

Quotas for OBCs ` for first time since Independence'

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Constitution ` provides for reservations for backward classes, citizens' Constitution ` provides for reservations for backward classes, citizens'

? *Arguments of anti-reservationists baseless*
? *Such move taken after 60 years of freedom*

TAMBARAM: Welcoming the proposed 27 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes in Central Government education institutions, speakers at a discussion held here on Sunday said that arguments of anti-reservationists were only aimed at muddying the waters.

Addressing the meet organised by the Puratchi Kavignan Bharathidasan Kalai Ilakkiya Mandram, the speakers said that the move ensured reservations in these institutions to the OBCs for the first time since independence.

V. Aanai Muthu organising secretary of the Marxist Periyarist Communist Party (MPCP) and an architect of the Mandal Commission recommendations, cited Constitutional provisions calling for reservations for backward classes and citizens. Though no time frame was set in the Constitution, he said the argument of some critics that B.R. Ambedkar himself wanted reservation only for 10 years, were baseless.

He recalled that as early as in May 1961, the Union Cabinet had decided not to allow any form of reservation in either jobs or in education. Due to sustained efforts by political parties, Bihar announced a reservation for BCs in jobs in 1978, followed by Punjab and Rajasthan. Yet, the Centre woke up to the issue only after the Mandal Commission findings, the 81-year-old Mr. Muthu said.

He said the demands to exclude the creamy layer from the benefits of reservation should be discouraged.

"Reservation for OBCs has come only now, after nearly 60 years of independence. Let them enjoy the benefits and improve and then let us decide about the creamy layer," he said. Emeritus scientist M. Dayanandan said anti-reservationist arguments that it would lead to merit taking a back seat, that the creamy layer would walk away with all benefits and that it would divide society, were only made to block social justice.

Johnson Wesley, a teacher with Corley Government Boys Higher Secondary School, presided over the meeting which was attended by activists, students, members of political parties and the public.

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/2006/06/07/stories/2006060718110400.htm>