



## National Commission for Scheduled Castes

**For Prelims:** [National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Article 338 of the Constitution](#), 89<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 2003, 89th Amendment Act, 2003.

**For Mains:** Functions of NCSC.

### Why in News?

The [National Commission for Scheduled Castes \(NCSC\)](#) has recently issued a notice to Zomato, regarding an advertisement that was deemed "inhuman" and casteist.

### What is the National Commission for Scheduled Castes?

#### ▪ About:

- The **NCSC is a constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests.**

#### ▪ History:

##### ◦ Special Officer:

- Initially, the **constitution provided for the appointment of a Special Officer under Article 338**. The special officer was designated as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

##### ◦ 65<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 1990:

- It **amended Article 338 of the Constitution** and replaced the one-member system with a multi-member **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)**.

##### ◦ 89<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 2003:

- **Article 338 was amended**, and the erstwhile National Commission for SC and ST was replaced by two separate Commissions from the year 2004 which were:
  - **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)** and
  - **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)**

#### ▪ Composition:

- The NCSC comprises a **Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and three additional Members.**
- These positions are **filled through the President's appointment, indicated by a warrant under his hand and seal.**
  - Their **conditions of service and tenure of office are also determined by the President.**

#### ▪ Functions:

- To **investigate and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and other legal safeguards for the SCs** and to evaluate their working;
- To inquire into **specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the SCs;**
- To **participate and advise on the planning process of socioeconomic development**

- **of the SCs** and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union or a state;
- To present to the President, annually and at such other times as it may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
- To make **recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or a state for the effective implementation of those safeguards** and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the SCs
- Till **2018**, the commission was also required to discharge similar functions with regard to the **other backward classes (OBCs)**. It was relieved from this responsibility by the **102<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act, 2018**.

## What are the Other Constitutional Provisions for Upliftment of the Schedule Caste?

- **Article 15:** This article specifically addresses the **issue of discrimination based on caste**, emphasizing the **protection and upliftment of Scheduled Castes (SCs)**
- **Article 17:** This article abolishes **untouchability** and prohibits its practice in any form. It seeks to eliminate **social discrimination and promote the equality and dignity of all individuals**.
- **Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests:** This article directs the **State to promote the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes and other weaker sections of society** and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- **Article 243D(4):** This provision mandates the **reservation of seats for SCs in Panchayats (local self-government institutions)** in proportion to their population in the area.
- **Article 243T(4):** This provision ensures the **reservation of seats for SCs in Municipalities (urban local bodies)** in proportion to their population in the area.
- **Article 330 and Article 332** provide for reservation of seats in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the **Lok Sabha and in the legislative assemblies of the States** (respectively).

### UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

#### **Mains**

Q. In 2001, RGI stated that Dalits who converted to Islam or Christianity are not a single ethnic group as they belong to different caste groups. Therefore, they cannot be included in the list of Scheduled Castes (SC) as per Clause (2) of Article 341, which requires a single ethnic group for inclusion. (2014)

Q. Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. (2018)

**Source: TH**