



**COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF
OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES**



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Constitution and Functions

Consequent upon the adoption of a Motion moved in the Lok Sabha on 21 December, 2011 by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources, a Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes was first constituted in June, 2012. Since then, the Committee is being reconstituted every year for the term of one year at a time. The Committee consists of 30 Members; 20 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha. The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst the Members of the Committee.

A Minister is not eligible for election to the Committee. A Member of the Committee, after being appointed as Minister, ceases to be a Member of the Committee from the date of such appointment.

The Members of the Committee shall hold office for a period of one year from the date of the first sitting of the Committee which shall be reconstituted thereafter for one year at a time.

The functions of the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes are:-

- (i) To consider the reports submitted by the National Commission for Backward Classes and to report to both the Houses as to the measures that should be taken by the Union Government in respect of matters within the purview of the Union Government, including the Administrations of the Union territories;
- (ii) To report to both the Houses on the action taken by the Union Government and the Administrations of the Union territories on the measures proposed by the Committee;
- (iii) To examine the measures taken by the Union Government to secure the representation of the Other Backward Classes, particularly the Most Backward Classes, in services and posts under its control (including appointments in the public sector undertakings, statutory and semi-Government Bodies and in the Union territories) having regard to the provisions of the Constitution;
- (iv) To report to both the Houses on the working of the welfare programmes for the Other Backward Classes in the Union territories;
- (v) To consider generally and to report to both the Houses on all matters concerning the welfare of the Other Backward Classes which fall within the purview of Union Government, including the Administrations of Union territories; and
- (vi) To examine such matters as may deem fit to the Committee or are specifically referred to it by the House or the Speaker.

Thus, the Committee have mandate to examine all the Ministries/Departments under Government of India and Union territories' administration. The Committee does not consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned Ministries/Departments.

The Committee also does not generally consider the matters which are under examination by the other Parliamentary Committees.

The Committee, like other Parliamentary Committees, have all the power to call for the detailed information from the Ministries of the Government, Public Undertakings, Public Sector Banks and various organizations in respect of subjects taken up by the Committee for examination and to examine official and non-official witnesses.

Procedure of Work of the Committee

The Committee, soon after its constitution, selects such subjects as it may deem fit pertaining to the welfare of Other Backward Classes. The Committee may also examine matters of special interest relating to the welfare of Other Backward Classes which may arise, or come to light, in the course of its working or which may be specifically referred to the Committee by the House or by the Speaker.

The Committee may undertake “on-the-spot” visits to various States and UTs, if considered necessary, to study the problems of Other Backward Classes and the measures taken by the Government/UT Administration for redressal.

During such study visits, no formal evidence is recorded nor any decision taken. Later, in the light of these informal discussions and the memoranda and other information received by the Committee, officials and where considered necessary, non-official witnesses are invited to tender evidence at the sittings of the Committee held in Parliament House Complex.

The procedure for examination of official/non-official witnesses, as laid down by the Committee, is as follows:-

- (i) The programme for taking the evidence of the officials and non-officials on various subjects under examination by the Committee is drawn up and the witnesses are invited to appear before the Committee on the appointed dates to tender evidence. As a rule, examination of non-officials precedes that of the officials on the subjects concerned.
- (ii) The purpose of examining the witnesses is to obtain information on the working of the organizations and subjects concerned which are examined by the Committee.
- (iii) In the case of official witnesses, generally the Secretary of the Ministry and head of the Organization/Undertaking are the principal witnesses.
- (iv) The Chairperson or the Convenor then asks questions.
- (v) After the queries raised by the Chairperson or the Convenor, other Members who so desire, seek clarifications or elucidation of the points under discussion one by one.

Report and Minutes

The conclusions of the Committee on a subject are contained in its report which, after adoption by the Committee, is presented by the Chairperson to the Lok Sabha. A copy of the Report is also laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha. Minutes of the sittings of the Committee are presented/laid along with the report on the Table of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha.

Action Taken Reports

After presentation of Report to Lok Sabha, copies thereof are forwarded to the Ministry or the Department concerned which is required to take action on the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Report and furnish action taken replies thereon within three months.

Action Taken replies received from the Ministries/Departments are examined and then action taken reports of the Committee are presented to Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha in the usual manner.

Statements of Action Taken on Action Taken Reports

Replies received from the Government in respect of recommendations contained in the Action Taken Reports are also laid on the Table of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha in the form of Statements.

Disposal of Complaints/Representations

The Committee also receive complaints/ representations from the Other Backward Classes people and also from various OBC Employees Associations ventilating their grievances on matters pertaining to their welfare. The complaints/representations received in the Secretariat are examined and genuine cases are referred to Union/State Government authorities for redressal or comments.

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