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Progress Report of Commission for Sub-categorisation of OBCs

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Why in News

Recently, the **Centre has extended the tenure of the Rohini Commission** until 31st July, 2021 to submit its report on **Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)**.

- The **Rohini Commission was constituted in October 2017** under **Article 340 of the Constitution**. At that time, it was given 12 weeks to submit its report, but has been given several extensions since, the latest one being the 10th.
- **Article 340** deals with the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes.

Key Points

- **Need for Committee for Sub-categorisation of OBCs:**
 - **Ensuring Equality:**
 - It had been constituted to complete the task of **sub-categorising 5000-odd castes in the central OBC.**
 - **OBCs are granted 27% reservation** in jobs and education under the central government.
 - The need for sub-categorisation arises out of the perception that **only a few affluent communities among the over 2,600 included in the Central List of OBCs** have secured a major part of this 27% reservation.
 - Sub-categorisation would **ensure more equitable distribution of opportunities** in central government jobs and educational institutions.
 - **Recommended by NCBC:**
 - In 2015, the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** had recommended that OBCs should be **categorised into extremely backward classes, more backward classes and backward classes.**
 - The benefits of the **reservation** in OBCs are being cornered mostly by the dominant OBC groups over the years so there is a need to recognise sub-quotas for the extremely backward classes within the OBCs.
 - NCBC has the authority to **examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes.**
- **Commission's Terms of Reference (ToR):**
 - **Examining Inequality:** To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of OBCs with reference to such classes included in the Central List.
 - **Determining Parameters:** To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such OBCs.
 - **Classification:** To take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes or communities or sub-castes or synonyms in the Central List of OBCs and classifying them into their respective sub-categories.
 - **Eliminating Errors:** To study the various entries in the Central List of OBCs and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription.
- **Challenges Before the Commission:**
 - **Data Deficiency:**

Absence of data for the population of various communities to compare with their representation in jobs and admissions.
 - **Delaying of Survey:**

It was decided in **Census 2021**, data of OBCs will also be collected, but no consensus has been reached regarding enumeration of OBCs in the Census.

- **Findings of the Commission Until Now:**
 - 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 OBC admissions to central higher education institutions**, including universities, IITs, NITs, IIMs and AIIMS, over the preceding three years. The **findings** were:
 - **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.
 - In **mid- 2019**, the Commission informed that it is **ready with the draft report** (on sub-categorisation). It is widely understood that the report could have huge political consequences and face a judicial review so it's **still not released.**
- **OBC Recruitment in the Central Government Jobs** (as per the Report submitted by the Department of Personnel and Training to NCBC in 2020):
 - From the data of **42 ministries/departments**, OBC representation in Central government jobs was found out to be:
 - **16.51 % in Group-A** central government services.
 - **13.38 % in Group-B** central government services.
 - **21.25 % in Group-C** (excluding safai karamcharis).
 - **17.72 % in Group-C** (safai karamcharis).
 - **Regarding NFS:**
NCBC also found out that a **number of posts reserved for OBCs were being filled by people of general category** as OBC candidates were declared “NFS” (None Found Suitable).
- **Revision of Creamy Layer:**
Even the **revision of the income limit for the creamy layer for the OBCs** is under consideration.

Note

Recently, the **Supreme Court of India** has reopened a similar legal debate on **sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservations**, what is commonly referred to as “**quota within quota**” for SCs and STs.

Source:IE