



## Sub-Categorisation of OBCs

**For Prelims:** [Commission for the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes \(OBC\), Mandal Commission, 102<sup>nd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act.](#)

**For Mains:** Historical Evolution of the OBC Reservation Status in India, Need for Sub-categorisation of OBCs.

**Source:** IE

### Why in News?

The [Justice G. Rohini-headed Commission for the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes \(OBC\)](#) caste groups submitted its long-awaited report to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment after nearly six years of work.

- The **details of the recommendations have not been made public yet**, and the government is expected to deliberate on the report before any implementation.

### What are the Terms of Reference of the Rohini Commission?

- **About:**
  - The commission was set up on **2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017** under **Article 340 of the Constitution (President's power to appoint a Commission to investigate the conditions of the backward classes)**.
- **Terms of Reference:**
  - Examine the inequitable distribution of benefits among OBCs listed in the Central List.
  - Propose a scientific approach and parameters for sub-categorisation within OBCs.
  - Identify and classify the respective castes or communities into their respective sub-categories.
  - Study the entries in the Central List of OBCs and recommend corrections for repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies, and errors in spelling or transcription.

### What is the Need for Sub-categorisation of OBCs?

- **OBCs get 27% reservation** in central government jobs and educational institutions, but it is perceived that only a **few dominant caste groups among them benefit from this quota**.
- In 2018, the **commission analyzed the data of 1.3 lakh central government jobs and OBC admissions** to central higher education institutions over the preceding years, **revealing that 97% of benefits went to 25% of OBC castes**.
- **Around 983 OBC communities (37% of the total) had zero representation in jobs and educational institutions**, highlighting the need for sub-categorisation.
- Sub-categorisation aims to **create quotas within the 27% reservation to provide more opportunities for historically underrepresented and crowded-out OBC communities**.

## What is the Historical Evolution of the OBC Reservation Status in India?

- The journey began with the establishment of the **Kalelkar Commission in 1953**, which marked the **first instance of recognizing backward classes beyond the [Scheduled Castes \(SCs\)](#) and [Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#)** on a national level.
- In **1980**, the **[Mandal Commission Report](#)** estimated that the **OBC population constituted 52% and identified 1,257 communities as backward**.
  - To address the inequity, it **suggested an increase in the existing quotas** (which were previously applicable only to SC/ST) **from 22.5% to 49.5%, extending the reservation to include OBCs**.
  - Following these recommendations, the **central government implemented the reservation policy, reserving 27% of seats in union civil posts and services for OBCs under Article 16(4)**.
    - This policy was also enforced in central government educational institutions under **Article 15(4)**.
- In 2008, the Supreme Court intervened and directed the central government to **exclude the "[creamy layer](#)" (advanced sections) among the OBCs** from benefiting from the reservation policy, ensuring that it reaches the most disadvantaged.
- In 2018, **[102<sup>nd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act](#)** granted **constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**.
  - This elevated the **NCBC from its previous status as a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, giving it more authority and recognition in safeguarding the interests of backward classes, including the OBCs.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

**Q. Consider the following organizations/bodies in India: (2023)**

1. The National Commission for Backward Classes
2. The National Human Rights Commission
3. The National Law Commission
4. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

**How many of the above constitutional bodies?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Ans: (a)**