

CENTRE SEEKS URGENT LISTING OF EWS RESERVATION CASE TODAY

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

The Union government on Monday pressed the Supreme Court to list on Tuesday the hearing of a case raising questions about the Rs. 8-lakh income criterion for identifying economically weaker sections (EWS) to provide them reservation in admissions and jobs.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, made an oral mentioning to urgently list the case on Tuesday.

The case is originally scheduled for January 6. The Centre has filed a committee report in the Supreme Court which supports the Rs. 8-lakh income threshold as a “reasonable” basis to determine EWS.

All-India quota

The report is the result of the Supreme Court’s repeated grilling of the government, since October, to explain how it zeroed in on the figure of Rs. 8 lakh as the annual income criterion to identify EWS among forward classes of society for grant of 10% reservation in NEET medical admissions under the all-India quota (AIQ) category. The court was hearing a batch of petitions filed by NEET aspirants challenging a July 29 notification of the Centre announcing a 27% quota to OBCs and 10% reservation to EWS in AIQ.

The Supreme Court’s query was significant as the One Hundred and Third Constitutional Amendment of 2019, which introduced the 10% EWS quota, is itself under challenge before a larger Bench. The amendment is under question for making economic criterion as the sole ground for grant of reservation benefits.

Committee report

On November 25, the Centre had informed the court that it had taken a considered decision to revisit the criterion for determining EWS. The Union government then formed an expert committee comprising former Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey; ICSSR Member Secretary V.K. Malhotra; and Principal Economic Adviser to the Government of India Sanjeev Sanyal. The committee submitted its report to the government on December 31.

“The current gross annual family income limit for EWS of Rs. 8 lakh or less may be retained. In other words, only those families whose annual income is up to Rs. 8 lakh would be eligible to get the benefit of EWS reservation,” the report said.

The committee said the Rs. 8 lakh criterion strikes a “fine balance” between over-inclusion and inclusion errors.

“The figure ensures that most low-income people who are not required to pay income tax are not excluded and are covered in EWS and at the same time it should not be so high that it becomes over-inclusive by including many incomes tax-paying middle and high income families into EWS. Therefore, considering that the currently effective Income Tax exemption limit is around Rs. 8 lakh for individuals, the committee is of the view that the gross annual income limit of Rs. 8 lakh

for the entire family would be reasonable for inclusion into EWS," the report reasoned.

Our code of editorial values

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© Zuccess App by crackIAS.com

crackIAS.com