

Subcategorisation of OBCs

Why in news?

Recently, the Minister for Backward Classes Welfare in Andhra Pradesh said that the state will begin a backward classes census.

Who are the Other Backward Classes (OBCs)?

- **OBC**- The expression 'OBC' was coined to denote backward/ marginalised communities and castes that were not Scheduled Castes (SCs) or Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- It is recognised that social backwardness in India has traditionally been a direct consequence of caste status, and that other types of backwardness have flowed from this initial handicap.
- **Reservation**- The affirmative action for OBCs is mandated by **Article 15(4)** of the Constitution-

“Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of Article 29 [non-discrimination with regard to admission into state educational institutions on grounds of religion, caste, etc] shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens”

- **Article 16(4)**- It allows the State to make provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which is not adequately represented in the services under the State.
- **Categorisation**- OBCs have been generally identified on the basis of their occupation like cultivation of own land, tenant farming, agriculture labour etc.,
- Two broad categories within the OBCs emerge,
 - Those who own land - Eg: Yadavs and Kurmis in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh
 - Those who do not own land

What is sub-categorisation of OBCs?

Article 340 provides for the appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions for the improvement of socially and educationally backward class

- It refers to creating subgroups of backward castes within the OBC category.
- **Need for sub-categorisation** - OBCs get 27% reservation in central government jobs and admission to educational institutions.
- There are more than 2,600 entries in the Central List of OBCs, but over the years, a perception has taken root that only a few affluent communities among them have

benefited from the quota.

- Therefore, there is an argument that a “sub-categorisation” of OBCs is needed in order to ensure “*equitable distribution*” of the benefits of reservation.
- **Sub-categorization of OBCs in States** - It has been done in States such as Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, etc.
- **Sub-categorization of OBCs in Central List** - In 2017, Justice Rohini Panel was appointed to examine the sub-categorisation of OBCs.

About the Commission	
Year	2017 under Article 340 of the Constitution
Chairman	Justice G.Rohini
Terms of reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine the inequitable distribution of reservation benefits among OBCs in the Central List. • To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach • To identify the respective castes and classify them into their respective sub-categories
Recommendations	<p>It suggested breaking the caste groups into broad categories,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the dominant castes getting the smallest share of the 27% reservation • The historically crowded-out caste groups getting the largest share of the reservation pie

What committees were formed regarding OBCs?

1st OBC Commission	About
Head	Kaka Kalelkar
Year	1953
Objective	To identify socially and educationally backward classes
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It prepared a list of 2,399 backward castes or communities in the country, categorised 837 of them as “most backward”. • It recommended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enumerating castes in the 1961 census - Providing 25-40% reservation at different levels of government jobs - 70% reservation for admission to technical and professional institutions
Outcome	The report was never discussed in the Parliament and never implemented as the government decided that any all-India list drawn up the Central Government would have no practical utility.
2nd OBC Commission	About
Head	B.P.Mandal
Year	1979
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified 3,743 castes and communities as OBCs • Estimated their population at 52% • Recommended 27% reservation in government jobs and admissions to all government-run scientific, technical, and professional institutions

Outcome	Within the 27% reserved for Socially and Economically Backward Castes, preference shall be given to candidates belonging to the poorer sections of the SEBCs
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References

1. [Indian Express- OBCs and Subcategories a hot button issue for long](#)
2. [Indian Express- Rohini panel submits report](#)

