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Sub-categorisation of OBCs

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Why in News

A commission headed by Justice (Retd.) G Rohini has been **examining sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes** (OBC) for almost three years now.

The issue of the **sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes** for reservations is also in the highlights after the **Supreme Court** (SC) has referred it to a larger Bench.

Key Points

- **Sub-categorisation of OBCs:**

- OBCs are granted **27% reservation in jobs and education** under the central government **but only a few affluent communities** among the over 2,600 included in the Central List of OBCs **have secured a major part** of this.
- Sub-categorisation or creating categories within OBCs for reservation would **ensure “equitable distribution” of representation** among all OBC communities.
- However, sub-categorisation **can be used to appease one vote-bank or the other within the category** and thus a **cause of social justice would end up being politicised**.
- The commission requested for an appropriate budget provision for a **proposed all-India survey for an estimate of the caste-wise population of OBCs**.
 - The reason given was the **absence of data for the population of various communities to compare with** their representation in jobs and admissions as the data of the **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC)** were not considered reliable.
 - In August 2018, it was announced that the data of OBCs will also be collected in **Census 2021** but there have been no other announcements after that.

- **Commission:**

- It took charge in October 2017 with a tenure of 12 weeks ending in January 2018. In **June 2020**, the Cabinet approved a **six-month extension to the commission** up to 31st January 2021.
- **Progress:** It is **ready with the draft report** and would have huge political consequences and is likely to face a **judicial review** as well.
- **Budget:** Until November 2019, the government has spent **over Rs. 1.70 crore** on the Commission including salary and other expenses.

The budget is being drawn from the **National Commission for Backward Classes** (NCBC) which was given **constitutional** status by the government in 2018.

- **Commission’s Terms of References:**
 - To **examine the uneven distribution of reservation benefits** among different castes in the central OBC list.
 - To **work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach** for sub-categorisation within such OBCs.
 - To **take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes/communities/sub-castes/synonyms** for comprehensive data coverage.
 - To **study and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors** of spelling or transcription.
- **Findings So Far:**
 - According to the **2018 data analysis of 1.3 lakh central jobs and admissions to central higher education institutions** given under OBC quota:
 - 24.95% of these jobs and seats have gone to just 10 OBC communities.
 - 97% of all jobs and educational seats have gone to just 25% of all sub-castes classified as OBCs.
 - 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.
 - According to the **2018-19 annual report of the Department of Personnel and Training, OBC recruitment in central jobs is considerably low.**
 - For example, there was **not a single professor and associate professor appointed under the OBC quota** in central universities.
 - Posts reserved for them were being **filled by people of general category** as OBC candidates were declared ‘**None Found Suitable**’ (NFS).

Source: IE