Central Staffing Scheme (CSS)

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Polity & Governance*

Why in news?

The Centre has asked States to nominate women, SC/ST officers for appointment in key posts on Central deputation for CSS.

- **Introduced in –** 1996.
- **CSS –** It is used to ***fill senior posts*** in Ministries and Departments of the Government of India.
- **Aim –** To improve administration, give officers national policy exposure, and balance state–centre experience through rotation.
- **Administered by –** Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

Key Features

- **Posts Covered –** It arranges for officers from IAS, IPS, IFoS, and some Central Services to work in the GoI as *Deputy Secretary, Director, Joint Secretary, Additional Secretary, and Secretary.*
- **Officer Pool –** Officers are drawn ***from State Governments*** and various Group-A services (covering technical, economic, medical, legal, trade, engineering, etc).
- **Cadre Clearance –** Officers must obtain clearance from their parent cadre before being considered for deputation.
- **Empanelment –** Officers are empanelled at different levels (e.g., Joint Secretary) based on their Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs/APARs), performance, and seniority.
- **Tenure –** Deputation is generally for a ***fixed tenure (commonly 3–5 years),*** after which officers return to their parent cadre.
- **Age limit –** Officers must have at least 4 years of service left before retirement.
- **Eligibility –** Officers must meet service length requirements and

performance benchmarks to be considered for empanelment.

- **Minimum Service requirement** – Generally 9 years as of July 1st of the relevant year.
- **Selection Process –**
  - **Annual Circular –** DoPT asked State Chief Secretaries and Group-A service authorities to nominate willing officers for deputation.
  - **Offer List –** Each year, an offer list is made from the nominations, and CSS appointments are chosen from it.
- **Relaxations –** Special provisions exist for SC/ST, women, NE states, and underrepresented cadres get relaxed criteria to ensure representation.
- Up to 15% of empanelled officers may be selected under relaxed norms.
- **Benefits –** Two-way benefit – Centre gets skilled officers, officers get exposure, and their parent cadres benefit from their central experience.

References

1. The Hindu | Nominate Women, SC/ST officers for on Central deputation
2. DoPT | Central Staffing Scheme
3. EASY | Central Staffing Scheme

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