

## **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 references?**

- 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**

