

# 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.**