Commission on OBC sub-categorization

Syllabus subtopic: Appointment to various Constitutional Posts, Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

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

Context: The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the extension of the term of the Commission to examine the issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes, by six months that is up to 31.7.2020.

- The Cabinet has also approved addition of following Term of Reference to the existing Terms of Reference of the "Commission" -

  “iv. 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."

Background:

- The Commission was constituted under article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of President on 2nd October, 2017.
- The Commission, headed by Justice (Retd.) Smt. G. Rohini commenced functioning on 11th October, 2017 and has since interacted with all the Stats/UTs which have subcategorized OBCs, and the State Backward Classes Commissions.
- 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, that is up to 31st July 2020 and also addition in its existing Terms of Reference.

**Impact:**

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.

**Financial Implications:**

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.

**Benefits:**

All persons belonging to the castes/communities which are included in the Central List of SEBCs (Socially and Educational Backward Communities) but which have not been able to get any major benefit of the existing scheme of reservation for OBCs in Central Government posts & for admission in Central Government Educational Institutions would be benefitted.

**Implementation strategy and targets:**
Orders for extension of the term of the Commission and addition in its Terms of Reference will be notified in the Gazette 'in the form of an Order made by the President, after receipt of the approval of the Hon'ble President to the same.

**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.