



Challenges Related to Lateral Entry Scheme

For Prelims: [Lateral Entry Scheme \(LES\)](#), [Union Public Service Commission \(UPSC\)](#), [Other Backward Classes \(OBCs\)](#), [Scheduled Castes \(SCs\)](#), [Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#), NITI Aayog, Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC).

For Mains: Issue of Lateral Entry into Bureaucracy, its implication and Way Forward.

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

The [Lateral Entry Scheme \(LES\)](#), enabling private sector professionals to join senior bureaucracy on contract, faces **legal and political dispute**.

- Since 2019, **63 appointments have been made**, but concerns over the **lack of a statutory framework** and **reservations** for marginalized communities persist.

Note: The legal dispute began in February 2020 when IFS officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi challenged the Lateral Entry Scheme before the Nainital **Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)**, citing **lack of legal sanctity and procedural rigour**.

What are the Challenges Related to Lateral Entry Scheme?

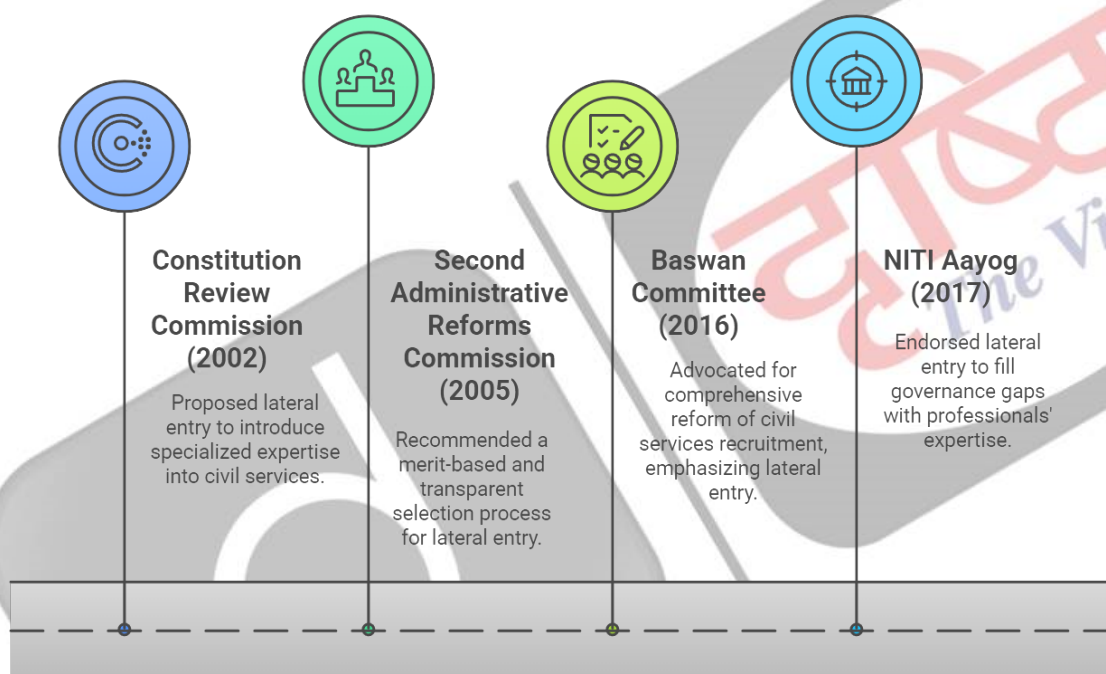
- **Constitutional Validity:** It challenged for conflicting with **Article 309** of the Constitution which grants the **authority to the appropriate legislature (Parliament, State legislatures)** to enact laws **regulating the recruitment** and conditions of service for public servants
 - Also, **excluding reservation in recruitment** undermines **social justice and constitutional mandates**.
- **Short Tenure:** The 3-year tenure for lateral entrants is seen as **too short for effective governance adaptation** and **accountability**.
- **Doctrine of Pleasure and Bulk Recruitment:** The government justifies LES under [Article 310](#), allowing the **President to appoint specialists**. Critics argue it's not meant for large-scale recruitment of senior, non-permanent roles.
 - While citing an officer shortage, the necessity is questioned, given 18 empanelled officers per vacancy.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Concerns include **potential biases from private-sector professionals** influencing **government policies** and the **lack of rigorous vetting**, such as **background checks** and **vigilance clearances**.
- **Bureaucratic Morale Concerns:** The rise in lateral entrants may **negatively affect the morale of career bureaucrats**. They may **resist lateral entrants**, viewing them as outsiders and potentially fostering hostility due to concerns about hierarchy and disruption.

What are the Key Facts Related to Lateral Entry Scheme (LES)?

- **About:** A **LES**, launched in **2018** is a recruitment process that **allows private sector professionals** to be **directly hired into mid-level or senior government positions**, bypassing the usual competitive exams.
 - They are appointed by the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** on **contracts for 3 years**, which can be **extended to a maximum of 5 years**.
- **Reservation Provision:** Lateral entry positions are **exempt from the reservation system** as these roles are **considered "single posts,"** meaning quotas for **SC, ST, OBC, and EWS categories do not apply**.
- **Recruitment:** Since 2018, **63 lateral entrants** have been appointed, with **57 serving** as of August 2023.
 - In August 2024, UPSC withdrew recruitment for 45 senior posts under LES due to opposition over reservation rights.

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Evolution of India's Lateral Entry Scheme



What are the Advantages of Lateral Entry in Civil Services?

- **Specialized Expertise:** Lateral entry enables the **recruitment of specialists** in fields like technology, management, and finance, **addressing knowledge gaps** that generalist civil servants may not fill.
- **Addressing Shortages:** With a **deficit of around 1500 IAS officers**, lateral entry can help alleviate this shortage and **ensure the smooth functioning** of government departments.
- **Improving Work Culture:** Lateral entrants can help **break the bureaucratic inertia**, fostering a shift away from **red-tapism** and towards **more dynamic, results-oriented** governance.
- **Inclusive Governance:** Lateral entry facilitates **greater involvement of stakeholders, including the private sector and non-profits**, enhancing participatory governance and multi-actor collaboration.

Way Forward

- **Dual Entry System:** Former RBI Governor **D. Subbarao** suggested a **dual-entry system** with **traditional recruitment for the 25-30 age group** and mid-career lateral entry for the **37-42 age group** to bring in domain experts.
 - **Relax age limits for joint secretary positions** to attract **younger, dynamic talent**.
- **Training for Lateral Entrants:** Establish a **dedicated administrative university** to provide **comprehensive training for lateral entrants** to **ease their transition** from the private sector to government roles.
- **Private Sector Exposure:** Allowing **IAS and IPS officers** to **gain experience in the private sector** can enhance competition, innovation, and sectoral expertise in governance.

Drishti Mains Question

What is the Lateral Entry Scheme of the Government into Civil Services? What are its merits and demerits and its implications?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Q. "Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance". In this context suggest reforms in the Civil Service for strengthening democracy. (2020)

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