



1. EWS Quota

EWS QUOTA UPHELD: CHRONOLOGY

Jan 8, 2019: Lok Sabha clears the 103rd Constitution amendment Bill

Jan 9: Rajya Sabha clears the 103rd Constitution amendment Bill

Jan 12: Ministry of Law and Justice issues notice saying President Ram Nath Kovind has given assent

February: New law challenged before SC

Feb 6: SC issues notice to govt on pleas challenging amendment

Feb 8: SC declines to stay 10 per cent EWS quota

Sep 8, 2022: SC bench headed by CJI U U Lalit constitutes bench to hear appeals

Sep 13: SC starts hearing arguments

Sep 27: SC reserves order

Nov 7: SC, by majority of 3:2, upholds validity of 103rd Constitution amendment providing 10 pc reservation to EWS in admissions, govt jobs

(PTI)

Topic: Polity and Governance

In News: A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court by a majority of 3:2 has upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act.

More on the Topic

- The Central Government put forth the **10 percent reservation quota for candidates in the economically weaker sections (EWS) sections** of the society for admissions and government jobs with the 103rd Constitution amendment.
- The amendment was passed in January 2019 and through it **Articles 15(6) and 16(6) were inserted in the Constitution for the reservation.**
- It was provided for among non-OBC and non-SC/ST sections of the population.

Criteria for availing EWS Reservation:

- Under EWS quota, “Persons belonging to the general category with an annual gross household income of up to Rs 8 lakh are eligible for the reservation, excluding families that own over 5 acres of agricultural land, a house over 1,000 square feet, a plot of over 100-yards in a notified municipal area or over a 200-yards plot in a non-notified municipal area.”

Why the Amendment was challenged?

- They petitioners argued that the policy will hinder equality of opportunity and it violates the basic structure of the Constitution by breaching the 50 percent ceiling for reservation fixed by the Supreme Court ruling of the Mandal Commission case.
- **Government Arguments:** The government argued that under **Article 46 of the Indian Constitution, the state has a duty to protect the interests of economically weaker sections:** “The state shall 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 shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”

Arguments by the judges in favour of EWS reservation;

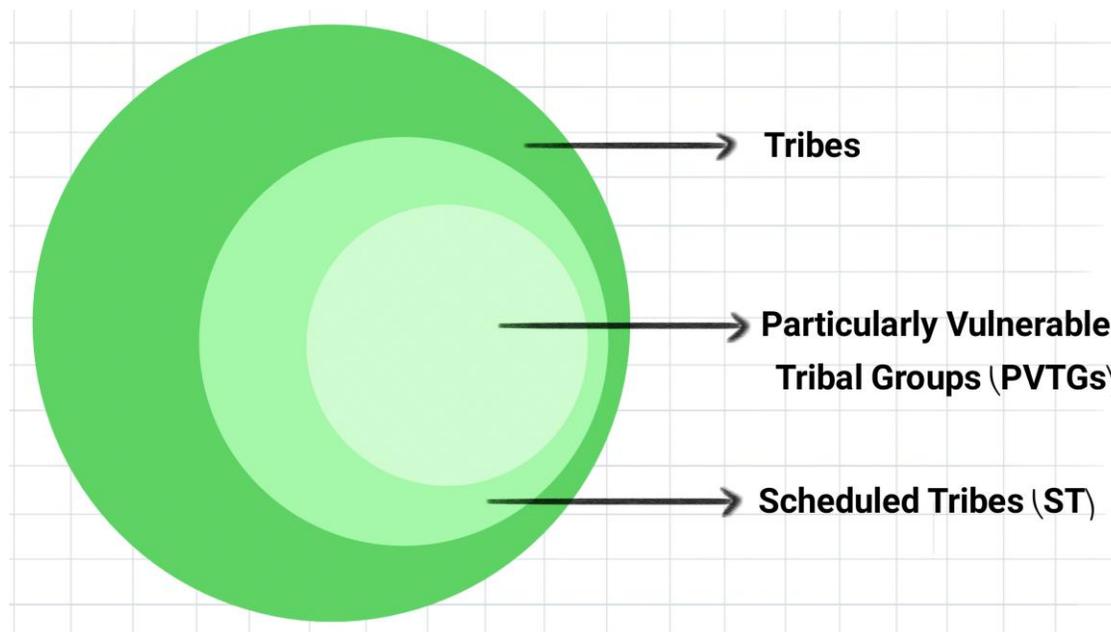
- Reservation based only on economic criteria does not damage the basic structure of the Constitution.
- Treating EWS as a separate class would be a **reasonable classification, and treating unequals equally would violate the principle of equality under the Constitution.**

Arguments by the judges in against EWS reservation;

- While reservation on economic criteria is not violative of the basic structure of the Constitution, **excluding SC/ST/OBC from the purview of EWS is a clear violation of the basic structure.**

Source: Indian Express

2. Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups



Topic: Culture



In News: Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) has recreated the huts of several Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

More on the Topic:

- The huts are not only authentic in design, and built using the same materials used by the tribal people, but also contains artefacts which they use, thus offering a rare glimpse into the lives of these communities who reside in locations which are not easily accessible to others.
- For instance, the traditional **Jarawa hut, called a chadda**, has traditional baskets, bows and arrows, and other artefacts used by the community.
- The **Shompen hut contains a store of a paste made using the pandamus fruit** which members of the tribe eat when there is shortage of food.
- Both **the Jarawa and Shompen communities are PVTGs living in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- While the population of Shompen people is said to be less than 300, there are about 500 members of the Jarawa tribe.

About PVTGs:

- PVTGs are **more vulnerable among the tribal groups.**
- Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a major chunk of the tribal development funds, because of which PVTGs need more funds directed for their development.
- In this context, **in 1975, the Government of India initiated to identify the most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category** called PVTGs and declared 52 such groups.
- Right now a total of **75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes, spread over 17 states and one Union Territory (UT), in the country (2011 census) are identified as PVTGs.**

How they are identified:

- Government of India follows the following criteria for identification of PVTGs.
- Pre-agricultural level of technology
- Low level of literacy
- Economic backwardness
- A declining or stagnant population.
- Accordingly 75 PVTGs have been identified in the country.

Source: PIB



3. National Bio Energy Programme

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India has notified the **National Bioenergy Programme**.

More on the Topic:

- MNRE has continued the National Bioenergy Programme for the period from FY 2021-22 to 2025-26. The Programme has been recommended for implementation in two Phases.
- The National Bioenergy Programme will comprises of the following sub-schemes:
- **Waste to Energy Programme** (Programme on Energy from Urban, Industrial and Agricultural Wastes /Residues) to support setting up of large Biogas, BioCNG and Power plants (excluding MSW to Power projects).
- **Biomass Programme** (Scheme to Support Manufacturing of Briquettes & Pellets and Promotion of Biomass (non-bagasse) based cogeneration in Industries) to support setting up of pellets and briquettes for use in power generation and non-bagasse based power generation projects.
- **Biogas Programme** to support setting up of family and medium size Biogas in rural areas.

About Bio Energy:

- Any hydrocarbon fuel that is **produced from an organic matter** (living or once living material) in a short period of time (days, weeks, or even months) is considered a biofuel.
- Biofuels may be solid, liquid or gaseous in nature.

- Reasons for shifting to biofuels include **the rising prices of oil, emission of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels and the interest in obtaining fuel from agricultural crops** for the benefit of farmers.
- **Disadvantages of Biofuels include** Low Efficiency compared to fossil fuels, Loss of biodiversity, Less availability of space for production, Food shortage due to The first generation biofuels make use of food sources, and requirement of Massive quantities of water.

Source: Hindu



4. Black Sea Grain deal

Topic: International Relations

In News: Recently Russia re-joined the Black Sea Grain deal.

More on the Topic:

- The grain initiative has been a rare example of cooperation between Ukraine and Russia since Russia's invasion in February.
- Brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, it has allowed more than 9 million tons of grain in 397 ships to safely leave Ukrainian ports.



- The grain agreement has brought down global food prices by about 15% from their peak in March.

About the components of the Deal:

- **Ukraine is one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil**, but Russia's invasion of the country and naval blockade of its ports has halted shipments.
- **The deal makes provisions for the safe passage of ships.**
- It foresees the establishment of a control centre in Istanbul, to be staffed by U.N., Turkish, Russian and Ukrainian officials, to run and coordinate the process.
- Ships would undergo inspections to ensure they are not carrying weapons.
- No Russian ship would escort vessels and there would be no Russian representative present at Ukrainian ports.
- Ukraine was expected to export 22 million tons of grain and other agricultural products that have been stuck in Black Sea ports due to the war.

Source: Indian Express

5. Seema Darshan



Topic: Government Policies

In News: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has urged the citizens to visit Nadabet and other border areas as part of Seema Darshana.

More on the Topic:

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- Seema Darshan is a joint initiative between the Government of Gujarat and BSF Gujarat Frontier for developing border tourism in regions sharing the border with Pakistan and having a sparse population.
- The project is aimed to boost tourism and lessen migration from villages across the border to India.
- Nadabet is in the Rann of Kutch region. It is also known as the 'Wagah of Gujarat'.
- Civilians could watch the fenced international border with Pakistan at 'Zero Point'.
- This is guarded round the clock by the Border Security Force (BSF) in Banaskantha district of Gujarat.
- Pakistan is around 150 metres from the border pillar 960 at Nadabet.
- Nadabet played a key role in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War.
- It was in this region that the BSF not only stalled the enemy trying to invade from the west, but also captured 15 enemy posts.
- The area was returned to Pakistan after the Shimla Agreement was signed.

Source: Business Standard

6. Arapaima

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Due to the conservation efforts Pirarucu, also known as arapaima has returned to the lakes of the Medio Jurua in Brazil.

More on the Topic:

- It can weigh up to 200 kilos (440 pounds), by far the largest of 2,300 known fish species in the Amazon.
- It is found primarily in floodplain lakes across the Amazon basin, including the region of Medio Jurua.
- It is one of the few fish species in the world that surfaces to breathe. It does that with a big splash, flashing its red tail out of the water.
- The recovery of the fish happened due to the efforts of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Source: Business Standard

7. Indian Black Bee



Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: Researchers have discovered a new species of honey bee that is endemic to the Western Ghats.

More on the Topic:

- The species, discovered after a gap of over 200 years, has been named **Apis karinjodian**, with the common name, 'Indian black honey bee'.
- What is notable is the ability of the Indian black honey bee to produce higher quantities of honey which is thicker and consistent.
- The distribution of *Apis karinjodian* ranges from the central Western Ghats and Nilgiris to the southern Western Ghats, covering the states of Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and parts of Tamil Nadu.
- The species has been classified as **Near Threatened (NT) in Kerala based on the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria**, an easily and widely understood system for classifying species at high-risk of global extinction.
- The honey bee last discovered from India was *Apis indica* which was identified in 1798.
- The discovery has increased the species of honey bees in the world to 11.

Source: Hindu
