Little room for SC/ST scientists in biotech bodies

The Pune-based National Centre for Cell Sciences had the highest representation of SCs and STs among scientists – five in the SC category and two from the STs.

Of the 16 DBT institutions, only nine responded to a request for information on representation of scientists, said Ashok Kumar, the RTI applicant. Mr Kumar is a doctoral candidate at the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) in Faridabad, also an autonomous DBT institute. The THSTI records just two of its 32 permanent employees from the SC/ST category of whom one was in the scientist grade.

Responding to queries from The Hindu, Secretary, DBT, Renu Swarup, said the DBT was apprised of this problem last year and had taken corrective action. “A couple of institutes had a problem of representation. We now have a formula in place to ensure that scientists are adequately represented and our hires as of this May reflect this. However, recruitment also has to factor available vacancies, backlog, and skills required,” she said.

In response to a query in the Lok Sabha in December 2018, the government had said that in Central Universities, 193 of the 936 ‘Professor’ grade posts were from the SC/ST category as were 395 of the 1838 ‘Associate Professor’ posts.