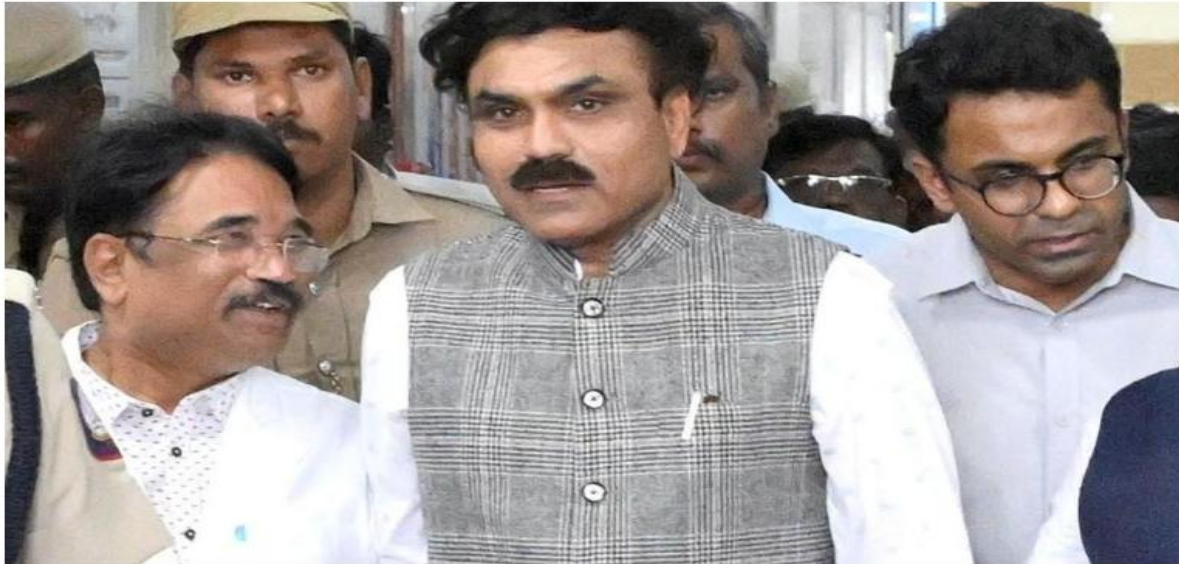
NCSC Chairperson Kishor Makwana supports caste enumeration in census for social justice and policy decisions, rejecting division concerns

Published - May 25, 2025 12:29 pm IST - New Delhi

PTI



 READ LATER  PRINT



National Commission for Scheduled Castes Chairperson Kishor Makwana (centre). File | Photo Credit: S.S. Kumar

Nixing insinuations that caste enumeration would create chasms in society, National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) Chairperson Kishor Makwana said the data gathered would serve as a foundation for policy decisions and strengthen social justice.

It will help uplift the marginalised backward communities, he told *PTI* in an interview.

With the BJP-led NDA Government deciding to include caste enumeration in the next census, Mr. Makwana welcomed the move, saying that unlike in 2011, “definite figures would be available” that would ensure proportionate access to welfare schemes.

The UPA Government conducted the Socio-Economic and Caste Census in 2011, which was the first attempt since 1931 to collect caste data nationwide. However, the caste data from SECC-2011 was never fully released or utilised.

Rejecting concerns that the caste census could lead to sectarian divisions, Mr. Makwana said, “This will not create any division based on caste. Rather, it will strengthen social justice.” “It will uplift backward castes and strengthen all three aspects — social, political, and economic — of Babasaheb Ambedkar’s dream for the Scheduled Caste community.” The caste census will provide accurate numbers that will serve as a foundation for policy decisions and target beneficiaries of schemes such as the Mudra Yojana in a much better manner, the NCSC chairperson said.

"It will ensure that those who have remained deprived, finally get their due." Mr. Makwana clarified the NCSC would not be directly involved in the enumeration process but would play a critical role in post-census policy framing.

"We don't have a role in the data collection itself. But after the data is out, the commission will have a role in ensuring the Scheduled Castes get their due share based on proportion. In that sense, this is a major step toward social justice," he said.

Lauding the central Cabinet's decision, the NCSC chairperson said the caste census aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to uplift the last person in society, both socially and economically.

"This decision takes that vision forward. Those who have been left behind will now be empowered," he said, adding that accurate data would ensure proportionate access to welfare schemes.

"With definite population data, communities will get what they deserve in proportion. Right now, benefits are being given based on estimates. Once we have numbers, proper policy interventions can be made," he said.

Noting that the last caste census was held in 1931 and updated data has been lacking, Mr. Makwana said, "We've been working on the assumption that SCs form 7 per cent of the population. But without verified data, many deprived sections remain unaccounted for." "The new census will bring detailed data, not just for the SCs, but also for sub-castes within Muslim and Christian communities," he said.

Mr. Makwana also criticised political parties that previously opposed the caste census, saying they didn't include caste data in the seven censuses conducted since 1951 because their intentions were not right".

On the Commission's broader activities, the Chairperson said the NCSC has begun conducting State-level hearings, which weren't done earlier.

"We held hearings in Punjab and Rajasthan. We are going among the people. Legal provisions alone won't solve caste-based issues; there has to be a sense of empathy and emotional connection in society as well," he said.

Raising concerns about the condition of Dalits in Punjab, Mr. Makwana said, "Students are not getting scholarships, many youths have fallen into drug addiction, dropout rates are high, and even government officials are not getting benefits of schemes."