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**SC to govt: Why not enumerate OBCs in census?**

The SC has sought the Centre's response to a PIL seeking enumeration of Dalits and castes bunched

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under 'OBC' with regard to their social, educational and financial status in Census 2021. P10

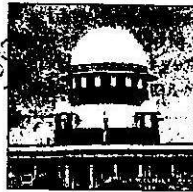
# Consider enumeration of Dalits, OBCs in 2021 census: SC to govt

## This Will Help Govts With Quantifiable Data For Quota: PIL

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court has sought the Union government's response to a PIL seeking enumeration of Dalits and castes bunched under 'Other Backward Classes' with regard to their social, educational and financial status in Census 2021 to determine the eligibility of a particular caste for reservation in government jobs and admissions to educational institutions.

Appearing for PIL petitioner Tinku Saini, advocate Sonia Saini told a bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian that there had been no headcount of the communities falling under the OBC umbrella since implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendation for 27% reservation for them in central services and the subsequent extension of the quota to admissions to central educational institutions.



Nor was there any data about their social/financial status over these years, she added.

The bench issued notices to the home ministry, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner and the National Commission for Backward Classes and sought their responses to the PIL which said enumeration of social and financial status of OBCs was essential for implementation of reservation in letter and spirit as envisioned by the Constitution.

"In order to identify these socially and educationally backward classes entitled to special provisions under Article 15(1) of the Constitution, it is important to first ascertain the population of a caste in each state to compare their education level with the state

**The bench said there had been no headcount of the communities falling under the OBC umbrella since implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendations**

average. The best way to ascertain their numbers and backwardness is by collecting relevant data through the Census conducted every 10 years," the petition said.

"The Census so conducted should be able to find out the percentage of backward class castes as against the total population, literates, English-literates, graduates, government servants, doctors, engineers and other professionals within each caste. Without this data, the social and educational level of people in a caste cannot be compared with the state's average in order to identify whether a caste or tribe is backward," it added.

In its verdict in Indira Sawhney case nearly three decades ago, the SC had ru-

led that while caste could be the starting point for reservation to socially and economically backward classes, governments should strive to collect quantifiable data for the purpose of granting special benefits to communities which are really backward. However, no quantifiable data in this regard has been collected so far.

The PIL said though the Union government had announced that it would collect data relating to social and educational backwardness of each caste through the Census, the idea was since dropped. It said collection of such data would also help in accurate delimitation of reserved constituencies for Parliament and assemblies. The petition said castes were added to the Schedule without any attempt to collect quantifiable data about their backwardness. "Till date, no step has been taken for exclusion of affluent castes/tribes from the other backward classes schedule," it said.