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National Commission for Scheduled Castes

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Why in News

Recently, **Vijay Sampla** has been appointed as the chairman of the **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**.

Key Points

- **About:**

- NCSC is a **constitutional body** that works to **safeguard the interests of the scheduled castes (SC)** in India.
- **Article 338** of the constitution of India deals with this commission:
It provides for a **National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes** with duties to investigate and **monitor all matters relating to safeguards provided for them**, to inquire into specific complaints and to participate and advise on the planning process of their socio-economic development etc.

- **History and Origin:**
 - **Special Officer:**
 - Initially, the constitution provided for the appointment of a **Special Officer** under Article 338.
 - The special officer was designated as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
 - **65th Amendment, 1990:**
 - It replaced the one-member system with a multi-member **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)**.
 - The Constitution (65th Amendment) Act 1990, amended Article 338 of the Constitution.
 - **89th Amendment, 2003:**

By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for SC and ST was replaced by **two separate Commissions** from the year 2004 which were: **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)** and **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)**- under **Article 338-A**.
- **Structure:**
 - It consists of:
 - Chairperson.
 - Vice-chairperson.
 - Three other members.
 - They are **appointed by the President** by warrant under his hand and seal.
- **Functions:**
 - **Monitoring and investigating all issues** concerning the safeguards provided **for the SCs** under the constitution.
 - **Enquiring into complaints** relating to the deprivation of the rights and safeguards of the SCs.
 - Taking part in and **advising the central or state governments** with respect to the planning of socio-economic development of the SCs.
 - Regular **reporting to the President** of the country on the implementation of these safeguards.
 - **Recommending steps** to be taken to further the **socio-economic development and other welfare activities** of the SCs.
 - Any other function with respect to the welfare, protection, development and advancement of the SC community.
 - The Commission is also required to discharge similar functions with regard to the **Anglo-Indian Community** as it does with respect to the SCs.
 - Till 2018, the commission was also required to discharge similar functions with regard to the other backward classes (OBCs). It was relieved from this responsibility by the **102nd Amendment Act of 2018**.

Other Constitutional Provisions For Upliftment of the Schedule Caste

- **Article 15(4)** refers to the special provisions for their advancement.
- **Article 16(4A)** speaks of “**reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of SCs/STs**, which are not adequately represented in the services under the State’.
- **Article 17** abolishes Untouchability.
- **Article 46** requires the State ‘**to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections** of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- **Article 335** provides that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of **appointments to services and posts** in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.
- **Article 330** and **Article 332** of the Constitution respectively provide for **reservation of seats in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the legislative assemblies** of the States.
- Under **Part IX** relating to the **Panchayats** and **Part IXA** of the Constitution relating to the Municipalities, reservation for SC and ST in local bodies has been envisaged and provided.

Source:TH