

OBC VOICE



PONGALO
PONGAL



EWS
ILLUSION



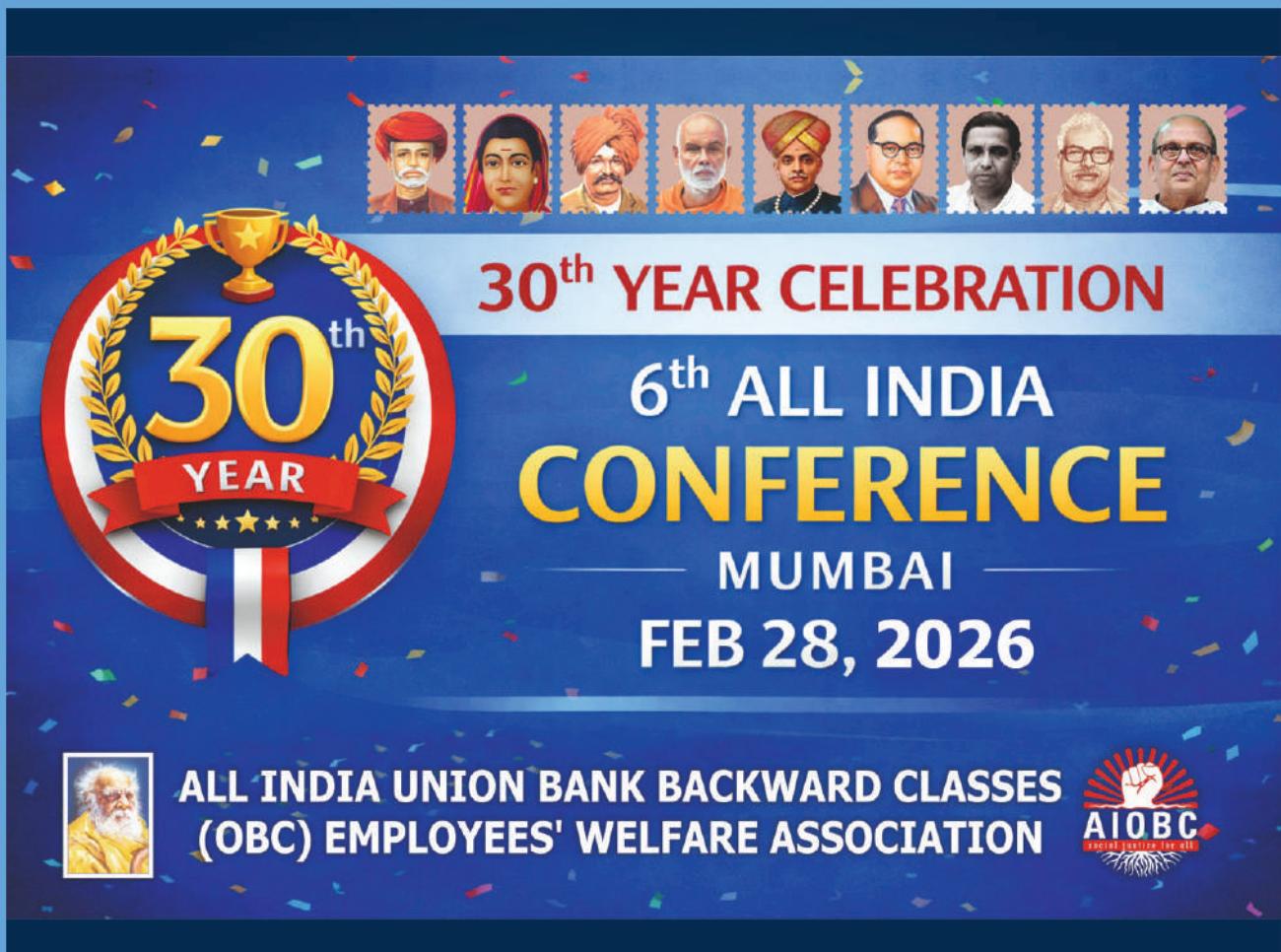
FEE
DISPARITY



CHAMPAKAM
DORAIRAJAN
CASE



IRRATIONAL
ASTROLOGY



INVITATIONS & REPRESENTATION SUBMITTED

A delegation of AIOBC Employees Federation and Union Bank OBC Association met Hon'ble Shri Ganesh Singh, M.P., Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on OBCs, and Hon'ble Shri R. Krishnaiah, M.P., National President, BC Association, at New Delhi on 18.12.2025 and formally invited them to grace and address the 6th All India Conference of All India Union Bank OBC Association at Mumbai on 28th February 2026, as Chief Guest and Distinguished Guest respectively.



The delegation also submitted detailed representations seeking intervention on ensuring parity in equivalence of posts in Public Sector Banks with Government Departments and restoration of quarterly RO-level meetings in Union Bank of India. The Hon'ble Chairperson was requested to take up these issues with the concerned Ministry and Bank management.



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The views expressed
in the articles
are not necessarily ours

With Hope, Resolve, and Renewed Commitment

Warm Greetings for a Happy New Year 2026 and
Pongalo Pongal

As the New Year 2026 dawns, bringing with it fresh hopes and renewed aspirations, we extend our heartfelt wishes to all our readers, well-wishers, contributors, and their families. The joyous festival of **Pongal**, symbolising gratitude, abundance, and renewal, adds deeper meaning to this moment—reminding us that perseverance, unity, and faith in justice ultimately yield harvest.

Looking back at the year gone by, **2025 stands as a year of meaningful engagement and purposeful dialogue**. Through its pages, *OBC VOICE* has consistently highlighted pressing social issues, constitutional concerns, and policy gaps affecting the Other Backward Classes and other marginalised communities. Our articles and editorials were not merely expressions of concern; they were appeals to conscience—aimed at awakening the powers that be and urging them to act in the spirit of social justice.

Yet, we are conscious that this journey is far from complete. Social justice is not achieved through isolated efforts or momentary attention. It is a **continuous struggle**, demanding vigilance, courage, and unwavering commitment. As we step into the new year, *OBC VOICE* reaffirms its resolve to pursue this mission with greater determination, clarity, and responsibility.

In compliance with the latest regulatory requirements governing periodicals, the registration of our magazine necessitates a change in its present name, as abbreviations are no longer permitted. While the name may change, **our vision, purpose, and ideological foundation shall remain unaltered**. The spirit of *OBC VOICE*—to uphold equality, dignity, and constitutional values—will continue to guide us, irrespective of nomenclature.

We are encouraged and deeply humbled by the widespread appreciation our articles and editorials have received from leaders, scholars, activists, and readers from diverse walks of life. Such recognition strengthens our belief that informed discourse can influence public thought and policy.

Beginning this year, we are pleased to introduce a **new regular feature** focusing on the legal dimensions of court judgments that have a bearing on OBCs, SCs, STs, and minorities. These articles will analyse important judgments in **simple, accessible language**, enabling the common reader to understand their implications and significance. Law must not remain confined to courtrooms—it must reach the people whose lives it shapes.

We also aspire to **broaden our collective voice** by inducting more writers and contributors. The process has already begun, and we warmly invite socially conscious thinkers and scholars to join this endeavour.

We are confident that, with your continued support, encouragement, and participation, we will be able to meet these goals and strengthen this platform further.

Once again, we wish each one of you and your families a **Happy New Year 2026** and a joyous **Pongalo Pongal**—may the coming year bring peace, prosperity, and progress rooted in justice and equality.■

பொங்கல் திருநாள்

— அறுவடை, மறு, ஒற்றுமையின் திருவிழா

“பொங்கல் என்பது தமிழர்களின் புத்தாண்டு.”

Pongal - Celebrating Harvest, Heritage and Togetherness Everywhere

க.சரஸ்வதி
G.Saraswathi



தை மாதத்தில் கொண்டாடப்படும் பொங்கல், தமிழர்களின் வேளாண்மை மற்றும் பொருளாதார வாழ்வில் ஒரு புதிய சுற்றத்தைத் தொடங்கும் திருநாளாகும். காலன்டர் அடிப்படையில் சித்திரை முதல் நாளை புத்தாண்டாகக் கொண்டாடினாலும், வாழ்க்கை மற்றும் வாழ்வாதாரத்தை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்ட தமிழர்களின் உண்மையான புத்தாண்டாக பொங்கல் பாரம்பரியமாகக் கருதப்படுகிறது.

மத்தைத் தாண்டிய பொங்கல்:

பொங்கல் ஒரு மதச் சடங்கு அல்ல. அது தமிழர்களின் மதச்சார்பற்ற, சமூகபண்பாட்டு அறுவடைத் திருவிழா. வேளாண்மை, இயற்கை மற்றும் மனித உழைப்பில் வேறுன்றிய திருநாள் இது.

பொங்கல் ஏன் மத்தைத் தாண்டியது?

- விவசாயக் கொண்டாட்டம் - விவசாயிகளின் உழைப்பையும் அர்ப்பணிப்பையும் போற்றுகிறது
- இயற்கைக்கு நன்றி - சூரியன், மழை, நிலம், பருவகாலங்கள்
- சமூகத் திருவிழா - அனைத்து மதத்தினரும் ஒன்றாகக் கொண்டாடுவது
- உணவு பகிர்வு - பொங்கல் சமைத்து அனைவருடனும் பகிர்ந்து கொள்ளுதல்
- பண்பாட்டு அடையாளம் - கோலம், பாரம்பரிய உணவு, இசை, வழக்கங்கள்

எனிமையாகச் சொன்னால், பொங்கல் என்பது மத்தை விட வாழ்க்கை, உழைப்பு, இயற்கையை கொண்டாடும் திருநாள்.

இந்தியா முழுவதும் அறுவடைத் திருவிழாக்கள்:

தமிழ்நாட்டில் இந்த அறுவடைத் திருநாள் பொங்கல் / தை பொங்கல் எனக் கொண்டாடப்படுகிறது. இந்தியாவின் பிற பகுதிகளில் இது பல்வேறு பெயர்களில் அறியப்படுகிறது: மகர சங்கராந்தி, லோஹ்ரி, மக பீஹா, உத்தராயணம், கிச்சடி, சுகராத், மகர சங்கிரமண, மாகி, பெளஷ் சங்கராந்தி, தில் சங்கராந்தி ஆகியவை.

“Pongal is the New Year for Tamil people.”

Pongal – Beyond Religion

Pongal is not just a religious festival. Pongal is a secular, social-cultural harvest festival of the Tamil people, celebrated beyond religious boundaries. It is rooted in agriculture, nature, and human labour.

Why Pongal is beyond religion?

Celebration of farming – honours farmers and their hard work

Gratitude to nature – Sun, rain, land, and seasons

Community festival – celebrated by people of all faiths

Sharing food – Pongal is cooked and shared with everyone

Cultural identity – kolam, traditional food, music, and customs

Pongal – Beyond Religion

Pongal is not just a religious festival. It is a social and cultural celebration rooted in agriculture, nature, and human labour

Celebration of farming
honours farmers and their hard work

Gratitude to nature
Sun, rain, land, and seasons

Community festival
celebrated by people of all faiths

Sharing food
Pongal is cooked and shared with everyone

Pongal celebrates life, labour, and nature – not religion alone

பெயர்கள் மாறினாலும், இவை அனைத்தும் அறுவடை, பருவ மாற்றம் மற்றும் இயற்கைக்கு நன்றி சொல்லும் திருவிழாக்களே.

சங்க இலக்கியங்களில் பொங்கல்:

பொங்கல் என்ற அறுவடைத் திருநாளங்கு சங்ககால இலக்கியங்களில் ஆழமான அடையாளம் உள்ளது.

எட்டுத்தொகை, பத்துப்பாட்டு போன்ற நூல்கள் வேளாண்மை வாழ்க்கை, வளமான மருதம் தினை, அறுவடைக்குப் பிந்தைய மகிழ்ச்சியான கொண்டாட்டங்களை உயிர்ப்புடன் வர்ணிக்கின்றன.

பரிபாடல் குரியன், மழை, பருவச் சமூர்ச்சி ஆகியவற்றுக்கு நன்றியை வெளிப்படுத்துகிறது. இது தை பொங்கலின் அடிப்படை உணர்வுடன் ஒத்துப் போகிறது. சிலப்பதிகாரம் அறுவடைக்குப் பிந்தைய சமூக மகிழ்ச்சி, இசை, நடனம், விழாக்கள் ஆகியவற்றை பிரதிபலிக்கிறது.

இதன் மூலம், பொங்கல் என்பது ஒரு சடங்கு அல்ல; இயற்கை, விவசாயி, வாழ்க்கை வளம் ஆகியவற்றை கொண்டாடும் பண்பாட்டு வெளிப்பாடு என்பதைக் காட்டுகிறது.

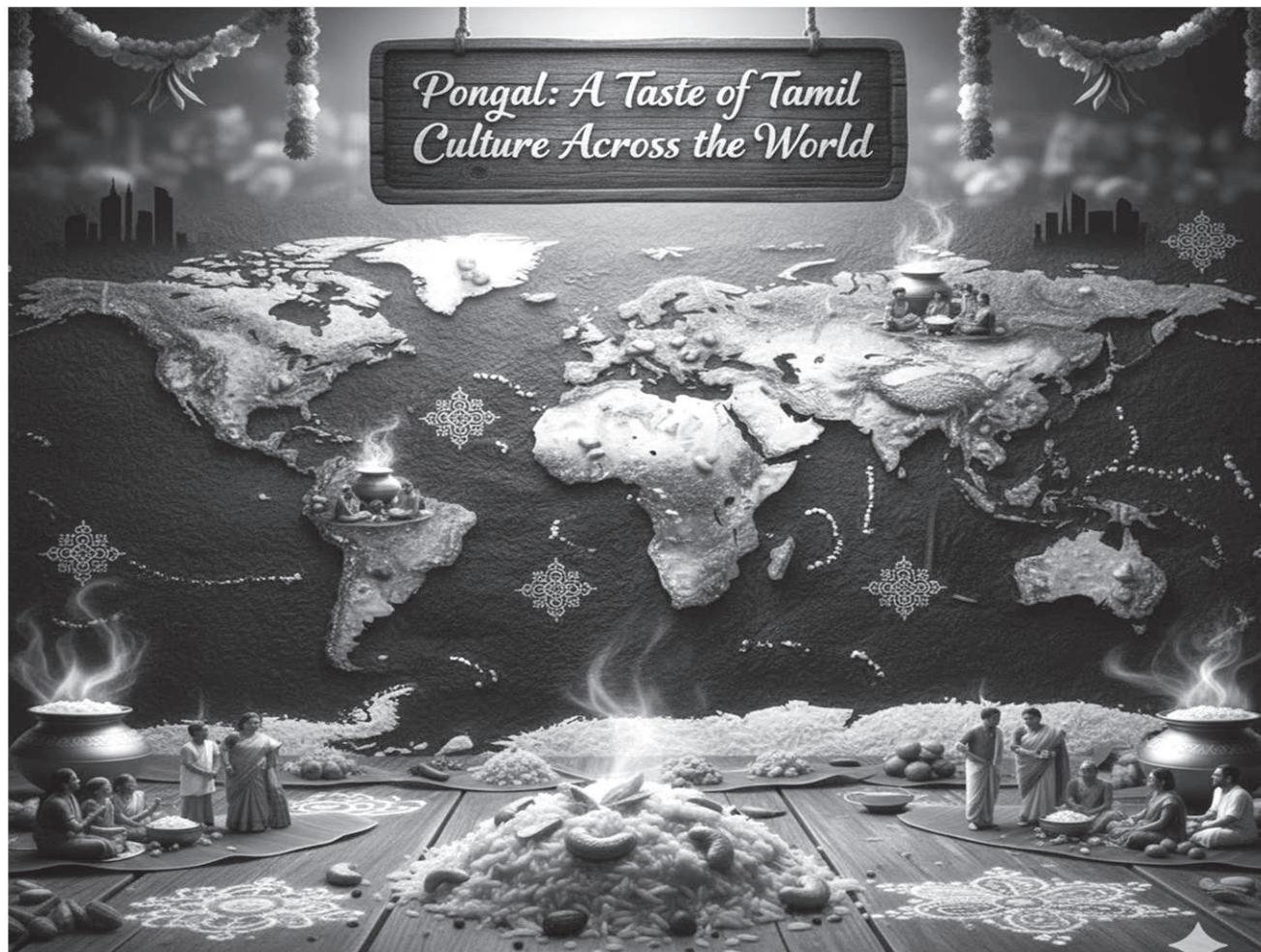
In simple words, pongal celebrates life, labour, and nature — not religion alone.

Harvest Festivals Across India:

In Tamil Nadu, the harvest festival is celebrated as **Pongal / Thai Pongal**. Across India, it is known by different names—**Makar Sankranti, Lohri, Magh Bihu, Uttarayan, Khichdi, Sukarat, Makara Sankramana, Maghi, Poush Sankranti, and Til Sankranti**.

Though named differently, all these festivals mark the harvest, seasonal change, and gratitude to nature.

Pongal, the harvest festival, has deep roots in ancient Tamil literature. Sangam texts like *Ettuthokai* and *Pattuppāṭṭu* vividly portray agrarian life, fertile *marutham* lands, and joyful post-harvest celebrations. *Paripadal* highlights gratitude to the Sun, rain, and natural cycles, echoing the spirit of Thai Pongal. *Silappathikaram* reflects communal joy through music, dance, and festivals after harvest. Overall, ancient Tamil literature shows Pongal as a cultural celebration of nature, farmers, and life's abundance—not merely a ritual.



பொங்கலும் புதுவீடும்:

பொங்கலும் புதுவீடு (புதியீடு) எனப்படும் வழக்கும் தமிழர் வாழ்வில் ஒன்றோடொன்று இணைந்தலை. தை மாதத்தில் கொண்டாடப்படும் பொங்கல் அறுவடையின் நிறைவு மற்றும் இயற்கைக்கு நன்றியை வெளிப்படுத்துகிறது. அதே நேரத்தில், புதுவீடு என்பது பழைய கணக்குகளை முடித்து, புதிய ஆண்டிற்கான புதிய கணக்கு புத்தகத்தைத் தொடங்கும் வழக்கம்.

பொங்கல் நிறைவை குறிக்க, புதுவீடு புதிய தொடக்கத்தை குறிக்கிறது. இவ்விரண்டும் சேர்ந்து, ஒரு சுற்றுத்தை பொறுப்புடன் முடித்து, நம்பிக்கையுடன் புதிய சுற்றுத்தை தொடங்கும் தமிழர் வாழ்க்கை தத்துவத்தை வெளிப்படுத்துகின்றன.

பொங்கல் குறித்து நந்தை பெரியாரின் பார்வை: நந்தை பெரியார் பொங்கலை மதச் சடங்காக அல்ல; பண்பாட்டு அறுவடைத் திருநாளாகவே பார்த்தார். பொங்கலை “தமிழர் திருநாள்” என அறிவித்தவர் பெரியாரே. இதன் மூலம், அதன் தமிழ் பண்பாட்டு அடையாளத்தை அவர் வலியுறுத்தினார்.

மூடநம்பிக்கை, சடங்குவாதம், சாதி ஆதிக்கம் ஆகியவற்றுக்கு எதிராகக் குரல் கொடுத்த பெரியார், பொங்கலை மதச்சார்பற்ற, அறிவார்ந்த, சமத்துவம் மற்றும் சமூக ஒற்றுமையை முன்னிறுத்தும் திருநாளாகக் கொண்டாட வேண்டும் என்று வலியுறுத்தினார்.

சுருக்கமாக, பெரியாரின் பார்வையில், பொங்கல் என்பது அறிவார்ந்த, சமூக நீதி சார்ந்த பண்பாட்டு விழா.

“உலகமெங்கும் தமிழர் – எங்கும் பொங்கல்”:

தமிழ்நாட்டில் மட்டும் அல்லாமல், இலங்கை, சிங்கப்பூர், அமெரிக்கா, இங்கிலாந்து, ஆஸ்திரேலியா உள்ளிட்ட உலக நாடுகளில் வாழும் தமிழர்கள் அனைவரும் பொங்கலை உற்சாகமாகக் கொண்டாடுகிறார்கள். சக்கரை பொங்கல் சமைத்தல், கோலம் போடுதல், பண்பாட்டு நிகழ்ச்சிகள் நடத்துதல் போன்றவை வழியாக, தமிழர் மரபு தலைமுறைகளுக்கு எடுத்துச் செல்லப்படுகிறது.

சூழ்நிலைக்கேற்ப சில வழக்கங்கள் மாறினாலும், இயற்கைக்கு நன்றி, சமூக ஒற்றுமை, தமிழர் அடையாளம் என்ற பொங்கலின் சாரம் எங்கும் மாறுவதில்லை.

சுருக்கமாகச் சொன்னால், வெளிநாடுகளில் கொண்டாடப்படும் பொங்கல் ஒரு திருவிழா மட்டும் அல்ல; உலகளாவிய தமிழர் பண்பாட்டின் கொண்டாட்டம்.

பொங்கலோ பொங்கல்!

— கட்டுரையாளர்: க.சரஸ்வதி, பொருளாளர், யூனியன் வங்கி பிற்படுத்தப்பட்டபோர் நல சங்கம், தமிழ்நாடு

Pongal and Pudiyedu are closely linked traditions in Tamil culture that symbolize gratitude and renewal. Pongal, celebrated in the Tamil month of Thai, marks the harvest and expresses thanks to nature, farmers, and labour. Along with this celebration, Pudiyedu (Puthiyeedu) is observed as the practice of closing old accounts and starting a new account book for the coming year. While Pongal celebrates abundance and completion, Pudiyedu represents planning, order, and a fresh economic beginning. Together, they reflect the practical, life-centered philosophy of Tamil society—ending one cycle and beginning another with responsibility and hope.

Periyar's View on Pongal:

Thanthai Periyar viewed Pongal as a cultural harvest festival, not a religious one. It was Periyar who proclaimed Pongal as “**Thamizhar Thirunaal**”, emphasising its Tamil cultural identity. He opposed ritualism, superstition, and caste hierarchy, and advocated a rational, secular celebration that honours nature, farmers' labour, social unity, and equality.

In short, Periyar viewed Pongal as a secular cultural festival rather than a religious obligation, and he advocated celebrating it with rationality, community spirit, and social equality.

“Pongal: A Taste of Tamil Culture Across the World”:

Pongal, the Tamil harvest festival, is celebrated not just in Tamil Nadu but across the globe wherever Tamil communities live. From Sri Lanka and Singapore to the United States, UK, and Australia, families cook sakkai pongal, decorate homes with kolams, and organize cultural programs. These celebrations keep Tamil traditions alive, teaching younger generations about their heritage while fostering community spirit. Though rituals are sometimes adapted to local settings, the essence of Pongal—as a festival of gratitude, nature, and togetherness—remains strong. Beyond India, Pongal continues to unite Tamils worldwide, celebrating culture across borders.

In short, Pongal beyond seas is not just a festival; it is a celebration of Tamil identity and culture worldwide.

Pongalo Pongal

— The writer G.Saraswathi is the Treasurer, Union Bank of India Backward Classes Employees Welfare Association, Tamil Nadu

“High score & upgrade to general category won’t erode quota perks”

– Calcutta High Court

Background of the Case

The article reports a significant ruling by the **Calcutta High Court** concerning the rights of candidates belonging to reserved categories who score higher than the general cut-off in competitive examinations. The case arose from the **2025 State Level Selection Test (SLST)** conducted by the **Staff Selection Commission (SSC)**.

An SC category candidate qualified for the first list of selection by securing marks higher than the general category cut-off. Despite this, the SSC sought permission to “upgrade” her status to the general category, arguing that this would allow another SC candidate with lower marks to be accommodated under reservation.

Core Legal Issue

The central question before the court was:

Does scoring above the general cut-off and being placed in the general merit list automatically deprive a reserved category candidate of reservation-related benefits?

Court’s Ruling

The Calcutta High Court answered this decisively in the **negative**, holding that:

- A candidate who **applies under a reserved category and is treated as such at the time of application** continues to **enjoy the benefits of that category**, even if:
 - They score more than the general category cut-off, and
 - Their name appears in the general merit list.
- Once a candidate’s category is **finalised at the application stage, authorities have no power to alter it on their own (“suo motu”)** after the selection process has progressed.

The judge relied on an earlier **order dated 27 November**, reiterating that **administrative convenience or perceived fairness cannot override a candidate’s declared and accepted category status**.

Rejection of SSC’s Argument

The SSC contended that reservation exists for the welfare of the community, not individuals, and that restoring the candidate’s SC status would disadvantage another SC candidate with lower marks.

The court rejected this argument, noting that:

- Reservation policy **does not permit authorities to forcibly reclassify a candidate**.

‘High score & upgrade to general category won’t erode quota perks’

Subrata Chattoraj | TNN

Kolkata: Even if a candidate under the reserved category

The judge referred to her Nov 27 order, in which the court

- The candidate had:
 - Declared herself as an SC candidate,
 - Paid the category-specific examination fee, and
 - Participated in the process as a reserved category applicant.

Therefore, **institutional discretion cannot supersede individual legal entitlement** once category status is lawfully fixed.

Key Legal Principles Reinforced

1. **Merit and reservation are not mutually exclusive:** A reserved category candidate can succeed on merit without losing reservation benefits.
2. **Finality of category declaration:** Category once accepted cannot be altered unilaterally by recruiting agencies.
3. **Protection against arbitrary administrative action:** Authorities cannot reinterpret reservation rules post-selection to redistribute benefits.

Broader Implications

This ruling has **far-reaching consequences** for recruitment processes across government bodies:

- It safeguards reserved category candidates from being penalised for academic excellence.
- It prevents misuse of “merit list adjustments” to dilute reservation benefits.
- It reinforces constitutional principles under Articles 14, 15, and 16 regarding equality and social justice.

Conclusion

The judgment firmly establishes that **high performance does not nullify social disadvantage** recognised under reservation policy. A reserved category candidate’s success in the general merit list **adds to merit, not at the cost of constitutional protections**. The ruling is a strong affirmation of both **substantive equality** and **procedural fairness** in public recruitment.

(Source: Times of India 3.12.2025)

EW'S ILLUSION: HOW ECONOMIC CRITERIA DISTORT SOCIAL JUSTICE AND UNDERMINE CONSTITUTIONAL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- G.KARUNANIDHI

The recent investigative report published in **The Indian Express** on 27 November 2025 has brought into sharp public focus the deep contradictions inherent in the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) reservation policy. The article reveals that at least **148 candidates admitted under the EWS quota have secured post-graduate medical seats in private institutions by paying exorbitant fees—running up to ₹1 crore per year—through management and NRI quotas**. This disclosure does not merely point to isolated misuse; it exposes the **EWS Illusion**—the false narrative that economic criteria alone can serve as a meaningful instrument of social justice. This reality strikes at the very foundation of the justification advanced for EWS reservation: that economically weaker sections among the so-called forward castes were largely excluded from higher education due to financial incapacity. When beneficiaries of EWS quotas are demonstrably capable of mobilising enormous financial resources, the moral, empirical, and constitutional basis of the policy stands severely compromised.

The Constitutional Claim Behind EWS

The introduction of the EWS quota through the **103rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2019** was premised on a specific claim articulated in

its Statement of Objects and Reasons: that *people from economically weaker sections of society have largely remained excluded from attending higher educational institutions and public employment due to their financial incapacity to compete with the economically privileged*. On this basis, a **10% reservation** was carved out for EWS candidates from the general category, outside the existing reservation framework for SCs, STs, and OBCs.

This was a radical departure from the constitutional philosophy of affirmative action. Reservations in India were historically designed as **remedial measures for communities subjected to structural discrimination, social exclusion, and historical deprivation**, not as poverty-alleviation tools. Nevertheless, Parliament advanced the economic-exclusion argument, and the amendment was subsequently upheld by the **Supreme Court of India**.

However, constitutional validity does not automatically translate into social justice legitimacy. The lived outcomes of the policy must still withstand empirical and ethical scrutiny. It is here that the EWS framework begins to unravel.

Empirical Reality: The Myth of Exclusion

Long before the recent Indian Express revelations, empirical data had already cast serious doubt on

148 from EWS quota land pricey private medical seats

Ananya Dutt
New Delhi, November 26

AROUND 148 students from the EWS (economically weaker sections) category have secured the usually expensive management and NRI quota seats in private medical colleges during the first round of counselling for post-graduate courses this year. *The Indian Express* has learnt from an analysis of seat allotment documents.

The willingness of such students to pay these exorbitant fees — it can be as high as Rs 1 crore a year — has come under the lens, with the head of the apex medical education regulator calling for a probe at the state level.

The EWS certificate reserves 10% of the medical seats for general category students from poor backgrounds — a measure to ensure that poorer students are able to join government colleges that usually have a lower fee structure. There is usually no concession in fees for the EWS seats.

"The management or NRI quota seats were allocated to the EWS candidates during the state counselling — this is not part of the all India quota. The states should investigate the matter and take appropriate action," said Dr Abhijit Sheth, chairman of the National Medical Commission.

Management or NRI quota seats were allocated to the EWS candidates during state counselling. The states should investigate the matter.

DR ABHIJIT SHETH,
CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION

The number of EWS category students who have availed of such seats is likely to go up during the subsequent rounds of medical counselling.

The EWS certificate, issued by district officials, acknowledges that a candidate's family income is less than Rs 8 lakh per annum and their family does not possess assets such as agricultural land of 5 acres or more, residential flat of 1,000 square feet or bigger, or a residential plot of 100 or 200 square yards or more.

This discrepancy between means and the fees paid by the candidates has existed since the quota was implemented during the 2021-22 academic year. "This has been happening since the quota was introduced. The intent behind the EWS

Candidates say their uncle, aunt or other family members are sponsoring their education, or a trust is funding it, or they have secured a loan. What do you do then?

DR PRAVIN SHINGARE,
FORMER HEAD OF MAHARASHTRA'S DEPT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

quota was good — candidates who may not belong to the SC/ST or OBC categories but have been economically backward for generations would benefit. But many people are able to get fake certificates. The matter has previously been raised at the NMC, but there is no good way to plug the loophole," said a former health department official.

Students EWS certificate benefit if when they take seats, says reserved management open to all have p

through EWS, SC, ST or OBC quota. "When you investigate the matter, the candidates say that their uncle, aunt, or other family members are sponsoring their education, or a trust is funding it, or they have secured a loan. What do you do then?" he said.

The first rank to avail such a paid management or NRI quota seat, belonging to a candidate from the EWS category, is close to 12,000 at JSS Medical College in Karnataka.

The last rank to get such a seat is close to 1.13 lakh at Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences in Karad. To be sure, the last rank to secure a seat during the first round of counselling for PG seats was around 1.38 lakh.

Most of these seats belong to highly sought-after specialties such as general medicine (26), general surgery (20) and anaesthesiology (17).

even without a dedicated reservation.

The recent exposure of EWS candidates paying crores for private medical seats further strengthens this conclusion. If EWS beneficiaries can afford management and NRI quota fees — traditionally accessed by the wealthiest sections — then the claim of widespread financial incapacity collapses. What emerges instead is not exclusion, but **privileged adaptability**.

The EWS Illusion: Poverty Without Social Context

This contradiction gives rise to what may be aptly termed the **EWS Illusion** —

the claim that economically backward sections within the general category were largely excluded from higher education. A comprehensive analysis published in the Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) in June 2019, based on data from **445 NIRF-ranked higher educational institutions**, revealed that **economically backward class (EBC) students from the general category already constituted nearly 28% of total enrolment in 2016-17** — almost three times the subsequently proposed 10% EWS quota. In nearly **half of the NIRF-ranked institutions**, their representation exceeded 20%.

These findings fundamentally challenge the premise that EWS groups were systematically excluded from higher education. On the contrary, they demonstrate that **general-category students with economic disadvantages were already accessing elite institutions at significant levels**,

Whether EWS have largely remained excluded from attending Higher Educational Institutions?

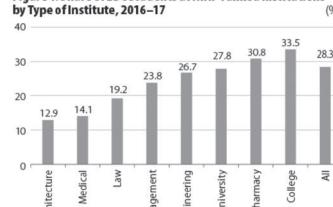
The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment states that **people from economically weaker sections of the society have largely remained excluded from attending the higher educational institutions and public employment on account of their financial incapacity** to compete with the persons who are economically more privileged.

But An analysis of 445 premier higher education institutions finds that this section of students already had about 28% of representation that is, close to three times the proposed 10% quota in these institutions in 2016-17.

Analysis:

1. **EBC students from General Category share 28% in 445 NIRF-ranked Higher Education Institutions in India.**
2. **In almost 50% of NIRF-ranked educational institutions, their share of representation is more than 20%.**
3. Is the proposed reservation policy empirically founded and justifiable? The answer is not in the affirmative

Figure 1: Share of EBC Students at NIRF-ranked Institutions by Type of Institute, 2016-17 (%)



Source: Estimated from NIRF data.

Table 1: NIRF-ranked Institutions and Share of EBC Students, 2016-17

| Type of Institution | 0-10% | 11-20% | 21 & above% | Total |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Colleges | 23 (23) | 16 (16) | 61 (61) | 100 (100) |
| Pharmacy | 26 (13) | 20 (10) | 54 (27) | 100 (50) |
| Engineering | 30 (30) | 20 (20) | 50 (50) | 100 (100) |
| University | 32 (32) | 14 (14) | 54 (54) | 100 (100) |
| Law | 50 (5) | 20 (2) | 30 (3) | 100 (10) |
| Management | 54 (27) | 10 (5) | 36 (18) | 100 (50) |
| Architecture | 60 (6) | 10 (1) | 30 (3) | 100 (10) |
| Medical | 64 (16) | 8 (2) | 28 (7) | 100 (25) |
| All | 34.2 (152) | 15.7 (70) | 50.1 (223) | 100 (445) |

Figures in parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

Table 2: Private and Public NIRF-ranked Institutions and Share of EBC Students, 2016-17

| % EBC | Private | Public | All |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 0-10 | 32.2 (47) | 35.1 (105) | 34.2 (152) |
| 11-20 | 11.6 (17) | 17.7 (53) | 15.7 (70) |
| 21 and above | 56.2 (82) | 47.2 (141) | 50.1 (223) |
| Total | 100 (146) | 100 (299) | 100 (445) |

Figures in parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

Table 3: NIRF-ranked Engineering Institutions and Share of EBC Students, 2016-17

| % EBC | Institutes of National Importance | Other Public Institutions | Private Institutions |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 0-10 | 31.6 (12) | 33.3 (10) | 25.0 (8) |
| 11-20 | 26.3 (10) | 20.0 (6) | 12.5 (4) |
| 21 and above | 42.1 (16) | 46.7 (14) | 62.5 (20) |
| Total | 100 (38) | 100 (30) | 100 (32) |

Figures in parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

Source: Economic and Political Weekly 8.6.2019

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/23/commentary/new-reservation-policy.html>

Compiled by: G.Karunandhy, General Secretary, AIOBC Employees Federation

the belief that economic deprivation alone is an adequate proxy for social disadvantage.

Economic hardship is real and deserves state attention. However, **poverty is neither uniform nor socially neutral**. A poor individual from a socially dominant caste does not face the same barriers as a poor individual from a historically oppressed caste. The latter encounters **layered disadvantages**: discrimination, lack of social capital, stigma, and inherited exclusion that persist regardless of income fluctuations.

By collapsing social disadvantage into income criteria, the EWS policy creates an illusion of equality. It treats **temporary or relative economic hardship** as equivalent to centuries of systemic exclusion, thereby flattening deeply unequal social realities. In doing so, it diverts the language of social justice away from its original purpose.

Misuse Is Not an Aberration—It Is Structural

The misuse of EWS certificates, highlighted in the medical admissions scandal, is often presented as an administrative failure. In reality, it is a **structural consequence of an income-based reservation model**.

Income thresholds are inherently volatile and easily manipulated. Family incomes can be underreported, assets fragmented across relatives, and financial support routed through informal channels—such as extended family sponsorships or education loans. As senior medical administrators quoted in the Indian Express report acknowledge, many EWS candidates rely on **family trusts, relatives, or loans** to fund expensive education, while still qualifying for EWS certification.

Such loopholes are not incidental; they are inevitable when **economic criteria are divorced from social context**. In contrast, caste-based reservations address disadvantages that are **visible, verifiable, and historically grounded**. The EWS framework, by comparison, is administratively fragile and socially ambiguous.

Impact on Social Justice and Existing Reservations

The expansion of reservation through EWS has not occurred in a vacuum. It has profound implications for existing affirmative action frameworks.

First, by introducing reservation for socially privileged groups, the policy dilutes the **moral rationale of reservations** themselves. It reframes affirmative action as a general poverty-relief measure rather than a corrective instrument for structural injustice.

Second, it risks crowding public discourse with a false equivalence between economic poverty and social backwardness. This equivalence is routinely invoked to question or undermine reservations for OBCs, SCs, and STs, even though their constitutional basis is fundamentally different.

Finally, the EWS policy creates competitive pressure within limited public resources, without expanding capacity proportionately. In practice, this can **reduce opportunities for historically marginalised communities**, while benefiting sections that already possess social capital and institutional familiarity.

Vindication of Long-Standing Opposition

The developments exposed by the Indian Express report unequivocally vindicate the consistent opposition raised by OBC, Dalit, and social justice organisations against reservation based solely on economic criteria. The argument was never that economic hardship is insignificant, but that **economic deprivation cannot replace social disadvantage as the basis of affirmative action**.

What we are witnessing today is not an accidental misuse of a well-intentioned policy, but the logical outcome of a flawed conceptual foundation. The EWS Illusion promised inclusion but has delivered contradiction; it claimed exclusion but revealed privilege; it invoked justice but produced distortion.

Conclusion: Reclaiming the Meaning of Reservation

The EWS debate forces us to confront a fundamental question: What is the purpose of reservation in India? If reservations are meant to correct historical injustice, ensure representation, and dismantle structural exclusion, then **economic criteria alone are insufficient and misleading**.

The exposure of EWS candidates paying crores for medical education is not merely a scandal—it is a mirror held up to a policy that confuses poverty with oppression and charity with justice. The real challenge before the nation is not whether to support the economically poor, but **how to do so without hollowing out the constitutional vision of social justice**.

Until that distinction is restored, the EWS framework will remain what it has now unmistakably revealed itself to be: **an illusion of equity that preserves privilege while masquerading as reform**.

(The author is the General Secretary, AIOBC Employees Federation and Member, Social Justice Monitoring Committee, Govt. of Tamil Nadu)

Analytical Note on the Statement by Union Minister, Making Caste Disclosure “Optional” in the Census

The document, based on *The Telegraph* report dated 14 December 2025, reports the Union Cabinet's approval of a two-phase, digitally enabled population census, with a notable and historically significant inclusion: caste data will be collected as part of the decennial Census for the first time.

However, the analysis must focus on the **critical caveat** introduced by the Government—that **disclosure of caste will be optional**, as stated by Information & Broadcasting Minister **Ashwini Vaishnav**. This single assertion substantially weakens the very purpose of caste enumeration and raises serious concerns about intent, implementation, and outcomes.

At the outset, the announcement appears progressive. The Cabinet, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved a large-scale census exercise with significant financial allocation, deployment of 30 lakh enumerators, and the use of digital tools such as mobile applications and a central monitoring portal. The stated objectives—improved data quality, micro-level accessibility, and better policy formulation—are all laudable. Yet, the optional nature of caste disclosure fundamentally contradicts these goals.

The **central contradiction** lies in the Government's acknowledgment that caste data is necessary for policymaking, **while simultaneously allowing respondents to opt out**. The demand for caste enumeration has never been symbolic; it is rooted in the need for **comprehensive, universal, and reliable data** on all caste groups, particularly OBCs and other socially and educationally backward classes. Making caste disclosure optional introduces **structural ambiguity**, allowing enumeration gaps to be attributed not to administrative failure but to alleged “non-disclosure by respondents.”

This concern is not hypothetical. The statement creates **plausible deniability** for the administration: officials may avoid probing caste details rigorously, later reporting that individuals “chose not to disclose” their caste. Such an approach opens the door to **systemic under-enumeration**, especially among marginalized communities who may face confusion, mistrust, digital exclusion, or fear of misuse of data. The shift to self-enumeration via a web portal, while modern in appearance, further risks excluding large sections of the population with limited digital literacy or access.

The document itself recalls the failure of the 2011-12 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC),



where caste data was later discarded due to inaccuracies. However, that failure stemmed from **poor questionnaire design and lack of standardised caste lists**, not from the concept of enumeration itself. The correct lesson should have been stronger institutional responsibility, not dilution of obligation. By allowing caste disclosure to be optional, the Government appears to be **pre-emptively weakening the dataset**, rather than correcting past methodological flaws.

In essence, the policy creates a contradictory framework: caste is declared important enough to be included in the Census, yet not important enough to be mandatorily recorded. This undermines the constitutional and social justice rationale behind caste-based data collection. Without complete enumeration, the data will be statistically unreliable, politically contestable, and administratively unusable—defeating the very objective of addressing inequities among caste groups.

In conclusion, while the statement by the Minister projects technological advancement and administrative scale, the optionality of caste disclosure represents a **serious dilution of the core demand for caste enumeration**. No attempt—explicit or implicit—should be made to distract from the avowed principle that the State must possess accurate and complete caste data to design equitable public policy. Any census that allows caste invisibility by choice risks perpetuating inequality by design, rather than correcting it.

The success of this exercise will ultimately depend not on digital tools, but on the political will to record social truth in full.

(Source: The Telegraph – 13th Dec 2025)

FEE DISPARITY, EWS PRIVILEGING, AND THE EROSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL EQUALITY

A Critical Examination of Tuition and Application Fee Policies in Centrally Funded Institutions, raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament and veteran OBC leader R.Krishnaiah

India's constitutional promise of equality is not merely symbolic; it is a hard-won guarantee forged through decades of social struggle, judicial interpretation, and affirmative policy design. Yet, recent fee notifications and admission practices in centrally funded institutions reveal a deeply troubling contradiction between constitutional intent and administrative action. The tuition and application fee structures currently in force at premier institutions expose a pattern of **systemic discrimination against Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** while extending disproportionate and often unconditional concessions to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), largely drawn from socially forward castes.

At the heart of this debate lies the **tuition fee notification dated 16.12.2024 issued by the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi (SPA)**, an institution functioning under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The notification prescribes an **annual tuition fee of ₹55,000 for OBC students**, while SC, ST, PwD candidates, and a limited sub-category of OBCs are charged ₹27,500. In stark contrast, **students admitted under the EWS category are granted a full waiver—zero tuition fees**.

This differential treatment is not a minor administrative variation; it is a profound policy statement. It effectively conveys that **economic criteria alone merit complete state support**, while students who suffer **both historical social discrimination and present-day economic vulnerability** must shoulder a higher financial burden.

OBCs: Bearing a Dual Burden

OBCs constitute nearly **half of India's population** and are constitutionally recognized as **Socially and Educationally Backward Classes**. Their backwardness is not incidental or temporary; it is structural, inherited, and reinforced through generations of exclusion from land, education, power, and opportunity. Affirmative action for

 **TELANGANA News**

Fee Disparity Violates Constitutional Equality: Krishnaiah

VOICE OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD, DEC. 18

National BC Welfare Association

President and Rajya Sabha

Member R. Krishnaiah

on Wednesday demanded that fee

parity be ensured for OBC stu-

dents in government-funded in-

stitutions, including certain central

institutions. He pointed out that

while EWS students are granted

complete exemption from

tuition

fees in some centrally funded in-

stitutions, OBC students from

families earning up to 75 lakh annually

are required to pay ₹27,500, and

those with higher incomes must

pay ₹55,000, placing a significant

financial burden on

them. Krishnaiah said this disparity

undermines the constitutional

principle of equality under Article 15

and has triggered serious criticism.

He noted that affirmative action is

meant to address both social and

economic disadvantage, but OBC

students are currently facing a dual

burden—historical social marginali-

zation coupled with financial

stress. In contrast, he said, EWS

students from socially forward

backgrounds receive full relief

despite not facing social disadvan-

tage. Across India, national post-

matric scholarship and reimburse-

ment schemes do provide tuition

relief to OBC students from low-

income families, though benefits

vary based on income ceilings and

regional policies, he said. In

Andhra Pradesh, the government's Post-Matric Scholarship/Fee Reimbursement Scheme, implemented through the Jhanabhami portal, offers full coverage of tuition, special and examination fees to eligible SC, ST, BC, EBC, minority and disabled students on a saturation basis. While the poorest OBC students receive partial structural support, Krishnaiah observed that EWS students largely benefit only from reservation policies without equivalent tuition remission, exposing a clear policy gap. Overall, these examples, he said, highlight a systemic trend across the country, where OBC students—despite having equal or greater need—are forced to bear heavier financial responsibilities than their EWS counterparts, calling for urgent corrective measures to uphold social justice and constitutional equality.



OBCs was envisioned precisely to counter this entrenched disadvantage.

However, the SPA fee structure inverts this logic. An OBC student from a family earning marginally above the prescribed income threshold is compelled to pay ₹55,000, while an EWS student—often from a socially dominant caste background—pays **nothing**. This creates a paradox where **social disadvantage is penalised, and social privilege is neutralised through economic labeling alone**.

The injustice deepens when one considers that EWS reservations and concessions were introduced **without any empirical evidence of historical discrimination**, unlike SCs, STs, and OBCs, whose backwardness has been repeatedly affirmed by commissions, courts, and constitutional amendments.

Discrimination Beyond Tuition: Application Fee Inequality

The bias against OBCs is not confined to tuition fees. Admission application fees across major national institutions display the same discriminatory pattern. For instance:

- At **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)**, OBC applicants are charged ₹3,000, while EWS applicants pay ₹2,400.
- At **National Institute of Technology Manipur**, the fee is ₹2,500 for OBCs and ₹1,000 for EWS.
- At **National Institute of Technology Silchar**, OBCs pay ₹1,000 compared to ₹500 for EWS candidates.

These figures, drawn from official recruitment and admission notifications, demonstrate a

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OBC TUTION FEES FOR EWS: ZERO FOR OBC: Rs.55,000

POST-GRADUATE TUITION FEES IN SCHOOL OF PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE, NEW DELHI
(UNDER THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, Govt. of India)



Ref. No. F/100/3/SPA/AE/2024

मोर्जना तथा वास्तुकाल विद्यालय, नई दिल्ली
केंद्रीय विभाग के द्वारा संचालित विद्यालय
School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi
केंद्रीय विभाग के द्वारा संचालित विद्यालय
विद्यालय के द्वारा संचालित विद्यालय

NOTICE - POST GRADUATE COURSES (JANUARY - 2025)
(FOR IIND & IIV SEMESTERS)

All Indian students of First Year (Second Semester), Second Year (Fourth Semester) and repeater of the First & Second Year of the Master's Degree Course in the School are required to pay the following fees for the First & Second Year of the Master's Degree Course in the School for the academic session 2024-25 (January - 2025), till 13th January 2025 as per the detail given below:-

SCHOOL CHARGES

| Head of Fees | Gen/ OBC (Above 5 Lakh) | Gen / OBC (Below 5 Lakh) & SC/ST/ PwD | EWS |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Registration Fees | 1,500.00 | 1,500.00 | |
| 2. Enrolment Fees | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 |
| 3. Tuition Fees | 55,000.00 | 27,500.00 | 0 |

| Institution | Tuition Fee for OBC | Tuition Fee for EWS |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| SCHOOL OF PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE, NEW DELHI | Rs. 55,000 | 'O' |

(Notification dated 13.12.2024)

APPLICATION FEES: OBC Vs EWS

| Institution | Application Fee for OBC | Application fee for EWS |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| AIIIMs | Rs. 3000 | Rs. 2400 |
| NIT, Manipur | Rs. 2500 | Rs. 1000 |
| NIT, Silchar | Rs. 1000 | Rs. 500 |

(CRE Recruitment 2025 Notification for 4576 Posts and NIT Silchar and Manipur centres)

Without any representation from EWS, all concessions, relaxations, waiving of fees are done for the EWS

IS THE UNION GOVERNMENT MORE CONCERNED WITH EWS - UPPER CASTE 'POOR'?

THAN THE

THE HISTORICALLY DISCRIMINATED OBCs (SOCIALLY AND EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD CLASSES)



Compiled by: G.Karunanidhi, General Secretary (27.02.2025)

AIOBC

ALL INDIA OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES EMPLOYEES' FEDERATION

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nationwide institutional pattern, not an isolated anomaly. What is particularly alarming is that **these concessions to EWS are extended automatically**, without any mass representation, agitation, or constitutional compulsion—while OBC demands for parity remain persistently ignored.

Constitutional Violations: Articles 14 and 15 in Question

Such policies strike at the core of **Article 14**, which guarantees equality before law, and **Article 15(4)**, which empowers the State to take special measures for socially and educationally backward classes. The Supreme Court has consistently held that **affirmative action must be proportionate, rational, and rooted in real disadvantage**. By privileging EWS over OBCs in fee remission, the State risks converting affirmative action into a tool of **reverse prioritisation**.

Reservation without meaningful financial access is an illusion. For students from marginalized communities, **tuition fees and application costs are not peripheral concerns—they are decisive barriers**. A seat secured through reservation becomes meaningless if the student cannot afford to occupy it.

Parliamentary Intervention and Moral Authority

It is therefore significant—and heartening—that **Hon'ble Rajya Sabha Member Shri R.**

Krishnaiah, President of the National BC Welfare Association, has raised this issue on the floor of Parliament. His intervention articulates what millions of OBC families experience silently: that **OBc students today face a dual burden of historical marginalisation and contemporary financial exclusion**, while EWS students enjoy comprehensive relief despite lacking comparable social disadvantage.

His remarks underline a crucial truth: **social justice cannot be reduced to income certificates alone**. Economic hardship must be contextualised within social history, not detached from it.

The Larger Question Before the Union Government

These developments raise an unavoidable and uncomfortable question:

Is the Union Government more concerned with protecting the interests of EWS—predominantly from upper castes—than with upholding its constitutional responsibility towards historically discriminated OBC communities?

If the answer is no, then immediate corrective steps are imperative.

The Way Forward: Restoring Constitutional Balance

To uphold constitutional morality and social justice, the following measures are urgently required:

- Parity in tuition fee remission** between OBC and EWS students in all centrally funded institutions.
- Uniform application fee structures** ensuring OBCs are not charged higher fees than EWS candidates.
- A comprehensive policy review** by the Ministry of Education examining the cumulative financial burden on OBC students.
- Mandatory social impact assessments** before implementing any fee or concession policy linked to reservation categories.

Conclusion

The issue at hand is not opposition to EWS students receiving support. Economic hardship deserves relief. But **relief that ignores social history, structural inequality, and constitutional intent becomes injustice by another name**.

India's democracy cannot afford a model of affirmative action that **dilutes social justice under the guise of economic neutrality**. The State must remember that equality is not achieved by treating unequal alike, nor by privileging the historically privileged under a new label.

The nation now awaits a **serious, reasoned, and just response from the Hon'ble Union Education Minister**—one that reaffirms the Constitution's commitment to those who have waited the longest for its promises to be fulfilled. ■



FROM FORMAL EQUALITY TO SUBSTANTIVE JUSTICE: THE STATE OF MADRAS V. SRIMATHI CHAMPAKAM DORAIRAJAN CITATION: 1951 AIR 226, 1951 SCR 525.

The Communal G.O., the Champakam Judgment, and the Constitutional Battle for Social Justice

Introduction

The formative years of the Indian Republic were marked by intense constitutional debates on the meaning of equality in a society scarred by centuries of caste-based exclusion. The promise of equality enshrined in Part III of the Constitution confronted a social reality in which access to education and public employment had historically been monopolised by a few dominant groups. This tension came to the fore through the challenge to the Madras Government's Communal Government Order (G.O.), culminating in two landmark judgments of 1951—**State of Madras v. Srimathi Champakam Dorairajan and B. Venkataramana v. State of Madras**.

These decisions were not merely legal determinations on reservation policy; they became defining moments in India's constitutional evolution. They exposed the limitations of a purely formal understanding of equality and set in motion political and constitutional processes that decisively shaped India's commitment to social justice.

The Communal G.O.: Historical Roots and Social Imperative

The Communal G.O. of the erstwhile Madras Presidency emerged from a long history of anti-caste mobilisation and non-Brahmin assertion. Colonial administrative structures had disproportionately benefited a narrow social elite, systematically excluding large sections of society—particularly Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and religious minorities—from higher education and government service.

The G.O. sought to correct this structural imbalance by distributing opportunities across communities. Far from being an arbitrary or sectarian measure, it represented an early form of affirmative action rooted in the belief that equality could not be achieved merely by declaring identical treatment in an unequal society. In the socio-political imagination of the Madras Presidency, the policy symbolised democratic inclusion and social rebalancing.

The Champakam Dorairajan Case: Education, Equality, and Constitutional Text

The constitutional validity of this policy was tested in **State of Madras v. Srimathi Champakam Dorairajan**, reported in 1951 AIR 226; 1951 SCR 525. The judgment was delivered on 9 April 1951

by a seven-judge Constitution Bench comprising **Hiralal J. Kania, Saiyid Fazal Ali, Mehr Chand Mahajan, Vivian Bose, B. K. Mukherjea, Sudhi Ranjan Das, and M. Patanjali Sastri**.

The respondents were represented by **Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer** along with Alladi Kuppuswami Aiyer. Significantly, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer was not only a leading constitutional lawyer but also a **member of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution**. This lent a profound constitutional irony to the proceedings: one of the principal architects of the Constitution was defending a policy aimed at social justice against a strict textual interpretation of the Fundamental Rights he had helped frame. The case thus vividly captured the inner tension of the Constitution itself—between the guarantee of formal equality and the aspiration for substantive social transformation.

In its judgment, the Supreme Court struck down the Communal G.O. as violative of Articles 15(1) and 29(2), holding that admissions to educational institutions maintained by the State could not be denied on grounds of religion, race, or caste. The Court further held that Directive Principles, including Article 46, could not override enforceable Fundamental Rights. Equality, as interpreted by the Court, meant uniform treatment, irrespective of historical disadvantage.

B. Venkataramana Case: Public Employment and Article 16

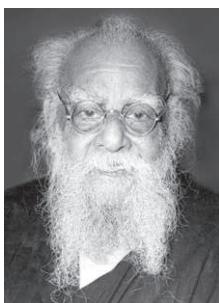
The same constitutional logic was extended to public employment in **B. Venkataramana v. State of Madras**. Here, the Supreme Court examined communal rotation in the appointment of District Munsifs. While recognising that Article 16(4) permitted reservation in favour of backward classes inadequately represented in State services, the Court held that the Madras scheme impermissibly extended reservations to communities that could not all be classified as backward.

The judgment clarified that reservation as an exception to equality had to be narrowly tailored and constitutionally justified. Consequently, the Communal G.O. was declared void insofar as it infringed Articles 16(1) and 16(2). Though legally coherent, the ruling once again privileged a formal conception of equality, treating merit as socially neutral and abstracted from the lived realities of caste disadvantage.

Social and Political Response: The Dravidian Challenge

The twin judgments provoked an intense political and social reaction in Tamil Nadu, spearheaded by **Thanthai Periyar** and the Dravidian movement.

For them, the decisions symbolised the Constitution's failure to recognise structural inequality. Mass mobilisations and agitations reframed the issue as one of social justice and democratic dignity rather than narrow constitutional interpretation.



This sustained resistance underscored a crucial truth: a Constitution drafted for a deeply unequal society could not rely on abstract equality alone. Social justice required explicit constitutional sanction.

The First Constitutional Amendment: Correcting the Constitutional Course

The immediate outcome of this political churning was the **First Constitutional Amendment, 1951**, which inserted **Article 15(4)**. This provision explicitly empowered the State to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, as well as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The amendment marked a decisive shift in constitutional philosophy—from formal equality to **substantive equality**. It affirmed that differential treatment aimed at correcting historical injustice was not an exception to equality, but a fulfilment of it.

Conclusion: Constitutional Evolution and Enduring Lessons

The Communal G.O. and the 1951 judgments represent a critical phase in India's constitutional journey. The Supreme Court articulated the limits of the Constitution as it then stood; society and Parliament responded by expanding those limits. This dynamic interaction strengthened Indian democracy and deepened its commitment to social justice.

The legacy of Champakam Dorairajan and B. Venkataramana endures as a reminder that the Constitution is not a static legal text but a living social document. Its true strength lies in its capacity to evolve—transforming formal guarantees into meaningful equality and ensuring that constitutional promises reach those historically denied their share of dignity and opportunity.

- G.Karunanidhi, Editor, OBC VOICE



THOUGHTS OF PERIYAR: IRRATIONAL ASTROLOGY

पेरियार के विचार: तर्कहीन ज्योतिष

Eminent scientist Venki Ramakrishnan was awarded the coveted Nobel Prize for Chemistry on 9th October, 2009. He had rubbished Astrology as a pseudo science. There were wide spread uproar and critical comments over his statement. On 06.07.1930, in the editorial of 'Kudi Arasu', 'Thanthai' Periyar had also rubbished Astrology as absolutely irrational.

The content of the editorial was as follows:

Dear readers,

nearly three decades have passed in this 20th century. Ours is a civilised society with great advancement in scientific spirit and rationalist outlook, but most people still cling to pseudo science prevailing in many forms such as Astrology, Palmistry, horoscope, Sun and Moon signs, planetary influences, stars, auspicious time and inauspicious time. We should draw such gullible people from the darkness of ignorance.

Reasoning power:

Only human beings have been endowed in nature with an ability to reason. This power makes us different from animals. It should be wisely used by us to get rid of misconceptions, blind faith and wrong perceptions. Belief in Astrology makes us absolutely irrational. It has ruined many precious lives.

Astrologers all around us hood-wink people in multiple ways. They probe into the month, day, date and time of birth and come out with various predictions. How can the time of birth be accurate? Does it mean the time a life was formed in the womb or the time of its deliverance? How can it be precisely determined? The nurse might have delayed revealing the exact time. Other causes could have led to an error in recording the time of birth. When there is such an uncertainty, how can an astrologer predict anything about the new born, relying on the time recorded by the hospital? Does it not sound absolutely ridiculous?

People in villages come out with months and dates recalling certain incidents, occasions and various other factors. How can an astrologer rely on such particulars

जाने माने वैज्ञानिक वैकी रामकृष्णन को 9 अक्टूबर 2009 को रसायन विज्ञान के लिए प्रतिष्ठित नोबेल पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया गया था। उन्होंने ज्योतिष को एक छद्म-विज्ञान बताते हुए खारिज कर दिया था। तब उनके इस वक्तव्य का व्यापक विरोध हुआ था और इस पर आलोचनात्मक टिप्पणियाँ हुई थी। 6th जुलाई 1930 को "कुड़ी अरासु" के संपादकीय में 'तंतर्झ' पेरियार ने भी ज्योतिष को बिल्कुल अतार्किक कहकर नकार दिया था।

उपरोक्त संपादकीय का सार इस प्रकार से है: प्रिय पाठकों,

इस 20वीं सदी के लगभग तीन दशक बीत चुके हैं। हमारा समाज एक विकसित और सभ्य समाज है जहाँ वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण और तर्कवादी सोच का विस्तार हुआ है। फिर भी अधिकतर लोग अभी भी ज्योतिष, हस्तरेखा, राशिफल, सूर्य-चंद्र राशि, ग्रह-नक्षत्र, शुभ-अशुभ समय जैसी अनेक छद्म-विज्ञानों से चिपके हए हैं। हमें ऐसे सरल-सहज लोगों को अज्ञान के अंधकार से बाहर लाना चाहिए।

तर्क शक्ति:

प्रकृति ने केवल मनुष्य को तर्क करने की क्षमता दी है और यहीं शक्ति हमें पशुओं से अलग करती है। हमें इस शक्ति का विवेकपूर्ण उपयोग कर आंतियों, अंधविश्वासों और गलत धारणाओं को दूर करना चाहिए। ज्योतिष पर विश्वास हमें पूरी तरह अतार्किक बना देता है। इसने अनेक अनमोल जीवन नष्ट किए हैं।

ज्योतिषी लोगों को अनेक तरीकों से ठगते हैं। वे जन्म का महीना, दिन, तारीख और समय पूछकर तरह-तरह के भविष्यवाणियाँ कर देते हैं। जन्म का समय कैसे सटीक हो सकता है? क्या यह वह समय है जब गर्भ में जीवन बनता है या वह समय जब शिशु जन्म लेता है? इसे सटीक रूप से कैसे निर्धारित किया जा सकता है? नर्स ने समय बताने में देर कर दी हो या रिकॉर्ड में गलतियाँ हो सकती हैं। ऐसी अनिश्चितता के बावजूद जन्म समय के आधार पर भविष्य बताना क्या हास्यास्पद नहीं है? गाँवों में लोग तारीखें और

and predict the future of an individual? Some astrologers use the name of a person for predictions. Family members give a name that would have undergone changes later. A name is meant merely for an identity. How can one's life be predicted relying just on the name?

Multiple tricks

Astrologers analyse even the horoscopes of parents and relatives to say something about a new born child. Does it not seem silly? I have heard of astrologers who shower predictions after asking people to specify a number or the name of a flower. Some tricksters use themselves as touchstones to predict the future of others. It is mind-boggling indeed.

A few others pretend to have found something ill-ominous in a horoscope and suggest making amends to set it right. If the defects are rectified, the horoscope itself should be bogus, shouldn't it? Besides, people waste huge amounts performing rituals suggested by these tricksters.

33 births per minute:

It is said that 33 babies are born in India every minute, at various places in various cities. When these 33 babies grow up, would the lives of all be similar? I learnt from a book that 4158 kids are born in India within 126 minutes; at the rate of 33 births per minute. Most of them might have been born in identical positions of planets stars and zodiac signs could the lives of most of these 4158 individuals be similar when they grow up? We have seen that the temperament, likes and dislikes of two individuals born under the same zodiac sign, are not similar at all.

How can thousands of people born in the world at one particular time, be leading an identical life with the same kind of mind set and attitude? This is really puzzling. Would all the occurrences and experiences in all their lives be alike? Faults lie in us but we keep blaming stars and planets that are objects of nature. Our people fail to use their ability to reason. This is the root cause of their irrational behaviour.

Can this ever be denied?

Criminals and Victims

If a criminal murders someone as predetermined by his horoscope, the victim who dies must also have had his death predetermined by his horoscope. Does it seem believable? Many culprits undergo imprisonments on multiple occasions on various charges. Were all the imprisonments foretold by their horoscopes? How are we to believe it?

Thieves barge into houses and steal. If it was foretold by their horoscopes that they would become thieves, the people who face the loss of articles by the theft should also have had their loss predicted through their horoscopes. Does this seem credible?

Marriage disasters

Many marriages are called off and proposals are dropped if the horoscope of the girl does not match that of the boy. A Mars-born girl is expected to marry only a Mars-born boy. This ridiculous match making process has caused many of our girls leading life as spinsters. Horoscopes are infact horrorscopes in my opinion. They ruin lives and hinder marriages.

महीने घटनाओं को याद कर बताते हैं। ऐसे आधार पर ज्योतिषी किसी का भविष्य कैसे तय कर सकते हैं? कुछ ज्योतिषी तो नाम के आधार पर भविष्य बताते हैं, जबकि नाम तो परिवार वाले रखते हैं और वह बाद में भी बदल सकता है। नाम के बाद पहचान के लिए होता है—क्या केवल नाम के आधार पर जीवन का निर्धारण संभव है?

अनेक चालबाजियाँ

ज्योतिषी नवजात शिशु का भविष्य बताने के लिए मातापिता और रिश्तेदारों की कुंडली तक देख डालते हैं। क्या यह मूर्खतापूर्ण नहीं है? मैंने ज्योतिषियों को लोगों से कोई संख्या या फूल का नाम पछकर भविष्यवाणी करते देखा है। कुछ तो स्वयं को ही कसौटी मानकर भविष्य बता देते हैं—यह दिमाग चक्रा देने वाली बात है। कुछ और लोग कुंडली में किसी दोष का झूठा भय दिखाकर उसे शांति-पूजा से ठीक करने का सुझाव देते हैं। अगर दोष ठीक हो सकता है, तो कुंडली ही नकली हई न? ऊपर से लोग इन पाखंडियों की सलाह मानकर भारी धन बर्बाद कर देते हैं।

प्रति मिनट 33 जन्म:

कहते हैं भारत में प्रति मिनट 33 बच्चे जन्म लेते हैं। जब ये 33 बच्चे बड़े होंगे, क्या सबका जीवन एक जैसा होगा? एक पुस्तक से पता चला कि 33 बच्चे प्रति मिनट की दर से 126 मिनट में 4158 बच्चे जन्म लेते हैं। इनमें से बहुत से बच्चे ग्रह-नक्षत्रों और राशियों की समान स्थिति में जन्मे होंगे। क्या इनके बड़े होने पर सभी का जीवन एक जैसा होगा? हम देखते हैं कि एक ही राशि में जन्मे दो लोगों के स्वभाव, रुचियाँ, पसंद-नापसंद भी समान नहीं होतीं। तो फिर किसी एक क्षण में दुनिया में जन्मे हजारों लोग एक जैसी मानसिकता और जीवनशैली कैसे रख सकते हैं? यह वास्तव में उलझाने वाला सवाल है। क्या इनके जीवन की सभी घटनाएँ एक समान होंगी?

त्रुटि हममें है, लेकिन दोष हम सितारों और ग्रहों को देते हैं। हमारे लोग तर्क शक्ति का उपयोग नहीं करते और यही उनकी अतार्किकता की जड़ है।

क्या इसे नकारा जा सकता है?

अपराधी और पीड़ित

यदि किसी अपराधी द्वारा हत्या उसके कुंडली के अनसार पूर्वनिर्धारित थी, तो पीड़ित की मृत्यु भी उसकी कुंडली में पूर्वनिर्धारित होनी चाहिए। क्या यह विश्वास करने योग्य है? कई अपराधी कई बार जेल जाते हैं—क्या यह भी उनकी कुंडली में लिखा था?

चोर घरों में चोरी करते हैं। यदि कुंडली ने उन्हें चोर बनना तय किया था, तो जिन्हें चोरी का नुकसान हुआ, उनकी कुंडली में भी चोरी से नुकसान लिखा होना चाहिए न? क्या यह तर्कसंगत है?

विवाह की विडंबनाएँ

लड़कियों की कुंडली लड़के से न मिलने पर कई विवाह टूट जाते हैं। मंगल दोष वाली लड़की को मंगल दोष वाले लड़के से ही विवाह करने को कहा जाता है। इस बेतुके मिलान ने कई लड़कियों को कंवारी रहने को मजबूर कर दिया है। मेरे विचार में कुंडलियाँ (हॉरोस्कोप) वास्तव में "हॉररस्कोप" हैं—विवाह रोकती हैं और जीवन बिगाड़ती हैं।

There are people who do not possess a horoscope. I have found them leading a happy and peaceful life. I have also seen marriages arranged by the match of horoscopes ending up in disasters. Couples get separated owing to incompatibility. Therefore I feel that self-respect marriages are ideal because they ignore all the irrational concepts.

Inauspicious time

Astrologers threaten people indicating inauspicious time and advise family events commencing at an auspicious time. This is another fallacy. I believe every second in our life is good for anything. There is nothing good or bad; thinking makes it so. Couples getting married at an auspicious time sometimes do not lead a compatible life. Most of us waste a number of days every year staying inactive owing to the fear of inauspicious time. Productive work is hindered by this blind belief. Readers of the younger generation must get rid of such fears.

I have heard of people requesting doctors to put off delivery of a child until the favourable day and time. This has been going on at the risk of the life of the mother and the child. I am sure astrologers are behind this unreasonable fear.

Palmistry and other idiocies

The lines on our palms are acts of Nature. How can they determine the course of our life? I have seen palmists pretending to have amazing skills and predicting good and bad occurrences. Parrots are also used by astrologers for predictions. People leave the sidewalk cheerfully or sorrowfully depending on the forecast. People make amends to plug the loopholes in their horoscope. If imminent grief can be avoided by meaningless rituals, it could only mean that the horoscope itself is imperfect. Why should we blame one another, reposing our confidence in imperfect horoscopes? Let us all think over all these and stay away from astrologers, palmists and other tricksters.

Source: 'Kudi Arasu' dated 06.07.1930

Translated by: M.R. Manohar

मैंने उन लोगों को भी सखी जीवन जीते देखा है जिनकी कोई कुंडली ही नहीं थी। वहाँ कई कुंडली-मिलान से हुए विवाह असफल हुए हैं। इसलिए मुझे लगता है कि आत्मसम्मान विवाह बेहतर हैं क्योंकि वे इन अतार्किक मान्यताओं को नज़रअंदाज़ करते हैं।

अशुभ समय

ज्योतिषी अशुभ समय का भय दिखाकर कार्य शुभ समय में शुरू करने की सलाह देते हैं। यह भी एक अभ्र है। मेरा विश्वास है कि जीवन का हर क्षण शुभ है। अच्छा-बरा कुछ नहीं होता – सोच ही इसे अच्छा या बुरा बनाती है। शुभ मुहूर्त में विवाह करने वाले भी कई बार असफल जीवन जीते हैं। अशुभ समय के डर से लोग हर वर्ष कई दिन बेकार गंवा देते हैं। यह अंधविश्वास हमारे काम को रोक देता है। युवाओं को इस डर से छुटकारा पाना चाहिए। मैंने लोगों को डॉक्टरों से अनुकूल समय तक प्रसव टालने की विनती करते सुना है—यह माँ और बच्चे दोनों के जीवन के साथ खिलवाड़ है। मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि इस अवैज्ञानिक डर के पीछे ज्योतिषी ही हैं।

हस्तरेखा और अन्य मूर्खताएँ

हमारी हथेली की रेखाएँ प्रकृति का कार्य हैं। वे हमारे जीवन को कैसे तय कर सकती हैं? मैंने हस्तरेखाविदों को आश्चर्यजनक दावे करते और भविष्य बताते देखा है। कुछ ज्योतिषी तो तोतों से भविष्यवाणी करवाते हैं। लोग उनकी बात पर प्रसन्न या दुखी होकर लौटते हैं। लोग अपनी कुंडली में बताए दोष दूर करने के लिए उपाय करते हैं। यदि कोई अनिष्ट उपायों से टल सकता है, तो इसका अर्थ है कि कुंडली ही दोषपूर्ण थी।

इन त्रुटिपूर्ण कुंडलियों पर भरोसा करके हम एक दूसरे पर दोषारोपण क्यों करें? हमें इन सब बातों पर गौर करना चाहिए और ज्योतिषियों, हस्तरेखाविदों तथा अन्य पाखंडियों से दूर रहना चाहिए।

स्रोत: कुड़ी अरसु, 06.07.1930

अंग्रेजी अनुवाद: एम. आर. मनोहर; **हिन्दी अनुवाद:** रवीन्द्र राम।

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RESERVATION IN JUDICIARY FOR SC, ST AND OBC JUDGES

The Ministry of Law & Justice And Minister of State In The Ministry Of Parliamentary Affairs Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal in reply to the Question raised by Tmt.Rajathi alias Kavignar Salma, Rajya Sabha (dt:4.12.2025), and Hon'ble Ministers Minister of State for Social Justice And Empowerment Shri Ramdas Athawale, in reply to the Question raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament Thiru.T.R.Baalu in Lok Sabha (9.12.2025) gave the following data:

HIGH COURT JUDGES APPOINTED FROM 2018 TO 28.11.2025

| TOTAL | SC | ST | OBC | MINORITIES |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 841 | 32 | 17 | 103 | 46 |

129 women were appointed as Judges in various High Courts during the same period.

(RS Qn.580 dt: 4.12.2025, LS Qn.1598, dt: 9.12.2025)

20.12.2025



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**OUT OF 841 HIGH COURT
JUDGES APPOINTED SINCE
2018 IN INDIA**

SOURCE
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND EMPOWERMENT,
LOK SABHA UNSTARRED
QUESTION NO.1598



UPPER CASTE

12.2%

**OBC
(BC+MBC)**

5.4%

MINORITY

3.8%

SC

2.0%

ST

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