

Seattle bans caste discrimination

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In news– Seattle became the first US city to outlaw caste discrimination, after its local council voted to add caste to the city's anti-discrimination laws.

About the law-

- The legislation banning caste-based discrimination will **prohibit businesses from discriminating based on caste with respect to hiring, tenure, promotion**, workplace conditions, or wages.
- It will **ban discrimination based on caste in places of public accommodation, such as hotels, public transportation**, public restrooms, or retail establishments.
- The law will also **prohibit housing discrimination** based on caste in rental housing leases, property sales, and mortgage loans.
- Basically, the legislation will **recognise caste as a unique basis of discrimination, similar to race or gender**.
- The resolution was moved by Kshama Sawant, Seattle City council member and upper-caste Hindu, and was approved by the Council by six to one vote.

Significance of the move-

- This move has set a precedent for other cities also adopting such laws in the future. As Kshama Sawant's tweet indicates, Seattle is likely to be just the first city in the US to recognise and ban caste-based discrimination.
- A similar trend has been observed in college campuses across the US.

- In December 2019, Brandeis University near Boston became the first US college to include caste in its nondiscrimination policy.
- However, since then, the California State University System, Colby College, Brown University and the University of California, Davis have all adopted similar measures.