Syllabus subtopic: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the commission: its mandate and significance; Article 340

News: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a six-month extension in the tenure of the commission to examine subcategorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC).

- The Cabinet also approved an addition to the commission’s terms of reference.

Background:

- The Commission was constituted under Article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of President on 2nd October, 2017 with an initial time frame of 12 weeks.

Why did the commission sought an extension?

- The commission has come to the view that it would require some more time to submit its report since the repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription, etc., appearing in the existing Central list of OBCs need to be cleared.
- Hence the commission has sought extension of its term by six months, that is up to July 31, 2020 and also addition in its existing terms of reference.

Mandate of the Commission

- The commission has been appointed to look into the existing list of OBCs and categorise the castes that have not benefitted from reservation in government jobs and education.

- It is also expected to give its recommendations to ensure that these marginalised communities get the benefits of various schemes.
• The commission will now also study the various entries in the Central list of OBCs and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription.

• The expenditure involved are related to the establishment and administration costs of the Commission, which would continue to be borne by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.

• The commission is headed by the G. Rohini, former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court.

**Significance**

The Communities in the existing list of OBCs which have not been able to get any major benefit of the scheme of reservation for OBCs for appointment in Central Government posts & for admission in Central Government Educational Institutions are expected to be benefitted upon implementation of the recommendations of the Commission. The Commission is likely to make recommendations for benefit of such marginalized communities in the Central List of OBCs.

**Article 340 in the Indian Constitution**

Appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes

1. 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 and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by the Union or any State the conditions subject to which such grants should be made, and the order appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission.

2. A Commission so appointed shall investigate the matters referred to them
and present to the President a report setting out the facts as found by them and making such recommendations as they think proper.

3. The President shall cause a copy of the report so presented together with a memorandum explaining the action taken thereon to be laid before each House of Parliament.