

Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)

January 6, 2022

In news– A committee constituted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which examined the income criteria for determining who are to be included among the EWS, submitted its report recently.

About the committee-

- It consists of former finance secretary **Ajay Bhushan Pandey**, Indian Council for Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) member secretary V K Malhotra, and Principal Economic Advisor to the Government of India Sanjeev Sanyal.
- It followed the Supreme Court's observation that the income criterion for determining EWS was "arbitrary"(with respect to income criteria).
- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on November 25 2021 submitted that the Centre would revisit the criteria and the committee was set up after that.
- In its report, the committee has said that the **threshold of Rs 8 lakh of annual family income**, in the current situation, seems **reasonable for determining EWS**.
- It has also **retained 5-acre criterion** for exclusion from the EWS category.
- It has **removed criteria related to residential assets**.

About EWS-

- **EWS reservation was granted based on the recommendations of a commission headed by Major General (retd) S R Sinho.**
- The Commission for Economically Backward Classes was constituted by the then UPA government in 2005, and submitted its report in July 2010.

- To implement this, a Cabinet Note dated January 6, 2019 was prepared by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Based on this, the Cabinet in **January 2019 decided to amend the Constitution (103rd Amendment) to provide reservation to EWS.**
- Under the 2019 notification, **persons not covered under reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs, and whose family has a gross annual income below Rs 8 lakh, among other criteria, are to be identified as EWS for benefits of reservation.**
- The Centre had issued a notification for implementing 10% reservation for EWS.
- The notification said income shall include income from all sources i.e. salary, agriculture, business, profession, etc for the financial year prior to the year of application.
- One should not have **residential properties of 1,000 sq ft and above**; residential plots of 100 sq yards and above in notified municipalities; and residential plots of 200 sq yards and above in areas other than the notified municipalities.
- Another criterion is that a person whose family owns or possesses **5 acres of agricultural land or more will be excluded from EWS.**