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	• 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	It suggested breaking the caste groups into broad categories, • 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	• It prepared a list of 2,399 backward castes or communities in the country, categorised 837 of them as "most backward". • It recommended - 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	• 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

References

1. Indian Express- OBCs and Subcategories a hot button issue for long
2. Indian Express- Rohini panel submits report

