

In Odisha, BJD & Congress demand 27% backward classes quota in professional courses

The Congress too has planned to hold a demonstration outside Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi's's residence Thursday demanding 27 percent reservation.

Despite the Odisha government's announcement of 11.25 percent reservation for the backward classes in education, Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Congress continue to step up their social justice pitch – this time seeking a quota in medical, engineering and other professional courses.

At a rally held outside the Raj Bhavan, the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD has demanded 27 percent reservation for the backward classes in “a uniform manner” in higher education and technical educational courses such as medical and engineering.

This comes days after the Mohan Charan Majhi Cabinet cleared a proposal to give 11.25 percent quota in the educational institutions to the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC) – a move that would benefit 231 groups in the state. That reservation is to be implemented in all state public universities, state government and aided higher secondary and higher education institutions as well as undergraduate, postgraduate courses.

Biju Janata Dal leaders including MPs, MLAs and senior leaders submitted a Memorandum before the Hon'ble Governor of #Odisha requesting his immediate intervention for the implementation of reservation for OBCs, SC and STs proportionate to their population. The leaders urged to...
pic.twitter.com/xviaCpGbhA

— Biju Janata Dal (@bjd_odisha) May 21, 2025

The move, according to observers, was an attempt to checkmate the BJD's pitch for social justice.

BJD's OBC cell chairman Arun Kumar Sahoo called BJP government's “a mere eyewash”. “Of total 2.73 lakh seats in Plus-3 courses (graduation), around 70,000-80,000 seats are lying vacant and they announced a quota for these courses. They have tactically avoided implementation of the reservation in medical and engineering courses,” Sahoo said.

The party also alleged that despite the scheduled tribes (ST) and scheduled caste (SC) communities comprising 22.5 percent and 16.25 percent of state's total population respectively, the current reservation in technical, medical, and engineering colleges stands at only 12 percent for STs and 8percent for SCs — totalling merely 20 percent.

“It falls significantly short of the 38.75 percent combined reservation that should be allocated in proportion to their population, as is the case in other sectors of higher education within the state,” another BJP leader said.

The BJD's push for social justice comes nearly a year after it lost the assembly elections in the state to the BJP – its first election loss in 24 years. Significantly, 94 percent of the state's population comprise SC, ST and social and economic backward classes.

Meanwhile, the Congress too has planned to hold a demonstration outside Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi's's residence Thursday demanding 27 percent reservation.

On his part, Odisha Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj has slammed both the BJD and Congress. "Those who deprived the backward classes of their constitutional rights while in power are now staging demonstrations," he said.