Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the significance of the creamy layer principle in ensuring equitable distribution of reservation benefits among Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Discuss the implications of applying judicial rulings on creamy layer criteria prospectively.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 06/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Equitable distribution of reservation benefits, social advancement within OBCs, exclusion of creamy layer, Article 14 and Article 16, administrative certainty, protection of completed recruitments, balancing equality and legal stability.

Model Answer

Introduction

The creamy layer principle excludes socially and economically advanced sections of OBCs from reservation benefits. It aims to ensure that benefits reach relatively disadvantaged sections within the community.

Significance of the Principle

The principle promotes substantive equality by preventing the concentration of reservation benefits among relatively advanced OBC groups. It strengthens the objectives of social justice and equality of opportunity under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution.

Implications of Prospective Application

The Supreme Court's clarification, as reported, that its March 2026 ruling on income calculations will operate prospectively provides legal certainty. It protects completed civil service selections and recruitment processes from retrospective disruption. It also gives governments and recruiting agencies time to adapt administrative procedures.

However, prospective application must not weaken the objective of identifying the creamy layer through fair and consistent criteria.

Conclusion

The creamy layer principle is an important instrument for equitable representation within OBC reservations. Its implementation requires transparent criteria, constitutional fairness and a balance between social justice and administrative stability.