

Lateral Entry into Government

.Why in news?

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The DoPT has issued a notification inviting lateral entry at joint secretary-level posts.

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What is the notification on?

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- The government has invited “outstanding individuals” to join the government at the joint secretary level at the Centre.

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- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has invited applications for 10 senior level positions.

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- It covers the Departments of Economic Affairs, Revenue, Commerce and Highways among others.

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- The intake will be made in 10 departments initially.

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- It will expand to other categories in the second phase.

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What are the specifications?

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- The eligibility criteria includes individuals working at comparable levels in -

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- i. Private Sector Companies

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ii. Consultancy Organisations

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iii. International/Multinational Organisations

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- They are required to have a minimum of **15 years' experience**.

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- Besides, it includes those working in -

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i. central public sector undertakings

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ii. autonomous bodies

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iii. statutory organisations

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iv. research bodies

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v. universities

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- The recruitment will be on contract basis for **3 to 5 years**.

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- The notification specifies a **minimum age of 40 years**.

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- The minimum qualification is **graduation** from a recognised university or institute.

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- Any higher qualification will be an added advantage.

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What is the significance?

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- Joint secretaries are at a crucial level of senior management in the Government.

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- They lead policymaking and implementation of various programmes and schemes of the department.
- They report to the secretary/additional secretary in the ministry or department.
- The idea of lateral entry of private individuals into the administrative framework is not new.
- However, the recent notification is the first move towards its implementation.

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What are the benefits?

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- A generalist was suited to the times when the state was the nerve centre of the economy.
- But in the course of time, the state started yielding to the market.
- A senior bureaucrat, thus, is expected to regulate the private sector as well.
- Moreover, the increasing complexities of policy-making have started to demand a level of specialisation in the fields.
- The move is thus aimed at bringing in expertise from the private sector individuals.
- It is a measure to infuse talent into the country's bureaucracy.

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What is the current practice?

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- Joint secretary level positions are normally filled by career bureaucrats.
- These are those who join the service after passing UPSC exam.
- UPSC prepares merit list and allot the different cadres like IAS, IPS, etc.

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- The success of the announced lateral entry will greatly depend on transparency.

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- Addressing potential conflicts of interest, and ensuring proper terms of engagement are crucial.

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Source: The Hindu, Indian Express

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