

Vanniyars

April 2, 2022

In news- Recently, the Supreme Court upheld the High Court of Madras judgement that had quashed the 10.5 per cent special internal reservation provided by the Tamil Nadu government to Vanniyars, a most backward caste (MBC). The bench referred to the Supreme Court ruling in the **Indra Sawhney case** which had stated that *'caste can be the starting point but not sole basis for reservation'*.

Key updates-

- Tamil Nadu Backward Class Commission had recommended 10.5 per cent reservation for Vanniyars community, after door to door enumeration.
- The state Government had **split the aggregate 20 per cent reservation for MBCs and Denotified Communities in 2012 into three separate categories** by regrouping castes and provided a **ten per cent plus sub-quota** for Vanniyars, formerly known as Vanniakula Kshatriyas.
- The Madras High Court had ruled that **identifying one caste as a separate group for creating an exclusive quota, without any quantifiable data** on its backwardness relative to others, amounted to giving reservation solely on the basis of caste and, therefore, **impermissible under the Constitution**.
- Further, it had noted that the **remaining 115 castes** under the 'MBC and Denotified Communities' category were **forced to share the remaining 9.5%** (in two groups with 2.5% and 7%, respectively) of what used to be a 20% MBC/DNC quota and this amounted to discrimination.

About Vanniyars-

- They are found in the northern part of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.
- **Vanniyakula kshatriya community includes** vanniayar,

vanniya, vannia gounder, gounder, padayachi, palli and agnikula kshatriya.

- **28% population in Tamil Nadu and 65% population in Pondicherry** belong to Vannia Kula Kshatriyar caste.
- **Famous titles that Vannia uses are** Padayatchi, Gounder, Reddiar, Kander, Palli, Naicker, Nayaka, Adiyaman and others.
- They **organised state-wide agitations in the mid-1980s demanding an exclusive 20 per cent reservation** in the state and 20 per cent in central services.

History of reservation in Tamil Nadu-

- Tamil Nadu had 25 percent reservation for OBCs and 16 percent for SCs and STs in 1951.
- It was the first **M.Karunanidhi government that increased OBC reservation to 30 percent** and **SC, ST reservation to 18 percent** in 1971.
- Later, an exclusive 20 per cent reservation was carved out for MBCs in 1989.

The **current reservation breakup of the state comprises 69 percent** – which includes 30 per cent for BCs (including Christians and Muslims), 20 per cent for MBCs, 18 per cent for SCs and 1 percent for the ST community.