

6. Examining Sub Categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

Prelims Level: Governance - Institutional Reforms

Mains Level: GS-II Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and Challenges Pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and Challenges Therein.

Why in News?

- Cabinet has approved the Extension of term of the commission constituted to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within other Backward Classes.

About the News:

- **Article 14** of the Constitution guarantees **equality before the law** which means un-equals cannot be treated equally.
- Measures are required to be taken for the upliftment of un-equals to bring them on par with the advanced classes.
- In view of this, the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** proposed the **sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** back in 2015.
- In exercise of the powers conferred by **Article 340** of the Constitution, the President appointed a commission to examine the issue of sub-categorization of OBCs, to ensure social justice in an efficient manner by prioritizing the Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs).

What does Article 340 says?

- The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India.

Objectives of the Commission:

- To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of Other Backward Classes with reference to such classes included in the Central List.
- To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorization within such Other Backward Classes.
- To take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes or communities or sub-castes or synonyms in the Central List of Other Backward Classes and classifying them into their respective sub-categories.

Why it is Needed?

- At present, there is no sub-categorization and 27% reservation is a Monolithic Entity.
- Sub categorization of the OBCs will ensure that the more backward among the OBC communities can also access the benefits of reservation for Educational Institutions and Government Jobs.

What are its Significances?

- The Government's efforts to achieve greater social justice and inclusion for all, and specifically members of the Other Backward Classes.
- The Union Cabinet's decision to set up a commission to examine the issue of sub-categorization of the Other Backward Classes speaks to the long years of failure in effectively preventing large sections of the creamy layer from taking advantage of the quota system to the detriment of the poorer sections among their own caste groups.
- In effect, the Union government is now seeking to ensure a more equitable distribution of reservation benefits by further differentiating caste groups coming under backward classes on the basis of their levels of social and Economic Backwardness.

