



Competitive Backwardness

Why in news?

\n\n

\n

- A study analysed large-scale data from the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) and compared Patels, Marathas and Jats to other major groups.

\n

\n\n

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- The Jat agitation for quotas is back with additional demands for withdrawal of charges against those booked for the protests last year.

\n

- The Patidar agitation is on the verge of revival.

\n

- Maratha community reiterated the demand to be designated as one of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) during the second half of 2016.

\n

- Thus the demand by powerful groups to be considered “backward”, based on the narrative of deprivation and marginalisation continues to be a major issue.

\n

\n\n

What is Competitive backwardness?

\n\n

It refers not only to more and more people wanting to claim backwardness, but also to more and more people claiming even greater backwardness.

\n\n

What are the findings of the study?

\n\n

\n

- The study found that these three castes are closer to the socio-economically dominant caste groups like Brahmins and Other Forward Castes in their respective states on a variety of indicators.

\n

- These indicators include per capita consumption expenditure (PCCE), poverty status, educational attainment and occupational status compared to the existing disadvantaged groups i.e OBCs, SC/STs.

\n

- e.g the PCCE of the Jats is 33 and 43 per cent more than that of the OBCs and SC-STs and not different from that of the Brahmins and Forward Castes, Patels are 5 & 15% less likely to be poor as compared to the OBCs and SC-STs.

\n

- It found that Jats, Patels and Marathas have increased their relative advantage between 2004-05 and 2011-12.

\n

- Thus, the analysis shows that not only do Jats, Patels and Marathas possess an advantage over the lower-ranked marginalised groups they also have consolidated their relative position.

\n

- It also found that though the relative advantage of the Jats, Patels and Marathas in the agricultural sector is greater than in the non-agricultural sector, they still do better in absolute terms than the socially disadvantaged groups in the non-agricultural sector.

\n

- This indicates that the narrative of being backward is largely based on perceptions, and has little empirical support in the data.

\n

\n\n

What is the reason for agitation?

\n\n

\n

- This raises a question about the factors that underlie in creating and sustaining powerful movements, which have been sufficiently large and disruptive, in spite of lack of any support of data

\n

- Jats, Marathas and Patels are among the most powerful communities in their

respective states.

\n

- Land ownership and cultivation have been their economic backbone.
- They are well connected to local political networks, both within and outside their communities, and that this might be an important factor underlying their massive mobilisation.
- These communities feel their power slipping away or eroding, in addition to feeling ill prepared to shift towards urban, formal sector livelihood opportunities.
- They feel that the real economic power lies in the hands of the big corporations, and the state, overtly or covertly, acts in their interest.
- Individuals or communities that feel strongly that the odds of economic success are stacked against them, are more likely to feel deprived.

\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

\n

- It should be noted that given increasing privatisation, the total jobs eligible for reservations is already shrinking.
- Data also shows that existing OBCs and SC-STs are increasingly lagging behind upper castes in a range of material indicators.
- In this context, extending quotas to relatively richer and powerful groups would amount to diluting the already small and shrinking entitlement for communities that are truly disadvantaged and discriminated against.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n



IAS PARLIAMENT

Information is Empowering

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative