

Seventy Years Later: Caste in the Indian Bureaucracy

By

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Abstract

The **objective** of the article is to study the compositional change of several tiers in India's administrative bureaucracy since affirmative action began seventy years ago and the factors that explain such observed patterns. The **methods** involved online archival data collection from government administrative and appointed commission reports as well as news articles for less readily available information. The **results** of the compositional study of India's administrative bureaucracy demonstrate that this institution has not fully diversified according to reservation quotas. Specifically, the upper tiers of the bureaucracy remain dominated by caste elites as during the colonial era. The factors that prevent such diversification of the Indian administrative bureaucracy include rigid social stereotypes about caste-oppressed groups, internal resistance to affirmative action initiatives, as well as institutional obstacles to the entry and promotion of historically oppressed castes. **Conclusions** from this research indicate that the caste composition of the Indian administrative bureaucracy does *not* reflect the nation's diverse populations. Thus, seventy years of affirmative action has *not* achieved its desired success. Additionally, illegal caste-based discrimination persists both within and outside of the institution. **Implications** suggest the continued marginalization of historically excluded communities in representation and in Indian culture more broadly. Such marginalization enables an ongoing cycle of discrimination in Indian society.

Keywords: Caste, bureaucracy, representation, hierarchy

Introduction

B.R. Ambedkar, a leader of India's 'untouchable' (Dalit) community and chair of the drafting committee of the 1950 Indian Constitution, feared the heart of government would remain in the hands of Brahmins and other caste elites after independence from the British in 1947. Ambedkar feared that without structural change, caste-based discrimination would pervade the central bureaucracy and worsen after British colonial officers departed. Ambedkar predicted that a bureaucracy controlled by caste elites would wreak havoc on legal and policy efforts to end caste, caste-based discrimination, and untouchability. He worried that "the administration unbridled in venom and in harshness, uncontrolled by the Legislature and the Executive, may pursue its policy of inequity towards the Untouchables without any curb" (Ambedkar 1947:414). As such, Ambedkar worked tirelessly to legalize affirmative action, locally known as reservations, in the 1950 Indian Constitution. Independent India became home to one of the world's

earliest systems of affirmative action.

With affirmative action remaining a hotly debated topic after seventy years, the following paper examines structural inequalities in the representation of an important Indian institution, the government bureaucracy. Across Indian society, caste is actively weaponized to discriminate and exclude historically marginalized communities through enduring, yet unfounded biases. The key research question examined in this article is: How has the caste composition of India's central government bureaucracy changed over time between 1947 and the present? Additionally, the author explores key factors that have blocked the entry of historically excluded groups into India's central government bureaucracy.

Background on Reservations in the Indian Bureaucracy

Soon after India gained independence, the national constitution institutionalized reservation quotas in the

government bureaucracy for marginalized populations. This legislation emerged from the organizing, activism, advocacy, and policy recommendations of prominent anti-caste leaders like B.R. Ambedkar. Like the earlier implementation of affirmative action during the colonial period, reservation quotas in independent India corresponded to the proportion of the population of marginalized communities.¹ Members of the Scheduled Caste (SC) administrative category (also known as ‘untouchables’ or Dalits) had a reservation quota of 12.5 percent in 1947.² Scheduled Tribe (ST) groups received a reservation quota of five percent. (See **Table 1 in the Appendix**).

Even after the installment of affirmative action, consistent underrepresentation of oppressed caste bureaucrats in the central services caused anti-caste activists to advocate for reservation in promotion, as well as increased quotas to reflect the growing SC and ST populations. India’s government extended affirmative action for internal promotions within the bureaucracy to facilitate the upward movement of SCs and STs. Initially, reservation in promotions was limited to the two lowest strata of the bureaucracy (Group C and Group D). Later it was extended to Group B for SCs and STs. (See **Table 1 in the Appendix**.) Six years later in 1974, promotional reservations for the reserved caste category extended to low positions in Group A. To better reflect India’s growing population, reservation quotas increased from 12.5 to fifteen percent for SCs and from five to 7.5 percent for STs in 1970. (See **Table 1 in the Appendix**.) The reservation quota for SCs and STs remains the same and has not changed since 1970.

Beyond SCs and STs, Ambedkar and the 1955 Kelekar Committee supported extending reservations to additional oppressed communities. Activists demanded that the government address the problems in the recruitment and hiring process that resulted in little to no representation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the bureaucracy.³ Finding OBC representation to be negligible, the 1980 Mandal Commission Report advised India’s government to create additional reservations in the central services. After a lengthy struggle, OBCs were awarded a reservation quota of twenty-seven percent in central government civil service positions in 1993.

¹Before India’s independence, reservations existed in some regions. For example, starting in 1874, Mysore, modern-day Karnataka, provided reservation quotas to ensure proportional representation of all populations (Government of Karnataka 1975:256). Despite the effort, Mysore’s Miller Committee (1919) reported that Brahmins still dominated the civil service.

²The SC administrative category includes Dalits, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs while excluding Christians and Muslims. As the most historically oppressed group, Dalits have been considered “outcastes” at the bottom of the caste hierarchy.

³SC, ST, and OBC are administrative categories for India’s most marginalized populations.

(See **Table 1 in the Appendix**.) The representation of historically excluded groups continues to be monitored by various commissions like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)⁴, and National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). In response to the bureaucracy’s insufficient representation of historically excluded groups, periodic Special Recruitment Drives (SRDs) have been launched to fill the mounting number of vacancies. (See **Table 2 in the Appendix**.)

Research Methods

To answer the main research question, the author gathered data on the government bureaucracy for the central services, Indian Administrative Service (IAS), and secretariat. The central services consist of four hierarchical divisions (i.e., Groups A-D), with Group A-- civil servants, often caste elites, holding supervisory and managerial positions while Group D-- employees, usually from marginalized populations, performing menial tasks like sweeping.⁵ Above the four-tiered administrative bureaucracy lies the Indian Administrative Services (IAS), which is considered the elite cadre of civil service officers.⁶ Lastly, the author investigates the caste composition of the secretariat which encompasses senior government appointees (joint secretaries, additional secretaries, secretaries, and cabinet secretaries--in ascending order).⁷ Discriminated caste communities are ineligible for reservations above the IAS or at the Secretariat level. Typically, secretary-level civil servants are selected from the IAS (Gupta 2019) and Group A.

The author examines the composition of SCs and STs, and when data are available for OBCs and caste elites (who fall in the administrative category of ‘unreserved’ or general), for a seventy-year period. Her primary data on the caste composition of the bureaucracy is from government documents. She examined government administrative reports from the Ministry of Personnel and Public Grievances and the NCSC, and government-appointed special commission reports. She also analyzed

⁴Originally, the NCSC and NCST were combined as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (NCSCST).

⁵Before the late 1990s, the four tiers of the Indian administrative bureaucracy were referred to as Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV. For the purpose of this report, the author will apply the recent categorizations of the four tiers (i.e., Group A-D).

⁶The All-India Services (AIS) is nonhierarchical and includes the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), and the Indian Forest Service (IFS). The IAS is considered the premier civil service of India, and compositional data on the IPS and IFS is limited, so, the author chose to focus on the IAS.

⁷Members of the secretariat are experienced officials usually selected from the IAS, so few reserved category individuals have a chance of being admitted to the superior division.

the online archives for English-language newspapers, like *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, and *Indian Express*.

In addition, the author also consulted a range of government documents and secondary sources to make sense of her findings on the compositional change in the Indian bureaucracy. She read the reports of government agencies, including the NCSC and NCST, to compile the historic and contemporary policies that sought to make the affirmative action program work in a bureaucracy dominated by caste elites. To better understand the barriers to diversifying the bureaucracy, she reviewed the published scholarship that documented the experiences of Dalit bureaucrats both qualitatively and quantitatively. She also reviewed online news sources that often narrated through interviews and testimonies of individual bureaucrats the barriers and access points to diversify India's bureaucracy.

Findings

Research Question: How has the caste composition of the government bureaucracy changed since India's independence?

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY

The author reports three interrelated findings from her analysis of the ever-evolving caste composition of India's central bureaucracy.

First, the proportion of SCs and STs in the central services **surpassed** their reservation quotas in 1965 and in 2016, respectively (Government of India 2018). This aggregate view of the central services' overall composition is misleading, however, because it suggests that SCs have had proportional representation for more than 50 years. At the same time, it does highlight the extremely low representation of STs in the central bureaucracy until the 21st century. A disaggregated view of the central services is important to highlight the concentration of SCs and STs in the lower tiers of the central bureaucracy. (See **Tables 3 and 4 in the Appendix.**) For example, in 1953, SCs already composed 20.52 percent of Group D, but made up less than one percent of Group A. Twenty years later in 1974, SC representation remained concentrated at the bottom, making up 18.6 percent of Group D and only 3.2 percent of Group A. In addition, within Group D, jobs that are seen as 'polluted' and therefore less desirable remain dominated by SCs; in 2000, SCs composed 60.45 percent of sweepers (NCSCST 2003:50). The

majority of SCs and STs in the central services remain concentrated in the bottom two tiers.

Relatedly, caste elites (Brahmins and other castes at the 'top' of the caste hierarchy) continue to control the upper tiers of the bureaucracy, despite seventy years of reservations. As of 2016, no historically oppressed group eligible for affirmative action (i.e., SCs, STs, or OBCs) has fulfilled their reservation quotas in Group A. Thus, reservations have been very sluggish in diversifying the upper tiers of the central services. Scheduled Castes only fulfilled their Group B reservation quota in 2008 (DOPT 2013:38). As such, a longitudinal view of the central bureaucracy highlights resistance to change in coveted jobs.

Thirdly, the author finds the representation of OBCs to be consistently low. In 2016, OBCs remain under-represented throughout the central services, accounting for only 21.57 percent of the government bureaucracy despite their reservation quota of twenty-seven percent (Vivek 2018). As of 2010, OBCs are inadequately represented because their representation shortfalls quotas in all four tiers of the central bureaucracy (DOPT 2013:38). Accordingly, the civil services continuously fail to reflect marginalized populations across Indian society. Furthermore, the statistics suggest that OBCs have been least successful in fulfilling their reservation quota. However, in some ways this is not surprising given that OBC reservations began more than forty years after reservations started for SCs and STs.

HIGHER GOVERNMENT JOBS: INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE (IAS) & SECRETARIES

Next the author examines the caste composition of the most elite segments of the central bureaucracy: the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Secretariat. Like the central government bureaucracy, there have been marginal improvements to the caste composition of the IAS since independence. In **Table 5**, the author examines three points in time: 1972, 1986, and 2014⁸ to illustrate the under-representation of historically excluded groups in the IAS. Beginning in 1972, SCs and STs occupied 7.28 and 3.15 percent of IAS posts, respectively.⁹ The composition of the IAS *modestly diversified* by 1986 so that SCs and STs accounted for 9.6 and 5.32 percent. In 2014, SCs made up 10.13

⁸Data becomes much more difficult to locate ascending into more prestigious sections of India's government bureaucracy.

⁹1972 was two years after the increase of reservation quota percentages for both historically discriminated groups to fifteen and 7.5 percent. (See **Table 1 in the Appendix.**) Both populations only possess approximately half of their reservation quotas in the IAS.

percent of the IAS, while STs accounted for 5.22 and OBCs consisted of 12.56 percent of nearly five thousand officers (DOPT 2016:59). (See **Table 5 in the Appendix.**) Considering the extremely slow rate change, despite reservations, Buch (2011) suggests that there is little hope for the improved representation of reserved bureaucrats because the IAS continues to favor Brahmins.

The Secretariat consists of IAS officers appointed as executives to lead central government agencies.¹⁰ Without the pressures of reservations, the Secretariat division has been least successful with increasing the representation of historically marginalized groups. SC representation is extremely low— less than two percent—in the senior-most position. There are a few more STs than SCs in the secretary position. Lastly, OBCs are only found in joint secretary positions in 2019, the lowest tier of the Secretariat. (See **Table 6 in the Appendix.**)

Analysis of Results

In this section the author explores the factors that help to explain the observed patterns in the entry of historically excluded groups into India's government bureaucracy.

BARRIERS TO EXPANDING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: STEREOTYPES AND RESISTANCE

Stigma and pervasive socio-cultural customs prevent the entry and promotion of underrepresented populations into the central government bureaucracy. Referencing “backwardness,” dominant-castes disrespect, harass, and mistreat oppressed-caste individuals for “needing” affirmative action. Oppressors overlook institutional inequalities by purporting that discriminated caste populations suffer from intrinsic deficits. They presume that bureaucrats from historically marginalized groups lack merit despite their passage through the same grueling admissions process. Some caste-elite individuals protest reservations by arguing that they are the victims of discrimination.¹¹ Furthermore, caste elites explain the inadequate representation of historically marginalized communities by deeming them ‘unfit’ and ‘unsuitable’ for the civil service.¹² Due to unfounded

fears of incompetency and inefficiency, bureaucrats from historically oppressed castes are relegated to menial posts with minimal consideration for promotion to more powerful jobs. Even civil servants from historically oppressed castes starting in elevated levels of the government encounter substantial promotional challenges. One officer remarked that reserved IAS civil servants should anticipate “resistance at every step” as their peers “gang up against them to stop them from rising up the ladder” (Kumar 2013). As such, even Dalits who are worthy of promotion experience severe hostility and resistance throughout the bureaucracy (Dhingra 2019a).

CLASS ADVANTAGES: APPLICATION PROCESS AND INTERVIEWS

Direct and indirect application costs pose as an obstacle for many aspiring Indian civil servants. Costly requirements for prospective civil servant applicants in the IAS and upper tiers of the bureaucracy (Groups A and B) include application fees, preparatory services, human capital, a college degree, investments in schooling, and social networks. Application fees are a financial barrier hindering entry into the civil service throughout the lengthy selection process. While some application costs, including the Civil Service Exam (CSE), are relaxed for financially eligible recipients, the test necessitates adequate preparation. Test preparation services like tutoring and courses are paid for without economic assistance.¹³ For the most part, performance on the CSE relies on preparatory access and the financial means to pay for such services. Although the annual applicant pool is extremely large, the collegiate prerequisite eliminates applications from many aspirants.¹⁴ Along with fulfilling the minimum educational requirement, human capital in the form of social networks is helpful in accessing information or tips about applications -- both the exam and interview -- from experienced civil servants. Networks and insider knowledge are beneficial for any candidate, but these social resources are concentrated among those who already have links to the civil service. Because caste and class identities often intersect to compound inequalities for historically oppressed populations in India, individuals from elite caste backgrounds dominate the upper middle classes;

¹³Due to the intersection between caste and class, oppressed groups may lack funding for CSE preparation which further narrows the number of civil servant candidates.

¹⁴An applicant must possess a college degree to sit for the Civil Service Exam (CSE) (Jain 2022). The CSE is the gateway to segments of the higher bureaucracy including the AIS; Groups A and B in the Central Civil Services (CCS); as well as at the secretary level.

¹⁰Like the IAS, data on the caste composition in these appointed positions are not widely available.

¹¹Reservation quotas for the already well-represented general category have been proposed.

¹²The derogatory sentiments of caste elites can be partially explained by their disdain and envy for caste-based reservations.

these groups have more financial resources and social networks for maximum exam preparation—and for the interview stage.¹⁵

Interviews comprise the final stage of the application process where applicants lose their anonymity. Past research indicates that caste-related bias interferes with an interviewer's assessment of oppressed caste applicants. In Uttar Pradesh, applicant surnames were withheld from interviewers, and individuals from the reserved category astoundingly climbed the merit list (Kumar 2013). Outside of the experimental context, successful reserved category test-takers from lower class and lower-middle-class backgrounds may receive low scores from interviewers who prefer candidates from upper-middle-class and caste backgrounds.¹⁶ The preferred candidates, typically from the general category,¹⁷ appear casteless but benefit from their caste identity through accumulated class and social capital benefits (Deshpande 2013:32).

GLASS CEILINGS: INITIAL PLACEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

Placements in the civil service are determined by scored rankings throughout the admissions process from the CSE, interview, and training. Candidates with top rankings choose their placement, often in the IAS or other areas of the AIS, while lower rankers may get placements in groups A or B, or not get admitted at all (Benbabaali 2008; Kumar 2013). Regardless of stellar work records, placements to marginal jobs at the outset of their careers ensures that civil servants from historically oppressed groups remain systematically obstructed from meaningful promotions (Dhingra 2019a; Kumar 2013). In many cases, given caste-based discrimination within the bureaucracy, junior officials from dominant castes surpass idle or “stuck” oppressed caste bureaucrats (Deccan Chronicle 2018). Stagnant career trajectories result in negative rhetoric voiced by caste elites as well as reinforces baseless arguments that privileged communities are more qualified as ideal candidates for promotion. Even bureaucrats from historically oppressed groups in Group A and the IAS with remarkable merit are seldom chosen to be elite secretaries (Kumar 2013). Ranking the lowest of the Secretariat, becoming a joint secretary is the gateway

to more prestigious positions. When civil servants from historically oppressed groups are not selected for positions as joint secretaries, they are not positioned for superior appointments. Age and retirement contribute to struggles for employment in the most prestigious bureaucratic tiers.¹⁸ When initially locked into Groups C or D, reserved civil servants may retire before being promoted (Kumar 2017). Even when deserving reserved bureaucrats are superficially promoted, they lack the power or time to represent their community (Kumar 2013). The problem of age and retirement is further compounded because reserved category officials can access relaxations related to the civil servant admission process. Reserved category candidates may apply later in life than general category competitors and have more opportunities to take the CSE (Dhingra 2019a). Obstacles to promotion ensure that it is nearly impossible for reserved category candidates to be empaneled at the secretary or additional secretary levels (Gupta 2019).

VACANCIES AND RECRUITMENT DRIVE LIMITATIONS

Perhaps most problematically, India's government bureaucracy houses thousands of vacancies that should be filled by individuals from historically oppressed groups. Astonishingly, India's Minister of State for Personnel reported more than eight lakhs¹⁹ vacancies across the central government bureaucracy in 2020 (Careers Desk 2021). Each recruitment term, the empty seats for discriminated castes become ‘backlog reserved vacancies.’ Between 2016 and 2017, only 63,876 posts were filled out of 92,589 backlog reserved vacancies for SCs, STs, and OBCs. (See Table 7 in the Appendix.) Thus, nearly thirty percent of reserved seats remained empty. Disturbingly, backlog vacancies are subject to de-reservation after three years, which may be curtailed by petitions (NCSC 2017:38; Tiwari 1989). No longer reserved, the positions may be occupied by general category bureaucrats. Consequently, the net result is that there are many ‘lost’ positions that historically oppressed castes were once eligible for but can no longer access. Responding to criticism over the unconstitutional²⁰ filling of former backlog reserved vacancies with general bureaucrats, the Government of India launched several sporadic Special Recruitment Drives (SRDs) to improve oppressed-caste representation. Since 1989, there

¹⁵As such, caste-based discrimination prevents marginalized groups from experiencing upward socio-economic mobility.

¹⁶Consequently, interviews widen the already existing shortfall of available candidates needed for reserved posts.

¹⁷The general category does not receive reservation quotas because they do not experience discrimination.

¹⁸Indians retire earlier than workers in the United States which limits opportunities for promotion and empanelment.

¹⁹Eight lakh is equivalent to 800,000.

²⁰De-reservation is unconstitutional because it dismisses legitimate claims to reservations by erasing posts for oppressed communities.

has been an intentional effort to fill backlog reserved vacancies that began mounting in the 1970s, through recruitment drives. (See Table 2 in the Appendix.) Although several backlog reserved vacancies have been successfully filled through various SRDs, many remain empty or were de-reserved.

CONCLUSION

After more than seventy years since B.R. Ambedkar chaired the drafting committee of the Constitution of India, caste-based discrimination and prejudice continue to plague most sectors of India's government bureaucracy. Although affirmative action has facilitated some compositional change through the entry of historically marginalized communities, the administrative bureaucracy must further diversify.

Albeit the aggregate percentage for SCs and STs exceeds the reservation quotas, the data is misleading because it overlooks their overwhelming concentration in the lowest tiers of the central bureaucracy. Correspondingly, formerly marginalized communities experienced limited success in the central bureaucracy's higher tiers where caste elites dominate. OBCs lack adequate representation even at the aggregate level in the central services. Although the composition of the IAS has improved some, representation of historically discriminated communities is nearly nonexistent at the secretariat level where reservations do not exist.

Some factors that explain the caste composition of the Indian bureaucracy stem from the ongoing overrepresentation of caste elites, the intersection of class- and caste-based inequalities, insignificant assignments, and backlog reserved vacancies. Social networks among caste elites and ongoing negative views of oppressed populations have limited the entry and promotion of historically oppressed groups into the higher tiers of the bureaucracy. Along with hostility, caste and class intersect to limit the successful entry of historically discriminated communities through the application process. Drives to fill backlog reserved vacancies, modifications to entrance exam eligibility for historically oppressed groups, and the implementation of reservation in promotion have helped to *slowly* diversify the composition of the bureaucracy, yet thousands of positions have been de-reserved.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The underrepresentation of historically marginalized communities yields four implications. The government bureaucracy represents a microcosm within the larger Indian society. Representational issues indicate the culture of the bureaucracy as exclusive and hostile. Resoundingly, the harsh nature of the bureaucracy prevails over the countless efforts to diversify the bureaucracy's composition. Without access to senior roles, historically oppressed groups lack the benefits of positive social change associated with more inclusion in society and the safeguarding of their rights. As such, caste-based discrimination persists both within and outside of the Indian administrative bureaucracy.

Areas for further research should expand on discrimination through other intersectional identities. For instance, studying the influence of class, gender, and religion in admissions or experiences in the bureaucracy may provide a more nuanced approach to understanding Brahmanical capitalism in India. Specifically, future research should consider the representation of women and Muslims.

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APPENDIX

Glossary of Abbreviated Terms in Order of Appearance

Abbreviation	Meaning
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Classes
NCSC	National Commission for Scheduled Castes
NCST	National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
NCBC	National Commission for Backward Classes
NCSCST	National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
SRD	Special Recruitment Drive
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
AIS	All India Services
IPS	Indian Police Service
IFS	Indian Forest Service
DOPT	Department of Personnel and Training in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions
CSE	Civil Service Exam
CCS	Central Civil Services

Table 1. Recruitment Efforts

Year	Description of Recruitment Efforts
1947	SCs receive a reservation quota of 12.5 percent for open competition and vacancies from recruitment.
1950	STs receive a reservation quota of five percent.
1954	Reservation in promotions became admissible for SCs in various offices.
1955	Reservation in promotion is formally introduced.
1963	Reservation in promotion by selection and competitive exams is limited to Group C and Group D.
1968	Reservation in limited exams and promotion by selection includes Groups B, C, and D while direct recruitment should not exceed fifty percent.
1970	Reservation quotas increase to fifteen percent for SCs and 7.5 percent for STs.
1972	Reservation in promotion prioritizes fitness and seniority.
1974	Reservation in promotion by selection expands to encompass transitions from Group C to Group B, within Group B, and to low tiers of Group A.
1975	SC and ST civil servants are granted two extra years to pass an exam required for promotion.
1987	Two secretaries are appointed by India's prime minister to protect the rights of SCs and STs.
1989	The limitation for direct recruitment increases to seventy-five percent.
1992	Reservations, according to population size, are extended by five years for direct recruitment and promotions across the Indian government bureaucracy.
1993	OBCs receive a reservation quota of twenty-seven percent.

Sources: ANI 2018; Ashraf 2018; DOPT 2013; DOPT 2020; Mustafa 2019; NCSC 2013; NCSC 2015; NCSC 2017; Verma 1996.

Table 2. Special Recruitment Drives (SRDs)

Year	Action
1989	SRD to fulfill the backlog vacancies reserved for SCs and STs.
1990	SRD to fulfill the backlog vacancies reserved for SCs and STs.
1991	SRD to fulfill the backlog vacancies reserved for SCs and STs.
1993	SRD to fulfill the backlog vacancies reserved for SCs and STs.
1995	SRD to fulfill backlog reserved vacancies.
1996	SRD to fulfill backlog reserved vacancies.
2004	SRD fulfills over sixty-thousand backlog vacancies.
2008	SRD to fulfill backlog reserved vacancies for SCs, STs, and OBCs.
2012	SRD to fill the remaining backlog reserved vacancies by the end of March.

Source: DOPT 2013.

Table 3. Representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in the Central Government Bureaucracy*

Year	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D	
	No. of SC	% of SCs	No. of SC	% of SCs	No. of SC	% of SCs	No. of SC	% of SCs
1953	20	0.35	113	1.29	24,819	4.52	161,958	20.52
1963	250	1.78	707	2.98	84,714	9.24	151,176	17.15
1974	1,094	3.2	2,401	4.6	161,775	10.3	230,864	18.6
1980	2,375	4.95	5,055	8.54	235,555	13.44	247,607	19.46
1991	5,689	9.09	12,115	11.82	376,015	15.65	248,101	21.24
1999	9,535	10.77	15,424	12.13	362,799	15.84	257,289	22.71
2008	10,315	11.6	26,495	15.3	330,167	15.9	159,509	21.64
2016	11,333	13.38	46,625	16.03	Group C+D: ^		511,928	17.76

Sources: Census of India 1981; DOPT 2013; DOPT 2020; Gool 2008; Mendelsohn 1998; NCSC 2013; NCSC 2016; NCSCST 2003; Verma 1996.

* The classifications have changed since the 1990s. Originally, the central government bureaucracy was organized into "Classes I-IV." The "Class" categorization was replaced by "Groups A-D" as depicted above. More recently, "Group D" started distinguishing administrative workers from "Safai Karamcharis" or sweepers. The current classification merges "Group C" and "Group D," so there is a distinction between "Group C (excluding Safai Karamcharis)" and "Group C (Safai Karamcharis)."

^ The data from 2016 illustrates the transition to the merging of "Group C" and "Group D."

Table 4. Scheduled Tribe (ST) Representation in the Central Government Bureaucracy

Year	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D	
	No. of STs	% of STs	No. of STs	% of STs	No. of STs	% of STs	No. of STs	% of STs
1965	52	0.27	103	0.34	12,390	1.14	38,444	3.39
1983	741	1.41	915	1.46	88,149	4.14	71,812	5.51
2000	3,382	3.45	5,020	3.48	154,314	6.49	64,865	6.78
2010	3,998	4.5	9,923	5.7	153,844	7.4	47,702	7.2

Sources: Census of India 2001; DOPT 2013; NCSCST 2003; Verma 1996.

Table 5. Reserved Category Representation in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS)

Year	SCs		STs		Total
	No. of SCs	% of SCs	No. of STs	% of STs	
1972	201	7.28	87	3.15	2,759
1986	437	9.6	252	5.32	4,549
2014	468	10.13	241	5.22	4,619

Sources: Chauhan 1976; PIB 2014; Verma 1986.

**Table 6. Percentage of Reserved Category
Representation in the Secretary Positions (2019)**

Position	% of SCs	% of STs	% of OBCs
Secretary	1.12	3.37	0
Additional Secretary	6.45	5.38	0
Joint Secretary	4.73	3.27	6.91

Sources: BBC 2019; Gupta 2019; Sindwani 2020; Sircar and Rajahmani 2021.

Table 7. Vacancy Status

Category	SC	ST	OBC	Total
Backlog Vacancies (2016)	29,198	22,829	40,562	92,589
Filled (2016)	20,975	15,874	27,027	63,876
Unfilled (2017)	8,223	6,955	13,535	28,713

Source: Government of India 2018.