



Current Affairs of the Day

GS II

- Inter-marriages can reduce caste tensions, says court
- PhD entry in IITs tougher for students from marginalized communities



Inter-marriages can reduce caste tensions, says court

News: Educated youngsters are showing the way forward to reduce caste and community tensions in India by tying the knot in inter-marriages, the Supreme Court said in a recent judgment.

Highlights:

1. Justice Kaul quoted B.R. Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste, in which the Father of the Constitution said, "I am convinced that the real remedy is intermarriage. The fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling — the feeling of being aliens — created by caste will not vanish."
2. Even as more and more cases challenging religious conversion laws enacted by several States reach the Supreme Court, Justice Kaul observed in the judgment on February 8 that "consent of the family or community or clan is not necessary once the two adult individuals agree to enter into a wedlock and that their consent has to be piously given primacy".

PhD entry in IITs tougher for students from marginalised communities

News: Despite the official policy, OBC, SC and ST applicants are less likely to gain admission to the premier institutes as compared to those from the General Category

Highlights:

1. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe applicants are half as likely to get selected for a PhD programme at leading IITs in the country as aspirants from the General Category (GC) are.
2. Data collated from a series of RTI applications, including from The Hindu, on the number of applicants versus the number of those admitted to PhD programmes in the five older IITs have indicated that the acceptance rate is skewed against students from the SC, ST, and Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities.
3. The acceptance rate, which refers to the number of students selected for every 100 students who applied, stood at 4% for students from historically privileged



castes (General Category). It falls to 2.7% for OBC students and further down to just 2.16% for SCs and 2.2% for STs.

Policy ignored

1. This finding comes against the backdrop of the Education Ministry's data submitted to Parliament last year showing the failure of the IITs to fill PhD seats as per reservation.
2. It showed that of the total admissions made by all IITs from 2015 to 2019, only 2.1% went to STs and 9.1% to SCs. The government's reservation policy mandates allocation of 7.5% seats for students from the STs and 15% from SCs.
3. Similarly, 23.2% of seats went to applicants from the OBCs against the 27% mandated by reservation. Remaining 65.6%, or roughly two-thirds of all the seats went to GC applicants.
4. The IITs have often cited the lack of applicants from the marginalised communities for the situation. However, the RTI data reveal quite the opposite.