



Lateral Entry

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Why in News

- The central government has recently announced opening up of 10 senior-level positions in several departments through lateral entry to people working in the private sector.
- The notified post, joint secretary level is usually filled by officers selected through Civil Services Examination conducted by Union Public Service Commission.
- Joint Secretaries are at a crucial level of senior management in the Government of India and lead policymaking as well as implementation of various programmes and schemes for the department assigned to them.

What is Lateral Entry?

- The term lateral entry relates to the appointment of specialists, mainly those from private sector, in government organisations.
- Government is looking for outstanding individuals, with expertise in revenue, financial services, economic affairs, agriculture, cooperation and farmers' welfare, road transport and highway, shipping, environment, forests and climate change, new and renewable energy, civil aviation and commerce.

Advantages of Lateral Entry

- Complexity: Governance is becoming more and more complex requiring specialised skills. Generalist officer cannot be always expected to be up-to-date with the specialized knowledge. Therefore, people with expertise and specialist domain knowledge are required to navigate the complex needs of present day administrative challenges.
- Personnel shortage: According to Department of Personnel and Training data there is shortage of about 1500 IAS officers. Lateral entry will help bridge this gap.
- Organisation culture: It will help in bringing change in organisation culture in

Government sector culture. It will help in bringing the values of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in Government sector. It will help in building culture of performance with in Government sector.

- Liberalisation Policy and Civil services: The generalist Civil Services was designed for a time when the State was all-powerful. After liberalisation in 1991, markets are playing critical role in administration. In such environment, regulatory capacity of govt. is critical which depend upon the up to date knowledge of administrators, which require fresh intake from private sector.
- Participatory Governance: In the present times governance is becoming more participatory and multi actor endeavour, thus lateral entry provides stakeholders such as the private sector and non-profits an opportunity to participate in governance process.

Issues Involved

- Need for transparent process: The key again to the success of this scheme would lie in selecting the right people in a manner which is manifestly transparent. Constitutional role of UPSC should not be ignored as it will provide legitimacy to the entire process of selection
- Difference in Organisational values: The value systems between the government and the private sector are quite different. It is important to ensure that the people who come in are able to have the skills to adjust to a totally different system of functioning. This is because government imposes its own limitations.
- Profit motive vs. Public service: Private sector approach is profit oriented on the other hand motive of Government is public service. This is also a fundamental transition that a private sector person has to make while working in government.
- Internal Resistance: Lateral entry is likely to face strong resistance from in service Civil Servants and their associations. There are already reports
- Constitutional mandate for affirmative action: On the constitutional mandate for affirmative action as a result of the creation of a new recruitment channel at a senior level,
- Issue of conflict of interest: The movement from private sector raises issues of potential conflict of interest. This issue requires stringent code of conduct for entrants from private sectors to ensure conflict of interest is not detrimental to public good.
- Narrow scope: Lateral entry at only at top level policy making positions may have little impact on field level implementation, given the multiple links in the chain of command from the Union Government to a rural village.
- Lack of specific criteria: The criteria laid out in the advertisement were broad-based, and so failed to provide a narrow window to attract people of eminence or domain experts in the fields advertised for.

Suggestions

- An intensive training program for entrants from the private sector to civil services need to be formulated which help them understanding the complex nature of work in Government.
- There should be open competition for the Lateral entry with due transparent process including all necessary checks and balances to ensure persons with integrity and political neutrality enters the government service.
- Lateral entry as done in the past was on an ad hoc basis it cannot be considered a suitable model of manpower planning. There is therefore a need to institutionalize the process of induction of outside talent into the government.