

Lokur Committee on criteria for recognition of any community under the ST list

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In news– The Office of the Registrar-General of India (RGI) is following the set of criteria set out by the Lokur Committee nearly 60 years ago to define any new community as a Scheduled Tribes.

Criteria set out by the Lokur Committee-

The criteria set out by the Lokur Committee for defining a community as a tribe are:

- Indications of primitive traits.
- Distinctive culture.
- Geographical isolation.
- Shyness of contact with the community at large.
- Backwardness.

Note: The Office of the RGI's nod is mandatory for the inclusion of any community in ST lists, as per the procedure for scheduling tribes.

Government task force on Scheduling of Tribes-

- The government task force on Scheduling of Tribes constituted under the leadership of then Tribal Affairs Secretary, Hrusikesh Panda in February 2014, had concluded that these criteria(Lokur Committee) may have become obsolete considering the process of transition and acculturation.
- Further, it noted that terms like primitive and the requirement of primitivity to be a characteristic of Scheduled Tribe indicates a condescending attitude by

outsiders.

- **The Task Force had recommended changes to the criteria** in May 2014 and based on this, the Tribal Affairs Ministry had in June 2014 prepared a draft Cabinet note to overhaul the criteria and procedure for scheduling of new communities as STs.
- **The new criteria under the government's consideration included,**
 - Socio-economic, including educational, backwardness, vis-a-vis, the rest of the population of the State.
 - Historical geographical isolation which may or may not exist today.
 - Distinct language/dialect.
 - Presence of a core culture relating to life-cycle, marriage, songs, dance, paintings, folklore.
 - Endogamy, or in case of exogamy, marital relationship primarily with other STs (This criterion is for scheduling of a community as ST and not for determining ST status of an individual).
- The draft Cabinet note also proposed that communities which have adopted a 'Hindu' way of life will not be ineligible merely on this ground.
- It further recommended considering the population of the new community in relation to the existing ST population of the State, adding that all these criteria had to be looked at holistically and none should take precedence over another.