

CURRENT AFFAIRS

10 OCTOBER 2022



TOPIC: VULNERABLE SECTIONS

Status beyond faith

The panel on giving SC status to converts has its work cut out

The Centre has appointed a three-member Commission to examine the sensitive issue of extending Scheduled Caste (SC) status to all those who have historically suffered discrimination and untouchability, regardless of the religion they now profess. It is a task fraught with difficulty for the panel headed by former Chief Justice of India, K. G. Balakrishnan, as it will have to grapple with both social realities and ideological objections while addressing the core question. The government itself has described it as a seminal and historically complex sociological and constitutional question. This is not the first time that the issue has come up before the Supreme Court – the panel's appointment comes in the wake of the Court asking the Centre to clarify its position on the issue – or has been examined by a commission headed by a former Chief Justice. In 1985, the Supreme Court agreed that historical discrimination may continue even after members of the SCs convert to other religions, but did not decide in favour of such converts being given SC status as it felt there was not enough material outlining their condition after conversion. It is to be welcomed that the Balakrishnan Commission has been asked specifically to examine the changes that Dalits go through after conversion in terms of their social status and the discrimination they may face, along with the implications of according them SC status.

The National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, headed by retired Chief Justice Ranganath Mishra, also examined this issue. In its 2007 report, the panel made a categorical recommendation in favour of giving SC status to Dalits belonging to all religions. It found the caste system to be “an all-pervading social phenomenon in India shared by almost all Indian communities”. It stressed the constitutional need to eliminate the religion-based discrimination underlying the present policy of limiting SC status to those professing Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. While the tenets of a religion may not allow discrimination, the ground reality was different, it said. The main counter-views are well-known: discrimination and deprivation being the consequences of the caste-based Hindu social order, SC status should not be extended to those who have converted to Christianity and Islam; and the benefits involved may be seen as an incentive to mass conversion. Another objection is that the share of the reservation pie available to Dalits among Hindus may shrink if new sections are included. There is no ‘creamy layer’ concept for SC reservation, and expanding its scope may be to the disadvantage of the current beneficiaries. The Commission will have to come up with a definitive study of these complex issues.

National Commission for Minorities:

- ✓ In 1993, the first Statutory National Commission was set up and five religious communities viz the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were notified as minority communities.
- ✓ In 2014, Jains were also notified as a minority community.

Composition.

- ✓ NCM consists of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and five members and all of them shall be from amongst the minority communities.
- ✓ Total of 7 persons to be nominated by the Central Government should be from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity.
- ✓ Tenure: Each Member holds office for a period of three years from the date of assumption of office.

TOPIC:IR

The coalition of the world

The League of Nations, set up in 1920, was the first intergovernmental organisation with the aim to promote international cooperation and outlived its utility with World War II. The United Nations claims to be the one place where all the world's nations can discuss common problems and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity. Now, 75 years later, rising conflict situations suggest it is time to go back to first principles of the Charter.

The United Nations Secretary General (UNSG), António Guterres, made a candid assessment of global governance. He addressed the United Nations General Assembly and said the "world is in big trouble", "gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction", even the "G20 is in the trap of geopolitical divides". "In a splintering world, we need to create mechanisms of dialogue to heal divides" and "only by acting as one, we can nurture fragile shoots of hope" for a "coalition of the world". This is a call for fresh thinking.

India's Presidency of the Group of 20, UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2022, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2023 when major powers are not even talking to each other and India alone, now the fifth largest economy, is interacting with each of them, presents a historic opportunity.

UN at a turning point
The gridlock does not flow from bilateral relations but from the way international cooperation is being re-defined.

First, multilateralism is under challenge even by its proponent, with the United States opting for partnerships, with the most important areas being the worst affected. The G7 Summit, held in June, endorsed the goals of a cooperative international Climate Club to accelerate climate action outside the UN. The dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO without the quorum of its



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India's Presidency of the G20, SCO and UNSC is a historic opportunity for reinventing the United Nations

members has rendered the institution dysfunctional. Despite the G7 having accepted the need for transfer of funds at Rio in 1992, because of their role in creating the climate crisis, the promise made in 2009 to provide at least \$100 billion per year in climate finance remains unfulfilled.

Second, China has opted for rival set of multilateral institutions. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) seeks to achieve policy, infrastructure, trade, financial, and people-to-people connectivity by building a new platform for international cooperation to create "new drivers of shared development", and covers half the world population with one-third the GDP and investment of \$930 billion. China's Global Development Initiative, 2021, and linked Global Security Initiative, 2022, is developing a conceptual frame responding to an urbanising world, i.e. digital governance and non-traditional security, which the international system has not covered.

Third, more significant than the clash of institutions reflecting the deepening divide between the Atlantic powers and the Russia-China combine is the diffusion of wealth, technology and power. The 'rest', despite threats, are now capable of not taking sides and are looking for leadership within the United Nations, for what the UNSG characterised as "coalition of the world".

India will chair the Security Council in December, and will

have the Presidency of the G20 and the SCO.

'Vasudhaiva kutumbakam' Strategists in major powers see the world in binary terms around rules. In a multipolar world, the question is the kind of rules needed for human wellbeing and whether principles would serve the purpose better.

Second, the time is ripe for a 'big idea' that both keeps away from the current multilateral focus on global rules, amount of aid and inviolability of IPR's as well as recognises a role for competing institutions as countries can now secure the best terms themselves without bargaining.

Third, just as the 'Rio principles' continue to guide climate change, *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, or 'world as one family', focusing on comparable levels of wellbeing can be the core of a set of universal socio-economic principles for a dialogue between the states.

Fourth, to the current global consensus around equitable sustainable development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has added a clearer societal purpose to flesh out a universal civilisational principle. He emphasised 'Lifestyle for Environment' seeing climate change as a societal process and combating it devoid of trade-offs characteristic of the Climate Treaty. He has also offered India's payments and linked digital ID technology without IPR restrictions.

Fifth, redefining 'common concerns' in terms of felt needs of the majority rather than interests and concerns of the powerful will shift the focus of a much slimmed down United Nations squarely to human wellbeing, and not as an add-on.

India's Presidential statement could introduce 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam' in the UNSC in December. The SCO Summit will precede the G20 Summit and acceptance of overarching principles will support acceptance by the wider G20.



C

At ₹7.45 lakh crore, direct tax receipts cross half the target

Gross collections reach ₹8.98 lakh crore; tax refunds jump 81% over the preceding year to touch ₹1.53 lakh crore; Finance Ministry says revenues have been registering a steady growth

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

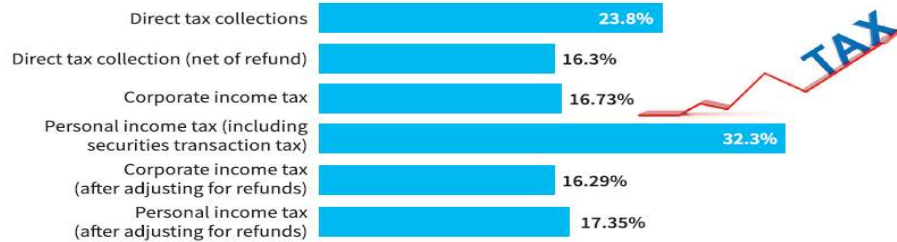
India's net direct tax collections till October 8 in the financial year 2022-23 have risen to ₹7.45 lakh crore, more than half of the Budget targets, the Union Finance Ministry said on Sunday. It is an increase of 16.3% over the tax inflows during the corresponding period a year ago.

Based on provisional data, net personal income tax collections grew 17.35%, rising faster than corporate income tax collections that were up 16.29% net of refunds. Securities Transaction Tax (STT) collections combined with personal income tax receipts, grew at a more moderate 16.25%.

Underlining that direct

Revenue rises

The graph shows the increase in tax collections this fiscal year up to October 8, 2022 compared with the figures for the corresponding period last year. Net personal income tax collections grew at 17.35%, faster than corporate income tax collections that were up 16.29%, net of refunds



tax collections continue to register a steady growth, the Ministry said tax refunds had jumped 81% over the preceding year to touch ₹1.53 lakh crore.

Gross collections

Gross direct tax collections reached ₹8.98 lakh crore

by Saturday, 23.8% more than in the corresponding period of 2021-22. After adjusting for refunds, net direct tax revenues now constitute 52.46% of the total Budget Estimates. Net direct tax collections had crossed ₹7 lakh crore by September 17 and were

23.3% higher at the time, so there appears to have been a moderation in tax inflows in the intervening three weeks.

Gross revenues from direct taxes were at ₹8,36,225 crore on September 17, reflecting a 30.2% growth.

✓ Securities Transaction Tax (STT) is a tax payable in India on the value of securities (excluding commodities and currency) transacted through a recognized stock exchange.

✓ A corporate tax is a tax on the profits of a corporation. The taxes are paid on a company's taxable income

TOPIC:TAXATION

Corporation turns its attention to professional tax to improve revenue

Professional tax

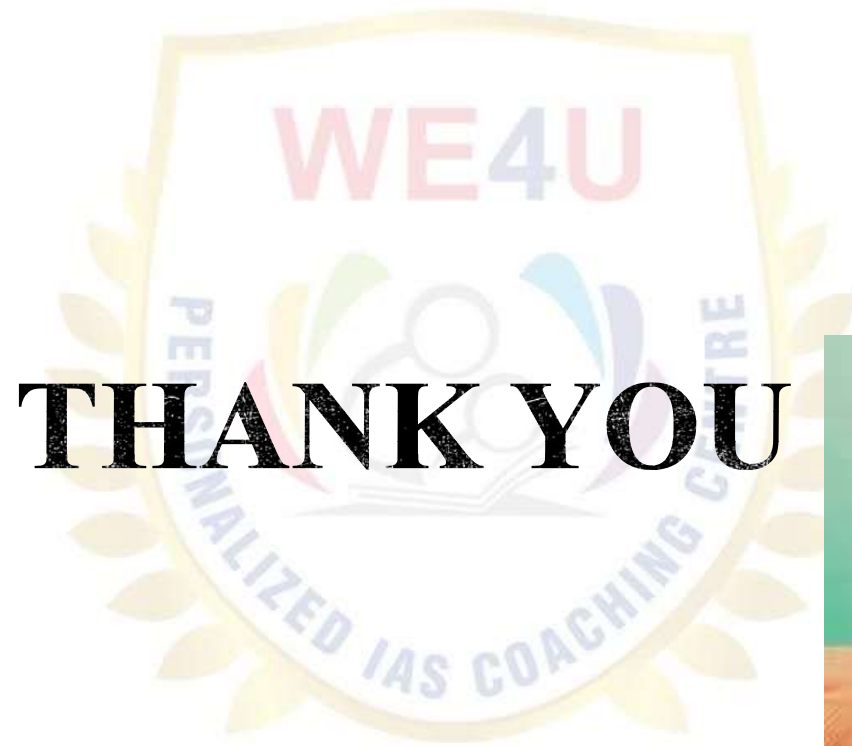
- ✓ It is a direct tax on the income of all earning individuals.
- ✓ Professional tax is a direct tax on the income of all earning individuals. It is imposed by the state governments. Direct tax on the profits of companies and corporates is called corporate tax.

TOPIC: SOCIAL REFORMER



About Basavanna:

- ✓ Basavanna was a 12th-century philosopher, statesman, Kannada poet and a social reformer during the reign of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka, India.
- ✓ Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Vachanaas. Basavanna rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals.
- ✓ He introduced new public institutions such as the Anubhava Mantapa which welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life, in open.
- ✓ The Sharana movement he presided over attracted people from all castes.



THANK YOU

