



## 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?

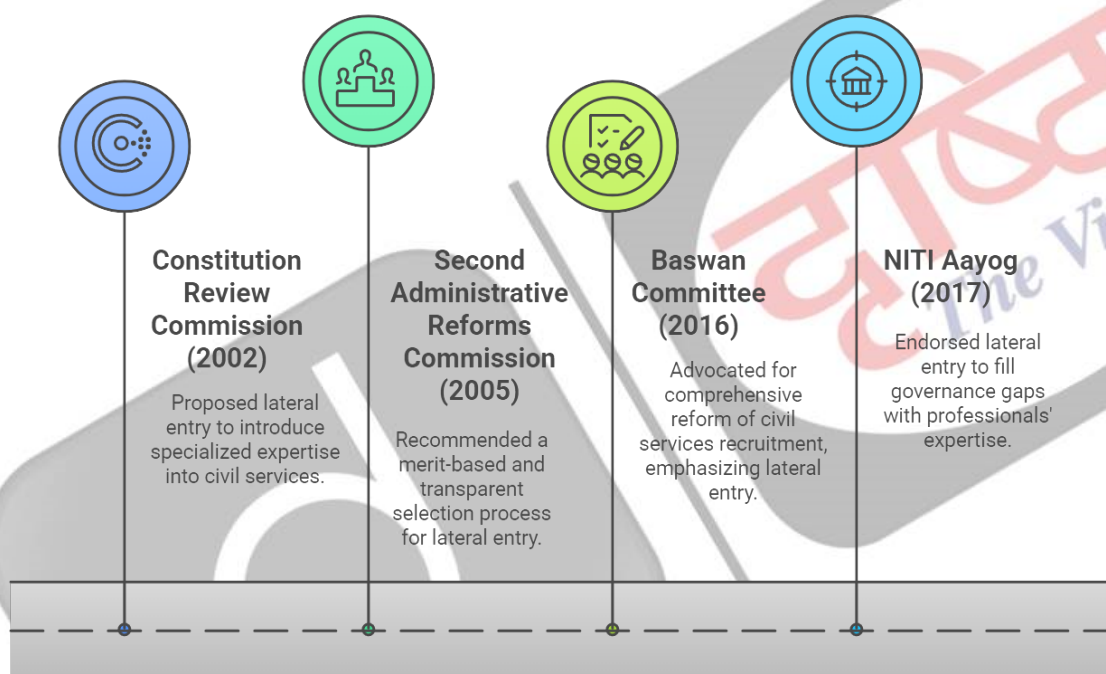
- **Constitutional Validity:** It challenged for conflicting with **Article 309** of the Constitution which grants the **authority to the appropriate legislature (Parliament, State legislatures)** to enact laws **regulating the recruitment** and conditions of service for public servants
  - Also, **excluding 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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