

National Commission for Scheduled Castes

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) is a constitutional body that works to safeguard the interests of the scheduled castes in India. It seeks to offer the SC community protection from discrimination and exploitation, as well as providing facilities to uplift the SC community. Article 338 of the constitution of India deals with this commission.

Important constitutional bodies are significant segments of the UPSC syllabus. The NCSC is a very important body in India as it deals with the scheduled castes and their development.

National Commission for Scheduled Castes Functions

1. Monitoring and investigating all issues concerning the safeguards provided for the SCs under the constitution.
2. Enquiring into complaints relating to the deprivation of the rights and safeguards of the SCs.
3. Taking part in and advising the central or state governments with respect to the planning of socio-economic development of the SCs.
4. Regular reporting to the President of the country on the implementation of these safeguards.
5. Recommending steps to be taken to further the socio-economic development and other welfare activities of the SCs.
6. Any other function with respect to the welfare, protection, development and advancement of the SC community.

National Commission for Scheduled Castes Composition

- Currently, the fifth NCSC is in progression.
- **National SC Commission Chairman: Dr Ram Shankar Katheria**
- Apart from the Chairman, there is a Vice-chairman and three other members.

NCSC History

- Initially, the constitution provided for the appointment of a **Special Officer** under Article 338.
- This special officer was designated as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- In 1987, the government, upon pressure from various Members of Parliament, decided to form a multi-member commission for the welfare of the SCs and STs instead of a one-member commission.
- The **65th Amendment** to the constitution replaced the one-member system with a multi-member **National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**. The Constitution (65th Amendment) Act 1990, amended Article 338 of the Constitution. The newly

formed National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes consisted of 5 members apart from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Commission.

- The 89th Amendment in 2003 replaced this Commission with the following with effect from 2004:
 - National Commission for Scheduled Castes
 - National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
- The first National Commission for Scheduled Castes was formed in 2004 under the chairmanship of Suraj Bhan.