Karnataka - Priority for Kannadigas in Private Sector Jobs

Why in news?

Karnataka cabinet has decided to introduce Sarojini Mahishi Committee recommendations to give 100% reservation for Kannadigas in Group C and D jobs in private establishments.

What are the committee recommendations?

- The Sarojini Mahishi Committee report of 1986 recommended job reservations for Kannadigas in government jobs, public sector units and even in the private sector.
- The report recommended that jobs in the private sector should be reserved for Kannadigas except for senior, skilled positions.
- The other recommendations include -

i. a minimum of 80% reservation for Kannadigas in Group B jobs
ii. a minimum of 65% reservations in Group A jobs

- The recommendations so far had not received legal backing and were not enforced, and jobs for Kannadigas were only made a priority.
- As, there were opinions that it violates Article 19 of the Constitution.

Whom will the decision apply to?

- **Kannadiga** - According to the report, a Kannadiga is not just someone who has lived in the state for 15 years, but who can speak, read, and write Kannada 'reasonably well'.
- **Group C&D** - According to the central government, Group C jobs include non-supervisory roles like clerks, stenographers, typists, and telephone operators.
- Group D jobs include manual workers like peons, sweepers, and watchmen.
- **Employers** - Establishments set up in Karnataka, especially those that directly or indirectly benefit from the government will have to adhere to the rule.
- The benefits may refer to industrial concessions, tax concessions, land tax rebate, energy rebate or industrial policy incentives.
- Information Technology/Biotechnology sector and other sectors that demand technical knowledge will be exempted from this change.

- Amendments would be made in this regard to the Karnataka Industrial Employment Standing Orders, Rule 1961.
- **Complaints** - Applicants who have been wrongfully denied a job can now write to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the district, complaining about the company.
- If the charges are proved, the DC can issue a notice to the company.
- The government can then revoke incentives or facilities given to the company.

What is the rationale?

- **Contribution** - When private establishments open in the state, the residents would have contributed in the form of land and resources for the intention of creating jobs.
- So it was felt fair to make reservations for the people of the state.
- **Employment** - It will help Kannadigas gain employment in unskilled jobs in the state.
- This is especially beneficial when business owners increasingly prefer hiring migrant workers for lower salaries over the native residents.
- **Regional share** - Finance Commissions accord a high weightage to poverty and population vis-a-vis development.
- So the northern States end up receiving a generous share of the resources pie.
- This would seem to deprive the income-generating Southern states of the resources needed to manage a growing migrant population.
- Resultantly, the gap between the per capita incomes of, say, Bihar and Tamil Nadu (which are far apart in development status) has not narrowed over the last decade.
- The relatively developed regions of the south have a perception that they do not get their due share in central transfers.
- So job policies based on the son-of-the-soil principle are prevalent here.

What are the concerns?

- Karnataka's workforce is comprised of more migrants than the native residents.
- The government could have seen this as positive as most of the local people have progressed so well that they are no longer in the blue collar spectrum.
- So the decision, in the near term, would result in a supply crisis as there are not enough people from the state who can fill the positions.
- Also, such quotas take away the freedom of businesses to employ a workforce of their choice.

- Moreover, such policies do not address the fundamental structural issues plaguing job creation all over the country.

Source: Business Line, The Quint

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