



Extension to OBC Sub-Categorisation Commission

For Prelims: Reservation of Other Backward Classes, National Commission for Backward Classes

For Mains: Sub-Categorisation Commission and its objectives

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet gave the 13th **extension to the Justice Rohini Commission**, to examine **sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes** (OBCs) and submit its report by 31st January 2023.

- The initial deadline to submit the commission's report was 12 weeks — by 2nd January, 2018.

What are the Key Highlights?

- **Commission:**
 - The commission was **set up on 2nd October, 2017 under Article 340 of the Constitution.**
 - It was tasked with sub-categorisation of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and equitable distribution of benefits reserved for them.
 - In 2015, the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** had recommended that OBCs should be categorised into **extremely backward classes, more backward classes and backward classes.**
 - NCBC has the **authority to examine complaints and welfare measures** regarding socially and educationally backward classes.
- **Commission's Terms of References:**
 - To **examine the uneven distribution of reservation benefits** among different castes in the central OBC list.
 - To **work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach** for sub-categorisation within such OBCs.
 - To **take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes/communities/sub-castes/synonyms** for comprehensive data coverage.
 - To **study and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors** of spelling or transcription.
- **Work Done So Far:**
 - It has met representatives of state governments, state backward classes commissions, community associations etc. apart from **obtaining caste-wise data of OBCs** in higher educational institutions and recruits in central departments, public sector banks and financial institutions.
 - In 2021, the commission proposed to divide OBCs into four subcategories numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 and split the 27% into 2, 6, 9 and 10%, respectively.
 - It also recommended complete digitisation of all OBC records and a standardised system of issuing OBC certificates.

How has the status of OBC reservation evolved over time?

- The **Kalelkar Commission, set up in 1953**, was the **first to identify backward classes other than** the **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at the national level.
- The **Mandal Commission Report, 1980** estimated the **OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities** as backward.
 - It recommended increasing the existing quotas, which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include the OBCs.
- **The central government reserved 27%** of seats in union civil posts and services for OBCs [Article 16(4)]. The quotas were subsequently enforced in central government educational institutions [Article 15 (4)].
 - In 2008, the **Supreme Court** directed the central government to **exclude the creamy layer (advanced sections) among the OBCs**.
- The **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018** provided constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), which was previously a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Source: IE

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