

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3916  
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2012  
CATEGORIZATION OF CASTES  
Rani Killi Krupa

**Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) the criteria for categorizing of various castes into different categories for reservation in the country;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to constitute a commission to determine categorization of general Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes on economic basis in place of caste basis;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK)

(a) to (d) According to Article 366 (24) of the Constitution of India, 'Scheduled Castes' means such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution'. The criterion for specification of a community as a Scheduled Caste is 'extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the traditional practice of untouchability'.

According to Article 366(25) of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes mean such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of the Constitution. The criterion for specification of a tribe or tribal community as a Scheduled Tribe is 'primitive traits, geographical isolation, distinct culture, seclusion of contact with community at large and economic backwardness'.

Backward Classes, also known as 'Other Backward Classes' (OBCs) are being notified, as such, on the basis of recommendation of the National Commission for Backward Classes, which recommends castes etc for specification as OBCs on the basis of laid down social, educational and economic factors.

The Government had constituted a Commission for Economically Backward Classes to consult State Governments/Union Territories and others to, inter alia, recommend quantum of reservation for economically backward classes not covered by the existing reservation policy.