The concept of Reservation is one of the most controversial among the policies undertaken by the government to bring the backward classes to the level of forward class. The fact that the Constitution provides reservation for the advancement of the backward sections of the society, no further justification is required to defend such policy. Reservations, on the other hand provoke resentment and dismay of various kinds, as they impinge heavily on the careers of specific individuals who are compelled to pay the price for collective good. In the face of the recent anti-reservation agitation and unabated violent disturbances over the new reservation policy the wider discourse that takes place today centers round the meaning of backward classes and the criterion for determining these groups.

Article 15(4) uses the word socially and educationally backward classes and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Article 16(4) uses the word ‘backward’. So far the work of this research is concerned, it is confined only with Article 16(4) of the Constitution and thus the backward word as used in this Article is the subject matter of this research work. A humble attempt has been made in this research work to find out the appropriate criterion for determining the backward classes which serve the maximum interests with minimum friction and waste.

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