

**10-10-2022**

## **Criteria for Scheduled Caste Status**

### **Why in Newspapers?**

Recently, the Supreme Court asked the government to clarify its stand on a petition challenging the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1950 and the inclusion of Dalit Christians under 'Scheduled Castes'.

### **Quick Issue?**

- Central government: ruled out the possibility of including Dalit Christians as members of the Scheduled Castes in the year 2019.
- A list of 'Depressed Classes' classified under the Imperial Order of 1936 and specifically excluded "Indian Christians".

### **Historical Background?**

- Only Hindus are recognized as 'Scheduled Castes' in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1950.
- **Amendments of 1956 and 1990 in this order:-**
  - In the 1956 amendment, Dalits who had converted to Sikhism were included in the 'Scheduled Castes'.
  - In the 1990 amendment, Dalits who had converted to Buddhism were included in the 'Scheduled Caste'.
- **Both these amendments were supported by the following reports:-**
  - Kaka Kalelkar Commission constituted in 1955.
  - Minorities, SC/Committee formed in 1983.
- **Reasons for exclusion of 'Dalit Christians' from the list of 'Scheduled Castes':**
  - Practice of untouchability: Untouchability was only a feature of Hinduism and its branches, while it was not practiced in Islam or Christianity.
- The Registrar General of India (RGI) had cautioned the government that 'Scheduled Caste Status' is for communities suffering from social disabilities arising out of the practice of untouchability.
- A mandate in rules for inclusion was formulated in the year 1999 and it requires the approval of the Registrar General of India (RGI). An amendment was passed in the year 1990 to include Buddhist converts as 'Scheduled Castes'.

### **Other Key Facts?**

#### **About Registrar General of India (RGI)**

- RGI was established in 1961 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Its function is to prepare a systematic collection of data on the size of population, its growth etc.
- Later, this office was also entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the Birth and Death Registration Act, 1969 in the country.
- It conducts and analyzes the results of demographic surveys (including the Census of India and the Linguistic Survey of India).



## **RBI will launch India's official Digital Currency**

### **Why in Newspapers?**

On 7 October this year, the Reserve Bank of India launched a concept note to raise public awareness about the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

### **Quick Issue?**

- The recently released concept note discusses key ideas such as technology and design options, possible uses of the digital rupee, issuance mechanism and other such topics.

### **Historical Background?**

- The purpose of the concept note is to create awareness about the features of a CBDC, specifically the Digital Rupee.
- It also provides clarification regarding the approach of the central bank towards the introduction of CBDC.
- It also examines the consequences of the introduction of CBDCs in the banking system, financial stability, monetary policy and personal privacy.
- The concept note highlighted the importance of a comprehensive legal framework to support the issuance of the digital rupee as another form of Indian currency.
- It called for an amendment to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act to include the digital rupee in the definition of the word "bank note" and a new clause in the Act to include CBDC-related facilities with necessary exemptions.
- The design of the Digital Rupee will be decided based on the circumstances and needs so that it can compete with the goals of financial and monetary stability.
- The launch of Digital Rupee will bring several benefits, such as reduction in overall currency management cost, reducing settlement risk as well as reducing dependence on cash.
- **SC Garg Committee Recommendations (2019)**
  - Prohibit the mining, owning, trading or dealing in crypto currencies in any form.
  - The committee recommended a punishment of imprisonment ranging from one to 10 years for exchanging or trading in digital currency.
  - The committee had proposed monetary penalty up to three times the loss caused to the exchequer or profit earned by the crypto currency user, whichever is higher.
  - However, the committee also advised the government to keep its mind open on the 'possibility of issuing crypto currencies by the Reserve Bank of India'.

### **Other Key Facts?**

#### **Digital Rupee**

- The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the release of e-rupee or digital rupee during the budget of 2022. The central bank has proposed to issue two versions of CBDC – wholesale for interbank settlement and retail for the public. The purpose of CBDC is to foster innovation, reduce transaction costs and promote financial inclusion.

