Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

The 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018 granted constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes through Article 338B. This strengthened its institutional standing, investigative powers and advisory role in protecting the interests of socially and educationally backward classes, although implementation and enforcement challenges remain.

Model Answer

Introduction

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was initially established as a statutory body under the NCBC Act, 1993. The 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018, granted it constitutional status.

Body

Significance of Constitutional Status

1. Constitutional Recognition: Article 338B provides a constitutional foundation for the Commission, strengthening its institutional legitimacy and independence.

2. Investigative Powers: The NCBC can investigate and monitor safeguards for socially and educationally backward classes and inquire into specific complaints.

3. Civil Court Powers: While conducting inquiries, it possesses specified powers of a civil court, including summoning witnesses and requiring documents.

4. Advisory Role: The Commission advises on socio-economic development and evaluates the implementation of protective measures.

5. Reporting and Accountability: It submits reports to the President, who places them before Parliament with explanations of action taken or proposed.

Limitations

Its recommendations are not automatically binding, and effective protection depends on government action, reliable data and adequate institutional capacity. The 105th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2021, also clarified the power of states and Union Territories to maintain their own lists of socially and educationally backward classes.

Conclusion

Constitutional status has strengthened the NCBC's authority and visibility. Its effectiveness ultimately depends on timely investigations, evidence-based recommendations and meaningful implementation by governments.

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