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PAPER CLIPPINGS

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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Social welfare

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Times of India

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE 3/7/2020

# NCBC OK with tightening of creamy layer for OBC

TOI 3/7/20  
Clears Proposal To Include Salary In Income Test

Subodh.Ghildiyal@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** In an about face, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) is learnt to have dropped its opposition to the government proposal to include "salary" in the "income test" to decide if an OBC belongs to the "creamy layer", setting the stage for a major review of the criteria for availing Mandal reservations.

In recent internal meetings, NCBC agreed with the proposal which states that "salaries" will be factored in for the "income test" to decide "creamy layer" - the category of OBCs which is seen as "well off" and thus ineligible for 27% job and education quotas. Presently, as per the 1993 official memorandum which lays down the norms for creamy layer, "salary" and "agricultural income" are not part of "income test".

The tweaking of the criteria to decide the "well-off" among the OBCs will mark a watershed in the Mandal reservations. Calculating



REDRAWING PARAMETERS

"gross family income" based on "salary" will make a backward breach the threshold beyond which he is ineligible for quotas.

A final decision is likely to be taken soon after which NCBC will convey its view on the cabinet note moved by the ministry of social justice and empowerment. Curiously, NCBC viewed the proposal in March as inimical to the interests of the backward castes and conveyed to the government its hostile view in a detailed note.

At the same time, the Centre proposes to increase the annual income ceiling for determining the "creamy layer" from the present Rs 8 lakh to Rs 12 lakh, a move which will

be favourable for the OBCs.

The review is based on the recommendation of an expert committee which was set up by the Modi government just ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The panel, as first reported by TOI, recommended that income should be calculated on the basis of Income Tax Act, thereby including salaries while keeping farm income out of its ambit.

The government argues that its proposed initiative would simplify the 1993 OM which has been a source of confusion and controversies. Its principal motivation for change stems from the row triggered by the DoPT's decisions on successful UPSC candidates whose parents work in PSUs, sources said.

The DoPT in recent years started including their "salary" in gross income, thereby creating two groups within OBCs on how to calculate the "creamy layer". Madras and Delhi High Courts passed strong strictures against this "discriminatory" policy.