

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

- Atul Kumar, the son of a daily wage worker and from the Scheduled Caste community, lost his seat at IIT Dhanbad after he was unable to pay the seat booking fee of ₹17,500 that was required to secure his admission.
- His case gained widespread attention on social media, prompting the Supreme Court of India to intervene by exercising its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to grant him admission.
- There are many and similar cases like Atul's, but which never draw media attention or receive justice, leaving many deserving students without opportunities due to financial constraints and systemic inequalities.
- In the pre-Independence India, people belonging to depressed castes were debarred from education, even under colonial educational framework.
- In the independent India, constitution of India, introduced inclusive education. But situation is still worsening.
- Under the prevalent current of neoliberalism, Government of India has been pushing for self-reliance in institutions, under the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" leading to a multi-fold increase in fees in the premier institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), the Indian Institutes of Management, the central universities, and the National Law University.
- In response to the criticism regarding the fee increase, the committee set up by the government asserted that students from marginalised communities would benefit from the Vidyalakshmi scheme, which offers interest-free scholarships.
- The hike in fees that was implemented in seven IIMs including increased tuition fees; IIM-Lucknow hiked it by nearly 30%, IIM-Ahmedabad and IIM-Shillong by 5%, IIM Lucknow by 29.6%, IIM-Calcutta by 17.3%, IIM-Kozhikode by 23.1%, IIM-Ranchi by 19% and IIM-Tiruchirappalli by 20%.
- IIT-Delhi increased tuition fees for full-time M.Tech students in the semester in 2022-23. This is a 100% increase from last year's fee.
- This pressure, exacerbated by the high cost of education, has a human angle too.
- In 2021, data showed that over the past seven years, 122 students from the IITs and the IIMs had ended their lives, many due to the financial strain of rising fees and the anxiety of securing employment

ISSUES OF DROP OUT

- Many students who manage to enrol themselves in prestigious institutions eventually drop out due to their inability to afford rising education fees.

- The Human Resources Development Ministry reported that 2,461 students dropped out of IITs in just two years (2017 and 2018).
- This issue was raised in the Lok Sabha, revealing that over the past five years, more than 13,500 students from the Scheduled Castes (SC), the Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) had dropped out of courses in the central universities, the IITs and the IIMs.
- Government data showed that in the central universities, 4,596 students from the Other Backward Classes, 2,424 SC students, and 2,622 ST students dropped out during this period.
- In the IITs, 2,066 OBC students, 1,068 SC students, and 408 ST students left.
- Similarly, the IIMs saw 163 OBC, 188 SC, and 91 ST students drop out over the past five years.
- These numbers highlight the significant challenges faced by marginalised communities in accessing & sustaining higher education in India.
- One of the key reasons behind the poor economic conditions of the Depressed community is that their identity in India is still largely defined by caste.
- They continue to be denied the opportunity to perform work that is on a par with others in society. This has not only left them economically marginalised but also socially vulnerable.
- Depressed India are considered an oppressed and discriminated class, often labelled as "untouchable". Historically, this stigmatisation has meant that they have been denied access to education.
- The term "untouchables" also refers to those who have been forced into the most undesirable and degrading jobs.
- A recent survey in 29 States on urban sewer and septic tank workers revealed that 92% of these workers belong to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).
- A 2019 report by former Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal revealed that 95% of faculty positions in IITs were held by individuals from upper caste backgrounds, with only 5% allocated to SC, ST, and OBC categories, despite these groups representing 70%-80% of India's population.
- An RTI filed by IIT-Bombay students further exposed the disparities, showing that 24 departments had no SC faculty, 15 lacked ST representation, and nine had no OBC faculty.
- These statistics highlight the deep-rooted caste-based inequalities that persist in both employment and education.

- After Independence, with provisions in the Constitution and welfare mechanisms, Depressed caste school enrolment rates have improved over time. However, Depressed caste children continue to face significant barriers in education, including poverty, social discrimination, and caste-based prejudice.
 - Depressed students are often judged based on their clothes, language, and other markers, making it difficult for them to integrate with their upper caste peers.
 - In many cases, caste-based remarks and discrimination wound these students, leading to social isolation. Some students succumb to the emotional toll of this prejudice — there are cases such as a woman postgraduate medical student in a medical college in Maharashtra and two students from IIT Bombay and IIT Delhi that are painful reminders of this reality.
 - These incidents underscore the persistent shadow of casteism and harassment over the aspirations of many Depressed caste students.
 - This troubling situation raises a critical question: how can these prestigious institutions effectively address this issue and foster a safe, inclusive environment for all students?
 - The unfortunate incidents of student suicides point to the immense pressure students face in the education system.
 - Many students are burdened by their families' expectations that completing a degree will solve their economic problems. But unemployment in India is also high.
 - An RTI filed in 2024 about IIT placements showed that approximately 8,000 students (38%) across 23 IIT campuses remained unplaced this year.
 - For students from the marginalised communities, this struggle is even more pronounced, as their caste identity often doubles the challenges they face in securing jobs.
 - These issues underscore the pressing need for systemic reforms in education and employment to alleviate the pressures on students & address caste-based disparities.
 - More than 13,500 students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes have dropped out of courses they were taking at Central Universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) in the past five years, data tabled in Lok Sabha on December 4, 2023 showed.
 - This comes amid hundreds of SC/ST/OBC students at these universities coming out with stories of caste-based discrimination that is both overt and covert after a string of student suicides across IITs in Mumbai, Delhi, and Madras in 2023, a majority of whom were from marginalised backgrounds.
 - The Education Ministry said, "In the Higher Education sector, students have multiple options and they choose to migrate across institutions and from one course/programme to another in the same institution. The migration/withdrawal if any, is mainly on account of securing seat by the students in other departments/institutions of their choice or on any personal ground."
 - The data provided by the government showed that in Central Universities, 4,596 OBC students, 2,424 SC students, and 2,622 ST students dropped out in the past five years.
 - For IITs, the number of dropouts stood at 2,066 OBC students, 1,068 SC students, and 408 ST students.
 - Similarly, at IIMs, the past five years saw 163, 188, and 91 OBC, SC and ST students, respectively, drop out.
 - The government in its reply insisted, that it is taking measures to ensure students from marginalised backgrounds find a place at these institutes — like providing tuition subsidies, fee waivers, scholarships, coaching schemes, & as per the mandate from the University Grants Commission, the institutes also had SC/ST cells, Grievance Redressal mechanisms, counselling etc.
 - However, a look at just the IITs would show that not all of them have an SC/ST cell, with IIT Delhi setting up their own only in 2023, despite the UGC mandating it a decade ago in its guidelines to promote equity in the institutes.
 - In IIT Bombay, despite the cell having existed, students have complained it neither has the authority nor the physical space to function as effectively as envisioned by the UGC.
 - Education Ministry stated that the dropout rate was high because the students had many other options.
 - The suicide rate in these institutions is also very high. From 2014 to 2021, as per another answer to Parliament, Mr. Venugopal said 122 students committed suicide out of which 24 were from the Scheduled Castes and 41 from the Other Backward Classes.
- END OF THE PRE-MATRICS SCHOLARSHIP**
- The Union Government has stopped pre-matric scholarships for students from class 1 to 8 belonging Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Community (OBC) and minority communities from the academic year 2022-23.
 - The government explained that these students are covered under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which makes it obligatory for the government to provide free and compulsory elementary education (classes 1 to 8) to each and every child.
 - Only students in classes 9 and 10 are now covered under the pre-matric scholarship scheme,

- In a pre-matric scholarship, the Centre & State governments share the financial burden in the ratio of 75:25.
- A student is eligible if parental income from all sources does not exceed ₹2.50 lakh per annum.
- Earlier, it was provided for class 1 to 10 students of SC and OBC communities under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, for ST students under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, and minority community under Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- The amount was ₹225 per month for day scholars and ₹525 per month for hostel residents for a period of 10 months in a year. Books & ad hoc grant for day scholars was ₹750 and ₹1,000 for hostel residents.
- Crores of students had applied for the scholarship in 2022-23 year too. However, the applications of students from class 1 to 8 have been rejected by the Ministry.
- The Union Government has sent notices to all States and Union Territories that Institute Nodal Officer (INO), District Nodal Officer (DNO), State Nodal Officer (SNO) may verify applications only for classes 9 and 10.
- People working in the education sector and parents have opposed the move of the Union Government.
- Dr. V.P. Niranjana, development educationist, called it an 'unfortunate move' and emphasised the need to incentivise children from these communities to enter the educational mainstream.
- "Free uniform, textbooks, cycle, shoes, and scholarships are incentives for poor children coming from SC/ST/backward classes and minority communities to encourage enrolment, attend classes and complete elementary education,
- Riyaz Ahmed from Centre for Educational Research and Analysis (CERA) called it an 'attempt to curtail their (children's) rights and thereby diluting their fundamental right'.
- RTE is a fundamental right. However, pre-matric scholarship is a government scheme for students' educational upliftment.
- The Union Government's move will result in more non-enrolment and dropouts at the elementary stage. It is a regressive step in terms of affirmative action."

DELAYS IN GRANTS

- In Kerala, Students representing Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities organised a mass agitation in protest against the delay in disbursing education grants (e-grants) and scholarships in the last two years.
- Alleging the neglect of Depressed caste and Tribal students by both the Union and State governments.
- The agitators have been demanding
 - the removal of the annual family income limit of ₹2.5 lakh as criterion to receive e-grants,

- the timely disbursement of grants every month,
- clearance of e-grants dues,
- hike in hostel allowances, and
- the withdrawal of orders to provide educational allowances in a single instalment every year.
- Unfortunately, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government, which claims to champion the cause of such sections, chose not to oppose the Centre's move.
- The decision of the State government to make one-time payment of grants as opposed to the Centre's guidelines of releasing its share in four instalments a year has left several students in the lurch
- The policy mismatch has resulted in a mounting backlog of grants payable under e-grants, the State government's centralised distribution system for scholarship and grants, and has led to many beneficiaries facing their certificates withheld by institutions that are yet to receive payments from the government.
- The students also flagged the inadequate academic allowances, including lump sum grant and monthly pocket money, that are not in tune with the prevailing cost of living.

NON-RECOGNITION BY THE STATE

- In response to a question about caste discrimination in higher educational institutes by MDMK MP Vaiko, the Union government in March 2023, told the Rajya Sabha, "No cases of caste discrimination and alienation in SC/ ST students have been reported from IITs in the last 5 years,"
- Mr. Vaiko had asked the Union government about cases of caste discrimination in IITs and Central universities in the last five years, measures taken to address the issues, the number of SC/ST student suicides in these institutes and the reasons for the same.
- In reply, Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar said there was no reported cases of caste discrimination in IITs, in the last five years.
- This, despite internal surveys conducted by IIT-Bombay in 2022, revealing widespread discrimination in the form of students being asked their surnames and ranks, and being made fun of for being a "reservation student".
- On discrimination cases in other Central universities, the government said, "With regard to Central Universities (CUs), no data of caste discrimination is maintained centrally."
- On measures to address issues of caste discrimination in campuses, the government said, "Institutes have set up mechanisms such as SC/ ST students' cells, Equal Opportunity Cell, Student Grievance Cell, Student Grievance Committee, Student Social Club, Liaison officers, Liaison Committee etc.

- Further, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued instructions for eradicating discrimination among students.”
- The government added that from 2018 to 2023, IITs across the country had seen seven suicides of students belonging to SC or ST category (6 SCs and 1 STs). Further, between 2017 to 2021, other Central universities had seen seven suicides of SC students.
- The Education Ministry said that in such cases, besides an internal probe by the institute, both the police and district authorities conduct inquiries. “The reasons behind such suicides were found to be academic stress, family reasons, personal reasons, mental health issues, etc.,”
- In addition, the Education Ministry listed out a slew of measures the institutes, government departments and the University Grants Commission had taken to address issues of language adjustment, mental health, psychological stress, academic pressure, etc.
- However, none of the listed measures included any specific measures to address issues of caste discrimination.

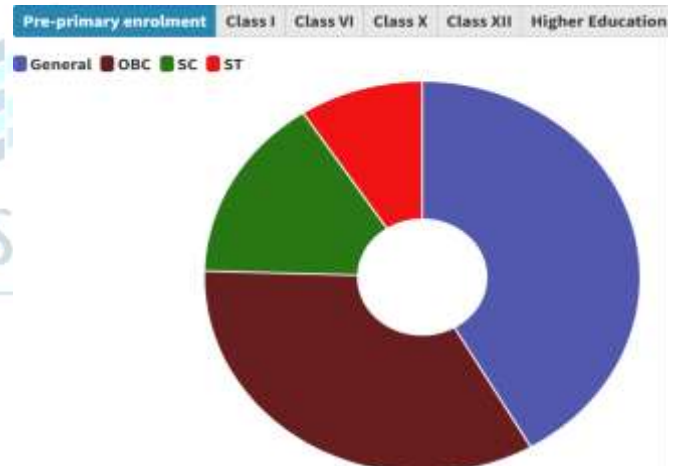
STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

- When LoP pointed out that there were just three OBC officers among 90 secretaries in the Central government, he was pointing to the generic lack of representation of marginalised social groups in the top echelons of government.
- But he was not saying anything new. Although the number of people from historically marginalised social groups in education and employment has increased, the social effects of this have been nullified by the increasing privatisation of education and employment.
- The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21, reaffirmed trends that have been prominent in the last two decades: a rise in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for all social groups and a more representative higher education enrolment pattern.
- The GER stood at 27.3 percent, up from 8.1 in 2000-01 and 20.8 in 2011-12. The female GER overtook the male GER in 2017-18 and has remained higher since.
- The GER for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, at 23.1 and 18.9 per cent, while lower than the overall GER but higher than two decades ago.
- Students from the OBC communities accounted for 35.8 percent of the 41.4 million students who enrolled for higher education, up from 31.2 per cent in 2012-13.
- There is, growing contradiction between aspirations and opportunities – enrolment trend is indicative of the aspirations of all social groups to access education, the lack of public investment in education and the concomitant expansion of the

private sector in education will have the effect of curtailing opportunities for the less privileged sections.

- The AISHE report shows that 65 percent of colleges in India are now private, unaided ones while only 21.4 per cent are government colleges.
- Government colleges account for less than 35 percent of total college enrolment.
- The number of private universities is increasing and so is the number of students enrolling in them.
- The total enrolment in higher education in the 2005-06 to 2010-11 period showed an increase of 13.2 million, this fell dramatically to 6.8 million between 2015-16 and 2020-21.
- The slowing down can be attributed to the absence of an expansion in public institutions of higher education.
- As far as the sector overall is concerned, the share of the SCs, STs, and OBCs has been relatively stable up to the secondary school level and shows a slight dip in the senior school level, only to decline sharply in the higher education level.
- In other words, there is still some distance to go before their representation in education matches their shares in the population.

ALL INDIA DISTRIBUTION



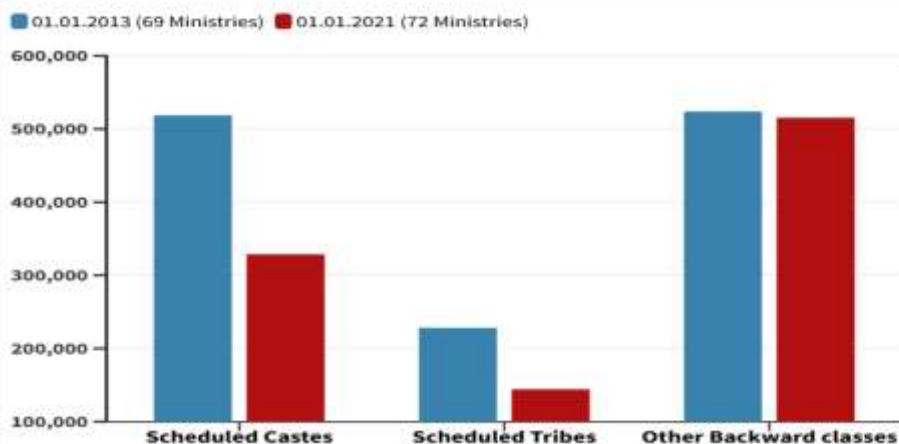
- Access to higher education is seen as a route to jobs, especially government jobs. However, the picture that emerges of public employment where reservation exists is dismal.
- If we consider employment in all Central government services, for example, while the representation of SCs and STs is above the prescribed reservation percentages, that of OBCs—introduced in 1993—continues to be lower, but is increasing.
- The improved percentage of OBCs is accompanied by a sharp reduction in the absolute number of employees, & this is true of the SCs and STs too, because of the overall decline in the number of employees in Central government services.
- As reported in Union Budget documents, the number of employees in Central government establishments has fallen from 33.38 lakh in 2014 to 31.69 lakh in 2022.

- When disaggregated, the representation in Central government services looks less rosy: it is below the prescribed reservation percentages for all three groups in Group A services.
- In Group C services, their representation is much higher & in the *safai karamcharis* component, the SC category employees account for 32.6 percent of the total, disproportionately higher than the quantum of reservation applicable to them.
- The bulk of Group C employees is, therefore,

dominated by OBC & SC categories

- Data from the Public Enterprises Survey show that over five lakh jobs were eliminated between 2014 and 2022 in CPSEs.
- As a result, the number of SC, ST, and OBC employees also declined.
- Similarly, public sector banks saw a fall in the number of employees, from 8.86 lakh (nearly 73 per cent of all bank employees) in 2012-13 to 7.57 lakh (less than 43 per cent of all bank employees) in 2022-23.

Representation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward classes in Central Government services



- While representation of the different categories in public employment might have improved—as it must with implementation of reservation—the declining significance of public sector employment itself means that overall representation is adversely affected.

- In higher education — the teaching and non-teaching staff continue to be much less socially representative in character.
- Of the 15,51,070 teachers in 2020-21 enumerated by the AISHE, 56.2 percent belonged to

the general category, 32.2 per cent were OBCs, while SCs and STs were only 9.1 and 2.5 per cent.

- Among non-teaching staff — with 56.5 per cent from the general category, 24.7 percent from the OBCs, and SCs and STs at 14.4 and 4.4 per cent.
- With higher education becoming increasingly privatised, a significant improvement appears unlikely in the foreseeable future.
- Increasing quotas without redress of structural inequities is a zero-sum game. The 2011, Socio Economic Caste Census showed that marginalised groups had larger proportions of their populations in the lowest income categories and very few in the highest income groups.
- The 2019 All India Debt and Investment Survey (NSS 77th round) showed that the average value of rural household assets was Rs.8,84,000 among STs, Rs.8,79,000 among SCs, Rs.16,45,000 among OBCs, and Rs.26,03,000 in the general (others) category.
- Although the numbers of marginalised individuals in education and employment have increased, the privatisation of these sectors threatens to nullify their social progress.
- The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reveals significant improvements in enrollment across all social groups, but the widening gap between aspirations and opportunities is a cause for concern.
- Private education institutions now dominate, limiting access for less privileged sections of society.

- Public sector employment opportunities are dwindling, impacting the aspirations of individuals from marginalised communities.

ASSET & LAND OWNERSHIP

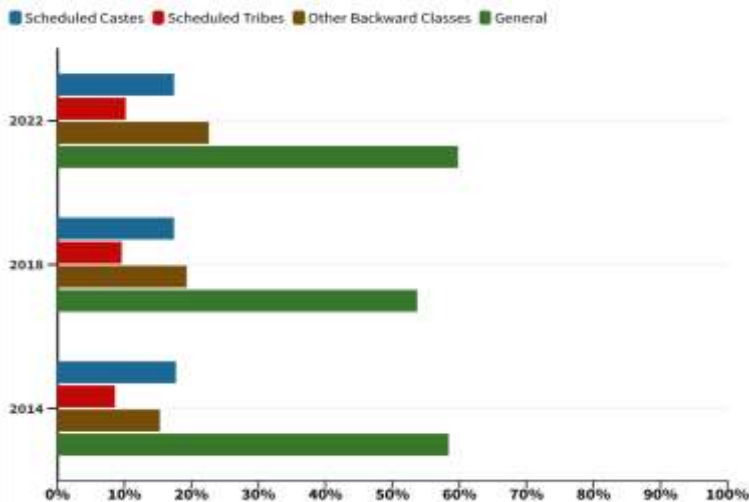
- The 2018-19 Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households of Land and Livestock Holdings in Rural India (NSS Report 587), released in 2021, showed that while SCs made up 21.7 per cent of all rural households, they comprised only 16 percent of agricultural households and owned only 9.5 per cent of the land held by all agricultural households.
- The OBCs made up 45.8 per cent of agricultural households and their share in land ownership was 47.8 per cent, whereas “others” (general) comprised 23.9 per cent of agricultural households and owned 28.7 per cent of land.
- Among non-agricultural households, the SCs were 28.4 per cent, the OBCs 42.8 per cent, and others 18.8 per cent.
- The asset and land ownership pattern also indicates that social groups like the SCs depend more on irregular wage employment
- According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, 38.3 percent of SC workers are in casual employment compared with 12.2 percent among others.
- On the other hand, just 12.7 per cent of STs and 18.8 percent of SCs are in regular wage/salaried

employment compared with 29.8 percent in the case of others.

RESERVATION IN PRIVATE SECTOR

- Reservation for SC, ST, and OBC communities in education and public employment has made a modicum of social and economic mobility possible.
- However, these prospects are now being increasingly thwarted by the secular decrease in the creation of new government jobs and the increasing trend of contractual work.

Representation of SCs, STs, and OBCs in the CPSES



than 60% of SC and OBC reserved positions are vacant, while almost 80% of positions reserved for STs have not been filled.

- This means that out of 24 positions reserved for STs, only five have been filled. For the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), data has only been provided for non-faculty positions.
- Both IITs and IIMs have been lobbying for exemption from such faculty quota requirements.
- Within the Central Universities, vacancies are higher at the level of professors. Out of 709 assistant professor positions reserved for STs at the 42 universities, more than 500 have been filled.
- However, when it comes to professors, only nine positions have been filled out of the 137 reserved for ST candidates.
- This means 93% of these posts remain unfilled.
- Less than 1% of the 1,062 professors in central universities are from ST communities.
- Similarly, 64% of the 2,206 assistant professor positions reserved for OBCs have been filled in the Central Universities. However, less than 5% of the 378 professor positions reserved for OBCs have been filled.
- Mr. Nishank's written response claimed that, "Now, after implementation of 'The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019', the OBC reservation has been implemented at all levels."
- He noted that the Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission (UGC) continuously

- The largest proportion of the shrinking job opportunities is precarious in nature and is available in the private sector, but the private sector's share in the small number of higher salary jobs has also increased.
- This is the background to the demand for reservation in the private sector and within religions.

- While the effect of the Bihar caste survey in pushing the debate on reservation and representation to the next level will only be known at a later date, the findings themselves will mean little unless they trigger a concomitant push for more opportunities of secure employment for these communities.

BACKLOG IN THE VACANCIES

- More than half of the faculty positions reserved for OBCs in central institutions of higher education are vacant, while about 40% of those reserved for Scheduled Castes and Tribes also remain unfilled, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank told Lok Sabha in a written response to a question from three Congress MPs. (2021)

- The situation is particularly acute in the elite Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), where more monitor vacancies, but put the final blame on universities themselves.
- However, the onus of filling up the teaching posts lies on Central Universities which are autonomous bodies created under Acts of Parliament," he said.
- In fact, in June 2019, UGC had written to all Universities, giving them a six month deadline to fill up their vacancies, and warning that grants would be withheld if its directions were violated.
- According to the data presented in the Lok Sabha, there are now 6,074 vacant positions at the 42 universities, of which 75% are in reserved categories.
- Despite a year-long mission mode recruitment drive at the elite Indian Institutes of Technology and Central Universities, just over 30% of identified vacancies were filled, the Education Ministry told Parliament.
- In the one year between September 5, 2021, and September 5, 2022, 23 IITs and 45 Central Universities were directed to conduct a mission mode recruitment to fill up vacancies in teaching positions reserved for three backward communities
- During this period, 1,439 vacancies were identified, against which just 449 recruitments were made.
- Of the 45 Central Universities, 33 had identified a total of 1,097 vacancies in these categories, of which just 212 were filled.

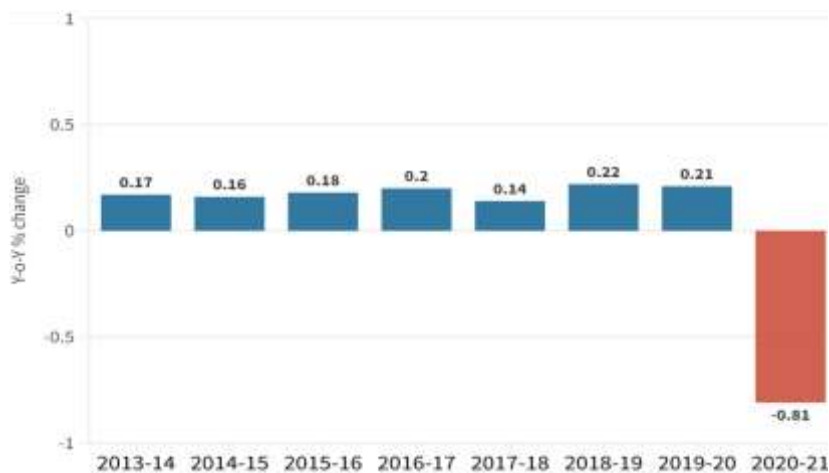
- Out of 33 Universities, 18 had no SC/ST/OBC teaching faculty recruited at all despite having identified vacancies.
- Among these 18 Central Universities, the Jawaharlal Nehru University had identified 75 vacancies, none of which were filled; the Banaras Hindu University identified 114 vacancies, none of which were filled; and the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University identified 7 vacancies, none of which were filled.
- Twelve of the Central Universities conducted almost no recruitment during this drive, saying that they had no backlog and could not identify any vacancies in these categories.
- The data presented in Parliament showed that Central Universities had a combined backlog of over 920 positions in the SC/ST/OBC categories for teaching faculty.
- Of the 23 IITs, only 10 were able to identify 342 vacancies in these categories for positions of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors. A total of 237 positions in these categories were filled at 19 IITs.
- An analysis of the raw data by the Ambedkar Periyar Phule Study Circle (APPSC) of IIT Bombay showed that 13 IITs were unable to identify vacancies to be filled in this recruitment drive because they follow “flexible cadre structure for faculty positions”.
- However, except for three (IIT Hyderabad, IIT Bhilai, IIT Bhubaneswar), the others did recruit a small number of SC/ST/OBC faculty in this time.
- The analysis further showed that 358 vacancies remained at 14 IITs at the end of this mission mode recruitment exercise.
- Of the recruitments done in this time period, the APPSC found that no ST candidates were recruited

at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Roorkee, IIT ISM Dhanbad, IIT Tirupati, IIT Goa and IIT Dharwad.

- Further, no SC candidate was recruited in IIT Roorkee.
- In addition, it was found that most IITs did not recruit SC/ST/OBC candidates at the Professor and Associate Professor levels.

BACKWARDNESS IN THE MINORITIES

- Be it learning or teaching, the Muslim community is lagging behind all communities, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in higher education.
- The AISHE Survey 2020-21 presents a dismal picture of the community.
- At a time when the enrolment of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in higher education improved by 4.2%, 11.9% and 4%, respectively, compared with 2019-20, the Muslim community’s enrolment declined by 8%, numbering around 1,79,000 students.
- This unprecedented decline, caused partially by the COVID-19 pandemic, points to the relative economic impoverishment of the community, which forces its talented students to pursue earning opportunities after completing schooling rather than enrolling for higher education, beginning at the graduation level.
- From 2013 to 2020, the total share of Muslim students in higher education was increasing.
- But in 2020-21, the share of Muslim students was 0.81% lower than what it was in 2019-20
- The most drastic decline was reported from Uttar Pradesh (36%), followed by Jammu and Kashmir (26%), Maharashtra (8.5%) and Tamil Nadu (8.1%).



- In Delhi, every fifth Muslim student failed to enrol for higher education after completing the Senior School Certificate Examination.

- In Uttar Pradesh, where Muslims are about 20% of the population, the community’s enrolment for higher education stands at a mere 4.5% even though the State has reported a significant increase in the number of colleges during the year.

- Kerala is the only State which bucks the trend of Muslims languishing at the bottom of the education pile. Here, 43% Muslims go for higher education.

- The survey presents a bright picture of the OBC community – accounts for 36% of the total

enrolment in higher education in the country. The SCs bring up another 14%. — two communities cover nearly 50% of the seats in universities and colleges.

- The Muslim community proves a laggard, accounting for only 4.6% higher education enrolment though the community’s share in the country’s population stands at over 14%.

- Interestingly, Muslims and other minorities have more female students than male students, pointing to a gradual uplift of the women of the minority communities.

- It also point towards the pressure to earn a living at the earliest on the male members of the community.
- The poor entry-level presence of Muslims in pursuing higher education is mirrored by the equally bleak presence of Muslim teachers in institutions of higher education.
- At an all-India level, teachers belonging to the General Category account for 56% of all teachers.
- OBC, SC and ST teachers make up another 32%, 9% and 2.5% of the teachers, respectively. Muslims constitute only about 5.6% of the teachers.
- In terms of gender, there are 75 female teachers for a 100 male teachers. Here, too, female teachers of the OBC, SC and ST categories are doing better than their Muslim counterparts.
- While there are 71% female OBC teachers and 75% female ST teachers, there are only 59 female Muslim teachers for every 100 male Muslim teachers.
- The highest females per 100 males among non-teaching staff is 85 from Other Minority Communities.
- The Muslims' share is the lowest with 34 females for 100 males.
- According to the AISHE survey, the total estimated enrolment in higher education stands at 4,13,80,71. Nearly 91 lakh students are in universities and constituent units.
- Females students account for 48.67% while the enrolment of male students stands at 51.33%.
- The findings of the survey came five months after the Ministry of Minority Affairs scrapped the Maulana Azad Fellowship for Muslim students pursuing higher education. Separately, the erstwhile BJP government in Karnataka had done away with 4% reservation for Muslims before the Assembly election.
- The report also noted that even though ragging was officially banned, there was unofficial ragging, which had serious caste overtones, for a month.
- The report also suggested that S.C./S.T. students had to face discrimination in examinations, practical work and viva voce.
- It said that they were kept out of administrative responsibilities and many cultural activities in AIIMS.
- The report also noted that the discrimination was so high in AIIMS that S.C./S.T. students were forced to live separately in different floors of the hostels.
- In a similar study done with the economist Paul Attewell, Thorat found caste-based discrimination in the urban labour market too.
- In their study, they found that S.C./S.T. students had much lower chances than upper-caste students of getting an interview call for a job.
- There are very few studies that capture the nature of discrimination. However, the limited evidence indicates that the discrimination that Depressed caste students face assumes various forms.
- They generally face discrimination and stigmatised behaviour in their relations with other students, the faculty, and administration in multiple aspects of their life on the campus—peer groups, friend circles evolved around caste, ethnic and religious identities, which brings about an exclusionary pattern in social life on campus.
- The exclusionary trends are reflected in hostels, in dining rooms, in friendships, in academic support and other spheres – many universities still have separate hostels for each caste and religious group.
- The differential treatment experienced by Depressed caste students in their relation with teachers varies from non-cooperation and lack of support to humiliation and discrimination.
- A representation by a group of teachers from educational institutions in the city of Hyderabad to the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh in 2013 brings out the behaviour that involves hurt and humiliation.
- It must be recognised that discrimination is deeply embedded in social relations, which cannot be captured in straightforward indicators but is experienced by Depressed caste students either directly or in an indirect and invisible manner.
- We have at least three studies that comment on the probable reasons for suicides by Depressed caste students
- An analysis of some suicide cases by Anoop Singh revealed that “there seems to be more than enough evidence to believe that caste discrimination played a significant role in driving these extraordinary individuals into committing suicide” and that “elite professional institutions are the places where caste prejudice is so firmly entrenched that it has become normal”.

EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

- The UPA govt, under a lot of pressure from civil society groups, constituted a three-member committee to inquire into the allegations of differential treatment of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (S.C./S.T.) students in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, in 2006.
- The committee, headed by the economist & former UGC Chairperson Sukhadeo Thorat, released its report in 2007. It pointedly spoke out against many discriminatory practices in the premier institute.
- Institutional measures like remedial classes and English-coaching classes for marginalised students were absent — S.C./S.T. students had to face social and academic isolation at every level of the course—from classrooms and laboratories to hostels and messes

- In the representation to the Andhra Pradesh High Court judge, a group of 29 academics, in a petition to the court, identified failure, fear of failure, administrative indifference, hostile regulations, insults, social and academic stigmatisation and rejection as some of the reasons for suicide by students from marginalised groups.
 - Research done by N. Sukumar, professor of political science, who was also a student of the University of Hyderabad, provides an insight into the general milieu of stigmatisation and discrimination faced particularly by Depressed caste students in the context of Senthil Kumar's suicide [Tamil Nadu] and throws light on how caste comes into play in interactions of Depressed caste students with high-caste students, teachers and administrators
 - It is this exclusionary social milieu that pushes those Depressed caste students who fail to handle the psychological pressure of humiliation to suicide.
 - In fact, academics have ignored the studies on these aspects of university life . We need to conduct methodological studies to better understand the marginal student's life.
 - It has to be recognised that in our higher education system there is a large inter-institutional disparity in quality of education and curriculum.
 - Most Depressed and Adivasi students enter elite institutions with an educational background from public institutions.
 - They often feel intimidated by the advanced curriculum and methods of teaching with which they are not so familiar.
 - Therefore, there is a need to make the curriculum and pedagogy student-friendly, and this demands reforms in the education system.
 - The government should take five steps: a law against discrimination; some form of academic assistance to students by reforming the present remedial schemes; regular fellowship; participation in governance; and a sensitisation programme for students through courses in civic learning, similar orientation programmes for teachers and administrative officials about the problems of discrimination. Overall, the government should look
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- towards creating a more supportive atmosphere for S.C./S.T. students.
 - Personalised academic assistance systems essentially involve identifying the academic needs of each student. Once those needs are identified, the teachers concerned, with the help of senior students, could help each student overcome those difficulties.
 - This system will be better than a general classroom teaching system. This is possible at postgraduate and PhD levels where the number of students is relatively low.
 - Since most marginal students come from poor backgrounds, fellowship is like a maintenance support for them. So the release of fellowships has to be regular.
 - However, there are delays in the releasing of the amount. In such situations, institutions should release the fellowship from their own resources. Above all, what is needed is concern and empathy for the poor. That is lacking.
 - We have one of the most privatised education systems in the world. About 60 per cent of students now go to self-financing institutions. Privatisation has already reduced the access of the poor to self-financing institutions. The proportion of students in the bottom quintile of consumption expenditure is much lower compared to the top quartile.
 - The share of S.Cs and S.Ts in private institutions is lower compared with the rest.
 - Access to higher education, particularly in professional courses, is highly unequal. Unlike European countries, where equal access through public education systems has become a leveller, in India unequal access to higher education has become a source of economic inequalities.
 - The tendency to form political groups around Ambedkar and social identity is because of the hesitation by general students' or teachers' organisations to take up the issues of Depressed caste students or teachers.
 - Often there is a conflict. This leads to the formation of associations built around their own problems.