

Public Services in India

Public Services (alternatively known as government services) play a key role in smooth functioning of democracy in India.

The public services in India are classified into three categories - all-India services, Central services and state services. Their meaning and composition will be explained in greater detail in this article.

All-India Services

All-India services are those services which are common to both Central and state governments. The members of these services occupy top positions (or key posts) under both the Centre and the states and serve them by turns.

At present, there are three all-India services. They are:

1. Indian Administrative Service (IAS)
2. Indian Police Service (IPS)
3. Indian Forest Service (IFS)

In 1947, the Indian Civil Services (ICS) was replaced by IAS and the Indian Police (IP) was replaced by IPS and were recognised by the Constitution as all-India services. In 1966, the Indian Forest Services was established as the third all-India service.

The All-India Services Act of 1951 authorised the Central government to make rules in consultation with the state governments for the regulation of recruitment and service conditions of the members of all-India services. The members of these services are recruited and trained by the Central government, but are assigned to different states for work. They belong to different state cadres; the Centre having no cadre of its own in this regard.

They serve the Central government on deputation and after completing their fixed tenure they go back to their respective states. The Central government obtains the services of these officers on deputation under the well-known tenure system. It must be noted there that irrespective of their division among different states, each of these all-India services from a single service with common rights and status and uniform scales of pay throughout the country. Their salaries and pensions are met by the states.

The all-India services are controlled jointly by the Central and state governments. The ultimate control lies with the Central government while the immediate control vested in the state governments. Any disciplinary action (imposition of penalties) against these officers can only be taken by the Central government.

Sardar Vallabhai Patel (Born on 31st October, 1875) was the chief architect of the all-India services in the Constituent Assembly. Hence, he came to be regarded as the ‘Father of all-India Services’

Central Services

The personnel of Central services work under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Central government. They hold specialized (functional and technical) positions in various departments of the Central government.

Before Independence, the Central services were classified into class-I, class-II, subordinate and inferior services. After Independence, the nomenclature of subordinate and inferior services was replaced by class-III and class-IV services. Again in 1974, the classification of Central services into class-I, class-II, class-III and class-IV was changed to group A, group B, group C and group D, respectively.

At present, there are 62 group A Central services. Some of them are:

1. Central Engineering Service
2. Central Health Service
3. Central Information Service
4. Central Legal Service
5. Central Secretariat Service
6. Indian Audit and Accounts Service
7. Indian Defence Accounts Service
8. Indian Economic Service
9. Indian Foreign Service
10. Indian Meteorological Service
11. Indian Postal Service
12. Indian Revenue Service
13. Indian Statistical Service
14. Overseas Communication Service
15. Railway Personnel Service

Most of the above cadres of group A Central services have also corresponding group B services. The group C Central services consists of clerical personnel, while group D consists of manual personnel. Thus group A and group B comprises gazetted officers while group C and group D are non-gazetted.

State Services

The personnel of state services work under the exclusive jurisdiction of the state government. They hold different positions (general, functional and technical) in the departments of the state government. However, they occupy lower positions (in the administrative hierarchy of the state) than those held by the members of all-India services (IAS, IPS and IFS)

The number of services in a state is different from state to state. The services that are common to all the states are:

1. Civil Service
2. Police Service
3. Forest Service
4. Agricultural Service
5. Medical Service
6. Veterinary Service
7. Fisheries Service
8. Judicial Service
9. Public Health Service
10. Educational Service
11. Co-operative Service
12. Registration Service
13. Sales Tax Services
14. Jail Service
15. Service of Engineers

Each of these services is named after the state, that is, the name of the state is added as a prefix. For example in Uttar Pradesh (UP), they are known as UP Civil Services, UP Police Service, UP Forest Service, UP Agriculture Service, UP Veterinary Services, UP Fisheries Services and so on. Among all the state services, the civil services (also known as the administrative service) is the most prestigious.

Like the Central services, the state services are also classified into four categories: class I (group I or group A), class II (group II or group B), class III (group III or group C) and class IV (group IV or group D).

Further, the state services are also classified into gazetted class and non-gazetted class. Class I (Group-A) and Class -II (Group-B) Services are gazetted classes, while Class-III (Group-C) and Class-IV (Group-D) services are non-gazetted classes.

The names of the members of the gazetted class are published in the Government Gazette for appointment, transfer, promotion and retirement, while those of the non-gazetted class are not published. Further, members of the gazetted class enjoy some privileges which are denied to members of the non-gazetted class are called 'officers' while those of non-gazetted class are called 'employees'.

The All-India Services Act of 1951 specifies that senior posts not exceeding thirty-three and one third per cent in the India Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) are required to be filled in by promotion of officers employed in the state services. Such promotions are made on the recommendations of the selection committee for this purpose in each state. Such a committee is presided over by the Chairman or a member of UPSC.