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' Other Backward Classes': The third major group of ' backward classes' consists of a big number of educationally and economically backward people. Though the term ' backward classes' has not been defined by the Indian Constitution, the characteristics of backwardness are described here and there and also sometimes the categories are mentioned. Article 15 (4) speaks of the socially and educationally backward. Article 16 (4) uses the term ' backward class' and speaks of inadequate representation in services. Article 45 mentions free and compulsory education. Article 46 mentions the weaker sections of the people and includes the expression " the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes". Article 340 empowers the State to investigate the condition of the backward classes and to help them by grants, etc. Thus the Constitution has accepted the following elements of backwardness; illiteracy and lack of education, poverty, exploitation of labour, non-representation in services and untouchability. Thus, the term ' backward classes' is vague in the sense that it includes a wide variety of lower classes as well as castes consisting of millions of people. Article 340 of the Constitution provide for the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes. Accordingly, the President (that is, the Union Govt.) had appointed on Jan.

29, 1953, The Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of Kakasaheb Kalelkar. The Commission prepared a list containing as many as 2, 399 communities which were treated as socially and educationally backward. Out of these, 913 communities alone had an estimated population of 115 millions. The commission adopted the following criteria for determining backwardness: 1. Low Social position in the traditional caste

hierarchy of Hindu Society. 2. Lack of general advancement among the major section of a caste or community.

3. Inadequate or no representation in Government services. 4. Inadequate representation in the field of trade, commerce and industry. Caste as the Basis to Determine Backwardness: It appears that after considering several criteria, the commission ultimately decided to treat the caste as an important factor for determining backward classes.

The Commission made its list on the basis of caste. In fact, the chairman of the commission Kalelkar wanted to eschew the principle of caste for he saw dangers in suggesting remedies on caste basis. The Union Government, however, also felt the same. In addition to the above, several committees were appointed by the States and lists of backward communities were drawn up. The Havnoor Commission Report of Karnataka can be cited here as an example.

Provision was made for reservations for these communities in educational institutions as well as in the state employment. It may be noted here that for the purposes of the Union of India at present there is no list of backward classes other than the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and there are no reservations for them under the Union of India.