

## Deficit in OBC, SC Positions Vacant at IIMs

### Why in news?

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank's response in Lok Sabha revealed a severe deficit in the number of OBC, SC, ST candidates recruited as faculty in Central institutes of higher education.

### What does data on vacant positions show?

- **Institutes** - More than half of the faculty positions reserved for OBCs in central institutions of higher education are vacant.
- About 40% of those reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also remain unfilled.
- The situation is particularly acute in the elite Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).
  - More than 60% of SC and OBC reserved positions are vacant.
  - Almost 80% of positions reserved for STs have not been filled.
  - This means that out of 24 positions reserved for STs, only five have been filled.
- For the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), data has only been provided for non-faculty positions.
- To note, both IITs and IIMs have been lobbying for exemption from such faculty quota requirements.
- **Positions** - Within the Central Universities, vacancies are higher at the level of professors.
- Out of 709 assistant professor positions reserved for STs at the 42 universities, more than 500 have been filled.
- However, when it comes to professors, only nine positions have been filled out of the 137 reserved for ST candidates.
- This means 93% of these posts remain unfilled.
- Less than 1% of the 1,062 professors in central universities are from ST communities.
- Similarly, 64% of the 2,206 assistant professor positions reserved for OBCs have been filled in the Central Universities.
- However, less than 5% of the 378 professor positions reserved for OBCs have been filled.

### What is the government's response?

- After the implementation of 'The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019', the OBC reservation has been implemented at all levels.
- The Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission (UGC) continuously monitor the vacancies.
- The onus of filling up the teaching posts lies on Central Universities which are autonomous bodies created under Acts of Parliament.
- In fact, in June 2019, UGC had written to all Universities, giving them a six month deadline to fill up their vacancies.
- The government also issued a warning that grants would be withheld if its directions were violated.
- According to the data presented in the Lok Sabha, there are now 6,074 vacant positions at the 42 universities.
- Of this, 75% are in the reserved categories.

### **What are the recommendations made in this regard?**

- In the case of the IITs, an official committee suggested that the way out would be to exempt these institutions from reservation.
- This option is provided for under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.
- Another suggestion is to dereserve lower faculty positions after a year, if suitable candidates from the beneficiary communities are not found.
- But this cannot be the right course for official policy, as reservations system is widely seen as the shortest path to equality and equity.

### **What are the possible measures to address this?**

- The data only confirm that the trend seen earlier in the IIT system extends to many more institutions.
- What could help bridge the gap is a better understanding of the lacunae in the education system.
- The failure to recruit faculty to all the reserved positions is usually attributed to the absence of enough qualified candidates.
- One of the forward-looking remedial measures suggested by the panel was to start government-sponsored preparatory programmes.
- This would both equip aspiring faculty and create a pool of research talent.
- This has merit in the context of management, science and other disciplines.
- In the short term, it could help qualified individuals overcome the deficiencies of their preparatory years.
- Such courses would also make these institutions of higher learning more socially responsive.
- It would help meet the goal of addressing historical deprivation of

communities based on caste.

**Source: The Hindu**

