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How is a Major Policy Decision Taken?

A Government Order

On August 13, 1990, the Government of India issued an Order which was called an Office **Memorandum**. The order says that other than SC and ST the 27% job reservation benefit will be given to a new third category called Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC). Only persons who belong to backward classes were eligible for this quota.

The Decision Makers

Who decided to issue this Memorandum? Such a major decision would have involved other major functionaries in India, which involves the following points:

1. The President is the head of the state and is the highest formal authority in India.
2. The Prime Minister is the head of the government and takes most of the decisions in the Cabinet meetings.
3. Parliament consists of the President and two Houses, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Prime Minister must have the support of a majority of Lok Sabha members to pass a memorandum.

When the Office Memorandum was passed in India, it was a hot debate issue. Some felt that this was unfair as it would deny equality of opportunity to those who did not belong to backward communities. While others felt that this would give a fair opportunity to those communities

who so far had not adequately been represented in government employment. This dispute was finally resolved by the Supreme Court of India by hearing all the cases. This case was known as the '**Indira Sawhney and others Vs Union of India case**'. The Supreme Court judges in 1992 declared that this order of the Government of India was valid. Thus, the dispute came to an end and this policy has been followed since then.