

27% quota for OBCs from 2007

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Number of seats to be increased to protect the interests of all sections of students

NEW DELHI: The United Progressive Alliance and the Left Parties announced on Tuesday that 27 per cent of the seats in Central educational institutions would be available to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from June 2007.

Simultaneously, the Government will increase the number of seats. An Oversight Committee will be set up to draw a time-bound road map for implementing the decisions. It will submit its report by August 31, taking into account the recommendations of academicians/administrators.

The UPA Coordination Committee and the Left Parties met in two sessions here to take stock of the two-year performance of the Manmohan Singh Government. The reservation issue took up most of the three-and-a-half-hour evening session. The Left parties insisted that the Government send out a clear message that it was committed to implementing the reservation policy.

Talking to presspersons, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said it was decided that the Constitution amendment providing for reservation be implemented in letter and in spirit. Legislation would be brought in during the monsoon session to provide for the quota. Keeping in view the interests of all sections, the number of seats would be increased.

Apart from the Oversight Committee, smaller groups consisting of deans, directors and Vice-Chancellors would be constituted to work out details for each class of institutions (such as IITs and IIMs).

The Oversight Committee would put together the recommendations of these groups and submit a comprehensive report. It was indicated that the Committee would include the University Grants Commission Chairman and Planning Commission Member in-charge of education.

The Government also shared with the participants of the meeting the report of the Group of Ministers. The average intake could go up by over 50 per cent to ensure that the general category did not lose out. This was estimated to cost Rs. 7,800 crore in non-recurring and Rs. 2,200 crore in recurring expenditure. The plan would take three-five years for implementation. Faculty shortage could be overcome by re-employing retired teachers up to 65 years.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/24/stories/2006052418801600.htm>