

## States have rightly raised questions about proposed rule changes on IAS, IPS deputation.

That the wrong remedy could exacerbate an ailment and not cure it is a well understood adage. This holds true for the Union government's (Department of Personnel & Training- DoPT) proposals to amend Rule 6 related to deputation of cadre officers of the IAS (Cadre) Rules 1954.

Reports have shown that the deputation from States to the Union government has been uneven. Some States have not nominated officers for deputation adequately to work with the Union government; in this, West Bengal (11 out of the 280 officers are on central deputation), Rajasthan (13 out of 247) and Telangana (7 out of an authorised strength of 208) stand out.

This has led to vacancies across Union government ministries. Numbers accessed by The Hindu show that actual deputation as a percentage of the mandated reserves fell from 69% (2014) to 30% (2021), suggesting that there is merit in the DoPT's identification of shortages in deputation being an issue. But does this necessitate the rule changes proposed by the DoPT, which include acquiring overriding powers for the Union government that will do away with seeking approval from the States for transferring IAS and IPS officers?

Two of the rules are particularly problematic — in case of any disagreement between the Union and State governments, the States shall give effect to the former's decision "within a specified time". And in some "specific situations", States would have to depute certain cadres whose services are sought by the Union government.

These changes amount to arm-twisting States and unwilling bureaucrats to be deputed to serve the Union government and also presenting a fait accompli to States for "specific situations" which have not been defined and prone to misinterpretation and politicisation.

These proposed changes have unsurprisingly raised the hackles of State governments. As governance responsibilities during the pandemic have shown, States are quite dependent upon the bureaucracy, and deputation to the Union government should not be done at the cost of State

requirements. Also, the Union government must address the key question of the reluctance of capable civil servants to be deputed away from the States.

Reports have indicated that civil servants have found the top-down culture in Union government offices to be stifling and prefer the relative autonomy at the State level. There is clearly a need for a more qualitative approach that tackles such work culture issues.

Besides, a State-by-State look at deputation that disincentivises those States which depute officers much below the mandated numbers to the Union government by adjusting future cadre strength reviews by the Union Public Service Commission should also address the shortage problem. These steps are better than any rule changes that amount to fiat striking at federalism.

### Expected Question (Prelims Exams)

**Q. Which of the following states has sent the least number of officers to the Center on deputation?**

- (a) West Bengal
- (b) Maharashtra
- (c) Kerala
- (d) Rajasthan

### Expected Question (Mains Exams)

**Q. At present, what is the cause of dispute between the state and the center in the matter of deputation of civil service officers? Critically evaluate the solution suggested by the Center for this. (250 Words)**

**Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.**