



[Analyst View](#)
[Company Results](#)
[Banking Sector](#)
[Forex Update](#)
[Stock Watch](#)
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#### Sections

[Home](#)  
[Stock Markets](#)  
[Featured Stories](#)  
[Buzzing Stocks](#)  
[Company Updates](#)  
[General Politics](#)  
[Celebrity Photos](#)  
[Health News](#)  
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[Print Edition Previews](#)  
[Contact Information](#)  
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#### Navigation

[Recent posts](#)  
[tree](#)  
[News aggregator](#)

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[Sensex opens firm, up 96 points in early trade](#)  
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## Top gov posts elude Dalits: Govt data

Submitted by [Sarthak Gupta](#) on Mon, 12/21/2009 - 07:14. **Featured Prithviraj Chavan India**

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More than half a century after Scheduled Castes were constitutionally guaranteed reservation in [government services](#), top posts in the [central](#) bureaucracy have constantly eluded them.

The figures: not one out of the 88 central government secretaries is a Dalit. On other crucial posts, too, Dalit representation is dismal: 1.52 per cent at additional secretary level (just one out of 66), 5.04 per cent at joint secretary level (13 out of 249), and 6.2 per cent at the director level (31 out of 471).

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The source: Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Prithviraj Chavan's reply

in the Lok Sabha.

But the problem may be far more serious. "The government has not quoted the number of officers equivalent in rank to secretary, additional secretary or joint secretary. If you add them, the problem is much larger," said a Dalit bureaucrat. "For example, if these are added, the total number of additional secretary-level officers is 128, while the number of Dalits is still the same, i. e., one."

The constitution guarantees 15 per cent SC reservation at the [entry level](#) in central services. The total number of serving IAS officers in India today: about 4,500.

"From the joint secretary level, there are cases of bias, and SCs are often ignored," said retired additional secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice O. P. Shukla, himself a Dalit. "These are not promotion posts but selection posts. Even if a Scheduled Caste officer is the best, he cannot claim the right to get selected."

[The selection](#) process: for becoming joint secretary in the central government, an officer has to get empanelled. A panel of senior secretaries does this. Once an officer is empanelled, the DoPT takes the final decision.

It is in this process that most Dalit officers get ignored, Dalit bureaucrats claim. But the government has a different logic.

"We consider only those officers who have prior central experience of at least three years at junior levels. Only those who opt for central deputation at junior levels get it," said a senior official in the personnel ministry.

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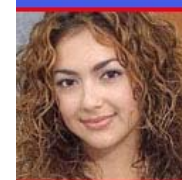
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