Mathrubhumi

Govt to review creamy layer criteria for OBC

New Delhi: The government will review the 'creamy layer' criteria for Other Backward Classes (OBC) by the end of this year, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thawarchand Gehlot said today.

At present, 27 per cent quota in government jobs and educational institutions is given to OBCs, provided the annual income of the family is up to Rs six lakh. Those with higher earnings are referred to as the 'creamy layer' and are not eligible for reservation.

"There is a provision to review the creamy layer definition and other criteria for reservations after every three years. And the last review of the OBC reservation was done in 2013," Gehlot told PTI here.

Minister of State for Social Justice Ramdas Athawale had yesterday pitched for extending the reservation limit from the present 50 per cent to 75 per cent, with an additional 25 percent for economically backward classes in all castes.

Gehlot's comment comes in the backdrop of a large number of vacancies in government jobs meant for OBCs remaining unfilled for want of candidates.

According to sources, the Social Justice Ministry is working on a proposal to raise the annual income ceiling of OBCs to Rs eight lakh. Raising the ceiling would result in a larger pool of candidates being eligible for government jobs and seats in educational institutions.
Earlier, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) had recommended more than doubling this income ceiling to Rs 15 lakh. "Even two decades after reservation (was introduced), out of the 27 per cent allocated quota, it has been seen that only 12-15 percent gets utilised. As per our analysis, the major reason behind this is the ceiling on annual income," NCBC member Ashok Saini had said.

As per the Mandal Commission report, in 1980 OBCs constituted 52 per cent of India's population. The panel's report was based on the 1931 census. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) had in 2006 pegged the OBC population at 41 per cent.