

OBC Sub-categorisation

Why in news?

A Commission has been examining the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC) for almost three years.

What is sub-categorisation of OBCs?

- Sub-categorisation of the OBCs means creation of categories within OBCs for reservation.
- OBCs are granted 27% reservation in jobs and education under the central government.
- The Central List of OBCs consists of over 2,600 communities in it.
- The question of sub-categorisation arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the listed ones have secured a major part of 27% reservation.
- The argument for sub-categorisation is that it would ensure equitable distribution of representation among all OBC communities.

Who is examining sub-categorisation?

- The Commission to examine Sub-categorisation of OBCs took charge on October 11, 2017.
- It is headed by retired Delhi High Court Chief Justice G Rohini.
- Initially constituted with tenure of 12 weeks ending January 3, 2018, it was granted an extension recently.
- The current tenure of the Commission ends on January 31, 2021.
- Its budget is being drawn from the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

What are its terms of reference?

- It was originally set up with three terms of reference:
 - a. To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the OBC category with reference to such classes in the Central List;
 - b. To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such OBCs;
 - c. To identify the castes or communities or sub-castes in the Central OBC

List and classify them into respective sub-categories.

- In January 2020, a fourth term of reference was added, when the Cabinet granted it an extension.
- This term of reference was about studying the various entries in the Central List of OBCs and recommending any correction.
- It was added following a letter to the government from the Commission.

What progress has it made so far?

- The Commission says that it is ready with the draft report.
- This could have huge political consequences.
- This is likely to face a judicial review.

What did the Commission analyse?

- In 2018, the Commission analysed the data of 1.3 lakh central jobs given under OBC quota over the preceding five years.
- It also analysed the data of OBC admissions to central higher education institutions, including universities, IITs, NITs, IIMs and AIIMS, over the preceding three years.

What have its findings been so far?

- Based on the above analysis, the Commission found the following.
- 97% of all jobs and educational seats have gone to just 25% of all sub-castes classified as OBCs.
- 24.95% of these jobs and seats have gone to just 10 OBC communities.
- 983 OBC communities (37% of the total) have zero representation in jobs and educational institutions.
- 994 OBC sub-castes have a total representation of only 2.68% in recruitment and admissions.

What is the hurdle for the Commission?

- The data for the population of various communities to compare with their representation in jobs and admissions is absent.
- This has been a major hurdle for the Commission.
- The Socio Economic Caste Census data weren't considered reliable.
- In 2018, the Commission requested the Central government for a Budget provision for a proposed all-India survey for an estimate of the caste-wise population of OBCs.
- On August 31, 2018, then Home Minister had announced that in Census 2021, data of OBCs will also be collected.

Source: The Indian Express

