

The government reserves up to half of all public service jobs and admissions to educational institutions for the “backward classes, scheduled castes and tribes.”

The cabinet secretary is on the highest rung of the administrative apparatus. He or she heads the cabinet secretariat which coordinates the activities of 35 ministries. Each ministry has one or more departments headed by a secretary. Under this secretary are additional secretaries, joint secretaries, directors, deputy secretaries and under-secretaries.

A joint secretary in the Government of India is equal to a senior secretary in the state government. At the state government level there are departments that correspond to the central government's departments, with the exception of External Affairs, Defence, Aviation, Railways, Communication, and others under the jurisdiction of the Government of India. A similar hierarchy exists at the state level. The chief secretary is the highest ranking officer in the state government.

The central government is the key player in controlling, regulating and promoting social and economic development. With liberalization, the private sector is becoming increasingly independent of government regulations and control.

Many agree that the Indian administrative system is top-heavy and unsustainable. The government has embarked on a number of measures to reduce expenditures, both at the central and state levels. Most Indians believe the government bureaucracy is inefficient, unprofessional and corrupt. It takes a long time and great effort to get anything accomplished in the bureaucracy. One has to bring political pressures to bear in order to reach a decision. Without the right contacts, it is best to avoid dealing with the government, especially at the state level and lower.

Administrative system

Within the national government, each department has the authority to make routine operational and policy decisions pertinent to its mandate. The cabinet has responsibility for major policy decisions. The chief minister of state governments is responsible for most policy decisions.

Government officers “put up” files to superiors for decision-making. As a result, the additional or joint secretaries in the national government make most executive decisions. At the state level, even after making a policy decision and signing an agreement, the concerned secretary must issue a Government Order and have it cleared by the finance department and, in some instances, by an Empowered Committee, before proceeding. The