DIRECT RECRUITMENT

Efficiency in the administration requires a fresh brain and an experienced hand, both at the same time. To meet the first requirement personnel are recruited from outside, direct from the labour market; and to meet the latter, personnel are selected from within the department itself by giving promotion to a number of efficient persons from lower responsibilities to the higher. While the first type of selection is called direct recruitment the latter may be described as recruitment by promotion.

The Indian system of direct recruitment is designed after the British pattern. Under this system the selection to the general administration is made from the young people direct from the school or universities on the basis of general competitive examinations. This system of recruitment is in contrast to that obtaining in the United States where recruitment to the public service is made from mature persons on the basis of tests related to their respective work.

In India, however, direct recruitment does not mean recruitment of fresh graduates or matriculates alone or recruitment by examination alone. Direct recruitment here also includes recruitment by interview. In the administration there is a large number of specialized and technical services and positions which
require ready-made personnel with experience and skill. These positions are filled up by interview alone from among those with prescribed educational, professional, scientific or technical qualifications.

Thus the recruitment activities of the Public Service Commission of West Bengal are of two categories: recruitment by competitive examination and recruitment by interview.

**COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION**

The object of recruitment is to get the best possible person for a particular post. This object which is considered to be the prerequisite for efficiency in administration, both public and private, necessitated the establishment of the Public Service Commission. It was believed that the Public Service Commission as an independent and impartial agency of the government would eliminate all the abuses of the spoils system and select the personnel for civil service only according to merit and thereby the entry of the best available candidates to the civil service would be guaranteed.

To ensure that the personnel for the civil service may be selected only on the basis of merit the competitive tests have been devised and used by the Public Service Commissions all over the world since their inception. Competitive tests have been universally assumed to be an ideal method in the selection of persons on the basis of merit.
Competitive tests are, as it has been rightly observed by Professor O. Glenn Stahl, the means by which favouritism can be excluded and the goal of securing the best man for a job can be achieved. They are the "answers to the twin problems represented by democracy and the requirements of good administration. They are the means by which equality of opportunity was to be united with efficiency".

Generalist vs. Specialist Though a competitive test has been unanimously considered as *sine qua non* for establishing the merit system in the civil service, opinion varies regarding its nature and aim. The United Kingdom and the United States hold two diametrically opposed views regarding the methods to be followed in and the nature of competitive tests. These two opposing approaches sponsored by the United Kingdom and the United States have led to the famous controversy of the generalist versus the specialist.

A careful analysis of the competitive tests practised by these two countries makes it clear that this difference in the approaches stems out of the differing attitude towards the nature and the function of an "administrator". In the United Kingdom where the 'generalist approach' is followed, the administrator is considered to be an all-rounder having general managerial capacity. In Britain, therefore, the competitive examination is

used to assess the candidate's power of independent and critical thought, the ability for clear and lucid expression of ideas and the humanistic attitude. So in Britain the competitive test which is used for the selection of the civil servant is only a written examination, purely academic in nature, which is followed by a personality test.

It may be noted in this connection that this principle of competitive written examinations was first enunciated by the Macaulay Committee in 1954. Since then this has remained the cornerstone of civil service recruitment in Britain although the scheme of the examination recommended by Macaulay had to be adjusted with the changing educational systems. Macaulay believed that the selection in public service should not require, on the part of the candidates, any technical or specialized preparation. The study of any subject, however remote it might be from the work to be done, which enriched the mind and sharpened the critical faculty could be considered as suitable for civil service work.

The people in the United Kingdom still have their faith in Macaulay's argument that

men who have been engaged, up to one and two and twenty, in studies which have no immediate connexion with the business of any profession, and the effect of which is merely to open, to invigorate, and to enrich the mind, will generally be found, in the business of every profession, superior to men who have, at eighteen or nineteen, devoted themselves to the special studies of their calling.

Therefore, they have retained still now the essay type written examination as the chief selection method of recruitment to the civil service.

Contrary to the British system, the American system which prefers the 'specialist approach' emphasizes recruitment of persons with specialization and experience. The American purpose is to find out specific abilities and qualities required for a particular job with a view to fitting the candidates immediately for their jobs. Therefore, the written tests, which the Americans use, are called objective achievement tests as opposed to the essay type of tests used in the United Kingdom. The purpose of these tests, as it has been explained by the United States Civil Service Commission, "is to measure the aptitudes, skills and experience needed to perform acceptably the duties of the position to be filled". In the United States, different tests are given for different administrative positions.

The Public Service Commissions of India, which are designed after the British model, quite obviously, support the 'generalist approach'. They recruit candidates to the civil service on the basis of general education. Therefore, the written examinations conducted by the Indian Public Service Commissions are academic in nature. This helps to assess the

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overall intellectual calibre of the candidates.

Examinations Conducted by Public Service Commission in West Bengal

The Public Service Commission in West Bengal, as it has been stated earlier, holds two types of competitive examinations. The first is a written examination of a comparatively higher standard which is followed by a personality test. Recruitment to the senior state services like the West Bengal Civil Service (Executive) and Allied Services or the West Bengal Judicial Service are made on the basis of this type of competitive examination and personality test. The second type of examination is conducted for recruitment to the lower posts like those of clerks, typists, stenographers and translators. Generally the candidates for these posts are not interviewed. Similarly at the Centre, recruitment to the all-India services, the central services (Class I & II) is made by the Union Public Service Commission on the basis of a competitive written examination and a personality test. For the lower posts written examinations are held. Of all the examinations conducted by the West Bengal Public Service Commission, the most important is the combined competitive examination for recruitment to the West Bengal administrative, police and other senior state services, which is called W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination. An analysis of the general schemes of different competitive examinations conducted by the Commission in West Bengal may be
made in this connection.

W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination There are two types of papers; compulsory and optional.

Compulsory papers include:
(1) English Essay and Precis Writing, (2) English Composition and Translation, (3) Bengali (Hindi/Urdu/Nepali) Composition and Translation, (4) General Knowledge and Current Affairs, (5) Elementary Mathematics, (6) Constitution of India and the Five-Year Plans. Candidates for Group "D" posts will not be required to take up the papers on English Composition and Translation (Paper 2) and the Constitution of India and the Five-Year Plans (Paper 6). But they shall take up the other four papers in the list above carrying a total of 400 marks only.

In the case of optional papers candidates for Group "A" shall take up any three papers and candidates for Group "B" and "C" shall take up any two papers in any one or more subjects while the candidates for Group "D" shall take up only one paper in any subject out of 27 optional subjects. Optional papers are of the honours degree standard and each paper carries 100 marks.

The written examination is followed by a personality test. In the personality test the total marks for Group "A" and Group "B" are 200 and the total marks for Group "C" are 100. The object of the personality test is to assess the candidate's personal qualities, e.g., alertness of mind, power of clear and
logical exposition, intellectual and moral integrity, leadership and also his or her range of interests. Candidates for Group "B" service (West Bengal Police Service) are specially tested at the interviews with regard to their suitability for the service.

The Commission may fix the qualifying marks in any or all of the papers and in the aggregate.

In this connection the general scheme of the I.A.S. and Allied Services Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission may also be examined. The written examination consists of two types of papers: compulsory and optional. Compulsory papers include (a) English Essay, (b) General English, (c) General Knowledge. Each paper carries 100 marks. Optional papers: two subjects are to be selected for the I.F.S. and three for the others out of 26 optional subjects, each carrying 200 marks. The total marks for the I.F.S. are 400 and for the other services are 600.

There are also additional subjects for the I.A.S. and the I.F.S. only. Two subjects are to be selected from a list of fifteen additional subjects (most of which are common to the optional papers), each carrying 200 marks. The total marks for the I.A.S. and the I.F.S. are 400.

The written examination is followed by a personality test. In the personality test the total marks for the I.A.S. and the I.F.S. are 400 and the total marks for all the other services are 300.
It may be noted in this connection that the candidates for the West Bengal administrative, police and other senior state services have to appear even for a test of Elementary Mathematics which is not compulsory for the candidates appearing for the I.A.S. or the I.F.S. or the other central services.

West Bengal Civil Service (Judicial) Examination Another important examination that the Public Service Commission of West Bengal conducts annually is the West Bengal Civil Service (Judicial) Examination for the recruitment of personnel to the West Bengal State Judicial Services. The general scheme of the West Bengal Civil Service (Judicial) Examination is as follows:

Compulsory papers:

1. English Composition, Essay and Precis Writing.
2. Bengali (Hindi, Urdu or Nepali) Composition, Essay and Translation from English into Bengali (Hindi, Urdu or Nepali).
3. General Knowledge and Current Affairs.
5. Criminal Procedure Code and Indian Penal Code.
8. Transfer of Property Act.

Each compulsory paper carries 100 marks.

Optional papers:

Candidates shall take up any three of the following
papers carrying a total of 300 marks:

1. Hindu Law,
2. Mohammedan Law,
3. Jurisprudence,
4. Indian Law relating to Companies and Insurance,
5. Principles of Equity, including Law of Trusts and Specific Relief,
6. Partnership Act,
7. Law of Limitation and Law of Prescription,
8. The Indian Constitution and Constitutional Law.

The standard of examination in the compulsory and optional law papers will be that of the LL.B. degree of the Calcutta University.

In the personality test the total marks are 100. There are no separate qualifying marks for any individual subject or for the personality test and the merit of the candidates shall be determined on the basis of the total marks obtained in all the written papers of the examination and in the personality test but no candidate who fails to obtain at least fifty per cent of the marks in the aggregate shall be deemed to be qualified for appointment.

West Bengal Miscellaneous Services Recruitment Examination The Public Service Commission of West Bengal holds almost every year a competitive examination called the West Bengal Miscellaneous Services Recruitment Examination for recruitment to the following
services and posts:

i) Secretariat Upper Division Clerical Service.
ii) Inspector of Commercial Taxes
iii) Inspector of Income Taxes
iv) Deputy Jailors
v) Inspector of Minimum Wages
vi) Inspector of Shops and Establishments
vii) Inspector of Trade Unions.

The examination held for these services and posts consists of the following compulsory papers:

Paper I - English Essay and Precis Writing
Paper II - General English and Composition
Paper IV - General Knowledge and Current Affairs
Paper V - Elementary Mathematics.

Each paper carries 100 marks.

West Bengal Secretariat Clerkship Examination The Commission also holds a competitive written examination for recruitment to the lower division clerical services in the secretariat and the other offices of the Government of West Bengal. The examination consists of the following subjects and papers

Paper I - English
Paper II - Bengali
Age Limits and Qualifications

Age limits The Indian recruitment system prefers early entry. As a follower of the 'generalist approach' the Indian system of recruitment does not aim at securing experts. It wants administrators capable of becoming skilled by contact with actual work. Both the British and the Indian systems are based on the 'career service' principle where a person, fresh from the university, is appointed to a lower post; and gradually he may rise to higher posts as he gains experience. The Indian system thus upholds the principle that the people should come into the civil service at an age when there mind is flexible.

The American system, on the other hand, prefers to recruit persons with appropriate technical qualifications needed for a particular position. So the American system prefers men of mature age and brain. In the United States the candidates of quite advanced age-groups - up to thirty-five or forty years - are recruited for civil service posts. For the United States Federal Service Entrance Examination the minimum age requirement is 18 years, no maximum age-limit is prescribed for it. But in the United Kingdom the age-limits for the Administrative Class are 21 to 24 years.

4 Stahl, O. Glenn, op. cit, p.59.
5 Finer, Herman, op. cit., p.768.
In case of India, at the Centre so long the age-limits for the I.P.S. were 20 to 24 years and for all other services, 21 to 24 years. But considering the cases of the candidates from the backward classes who start education at a comparatively later age the Central Government has recently raised the upper age-limits for all these services to 26 years.

In West Bengal the age-limits prescribed for West Bengal Civil (Executive) and Allied Services were 21 to 24 years; for police service 20 to 24 years; for judicial services, 21 to 27; for upper division clerical services 20 to 23 years and for lower division clerical services 18 to 23 years. But recently the upper age-limits for all these services have been raised up to 30 years by the Government of West Bengal. In addition to that the upper age-limits for all these services are relaxable by 5 years for the candidates belonging to the scheduled castes or scheduled tribes or if a candidate is a bona fide displaced person from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

Qualifications The minimum educational qualifications prescribed for the West Bengal executive, police and other senior state services is a degree in arts, science, commerce or agriculture. The standard of the examination of the optional papers conducted is that of an honours degree of the Calcutta University.

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6 From the brochures issued by the Public Service Commission for different examinations.
The candidate for the West Bengal judicial service must be a graduate in law of some statutory university or a barrister-at-law or a member of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland or an advocate or an attorney on the rolls of the High Court in Calcutta. The standard of the examination in the compulsory and the optional law papers of the West Bengal Civil Services (Judicial) Examination is that of the LL.B. degree of the Calcutta University.

For the upper division clerical services of the Government of West Bengal the candidates must be undergraduates and for the lower division clerical posts the candidates must have passed the School Final Examination of the Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal or an equivalent examination.

The candidates for any of these services under the Government of West Bengal must be citizens of India as defined in Part II of the Constitution of India.

As the competitive written tests, conducted by the Public Service Commissions of India for recruitment to the public services, are purely academic in nature and the examinations so conducted are of the honours degree standard of the Indian universities, some of the critics of the present system are of opinion

7 From the brochure issued by the West Bengal Public Service Commission for West Bengal Civil Service (Judicial) Examination.

8 The term "Undergraduate" is taken to mean a pass in the Part I Examination of the 3-year Degree Course, or where no such Part I Examination is held, satisfactory completion of at least two years of the 3-year Degree Course, or continuance of studies satisfactorily for at least one year after passing the Intermediate Examination of any university.

9 From the brochures issued for the respective services examinations.
that it is not necessary to insist on a university degree.

But objections may be raised against this view. First of all, there must at least be a minimum standard for entrance to the responsible services like administrative, police or judicial service. As no specialized qualifications or experience is necessary for entrance to all these non-technical public services, a large number of candidates appear every year for competitive examinations both at the Centre and in the States. The abolition of a university degree as a prerequisite, under these circumstances, would lead to an unmanageable increase in the number of such candidates. This may mean a deterioration in the quality of the candidates who would appear. Secondly the higher administrative and executive services require intellectual ability, maturity of outlook, a dominating personality and an educated mind.

The Association of First Division Civil Servants in England in its evidence before the Tomlin Commission, 1930, analysed the main characteristics which a higher public servant should possess. According to the Association

......the efficient performance of the administrative work of the various Departments calls in all cases for a trained mental equipment of a high order, while in the particular case powers developed in some particular direction are needed. In some spheres, what is most wanted is judgement, savoir-faire, insight, and fairmindedness; in others, an intellectual equipment capable of the ready mastery of complex and abstruse problems in, for instance, taxation or other
economic subjects, imagination and constructive ability. These developments of mind and personality are not possible without any university education. This is because universities not only give training for the development of mind through the study of various subjects, but also provide scope for the development of personality.

In this connection one may refer to Macaulay again. Macaulay, who was the chief architect of the competitive written test was also in favour of graduate recruitment though he had not mentioned it specifically. It has been correctly observed that his (Macaulay's) specific reference to two and twenty as against eighteen or nineteen, and his preference for studies which merely "open invigorate and enrich the mind" make it clear as to what he was driving at. Moreover the syllabus and the list of subjects which his committee prescribed were also meant for an examination of the honours standard.

So, if the governments are to maintain a qualified staff having high education, intellectual ability and a mature outlook, for their respective higher administrative services, the candidates for these services must have an honours degree. But in India still now the minimum educational qualification prescribed for these services is a university degree, which includes both pass and

10 Quoted in Finer, Herman, op.cit., pp. 769-770.
11 Bhalerao, C.N., op.cit., p.60.
and honours graduates.

It may be noted in this connection that the educational system determines to a certain extent the quality of the Civil service. The state as an employer must always be influenced by the state as an educator. In developed countries attention has been given to the problems of articulating the educational system and the civil service. In the United States there has been a constant attempt at bringing about a closer correlation between the formal education and the demands of public administration. The United Kingdom has developed a more closely correlated system where the public service, in the words of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1912), gathers "the natural fruits of the educational system of the country in its various stages as they mature."\(^{13}\)

In India also attempts should be made for the development of a close correlation between the education and the public service. This will help the government to obtain personnel with appropriate standards.

**Competitive Written Examination: Nature and Content**

The general administrator in India is considered to be an all-rounder. Therefore a candidate for the higher administrative services in India, and in West Bengal as well, is expected to have a capacity for effective thinking, sense of form, numerical

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ability, power of expression and general knowledge and common-sense about the world and things around him, on the one hand, and an intellectual calibre and depth of knowledge about the subject studied, on the other.

In West Bengal the general scheme of the W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services, and W.B.C.S. (Judicial) Examination has been so designed as to assess these two types of qualities of the candidates who appear. The compulsory papers of the W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, consisting of English Essay, General English, Bengali, Mathematics, General Knowledge and the Constitution of India help the assessment of the former qualities, and the optional papers attempt to find out the intellectual equipment and depth of knowledge about the subject studied. The optional subjects cover practically most of the subjects which are taught in the universities and colleges in India. Candidates have to offer their subjects in such a way as they can select two subjects from their field of specialization and one other subject or they can select three separate subjects.

Question papers for this examination are set by distinguished professors of universities and other academic institutions. But the questions generally fail to test the critical ability of the candidates. The following questions in Political Science in a Competitive examination in West Bengal will substantiate this point.

West Bengal W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination

1. Discuss the principal methods of Political Science and its relationship with History.

2. Discuss the Evolutionary theory of the origin of the state. Is it any improvement on the other theories?

3. Examine the value and limitations of the Doctrine of Self-Determination. Do you think that the "Right of Self-Determination is like a two-edged sword and can be admitted only with reservation?"

4. Discuss the Austinian theory of sovereignty and the pluralistic attack upon it.

5. Give a critical estimate of socialism as a political idea.

The same defect is to be found in the questions set in other States for their respective competitive examinations. The questions set in Maharashtra for its higher administrative services may be reproduced here in this connection.

Maharashtra: Competitive Examination for recruitment to the posts of Probationary Deputy Collectors and others.

1. Define a nation and describe the factors that constitute a nation. Is every state a nation? Illustrate.

2. State and examine the Evolutionary theory of the origin of the state.

3. Examine critically Plato's concept of communism.

4. Discuss how political parties help or hinder the working of democracy.

5. Examine the merits and demerits of the Presidential type of executive.

Vide the question paper for 1965.
In comparison to these questions set for the state services the questions set for the I.A.S. and Allied Services Examination may seem somewhat better, though according to some expert they also lack that "high critical quality" which characterises the British Administrative Class Examination. Some of the questions set in the I.A.S. and Allied Services Examination in Political Science may also be reproduced here.

I.A.S. and Allied Services Examination:

1. Comment on:
   
   (a) "... all things are produced more plentifully and easily and of a better quality when one man does one thing which is natural to him and does it at the right time and leaves other things" (Plato).
   
   (b) "The state exists for the sake of good life and not for life only" (Aristotle).
   
   (c) "The state is ... a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection" (Burke).
   
   (d) "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters pain and pleasure" (Bentham).

2. The Republic and The Laws are communist tractates, Plato ... is the first communist (Catlin) Do you agree? If so how would you reconcile it with the other view equally strongly propounded that Plato is the first among the fascists.

3. The greatest of the tasks of reconciliation which Aquinas had to perform was to reconcile the philosophy of Aristotle with the truth of Christian revelation (Foster).

   Elucidate the above statement.

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16 Bhalerao, C.N., op. cit. p. 64.
4. Discuss the Conciliar theory and its importance. Why did the Conciliar Movement fail in reforming the church? What were its total achievements in the realm of thought?

It would appear from the questions quoted above that the standard of the questions set for the I.A.S. and the Allied Services Examination is undoubtedly higher than the standard of questions set for the state administrative services examinations.

So it may be concluded that the standard of the competitive examination for recruitment in West Bengal needs some improvement. If the purpose of the recruitment examination is to assess the candidate's entire background of knowledge, his mental alertness and originality of thought and expression the questions should be more critical in nature. But it should be remembered that under the present system of education prevailing in India it will be useless to improve the standard of the recruitment examination. The existing system of education in India cannot provide a fundamental training in thought. It is evident from the annual reports of the Commission that most of the students lack originality of thought and expression and a critical outlook. Hence along with a change in the standard of recruitment examination it is also necessary to bring about a substantial change in the whole educational system of India.

In this connection an assessment may be made of the general quality of the candidates who appear every year at the competitive examinations in West Bengal.
Quality of Candidates

It is evident from the annual reports of the Commission that there has been a progressive deterioration in the intellectual standards of the candidates who appear at the West Bengal Civil Service (Executive) and Allied Services Examinations. The Commission itself pointed out that

So far as the West Bengal Civil Service Examination was concerned the absence of any restriction on graduates with minimum eligibility applying for admission to the written tests at the combined competitive examination led to an influx of low merit and the majority of the examinees disclosed a standard of fitness far below than that required for ultimate success. There was, therefore, a wide divergence in the quality of the answers (in the various subjects) of the few who were selected and the many who were disqualified.

This observation was made by the Commission during the year 1951-52 when the number of the candidates who appeared at the examination was 246. In 1967-68 this number increased many times. But the quality of the candidates remained unchanged. In the Commission's own words:

.... the performance of the majority of candidates .... continued to be unsatisfactory. In most cases the candidates seemed to be ignorant of the elements of English grammar and composition. Many of them appeared unprepared for the competitive examination.

A large number of candidates appear every year at the W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination but only a few among them qualify for the personality test. Table 6.1 corroborates the fact.

It is evident from the data given in Table 6.1 that in 1960 out of 1,106 candidates only 206 qualified for the viva-voce. That is, only 18% of the total number of candidates were successful in the written test. In 1965 the percentage of successful candidates rose up to 22% and in 1968 it had increased further, up to 26%, 163 out of 615 candidates being successful.

It may be noted in this connection that there are no qualifying marks prescribed for the written examination. Some candidates selected in order of merit on the results of the written examination are called by the Commission for a personality test. The marks obtained at the personality test are added to the aggregate marks obtained in the written examination. There are also no qualifying marks for the personality test. The merit of the candidate is determined on the basis of the total marks obtained in all the written papers of the examination and in the personality test. In this connection an attempt may be made to throw some light upon the nature and content of the personality test conducted by the Public Service Commission in West Bengal.

**Personality Test** A successful and efficient administrator should have not only a good academic career and a high intellectual ability; he should also possess qualities like leadership, judgement, intelligence, alertness in grasping a situation, ability to co-operate, patience, vigour and strength of character. These qualities of a candidate cannot be assessed by the written test alone. To assess these personal qualities the assessors must meet
Table 6.1

Number of Candidates Qualifying in the W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination 1959 to 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of candidates appeared</th>
<th>No. of candidates qualifying for personality test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1959</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1960</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1961</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1962</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1965</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1966</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1967</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.C.S. (Executive) and Allied Services Examination, 1968</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the Public Service Commission, West Bengal.

the candidate in person. Hence a meeting is arranged by the Public Service Commissions in India to interview the candidates
for the administrative and other services. The interview is taken by a competent and unbiased board. This is called the personality test or viva voce.

Personality test, therefore, is not a test of a candidate's specialized or general knowledge because those have been tested by a written examination. It is in the nature of a conversation to judge such qualities as mental alertness, powers of assimilation, clear and logical exposition, balance of judgement, variety and depth of interests, ability for social cohesion and leadership, intellectual and moral integrity. The Public Service Commission of West Bengal, like its counterparts in the other States in India, conducts personality tests to assess the personality of the candidates appearing for senior state services examinations. The tests are generally made by an interview board consisting of two members of the Commission, including the chairman who presides over the board, an educationist of high standing, and some senior administrative officers (in case of the judicial service some judicial experts like a Judge of the Calcutta High Court or the secretary to the judicial department, Government of West Bengal, are invited to constitute the personality test board for assessing the candidates for the judicial service). The tests held by the Commission last from 20 to 30 minutes.

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One of the main difficulties of the present selection method which is used by the Public Service Commission of West Bengal for recruitment of the personnel for the senior state services is its failure to attract the better class products of the universities. Persons with a 1st class Honours or Master's degree respond very rarely to the civil service recruitment. A large number of 1st classes are coming out of the universities every year but they are not interested in the state services. The result is that their proportion in the senior state services of West Bengal is disappointingly poor. Table 6.2 showing the qualification of the candidates who were selected for appointment to the senior state services during the period 1964 to 1968 proves the lack of response of the better class products of universities to the senior state services of the Government of West Bengal.

Table 6.2 reveals the fact that the 1st class graduates generally are not interested in the West Bengal Civil and Allied Services Examination. In 1965, among the first 40 candidates selected for the senior state services, there was only one 1st class graduate. In 1967 the first 30 places there were only three 1st class degree-holders and in 1968 again there was only one 1st class degree-holder (in Sanskrit) in the first 50 places.

A similar trend is also to be found in the I.A.S. and other central services. The quality of the recruitment, at the Centre, is also suffering on account of the same lack of response
Table 6.2

Qualifications of the Candidates Selected for Appointment to the Senior State Services of the Government of West Bengal, 1964-68

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of W.B.C.S. Examination</th>
<th>No. of Candidates appd.</th>
<th>1st Class M.A.</th>
<th>2nd Class M.A.</th>
<th>3rd Class B.A. B.</th>
<th>3rd Class B.Sc., Com.</th>
<th>3rd Class M.Sc., B.Sc.</th>
<th>Spl. Hons.</th>
<th>Pass Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964 Not available</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 868</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966 978</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 718</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968 615</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the Public Service Commission, West Bengal.

...of the better class products of the universities to the civil service. This fall in the attractiveness of the government service drew the attention of the Study Team of the Administrative Reforms Commission on Recruitment and Selection. According to the Team this is a "situation which a country engaged in a vast developmental programme and faced with multifarious difficulties both internal and external can afford to ignore only at its peril". The Team, therefore,

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has carried out extensive researches for finding out the probable causes of this diminution in attraction. In the Team's opinion, the present system of competitive written examinations is also one of the principal reasons for which the good university students are not interested in the government services.

The competitive examination, as it has been noted in the analysis of the general scheme of the written examination conducted by the Union and the West Bengal Public Service Commissions, is heavily weighted in favour of the written subjects and requires a long intensive preparation even by candidates with high intellectual calibre. Under such circumstances it is quite likely that a good university graduate with five to six years of regular study at the university would appear unwilling to undertake the long arduous preparation which is necessary for the present competitive examinations. It is no wonder that he would prefer an immediate appointment in the private sector where no such long academic preparation is required for selection and the remuneration and other service conditions are much better than those of the government service.

It may be noted in this connection that the Public Service Commission of West Bengal, while analysing the lack of response of the 1st class law graduates to the judicial service under the Government of West Bengal, has itself admitted that the really good law graduates are possibly shy of going through an elaborate

22 ibid., para 1.4.6.
written examination for which they have little time to prepare, being actively engaged in the profession, though they may be quite willing to submit to a process of selection by interview.

It may be noted that the Fulton Committee in Britain which submitted its report on the British Civil Service in 1968 has criticized this academic type of written examinations on the same lines. Some of the members of the Committee have considered that the written examination in its existing form should cease to exist for the following reasons:

(a) A written examination in the subjects studied by the candidate will be a repetition of the testing by his university.

(b) Many candidates will be reluctant to sit for two examinations of the same kind.

(c) It is difficult to think how the Civil Service Department would be able to examine better than the university the range of the subjects included in the syllabus of the written examination.

Another defect of the written examination that has been pointed out by the Study Team of the Administrative Reforms Commission is that under the present system even the candidates


of inferior calibre can qualify himself for one or another service having mastered the technique of the examination by taking repeated chances.

Reliability and Validity

Written Examination It must be admitted that with the essay type of examination conducted by the Public Service Commissions there are several problems of reliability and validity. In the compulsory subjects, though the candidates have the same subjects, there may be a number of examiners with one acting as the co-ordinator. A problem of reliability may arise even when the same person examines the paper and the problem increases when more than one person is involved. Problems become more accurate in the case of optional papers. The candidates appearing with Sanskrit or Mathematics may find themselves in a more advantageous position by obtaining more marks than those appearing with Philosophy or Economics though the latter may not be inferior to the former in intellect. It is difficult to provide for an equivalence among different subjects.

In this connection reference may be made to the findings of the International Institute of Examination Enquiry Committee in Britain in 1934. The Committee was of opinion that in an essay type of examination the fate of a candidate "is partly dependent on the particular examiner's reaction to the subject of the essay" and there are variations in the marks assigned.

25...Quoted in Kingsley, J. Donald, Representative Bureaucracy, Antioch Press, Ohio, 1944, p.198.
by different examiners.

**Viva Voce or Personality Test** The reliability and validity of the *viva voce* or personality test in its present form may also be questioned. The personality test is a 20 to 30 minutes' interview. Hence there are several reasons to doubt whether it is a reliable technique for the assessment of the personality of the candidate.

In the *viva voce* there is no definite technique in assessing the candidates' personalities. The line of questioning generally represents the opinion and views of the interviewers. The attitudes and background of the interviewers contribute to low reliability by affecting the interviewer's interpretation of what the applicants say and their subsequent evaluation of the applicant. In short, interviewers may hold the interview with biases which cause them to evaluate the same candidate differently.26

It has been shown earlier in the analysis of the social and professional background of the members of the Public Service Commission, that in general they represent the upper class and the upper middle class.27 In recruitment interviews these members may prefer those candidates whose views and social experience are similar to their own. Thus the *viva-voce* has been exposed to the criticism that it generally eliminates the chances of the

27 Chapter Supra. •
candidates from the lower social strata and that it is used as an instrument to preserve the social 'purity' of the administrative class

The charge against the class bias is no exaggeration. A close analysis of the social background of the higher civil servants in the different parts of the world testifies to its truth. In France, for instance, in 1962, fifty-six out of the seventy-one university students who were successful in the examinations held for admission to the École Nationale d'Administration belonged by social origin to the upper classes. Of the twenty-two successful candidates from the civil service itself, ten belonged to the same class. In Britain also the bulk of the British higher civil servants, to a remarkable degree, continue to be drawn from a narrowly restricted segment of the population. Most of them are educated at public schools and at Oxford.

A similar trend is also visible in India. In India also most of the higher civil servants are drawn from the upper social strata. The farmers, the agricultural labourers and the industrial workers forming the bulk of the work force, are grossly under-represented in the civil service.

This class bias of the commissioners, as Kingsley observes, is difficult to avoid. It is not a matter of conscious awareness. It is the product of the operation of a body of common assumptions seldom suspected and almost never analysed.\(^3\)

Moreover, instead of finding out the real personal qualities in the interview quite often it becomes a test of candidates' superficial characteristics. In such interviews, as Finer observes, a "nice" boy, with engaging manners and a pleasant accent, has a much better chance of having his relevant qualities assessed excessively than the rough diamond has of securing arithmetical justice.\(^3\) What the candidate is expected to possess is that vague entity called "personality" which in practical terms boils down to the accents with which he speaks English, an air of authority he assumes by talking fluently about almost any subject, and the confidence which he exudes. These are all qualities which the more expensive English medium schools in the country specialise in imparting to their students and it is not surprising that they provide the service, specially at the Centre, with a large number of officers. On the other hand, the "intelligent students without the gift of the gab may be and often are unfairly weeded out.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Kingsley, J. Donald, op. cit. p. 201.
\(^3\) Finer Herman, op. cit. p. 779.
\(^3\) The Times of India, April 25, 1972, Bombay.
The unreliability of the *viva voce* tests has more clearly been proved by the International Institute of Examination Enquiry Committee. The Committee tried to test the degree of concurrence of the two boards of examiners. Two *viva voce* tests were conducted for this purpose. Sixteen candidates were interviewed by the two boards and assigned marks on the basis of a maximum of 300. There was no case of complete agreement between the boards in the allocation of marks, and there were a number of cases of extreme disagreement. The candidate marked first by the board I was ranked thirteenth by board II and the latter's first choice was given the eleventh position by the former. These shattering results led the Committee to conclude that the different influences of the two boards and the operation of chance factors were sufficient "to mask the common influence of the same set of candidates".

In view of such findings it is not unreasonable to doubt the reliability of the *viva voce*. All these problems that arise in a *viva voce* are largely due to the fact that it is too much subjective giving undue reliance on the selectors' capacity to appraise the qualities of the candidate without the help of any objective means. A 20 to 30 minutes' discussion on the general topics is considered enough for an assessment of the total personality of a candidate.

Extensive researches on personnel management have brought about a radical change in the selection process. It has been

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proved that a carefully constituted test battery, comprising job analysis, psychological tests, group discussion and interview, makes the selection process more scientific and the prediction made thereby becomes more accurate and reliable. While the use of all these objective means of the selection process is growing popular increasingly in the other sectors in India, including the defence services of the Government of India, the Public Service Commissions have refrained from using any of them.

It is assumed by the advocates of the viva voce that one can assess the candidate's alertness, width of interests and intellectual, moral and social traits of personality by asking him "questions on which every young man should have something to say". The Union Public Service Commission believes that a well-constituted interview board can size up the trend of the personal qualities of young people even after a conversation of 15 to 20 minutes. In spite of this it cannot be denied even by its ardent supporters that "face-to-face evaluations are often influenced by the interviewer's own needs and prejudices". The absence of any scientific method in the present selection process has led Phillip E. Vernon, the consulting psychologist to the British Civil Service Commission, to conclude that the selection interview is obviously unsatisfactory because it provides such

an unrepresentative and limited sample of the interviewee's behaviour.\textsuperscript{37}

In spite of all these criticisms it will be utterly wrong to believe that the assessment by the Public Service Commissions proves to be unsatisfactory in every case. The long experience of the interviewers may be of a great help in their selection, but the process being subjective, there is every possibility of the assessment to be proved inaccurate. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to think that the introduction of some scientific and objective selection tools in the selection method of the Public Service Commissions may make the possibility less frequent and the prediction more accurate.

\textbf{Modern Selection Method}

To make the process of selection more scientific, modern selection methods place much emphasis on psychological testing and observational techniques. The last generation, it has been correctly observed, specially in Germany and in the United States, has witnessed a significant improvement in the technique of testing applicants for entrance and promotion in the public service. In lieu of single-question-answer or essay type of examination, standardized short-answer aptitude tests, possessing greater predictive power have been widely developed by the Civil Service Commissions and psychological laboratories\textsuperscript{38}.

\textsuperscript{37} Quoted in Bhalerao, C.N., \textit{op.cit.}, p.87.

Job Analysis  Psychological testing which attempts at the assessment of different qualities required for a particular job calls for analysing the work the candidate will be expected to perform and isolate the significant traits and qualifications essential for successful job performance. A careful preparation of the qualitative requirements of the administrator provides a guideline to the selector in his search for suitable candidates.

Psychological Testing  In appraising and comparing candidates' qualifications as well as their potential to perform jobs in a satisfactory manner the psychological tests are considered to be very useful. The psychologists agree that, psychological tests, when properly administered and interpreted, can make an important contribution to the selection process.

Since people function as composite entities, it is necessary to measure several aspects of the individual in order to arrive at a portrait of the whole man. Therefore, a number of tests are given to find out different qualities inherent in an individual candidate.

The most widely known and extensively employed psychological test of capacity is known as the intelligence test. Constant research of the behavioural scientists has proved that the intelligence tests are of great value in the selection process; the selection made on the basis of these tests has constant relationship to later adjustment to the job situation. There is a considerable accumulation of evidence to show that a minimum
level of general intelligence is a prerequisite to success in a number of occupations. In his article on "Occupational Intelligence Standards", Douglas Fryer observed that the "occupational territory of an individual is bounded by his intellectual capacity; he is blocked off into an occupational field with intelligence as the standard for classification". And he concluded that an individual to be successful in a given situation must almost certainly possess a degree of intelligence.

Like intelligence, interests and aptitudes also contribute their shares to the success or failure of a person in a particular occupation. Ability without interest in the job can spell failure. A carefully constituted psychological test of interest helps to assess a candidate's potentialities more correctly and makes the prediction more reliable. Due to this reason tests of these kinds have found growing popularity in the personnel administration.

A person can have all the necessary abilities and interests and yet he may fail to be successful as an executive if he lacks certain personal characteristics. Usually greater importance is attached to a man's personality make-up than to some of the other aspects of his psyche. An ability to handle inter-personal situations well, or lack of it, can often have far-reaching influence.

on the entire administration. So psychological analysis of different aspects of personality make up constitutes an indispensible part of the personnel selection programme.

Observational Techniques While tests are useful in evaluating potential to perform in an administrative capacity, they supply only part of the data needed for making a selection decision regarding a particular candidate. Test results should be interpreted in the light of other considerations concerning the person's behaviour, appearance, working habits, interpersonal skills, initiative, and leadership capacity. Information regarding these attributes can best be obtained by observing the candidate in person under different situations. The most widely used observational techniques are observation of the candidates in group discussion and interviewing. In a discussion the selectors have the opportunity to observe the candidates handling problems of the like they will have to deal with in their future jobs. This helps the selectors to have a concrete idea about the suitability of candidates for a particular job.

These psychological and observational techniques of selection are increasingly used not in the private sector alone. The Civil Service Commissions in the United Kingdom and in the United States are also using them for recruitment to the public services. An Examination of the selection methods used in the United Kingdom\(^{40}\) shows that psychological testing and observational

\(^{40}\) Vide Appendix II.
techniques constitute a major part of the new selection method used by the British Civil Service Commission.

Suggestions For an Alternative Method

The successful result obtained from Method II in the United Kingdom has encouraged the Study Team of the Administrative Reforms Commission to recommend a similar selection procedure to be adopted by the Union Public Service Commission in India as an alternative method of entry with a view to making the competitive examination more attractive to the better class of university graduates. The method proposed consists of three successive stages, a qualifying written test of general English and general knowledge, a series of tests and interviews under a specially constituted screening board and a final interview before the main selection board of the Union Public Service Commission. A similar selection procedure may also be used by the Public Service Commission of West Bengal as an alternative method of entry to the West Bengal Civil (Executive) Service at least as an experimental measure. A certain percentage of vacancies may be reserved for recruitment through this new method.

Objection may be raised on the ground that the type of tests and interview proposed cannot be conducted for such a large number of candidates as appear at the W.B.C.S. (Executive) Examination. In order to reduce the number of candidates the

41 Administrative Reforms Commission, *op.cit.* para 1.4.9.
admission to the examination may be restricted to those who have secured at least 55% aggregate marks at their degree examination. This will also ensure that the candidates taking the examination, which will not have too much scholastic content will have a minimum level of educational attainment at the university.

Reliability of the psychological test may be doubted on the ground that in India, there is no sufficiently developed psychological technique for conducting the tests suggested above. But the successful operation of psychological tests in defence services for entry into the officer ranks and in the commercial houses and banks is an assurance to the success and reliability of the psychological test in the civil service. Furthermore the Study Team is of opinion that the Psychological Foundation of National Council of Educational Research and Training under the Ministry of Education are fully equipped to design the kinds of tests required for the examination.

In India the psychological and observational techniques are increasingly used by the personnel departments of private undertakings, banks and even by the Defence Ministry of the Government of India for recruitment of personnel. The increasing popularity of these selection techniques justifies their reliability and validity. It is more reliable at least than the personality test in its present form. But the Public Service Commissions in India, in spite of the lack of attractiveness of their present method of selection, have refrained from using any of them. The
main reason for this indifference to the reform is, perhaps, that human tendency is to resist novelty in any form. Machiavelli is perfectly correct when he observes that "there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things for the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order .......". This is particularly true in case of administrative reforms.

**RECRUITMENT BY INTERVIEW**

Recruitment by interview is made by the Public Service Commissions to such posts as require specialized skill and experience and cannot be filled by a general competitive examination. Thus every year the Public Service Commission of West Bengal interviews a large number of teachers, doctors, engineers and other technical personnel for recruitment to the public service. Recruitment to all these posts are made on an *ad hoc* basis after advertisement of the posts with all their requirements.

Selection by interview is made through the following stages:

First, the ministry or the department concerned forwards the proposal for recruitment to a particular vacancy by furnishing a requisition form which contains the details regarding terms and.

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qualifications required for that particular service. Second, the Commission scrutinizes the form by reference to the rules of recruitment and drafts the advertisement to be issued.

Third, the Commission issues the advertisement giving all the details of the posts like age limits, pay scale, qualifications, experience and reservation, if any, for candidates belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.

Fourth, the Commission conducts a screening of the candidates and prepares a short list for interview on the basis of information furnished by them in their applications.

Fifth, a reference is made to the ministry for comments on this preliminary selection.

Sixth, the actual interview is conducted by the Public Service Commission.

**Interview**

The interview conducted for the purpose is different from the **viva voce** or personality test conducted for recruitment of personnel to the general administration. It is not only a test of the general personality of the candidates concerned but also a test of their skill and experience. The interview board consists of representatives of the ministry or department, experts in the field concerned and the members of the Commission itself. The outside experts help the Commission in the assessment of the
technical knowledge and experience of the candidates and the representatives of the ministry concerned help the Commission regarding the requirements of the job. But the ultimate responsibility for determining the suitability of the candidates lies with the members of the Commission.

Dearth of Good Qualified Candidates

The main problem that the Public Service Commission of West Bengal is facing in connection with the cases of selection by interview is the dearth of candidates with good academic qualification and requisite experience. The main reasons for this lack of attractiveness of the better qualified candidates are (i) temporary appointment and (ii) comparatively lower remuneration offered by the Government of West Bengal.

Temporary Appointments An important reason for the non-availability of good qualified candidates is the heavy increase in the temporary appointments. Most of the posts for which the Commission is required to select candidates are temporary. Good candidates are often not interested in the temporary appointments. The Commission itself has expressed the view that, from the general experience it has been found that "candidates with inferior calibre respond to advertisements for temporary vacancies". A similar observation has been made by the Public Service Commission of Maharashtra while explaining the reasons why good candidates do not present

themselves for selection. The Commission observes that though it is stated in several cases that the advertised posts will be made permanent a large proportion of the government posts advertised by the Commission are temporary. This, according to the Commission, creates a sense of insecurity and often good candidates are disinclined to apply for such posts.

The Public Service Commission of West Bengal, however, has repeatedly drawn the attention of the Government of West Bengal to the evils of the dilution of the services with inferior calibre consequent on large scale temporary appointments. But no improvement has been made so far. The increasing number of temporary appointments as shown in Table 6.3 corroborates the fact.

The Table shows that in the case of direct recruitment by interview a large number of temporary appointments were made by the Government of West Bengal. The number of temporary appointments had always remained larger than that of permanent appointments. The table shows that out of the total appointments in the period extending from 1960-61 to 1968-69 more than 80 per cent were temporary. The percentage rose up to 89.56% in 1968-69. In that particular year, out of 1031 cases only 82 were permanent and all the rest temporary.

As a remedy for this heavy influx of temporary appointments which affects the quality of the candidates responding to the

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Table 6.5

Increase in Temporary Appointments 1958-59 to 1969-70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Permanent appointment</th>
<th>Temporary appointment</th>
<th>Percentage of temporary appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>1,191</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>1,434</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>1,244</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>1,014</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>1,432</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>86.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>1,189</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>82.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>89.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>81.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the Public Service Commission West Bengal.
advertisements, the Public Service Commission of West Bengal, in its annual report of 1955-56 suggested that the government should decide to go in for recruitment on a permanent basis, at the initial stage on a much larger scale than at present.\footnote{45 Annual Report of the Public Service Commission, West Bengal 1955-56, p.10.}

\textbf{Lower Remunerations} But today the more important reason for the dearth of qualified candidates is the lower remuneration in the government service. The situation has undergone a radical change during these years. The argument that the dearth of qualified candidates was due to temporary appointments is no longer as valid as it was 10 or 15 years ago. At present it is well known that all the temporary government jobs are made permanent in due course. There is provision for such permanency in the rules of many services.

More recently, therefore, the Commission is of opinion\footnote{46 Based on an interview with the Deputy Secretary to the Public Service Commission of West Bengal.} that the reasons for this dearth of qualified candidates are rather to be found in the pay and emoluments offered by the State Government of West Bengal. The remuneration offered by the State Government is low, lower even than those offered by the other State governments. Under this situation the good qualified candidates whose supply is still limited would naturally be attracted to the private sectors, government undertakings and the Government of India where terms and conditions of service are
far better than that offered by the Government of West Bengal. Thus better remuneration and other conditions of service in the other sectors and also in the Government of India draw in all the best products from the labour market. Unless the terms and conditions of the state service are improved the dearth of the good qualified candidates will remain an unsolved problem of the Government of West Bengal.