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Twenty years after Sachar: measuring inclusion through evidence

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Mains: GS-II: Social justice and inclusion
Prelims: concepts and statement-based practice



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Why in the News

17 November 2026 marks twenty years since submission of the Sachar Committee report. It was submitted on 17 November 2006 and tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 30 November 2006. The anniversary raises a continuing question: how should reliable data and outcome-based review guide social inclusion?

What was the committee asked to do?

The Prime Minister's Office constituted the high-level committee on 9 March 2005 under Justice Rajinder Sachar. Its subject was the social, economic and educational status of India's Muslim community. It was not a general commission covering every issue of all minority communities.

It examined information on education, employment, economic opportunities, banking and basic amenities. Reducing its scope to a debate on reservations alone misses this broader development context.

Lessons from its approach

Evidence rather than assumptions: Assess a community's position through education, work and access to services.

Beyond averages: Examine differences between groups and regions alongside national averages.

Identify the barrier: Recording a shortfall is a first step. Policy must also examine whether it arises from school access, credit, skills or missing opportunities.

The government's historical follow-up

A parliamentary statement dated 31 August 2007 proposed measures relating to education, skills, bank credit and basic amenities. It also referred to a National Data Bank and assessment and monitoring arrangements.

This was the government's action agenda at that time. It cannot establish that every proposal had been implemented or that present-day outcomes had improved by 2026. Similarly, literacy or employment figures from 2006 must not be presented as current data.

What should a review examine today?

Current evidence: Read newer data using consistent definitions and comparable groups.

Announcements versus outcomes: Allocation, spending and actual educational or economic outcomes are different indicators.

Local needs: Identify location-specific barriers involving girls' education, skills and access to credit.

Accountability: Review progress regularly and publicly, while protecting sensitive personal information.

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The way forward

The report's lasting lesson is not to repeat an old percentage, but to identify development gaps through evidence. Inclusion should be judged through changes in opportunities and outcomes, rather than the number of schemes alone.

Prelims Practice Questions

Question 1. Consider the following statements about the Sachar Committee:

Statement 1: It was constituted in 2005.

Statement 2: It examined the social, economic and educational status of India's Muslim community.

Statement 3: Its report was first tabled in Parliament in 2026.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

▼ **Answer and Explanation**

Correct answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct. It was constituted on 9 March 2005.

Statement 2 is correct. This was its assigned subject.

Statement 3 is incorrect. It was tabled in both Houses on 30 November 2006.

Mains Practice Question

Why are group-specific data and outcome-based assessment necessary for social inclusion policy? Discuss with reference to the Sachar Committee. (150 words) (10 marks)

Answer Outline

Introduction: Introduce the committee

Main Body: discuss gaps concealed by averages and barriers in education, work and credit

Conclusion: address comparability, transparent review and privacy.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The committee examined the Muslim community's development situation. Its twentieth anniversary calls for current, comparable review, not the presentation of old figures as today's conditions.

When was the committee constituted?

On 9 March 2005.

When was the report submitted and tabled?

It was submitted on 17 November 2006 and tabled in both Houses on 30 November 2006.

Do the 2006 findings measure today's situation?

No. Current conditions require newer, comparable evidence.

Sources

- www.minorityaffairs.gov.in
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