

Telangana to hike quota for Muslims, STs

The Telangana government is planning to formulate a special legislation to increase reservations for Muslims and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities in proportion to their population in the state.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said the state Cabinet would deliberate on the subject and it would be followed by a special session of the Assembly. Muslims constitute 12.4% of the state's 3.52 crore population, while STs account for 9.8%. At present, there is a 4% quota for Muslims and 6% for tribal communities in government jobs and educational institutions.

As of now, the total quota in the state has been capped at 50% in tune with the Supreme Court guidelines. The Other Backward Castes (OBCs) are entitled to 25% reservations, the SCs and STs together have 21%, while Muslims are entitled to 4% quota.

“It is a constitutional obligation to provide reservations to weaker sections in proportion to their population. We will consider reservation to Muslims and STs based on their population, following the Tamil Nadu model,” Rao said.

Since Telangana has a larger population of the underprivileged sections, it deserves a special pattern of quota system, he said. The Muslim reservation policy has been caught in a prolonged legal quagmire ever since it was first mooted in 2004 in the combined Andhra Pradesh by the then Congress government headed by the late Y S Rajasekhara Reddy.

The quota for Muslims in jobs and educational institutions should be such that the total reservations do not exceed 50%. Though the apex court had given interim clearance for the quota policy, the final verdict on the matter is still awaited.