

Consider quota for forward caste poor: HC to Tamil Nadu

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CHENNAI: In a radical suggestion, the Madras high court has observed that poor candidates from forward communities too must get reservation in education and employment.

“The poor, in the so-called forward communities, have been neglected so far and no one could speak about them fearing protest voices in the name of social justice. Social justice should be extended to every section of the society,” Justice N Kirubakaran said on Friday.

Noting that talking about reservation or extending help to the deserving poor in forward communities should not be viewed or considered as an opposition to the reservation enjoyed by other sections of society, the judge said: “This court is aware that in all communities, there are poor

people and they should be encouraged to develop educationally, economically and socially.”

Justice Kirubakaran observed further: “A poor (person) is a poor (person), whether he is from a forward or backward community. A helping hand should be extended to such needy poor not only monetarily, but also by way of reservation in education and employment, the judge said.”

‘Students from other reserved categories allotted seats on merit’

Justice Kirubakaran directed the government to explore extending the scope of reservation to people from forward communities based on their economic status. He was passing interim orders on a plea moved by 14 students seeking to declare the transfer of MBBS seats in government colleges meant for the OC category to BC and MBC categories illegal and violative of Article 14.

They also wanted the court to direct the Directorate of Medical Education to conduct recounselling for seats allotted to OC category as per reservation policy in the state. Referring to the government's counter-affidavit, the judge said there were 2,651 MBBS seats in 22 government colleges of which 31% were open category, 26% reserved for BC, 4% for BC (Muslim), 20% for MBC, 18% for SC, 1% for ST.

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“Of 822 (31%) seats available in open competition, not only forward community students but also students from other reserved categories are allotted seats on merit. In the process, only 194 seats reached students belonging to forward communities which are equivalent to 7.31%,” the judge added.

From these details, it is evident that most communities are classified BC, MBC, SC and ST. Only a few are shown as FC. If almost every community was sought to be treated as either BC or MBC, the very purpose of reservation, based on social status and economic status would be of no use, he said.

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