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SHREYAS SCHEME FOR SC AND OBC STUDENTS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the topic details "SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students". This topic has relevance in the "Social Justice" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students?

What are its sub-schemes?

For Mains:

GS2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The **SHREYAS (Scheme for Higher Education and Research Yielding Accelerated Growth of Students)** scheme has been instrumental in empowering thousands of students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). Since its inception in 2014, the scheme has allocated over 2300 crore rupees to support the education of SC and OBC students.

SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students Overview

- The SHREYAS scheme is an umbrella scheme that comprises four central sector sub-schemes:
 - **Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs**
 - **Top-Class Education for SCs**
 - **National Overseas Scheme for SCs**
 - **National Fellowship for SCs**
- The **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment** scheme aims to provide educational and financial support to economically disadvantaged SC and OBC students to pursue higher education and achieve their academic and career goals.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the SHREYAS scheme, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a member of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- Have a total family income of less than Rs. 8 lakhs per annum
- Meet the specific eligibility criteria for each sub-scheme

Benefits

- The benefits provided by the SHREYAS scheme vary depending on the sub-scheme. However, all sub-schemes provide financial assistance to cover the cost of tuition, living expenses, and other educational expenses.

Sub-Scheme Details

- **Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs**

- **Objective:** To provide free coaching to SC and OBC students for competitive and entrance examinations
- **Eligibility:** Students who have passed the 12th class examination are preparing for competitive and entrance examinations such as JEE, NEET, UPSC Civil Services Examination, etc.
- **Benefits:** Full tuition fee and non-refundable charges, as well as a monthly stipend to cover living expenses

- **Top-Class Education for SCs**

- **Objective:** To provide full financial support to SC students to pursue higher education at top-ranked institutions in India
- **Eligibility:** SC students who have secured admission to a top-ranked institution in India, such as an IIT, NIT, IIM, or AIIMS
- **Benefits:** Full tuition fee and non-refundable charges, as well as an academic allowance to cover living expenses

- **National Overseas Scheme for SCs**

- **Objective:** To provide financial assistance to SC students to pursue master's and Ph.D. level courses abroad
- **Eligibility:** SC students who have secured admission to a top-500 QS-ranked foreign university/institution
- **Benefits:** Full tuition fee, maintenance and contingency allowance, visa fee, to and fro air passage, etc.

- **National Fellowship for SC Students**

- **Objective:** To provide fellowships to SC students to pursue M.Phil./Ph.D. degrees in Indian universities/institutions/colleges
- **Eligibility:** SC students who have qualified for the UGC-NET-JRF or UGC-CSIR Joint Test
- **Benefits:** Fellowship amount, contingency allowance, and HRA

The SHREYAS scheme is a valuable resource for SC and OBC students pursuing higher education. The scheme provides much-needed financial and educational support to help students achieve their academic and career goals.

Sources: SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students

Q1. Which of the following options correctly describes the SHREYAS Scheme?

1. A scheme to provide quality residential education for meritorious Scheduled Castes (SC) students.
2. A scheme to provide quality residential education for meritorious Scheduled Tribes (ST) students.
3. A scheme to provide educational and financial support to economically disadvantaged SC and OBC.

4. A scheme to develop more than 14500 PM SHRI Schools managed by Central Government/State/UT Government/local bodies.

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

- **Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs**
- **National Overseas Scheme for SCs**
- **Residential Schools for SC and OBCs**
- **Scholarship Scheme for OBCs**

How many of the above given are sub schemes of SHREYAS scheme?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (b)

Q3. Enumerate and evaluate the various government initiatives the Government of India took to improve education in SC, ST, OBC, and minority communities.

Gaurav Nikumbh

WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the Topic details "Women's Reservation Bill". This Topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Women's reservations?

For Mains:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Why is it Required?

Various aspects of the Women's Reservation Bill?

Why in the news:

The bill proposing reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies was presented in Parliament on Tuesday

Background:

- In 1996, the Lok Sabha saw the introduction of the Constitution (81st Amendment) Bill, aiming to reserve one-third of seats for women in Parliament and state legislatures. A Joint Committee recommended changes to ensure clarity in the wording and suggested extending reservations to the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils, even considering the inclusion of reservations for

Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The committee proposed a 15-year reservation period, Subject to review.

- Attempts by BJP-led NDA Government From 1998 to 2004, the BJP-led NDA government made multiple efforts to pass the Bill. However, these attempts faced opposition from coalition partners and other quarters.
- Push by UPA The UPA government took up the cause in 2008, introducing the Bill in the Rajya Sabha. It was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, which recommended its passage without delay. In 2010, the Rajya Sabha passed the Bill with a two-thirds majority. Despite this, due to internal differences within the UPA and the Cabinet, the Bill never made it to the Lok Sabha and lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lower House.
- BJP reiterated its commitment to the cause in its manifestos for the 2014 and 2019 elections. The party recognized women as a significant constituency, benefiting from women-focused welfare schemes like the Ujjwala Yojna.

Why is it Required?

- **Increasing Women Participation:** Over the years, there has been a gradual and consistent rise in the number of women candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections, from a mere 45 in 1957 to 726 in 2019. This trend signifies growing interest and engagement of women in the political process.
- **Rising Women's Turnout:** Women's participation in the electoral process has also shown a positive trajectory. In 1962, 46.6% of women electors exercised their voting rights, and this figure increased to 67.2% in 2019. This demonstrates an increasing awareness and involvement of women in shaping the nation's future.
- **Disparity in Representation:** Despite the increasing participation of women in elections, their representation in the Lok Sabha remains disproportionately low. In the inaugural Lok Sabha in 1952, there were 22 women MPs, constituting 4.41% of the total 489 members. While the 2019 elections saw a record high of 78 women elected, it still only accounted for 14.36% of the total. This falls significantly short of the envisioned 33% reservation in the Women's Reservation Bill.

Various aspects of the Women's Reservation Bill

- **Empowerment of Women:** The Women's Reservation Bill would facilitate affirmative action, promoting the empowerment of women in the political sphere. Similar efforts at the grassroots level, such as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which reserves seats for women in panchayats, have led to gender-sensitive decision-making, increased responsiveness to women's issues, and greater participation of women in local governance.
- **Decriminalization of Politics:** Increasing the representation of women in legislatures could potentially contribute to the decriminalisation of politics. Research indicates that women legislators are less likely to face criminal charges than their male counterparts. This could lead to cleaner and more ethical politics.
- **Distraction from Electoral Reforms:** Critics argue that the focus on women's reservation may divert attention away from other crucial electoral reforms, such as improving intra-party democracy, reducing the influence of money in politics, and enhancing transparency. These broader reforms are seen as necessary for improving the overall quality of Indian democracy.
- **Limiting Voter Choice:** Another concern is that reserving seats for women could limit voters' choices. In constituencies reserved for women, voters may not have the opportunity to elect

their preferred candidate based on merit, regardless of gender. This could lead to situations where less-qualified candidates are elected simply because of gender-based reservations.

- **Incentive to Work:** Critics also argue that the rotation of reserved constituencies may limit the incentive for women MPs to work effectively. Knowing that they will not be re-elected from the same constituency in the next term may reduce their motivation to invest in long-term development projects in their constituencies.

The Women's Reservation Bill is a complex issue with both advantages and disadvantages. The debate surrounding it involves considerations of gender equality, effective governance, and electoral reforms, and policymakers must weigh these factors carefully when making decisions about its implementation.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-politics/womens-reservation-history-rajiv-gandhi-narasimha-rao-8945826/>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the Women's Reservation Bill:

1. The Women's Reservation Bill proposes to reserve 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women
2. Several Indian states have enacted legal provisions to ensure 50% reservation for women in local bodies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding the Women's Reservation Bill:

1. The 73rd amendments to the Constitution mandated the reservation of one-third of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions
2. The Bill proposes that reservation of seats for women will cease to exist 30 years after the commencement

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Q.3 Discuss the contemporary status of women's representation in Indian politics. Analyze the significance of the Women's Reservation Bill in addressing gender disparities in legislative bodies.

Rishabh