

## Rajasthan gives 1% quota to Most Backward Classes

Agitators prevail:Gujjars squat on railway tracks in Bharatpur, Rajasthan.file photo: PTI

The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Rajasthan has issued orders for granting 1% reservation to the Most Backward Classes, comprising Gujjars and four other nomadic communities, within the 50% ceiling mandated by the Supreme Court. The State Cabinet had approved the decision last month and sent it for the Governor's consent.

The overall reservation in the State stood at 49% before the decision. Along with Gujjars, nomadic communities Banjara, Gadia-Lohar, Raika and Gadariya were included among the Other Backward Classes for quota in the government jobs and educational institutions.

Though Gujjars have been demanding sub-categorisation of OBC quota for extending the benefit to them, the State government has gone ahead with its decision to create MBCs and given it the quota while not exceeding the 50% limit. An official spokesperson said here on Tuesday that the roster for lateral reservation, which was unreserved, had been reserved for MBCs.

The State Assembly had on October 26, 2017, passed a Bill creating the "most backward" category within the OBCs for Gujjars and four other nomadic communities and given 5% reservation to them, while increasing the OBC quota from 21% to 26% and taking the overall quota in the State to 54%.

### Govt. restrained

However, the Rajasthan High Court restrained the State government from implementing the provisions of the Bill on November 9, 2017. Later, the Supreme Court restrained the State government from taking any action or decision on the administrative side or in any manner conferring the benefit of reservation, which would have the result of crossing the total reservation beyond 50%.

Gujjar leader Kirori Singh Bainsla and the Gujjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti members, who have been interacting with a Cabinet sub-committee tasked with finding a solution to the quota issue, have maintained that making a provision for sub-quota within the OBC quota is the "only solution" available in the matter.

Gujjars and others were earlier grouped as a special backward class and the State government had tried thrice to grant 5% reservation to them.

However, the legislation was struck down every time by the High Court, which ruled that the quota had not only exceeded the 50% limit, but was also not supported by the quantifiable data supporting the claim of Gujjars' backwardness.

END