Lateral Entry into Bureaucracy - Reservation

Why in news?

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has recently issued an advertisement to recruit through lateral entry in the second round.

What is 'lateral entry' into government?

- This refers to the induction of new personnel at middle and senior management levels in the central government.
- These 'lateral entrants' would be part of the central secretariat.
- The secretariat, in the normal course, has only career bureaucrats from the All India Services/ Central Civil Services.

What are the recent lateral appointments?

- Applications were open for appointment of 30 persons at the Joint Secretary and Director level in the Central administration.
- These individuals, who would make a "lateral entry" into the government secretariat, would be contracted for 3 to 5 years.
- These posts were "unreserved", meaning no quotas for SCs, STs and OBCs.
- The new advertisement is for the second round of such recruitments.
- Earlier, lateral appointments were made for 10 positions of Joint Secretary in different Ministries/Departments and 40 positions at the level of Deputy Secretary/Director.
    - A Joint Secretary, appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), has the third highest rank (after Secretary and Additional Secretary) in a Department.
    - S/he functions as administrative head of a wing in the Department.
    - Directors are a rank below that of Joint Secretary.

What is the government's rationale?

- Government has, from time to time, appointed some prominent persons for specific assignments in government.
- This is keeping in view their specialised knowledge and expertise in the domain area.
- Lateral recruitment is thus aimed at achieving the twin objectives of bringing

in fresh talent and augmenting the availability of manpower.

- However, groups representing SCs, STs and OBCs have protested the fact that there is no reservation in these appointments.
- The move is seen as another ploy to sideline and reduce reservations for deprived sections.

Why are these posts claimed to be "unreserved"?

- As per the currently applicable "13-point roster", there is no reservation up to three posts.
    - The expression "13-point roster" reflects the fact that 13.33 (or 14) vacancies are required to complete one cycle of reservations.
    - Based on this, every 4th, 7th, 8th, 12th, and 14th vacancies are reserved for OBCs, SCs, OBCs, OBCs, and STs respectively in the 13-point roster.
- In a single post cadre, reservation does not apply.
- Since each post to be filled under the above scheme is a Single Post, reservation is not applicable.
- Each of the nine individuals appointed in 2019 was recruited as a separate appointment.
- If they had been considered as a group of nine, there would have been at least two seats for OBCs and one seat for an SC candidate as per the Centre's reservation rules.
- But presently too, the posts have been advertised/ considered separately for each Department.
- So, all of them have been declared "unreserved".

Source: The Indian Express

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