

1. Introduction

Bangladesh bears a colonial legacy in its entire public administration system. Present day Bangladesh was part of the British Empire for almost two hundred years. In 1947, Pakistani rulers replaced the British and dominated the area then known as East Pakistan until a blood-shedding war in 1971 brought about an independent Bangladesh. A colonial imprint persists in Bangladesh especially in political and administrative arrangements. The British tradition helped the bureaucracy to become an essential tool of governance. At the same time, it is accused of following the “Pakistani tradition of involvement in power politics” (Haque, 1995). The political system of Bangladesh has survived a series of transitions. A few years of democracy were followed by nearly fifteen years of military rule. In 1990, for the first time, Bangladesh achieved a fully functioning democratic structure. Ironically, the nature and role of bureaucracy in both the pre and post-democratic period remained almost the same except for an increase in number of ministries, divisions, departments and statutory bodies (Ahmed, 2002: 323-26).

The role of government has changed in the course of Bangladesh’s development. After independence, its focus was the attainment of development in all spheres of life by intervention and the use of administration in a constructive way. Government and administration were seen not merely as a regulator but as a facilitator.

From the beginning of the 1990s, the role of government has changed from an intervener to a referee; instead of playing the game, its main duty is to make sure that a fair game is being played. This reinvented role of the government necessitates redefining the role of the bureaucracy. Bureaucracy can be considered as an “open” system that interacts with or is affected by the environment in which it operates. Traditionally, this environment consisted of only the “domestic economic, political and social context within which the

organization is located.” Now, however, “public organizations are more often faced with global threats and opportunities that affect their operations and perspectives” (Welch and Wong, 2001: 372-73). The performance of a public organization depends largely on how the domestic political institution handles global pressures as well as how it interacts with the bureaucracy.

In recent times, the term “Good Governance” has gained a lot of popularity. However, defining this particular term seems to be never an easy task and henceforth, good governance has always been identified as the absence of bad governance, which ultimately is used to measure the performance of the government. In deed in many cases, a poor performance of the government presents a scenario where, “... resources are wasted, services go undelivered, and citizens—especially the poor—are denied social, legal, and economic protection” (Grindle, 2002:1). Ultimately, the ability of government to provide services effectively and efficiently depends upon a competent cadre of civil servants. Good government has to depend on good, competent people whose presence can be felt at every activities of the government (Lavigna & Hayes, 2005:67).

However, in a third world country like us, this interaction is even more important as the government of Bangladesh has to confront a more daunting set of challenges and powerful forces -- globalization, economic competition that cuts across national borders, social and political upheavals, technological change, threats of terrorism, and a rapidly-changing labor market. The success of government to respond effectively to these challenges, therefore, is dictated largely by its ability to recruit and retain a talented workforce, as- “...good government requires good people” (Lavigna & Hayes, 2005:67). In reality, nature and process of recruitment in civil service sets the tone of the civil service and thereby, dictates the particular role it decides to play at particular times.

2. Conceptual Framework

Recruitment and Selection Defined

As stated earlier, the process and nature of recruitment is quite important to analyze the performance of the civil service. From a human resource planning perspective, recruitment and selection is the key of performing a job effectively and efficiently, as it ensures the choice and placement of best possible candidates. They are critical elements of effective human resource management (HRM). Within the HRM paradigm, they are not simply mechanisms for filling vacancies. Recruitment and redundancy can be viewed as key 'push' and 'pull' levers for organizational change (Price, 2005).

Theoretically, recruitment is defined as- “the process of attracting qualified persons to apply for jobs that are open” (Griffin, 2005:446). In other words, it comprises a set of activities through which an organization attempts to identify and attract candidates to meet the requirements of anticipated or actual job openings. Selection then consists of the processes involved in choosing from applicants a suitable candidate to fill a post. It is, “...whittling down the applicant pool by using the screening tools..., including tests, assessment centres, and background and reference checks” (Dessler, 1997:168).

In general, the recruitment and selection process has to go through the following stages-

- a. defining the position
- b. advertising the job
- c. Selecting the applicants (Price, 2007).

a. Defining the position:

This stage involves four distinct steps that should be taken before the actual recruitment process: job analysis, job descriptions, job specifications, and pay determination.

Job Analysis

Job analysis is a systematic study of the tasks comprising a job; the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to do the job; time factors; situation factors such as technology use, physical aspects, information flows, interpersonal and group interactions; and historical traditions associated with the job.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions summarize clearly and concisely the essential information gathered in the job analysis.

Job Specifications

Job specifications spell out the qualifications necessary for an incumbent to have a reasonable chance at being able to perform the functions of the job. Included in job specifications would be:

- Knowledge, skills, abilities, and other competencies
- Required experience, training, education, licenses, and certification
- Level of organizational responsibility
- Physical and mental demands of the job

These three processes help to write an effective job vacancy notice and also to sort through the many applications and screen out those, which lack the minimum requirements for the job.

Pay Determination

The pay range for a position should be determined after the specification of the job requirements and choice of the appropriate job class or class series.

b. Advertising the job

This stage includes the following steps:

Determination of the Scope of Search

First of all, it is needed to determine whether requires a local, regional, or national search. Normally, local searches are the most common because they are the least expensive. However, state agencies and universities who have executive level or very specialized positions open should consider broadening their search regionally and/or nationally.

Internal Postings

All open positions should be available for viewing in the agency's Human Resources Department. The agency can also post internally using bulletin boards, Intranet, or agency newsletters.

External Recruiting

This is useful to reach a broad range of potential applicants. The organization can post externally through the following:

- a) Newspapers and Magazines

- c) Job Fairs

- d) Internet Recruiting

c. selecting the applicants

This particular stage is quite important as this involves the utilization of various selection techniques to identify viable job techniques. The commonly used selection methods are:

i. Interview

This is mostly used to consider whether the applicants fit with the organization. People that can fit with an organization's culture have a much better chance of success than others do.

ii. Use of Selection Matrix

A Selection Matrix is a tool used to objectively compare an applicant's qualifications to a job vacancy. With a selection matrix, it is possible to objectively and more accurately compare applicants to one another. This selection tool helps to ensure that all selection decisions are made only on lawful job-related and non-discriminatory criteria.

iii. Pre-employment Testing

The use of a pre-employment test is one way to assure objectivity in the interview process. The tests that are used must be reliable and must not adversely affect protected groups. A pre-employment testing must:

- Pinpoint job-related criteria.
- Choose tests that have a direct correlation between test results and job performance.
- If a test is given to one candidate, then it must be given to all candidates.
- Allot the same time for each test that is given.

The following table gives a brief description of various types of tests:

Types of Tests

Test	Overview
Performance Tests (work sample test)	Candidates must complete an actual work task in a controlled situation.
Ability Test (aptitude or achievement tests)	Measures a person’s capacity to learn or acquire skills. Aptitude tests are designed to predict capability while achievement tests measure knowledge and skills that have already been acquired.

(Table 1: Types of Tests) (Source: Price, 2007)

iv. Reference Checks

Reference checks are important in order to verify information. There are several different background checks that can be done on employees. Table 2 gives a brief description of various ways of reference checks:

Credit Check	Often performed for positions that involve financial responsibilities. There are two types of credit checks: investigative consumer credit reports and consumer credit reports. Investigative reports include a written report along with interviews from friends and neighbors. The consumer credit report is a written report issued by a third party.
Criminal Record Check	These are recommended for positions, which involve close, unsupervised contact with the public, such as security guard and for any other type of position that is determined to be "security sensitive."

Driving Record Check	These are recommended for applicants who will be using a company vehicle and should be conducted before the applicant is actually hired. The employer could be held liable for negligent hiring if they knew or should have known about anything contained in the record. Employers should also make sure that the applicant has a valid driver's license.
Past Employer Check	Should be done on all new employees. In order to get the most in-depth and useful information, you should always try to contact the candidate's former supervisors and not just the human resources department. Additionally, you should always have the permission of the applicant before you proceed.
Personal Reference Check	This usually consists of references from friends, relatives, or fellow co-workers. This type of reference check should NEVER be used as a substitute for past employer reference checks.

(Table 2: Reference Checks) (Source: Price, 2007)

Variables Identified

For any organization, to survive and prosper in the competitive world, choosing the right person in right position is quite important. From this point of view; organizations must be careful, innovative and efficient enough to develop an ideal recruitment and selection technique. If the recruitment and selection procedure is faulty, an organization can find itself in a difficult position to cope up with the demand of the environment and at the same time can make a mess of itself. Therefore, it is quite necessary to develop some variables through which the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection procedure can be measured. As recruitment deals with mainly the process of attracting the best possible

candidates, recruitment variables should identify some distinct characteristics of the organization which will ultimately influence the best to build a career in that particular organization. Decenzo and Robbins pointed the following variables of recruitment procedure:

- i. the image of the organization
- ii. attractiveness of the job
- iii. internal organizational policies
- iv. Recruiting costs (Decenzo & Robbins, 1998: 156-158).

On the other hand, the selection procedure should deal with selecting and applying the best testing techniques. As the organization's performance depends on selection, as selection must be cost-effective and also it must ensure equal opportunity, selection process needs to be both valid and reliable. Indeed, validity and reliability are the two basic concepts that determine whether a selection process is good enough or not. These two variables are highly significant. Validity of the selection process determines whether it possesses certain strengths or soundness, which means-

- a. It must demonstrate that those who do well on the test also do well on the job. This also known as criterion validity
- b. It must demonstrate that the selection process constitutes a fair sample of the content of the job (Dessler, 1997: 169-170).

Reliability is the other important variable to measure the effectiveness of the selection process. The selection process must be reliable and consistent.

For our purposes here, it will be useful if we try to identify the variables through an input-output model. It can look like this:

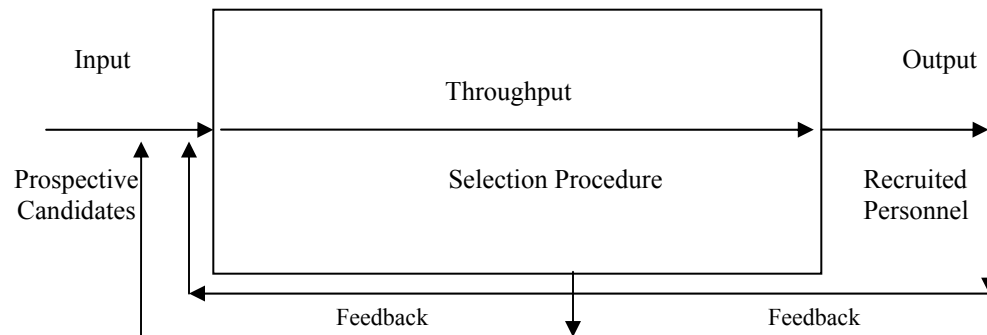


Figure 1: Recruitment and Selection process through Input-Output model

If we look at the figure, it is quite clear that recruitment variables are mainly input-variables, which ultimately attract the prospective candidates to choose that certain career. The selection variables are the throughput-variables, which determine the effectiveness of the selection process and output is the final recruitment and selection of the personnel, which ultimately influences the performance of the organization. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, we will deal with two set of variables, that is-

- a. Input Variables, which include-
 - i. attractiveness of the job
 - ii. image of the organization

- b. Throughput variables, which include-
 - i. validity of the selection process, be it criterion or content
 - ii. Reliability of the selection process.

The entire paper will aim at to determine the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process that is used in Bangladesh Civil Service based on the previously mentioned variables.

Objective of the Paper and Methodology Used

In recent times, the performance of the bureaucracy of Bangladesh has raised serious questions about the competence of the civil servants. Moreover, the citizen's perception of the public servants and the quality of the service they provide is negative. Various surveys indicate that citizens consider the public service as "over centralized, unaccountable, inefficient, overpaid, coercive, unethical, and rent seeking" (Zafarullah, 1997). The country's bureaucratic efficiency is rated at 4.7 on a 0 to 10 scale (10=best) (Mukherjee et al., 2001). Individual encounters with officials brought "unnecessary harassment, procrastination in deciding simple problems, discourteous and arrogant behavior, keeping customers waiting for hours before attending to their needs, frequent absence from office, not maintaining appointments, ignoring pleas for reconsideration of a problem, unwilling to correct mistakes, and making unabashed approaches for pecuniary benefits" (Zafarullah, 1997). Various surveys have pointed out that a large number of incompetent candidates have entered the civil service and the outcome has been embarrassing for the country. The country director of the Department for International Development (DFID), David Wood at a press briefing during a two-day long conference titled "Asia-2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty" questioned the capability of Bangladesh civil servants in implementing foreign aid projects (The Daily Star, July 17, 2006). A senior PSC member confessed that the performance of the civil service is sometimes

embarrassing for the government as some civil servants lack basic command of English language and communication skills (The Financial Express, October 29, 2005).

Based on this scenario, this paper has tried to find out whether the present recruitment and selection process of Bangladesh civil service is good enough to find out and appoint competent personnel into the civil service. At the same time, this study has attempted to analyze whether there stands a relation between the problems of recruitment process and the performance of the civil service. While doing so, attempts have been made to analyze the problems regarding the recruitment and selection process and lastly, some suggestions have been made to overcome the problems. The research questions that have been tried to examine are: is the recruitment and selection process of Bangladesh Civil Service is effective enough? If not, what are the problems? What is the impact of the recruitment process over the performance of the civil service? However, one thing should be noted here. **This paper does not deal with the overall recruitment process of the civil service rather it focuses on the recruitment and selection process of the class I gazetted officers into the cadre services.**

This paper is mainly based on empirical studies. A thorough review of the existing literature on recruitment and selection process of Bangladesh civil service has been made. Moreover, a number of students have been interviewed to find out if there exists any inconsistency between the existing literature and the view of prospective candidates residing in the job market.

3. Historical Background

The present day recruitment and selection process of Bangladesh Civil Service has a long history, which actually dates back to the colonial era- the British period. The East India Company (EIC), after taking control of Bengal, concentrated on developing their own civil service. The system of recruitment was known as "...the system of patronage" (Ali, 2004:43), where court of directors of the EIC reserved the right to nominate young men for appointment to their service. However, from 1806, the nominees had to undergo a course of four terms covering a six months period at the Hailebury College. Then in 1826, the system of recruitment had to go through two particular changes. On one hand, instead of six months' course, the candidates for EIC's service had to sit for a regular yearly test and on the other hand, a four member board of examiners was constituted to select the candidates (ibid:44). Later, the Act of 1833 passed by the British Parliament strengthened the governmental control over company's civil service. A Board of Control was established which dealt with the overall recruitment process (Mishra, 1970). A provision of preliminary examination was created through which the nominated candidates had to go and this actually opened the gate of limited competition for the first time. The successful candidates were listed according to their merit and those securing highest marks qualified for admission into the Hailebury College. Naturally, the EIC tried to resist this but eventually, in 1838, the Board of Control succeeded to acquire the total control over the recruitment and selection process. Then in 1853, the Charter Act of India, 1853, introduced a major change. The principle of open competition was established for the first time. It was indeed "an end of an era", as the court of directors of the EIC lost their power to nominate candidates. After the promulgation of the act, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Macaulay. Its main duty was to submit a plan for the recruitment of the company's civil servants. The committee submitted its report in 1854 and the EIC later framed regulations for the examination of candidates according to the recommendation of the report. It was decided that any natural born subject of Her

majesty within the age range of 18-23, having a sound health and moral character would be eligible to take part in civil service exam (Khan, 1980: 81-82).

The following table shows the branches of knowledge in which candidates were to be examined:

Serial Number	Subjects	Total Marks
1.	English Composition	500
2.	English Literature and History	1000
3.	Language, literature and history of Greece	750
	Language, literature and history of Rome	750
	Language, literature and history of France	375
	Language, literature and history of Germany	375
	Language, literature and history of Italy	375
4.	Mathematics, pure and mixed	1000
5.	Natural Science	500
6.	Moral and Political philosophy	500
7.	Sanskrit language and literature	375
8.	Arabic language and literature	375
	Total	6875

(Table 3: Marks Distribution during British Period)

(Source: Ali, 2004: 49)

The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 brought an end of the EIC's rule in India and the British civil service came on the Indian scene initially the British civil service was a part of a police state, where its major task was that of carrying out law and order functions. It was disjointed as the different provinces had different civil services. There was no code of conduct developed by any of the British-India provinces. The functionaries of the different provinces were free to appoint people of their choice. The British government set up the Indian civil service in 1911, primarily

with the objective of strengthening the British administration in the UK. However, it could not succeed in that, but very usefully retained the idea for strengthening the administration of its colonial base in India. Initially the recruitment to the Indian civil service was confined only to the Britishers. The minimum age of entry was kept at 19 years and the maximum age was prescribed as 21 years. The language of examination was English. The only centre for conducting the examination was London. However, due to pressures and demands raised by the Indian National Congress in 1921, Indians were allowed to take the examination (Mishra 1997).

The major “contribution” of the colonial period regarding recruitment policy is the introduction of open competitive examination. In reality, “the basic idea that the competitive examinations should be a test of general academic nature continued with minor modifications as long as the Civil Service of Pakistan lasted” (Kahn, 1980: 83).

However, one thing is quite noteworthy. In the British colonial period, access to civil service was limited to young university graduates belonging to the rich upper class. This pattern continued during the Pakistani period. After liberation, the Bangladesh constitution established that equal opportunity for all citizens should be the guiding principle in public service recruitment. Based on the constitutional provisions, the government also made special arrangements—a quota system—to create special opportunities for disadvantaged groups. However, no system was developed to regulate the induction of personnel at the base level of the higher civil service until 1977: it was regulated by ad hoc arrangements. In 1977 and 1979, the Public Service Commission, the constitutional body, conducted two superior post examinations to recruit candidates through open competition. As per recommendation of Pay and Services Commission, 1977, 14 main cadres (later increased to 29) were created. The first Bangladesh civil service examination was held in 1982 following the Bangladesh Civil Service (Recruitment) rules, 1981 (Zafarullah, 1988: 130-33). According to the current recruitment policy,

there are three means of recruitment: direct recruitment—open competitive examinations; promotion and transfer; and direct lateral recruitment (Report of Bangladesh Public Service Commission, 2004:12). Class I Officers (the key decision makers and roughly 8% of all civil servants) are recruited directly by the PSC through an open competitive examination into 29 cadres and other government services. The Ministry of Establishment gathers staffing requirements from ministries and government bodies to determine the number of new officers to be recruited. It then advises the PSC to conduct the competitive examination and finalize the list of potential recruits. Finally, the Ministry of Establishment appoints officers from the list supplied by the PSC.

When the open competitive examination for BCS recruitment started in 1982, each candidate had to sit for an exam of 1600 marks total. In 1984, the total marks were reduced to 900. However, in 1985, the Public Service Commission (PSC) decided to increase the total marks again. Since then, each candidate had to participate in an exam of 1000 marks: 500 marks for compulsory subjects, 300 marks for optional subjects and 200 marks for viva voce test. The five compulsory subjects were Bangla, English, Bangladesh Affairs, International Affairs and General Mathematics and Science with 100 marks for each. A candidate selected three exams from 64 optional subjects with 100 marks each. The marks distribution for technical and functional cadres had no optional subject exams: instead, 300 marks were based on the candidate's academic attainments (Public Service Commission Report, 2004:17).

In 1998, the PSC initiated a reform of the BCS written examination system to match better contemporary needs. In 2004, the PSC decided to introduce the new BCS examination in 2006 with the 27th BCS exam. Now all candidates sit for 900 marks of written examinations in five subjects and 100 marks viva voce.

4. The current Scenario

The constitution of Bangladesh has actually set the tone of the recruitment process. From its birth, the country's main focus is to ensure equitable representation in the civil service. Article 29 (1), (2) and (3) has made it quite clear that it is the duty of the government to make sure that special opportunities are provided for women and backward sections of citizens for their advancement.

This principle requires that recruitment be based on an allocation of quota in various categories. The existing quota system has been introduced in 1997. Table 4 shows the details of the quota system and the subsequent changes:

Categories of Quota	For Class I Services			
	1972	1976	1985	1997
Merit (outside district quota)	20	40	45	45
Freedom fighters	30	30	30	
Freedom fighters (in their absence, their children)				30
War Affected women	10	10		
District Quota	40	20		
Women			10	10
Tribal			5	5
Other general			10	

candidates				10
Total	100	100	100	100

(Table 4: Quota Reservation at various times)

(Source: Ali, 2004: 124-126)

Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) is vested with the responsibility to take necessary measures to select suitable persons for the class I posts of the cadre services. However, the process starts after the Ministry of Establishment makes and inquiry to find out the total number of vacant Class I posts of various cadre services. After determining the number of vacant posts to be filled, the list is sent to the PSC. Thereafter, PSC takes control of the whole process (CGS, 2005). PSC conducts this recruitment and selection process through a number of steps.

First of all, advertisement is made through leading newspapers. Applicants are requested to apply through the application form submitted by the PSC.

During the second step, the applicants submit their application forms to PSC. However, there are a number of conditions to be fulfilled by the applicants before being considered as eligible for taking part in the exam. The applicant should be a second-class graduate from a recognized university with first division in SSC or HSC. The general age requirement is not less than 21 and not more than 30. However, the upper age limit is relaxed for three categories of candidates. They are- tribal, doctors and freedom fighters. For them, the upper age limit is 32 (Ali, 2004; Khan & Zafarullah, 2005; Gob, 2005).

Then comes the third step. After the last date of submitting application is over, the PSC goes through the application forms and selects the applicants who are eligible to move to the next step.

Applications are rejected mainly for the following reasons-

- if the application form remains incomplete
- if the application form contains false or wrong information
- if the applicant fails to provide necessary documents

- if the application form does not contain signature of the applicant
- If the application form is not submitted within the last date of submission (GoB, 2005).

In the next step, the PSC conducts a preliminary test of 100 marks. All the valid applicants are allowed to take part in this exam. There are 100 questions in total, each containing 1 mark. The questions are mainly objective types and are mainly on- General English, general bangle, General Knowledge: Bangladesh Affairs, International Affairs, General Science and Technology, Analytical Ability etc. this actually a screening process through which only a certain number of candidates are chosen to sit for the written test.

At next step the candidates selected through preliminary test have to sit in written test and then in viva-voce. At present, the distribution of marks is as follows: 200 for Bangla, 200 for English, 200 for Bangladesh Affairs, 100 for International Affairs, 100 for General Science and Technology, 100 for Mathematics and IQ, and 100 for viva voce. Professional and technical cadres have the following distribution of marks: 100 for Bangla, 200 for English, 200 for Bangladesh Affairs, 100 for International Affairs, 100 for Mathematics and IQ, 200 for academic results and 100 for viva voce. (The Daily Star, August 11, 2004). Each candidate has to get at least 45% marks to pass the written test. Only the candidates who pass in the written test are called for the viva-voce. The pass mark in viva voce is 40.

Finally, the PSC, based on the result of the written test, viva voce and quota reservation publishes the result of the examination through a gazette notification. The successful candidates have to go through medical test and police verification. Based on the medical test and police verification report, final appointment is given.

5. Existing Problems of the Recruitment and Selection Process and Analyses of the Problems

There is no harm may be to express that the existing recruitment and selection policy has so far failed to recruit competent personnel in the civil service. In fact, the performance of the civil service in recent times has raised question about the applicability of the present system to attract the best of the country. Box 1 shows only one example of that.

Box 1: Can our civil servants communicate with the development partners?

“Annual reports of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission shows that most of those who qualify in the BCS. examination do so with low score in English. In the 18th BCS. examination only 1.09 per cent of the total candidates appearing at the BCS. examination qualified with 61 and above marks in compulsory English of 100 marks. The data shows that out of 16388 candidates, 3295 scored less than 25, of them 83 qualified in the written test, 63 passed the oral test (viva-voce), and five were finally recommended for appointment. Out of the total number of candidates only 71 candidates scored above 71 or above, of whom 27 were finally recommended for appointment. A total of 1757 candidates were recommended for appointment of whom only 179 got 61 and above marks.

Dr. Nurul Islam gives a few examples of the state of English in Bangladesh from scripts of B.C.S. examination which are taken by university graduates, in most cases with master degrees. The topic for an English essay was Rural Development in Bangladesh. One example of student writings is quoted here:

”Rural development in Bangladesh is the many years day, Bangladesh is progress where the need of education and family planning. There is the family planning is need of my Bangladesh. Bangladesh is poor. Bangladesh is progress the Foreign currencies. Foreign currencies depend upon the Bangladesh country. Because of the defects of Foreign currencies education and population.”

(Source: Dr. M. Shahidullah, “The present state of English teaching and learning in Bangladesh”, Weekly Holiday, August 9, 2002)

There are number of problems that have been identified. The existing literature on recruitment and selection process mainly focuses on the following issues:

- Heavy emphasis on written tests is creating a major problem, as the question pattern and structure are quite ordinary in nature. This allows the mediocre to simply memorize a number of topics, which ultimately leads them to success. As a result, “the existing structure and nature of the BCS examination tend to favor the impetuous and the shallow-knowledged candidates” (Zafarullah, 2005:134).
- the recruitment process is too lengthy. It takes more than one year and in some cases almost two years to prepare a list of the successful candidates to be recruited to the civil service (CGS, 2006:57)
- the examination structure mainly aims at obtaining university graduates, irrespective of their subject of the study and thereby lacks the validity and reliability of the selection process (Zafarullah, 2005: 133).
- another problem of the present procedure is political and corruption-related; this includes leakage of question papers and political consideration on the part of the political parties in recruitment.

The existing literature about the recruitment and selection process, however, hardly sheds any light on input-oriented problems, i.e., what the prospective candidates with bright academic background are thinking about the civil service; whether their perception is shunning them away from the civil service, whether the image of the entire civil service is keeping them away from the job. Moreover, what they think of the civil service jobs and whether that is helping the mediocre and incompetent personnel to enter into the civil service. So far, only one study has been done to analyze this problem (CGS, 2005).

Analysis of Input-variables and Input-oriented problems

Analysis of Primary Data

There is a possibility that the negative performance of the civil service is creating a negative feedback upon the prospective bright candidates and as a result of this,

they have decided to keep themselves away from the civil service. Based on this hypothesis, 20 prospective candidates with bright academic candidates, from both and private universities were interviewed. This primary research actually focuses on: their attitude towards the civil service as an organization, whether they find the civil service jobs as attractive and what is their level of knowledge about the civil service.

Image of the Civil Service and Attractiveness to the job

One of the important points to consider while analyzing the recruitment procedure of an organization is whether the image of that organization is good enough to attract “the best in the business”. The prospective candidates were asked if the Bangladesh Civil Service is an organization which attracts them a lot. Moreover, they were also asked whether with the current image of the civil service, they feel attracted to it.

(Attitude of prospective candidates)

Input Variables	Attitude			Total
	Positive (Total & Percentage)	Negative (Total & Percentage)	Neither Positive nor Negative (Total & Percentage)	
Image of the Organization	5 (25%)	13 (65%)	2 (10%)	20 (100%)
Attractiveness to the job	10 (50%)	7 (35%)	3 (15%)	20 (100%)

(Table 5: Prospective Candidates’ attitude towards the civil service)

The table shows an alarming result. Most of the students possess a negative attitude towards the civil service. The conventional belief about the civil service is that a job in civil service is honorable and therefore, the bright students opt for it. However, the survey shows a shift has occurred regarding this view. That “honorable” outlook is almost vanished and a significant number of prospective candidates no longer attracted towards the civil service. However, may it is no too late, as the table suggests that half of them are still attracted to a civil service job but if necessary measures are not taken, may be that number will decline too.

Another research conducted by CGS in 2006 can be considered as a helpful one to further analyze these input-oriented problems. That survey was conducted on 50 prospective candidates. They were asked about the recruitment process of the civil service- whether they thought it as a corrupt one. They were also asked to point out some motivating and de-motivating factors in case of joining civil service. The out come of the research is quite interesting. Fir instance:

“While interviewed, a prospective candidate admitted that he had actually bribed a viva board member to make sure that he could get the job. Leakage of question papers has become common and one prospective candidate said, “I actually got a suggestion before the preliminary test consisting of only 90 questions. When I saw the question paper, I realized about 95% of them had come from that so-called suggestion” (CGS, 2005: 57).

Stories like this spread around quite quickly and in fact, that particular study identified the faulty exam procedure as the number one de-motivating factors in case of joining civil service (ibid: 58). Therefore, in reality, problems related with throughput indeed created a problem in input.

The primary research conducted for this paper reveals another alarming scenario. 35% of the prospective candidates have no idea about the civil service, 25% have limited idea and only 40% have significant knowledge about civil service. Ironically, having no knowledge does not create any hindrance in case of adopting a negative image.

Analysis of Throughput-Variables and Throughput-oriented Problems

As described earlier, the throughput-variables include the validity and reliability of the selection process.

Undoubtedly, the entire recruitment and selection process and even the testing methods actually help the civil service to move on with the supremacy of the generalist. Khan & Zafarullah gave an exact description of it:

“In selecting candidates for specific services, heavy reliance is placed on tests and interviews and little is made of other selection devices like review of biological data, references and probationary periods....letters of reference are not sought from the persons listed by applicants as referees. Nevertheless, these have very low validity as selection criteria because of their subjectivity and positive bias and therefore limited effectiveness as a selection tool” (Khan & Zafarullah, 2005:133).

The selection technique lacks all forms of validity- be it criterion or content. The performance of the civil servants proves that section technique lacks criterion validity and a simple look at the question structure proves the lack of content validity.

The situation gets even worse if the selection technique lacks reliability. Sheer dependence on traditional notebooks on the part of the candidates and lack of

creative thinking regarding the question structure ensure the lack of reliability of the selection technique.

Problems related with PSC

Moreover, as we are considering these problems from a system's perspective, the throughput machinery, i.e., the selection process, from a theoretical point of view, has to interact with the environment. In Bangladesh, the organization that deals with the activities related to "throughput" is the Public Service Commission (PSC). Therefore, any "pollution" of the PSC can pollute the whole recruitment and selection process. Sadly, that is what is happening in Bangladesh.

At recent times, the role of PSC has raised many questions. The recruitment and selection process, which already lacks validity and reliability, has now added a number of feathers in its cap.

First of all, serious allegations such as the leakage of question papers have been made against the Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC had to cancel the 24th BCS preliminary test due to the alleged leakage of question papers (The Daily Star, August 11, 2003).

Later the PSC decided to form a probe committee to investigate this leakage incident. The probe committee, at that time found no evidence of question leakage and termed the whole incident as baseless and interestingly, the then Chairman decided not make the report public (New Age, April 6, 2005). However, pretty recently, one of the members of the probe committee revealed that the reason of not making the report public was the committee, in fact, found proof of question leakage (The Daily Star, March 12, 2007).

Well, the 24th BCS exam was not the only incident where allegation was made of question leakage. Again, a strong allegation of leakage of the question papers of

25th and 27th BCS examination rocked the organization. Existing literature also supports the leakage of question paper (CGS, 2005).

Secondly, the presence of corruption in the recruitment and selection process has become quite evident nowadays. A recent study conducted by TIB presented a brief picture of this. According to the study, Contractual selection based on transaction of bribery is quite rampant. Even if a candidate fails to make it to the merit list, by paying an amount of Tk. 8-10 lakh, he/she can find him/herself selected for the administration/police cadre. If he pays Tk. 10-12 lakh, he will be selected for the customs/tax cadre and in order to get himself selected for the professional cadre, he has to spend Tk. 3-5 lakh. However, if he succeeds to make it to the merit list, with exchange of money, he can choose his own cadre (Karim, 2007).

Allegations have been made against the members of the civil service, including the chair. A recent newspaper report claimed that these members were directly involved in taking bribe from the candidates and thus awarded them undue privilege in viva-voce exam (The Daily Shamokal, January 27, 2007). Box 2 presents a brief overview of the corruption of Bangladesh Public Service Commission.

Box 2: Corruption in Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission, the lone constitutional body responsible for recruiting, assessing, transferring and promoting government officers across the country is riddled with massive corruption that has taken institutional shape during the tenures of the past two elected governments, and particularly during the last five years.

According to former commission members—bribes worth Tk 50 lakhs changes hands daily at the commission, to determine recruitments, promotions and a raft of other crucial decisions that are taken by the PSC.

There are allegations that ring true with a number of reliable sources that on a number of occasions, question papers for the Bangladesh Civil Service Examinations—the results of which determine new recruitments— were sold to candidates for as much as Tk 5 lakhs.

Insiders point to how interview dates and interviewers are frequently changed in exchange for hefty payments by BCS candidates, as a sign of how corruption has spread within an institution that is tasked to recruit to all levels of the bureaucratic machinery.

Promotions were sold at Tk 5-10 lakhs, while corruption cases against government officials—which must be first vetted by the PSC—were dropped for sums as high as Tk 2 crore in the past five years, New Age has learnt. Under the current pay-off system, a BCS candidate can buy the guarantee that he will get the job for Tk 5 lakhs, while a sub-registrar aspirant—a non-BCS lower post which offers more scope for corruption—has to pay Tk 7 lakh for the same guarantee.

Amongst the 86,000 candidates selected during the preliminaries of the 24th BCS Exam, the chairman is said to have struck off candidates ranked 9, 37 and 237, to accommodate her own choice of candidates.

Some of the candidates whose names were inserted in this way were so unworthy that they did not survive the Viva Voce examinations, remembers one official. 'The chairman then gave them a new interview date with a commission member of her choice,' he says.

Recently, a Bengali daily published the contents of one of the PSC member's brother's diary which showed how and in what share each member of the commission received money. It alleged that this brother of the PSC member made a deal with 222 examinees in exchange of money, these examinees, at least most of them succeeded to get their desired cadre.

(Source: New Age, "How Greed Destroyed the Public Service Commission", February 16-22, 2007; The Daily Shamokal, "PSC-te Beporoa Durniti (In bangle), January 27, 2007)

Thirdly, Political pressure is undoubtedly one of the reasons behind this extensive negative perception regarding civil service recruitment. The CGS report identified the appointment and conduct of the PSC chair and PSC members as responsible for the corruption of recruitment. Even the prospective candidates admitted that political leaning towards certain parties indeed helps a lot in getting BCS job:

“...another prospective candidate actually enjoyed the preliminary test and written exam. However, “the real horror started when I faced the viva board. All sort of political questions were asked and when they found out that my political view is different from theirs, I realized that that was end of journey for me. Later, I came to know that I was rather lucky. One of my friends was asked why she did not use scarf to cover her head and whether she knew the Niyot of prayers. That was too much for her. She got herself out of the room and now we both are private sector employees” (CGS, 2006:58).

Fourthly, another important factor, which is not directly related with PSC’s corruption but eventually a source of it is the quota system. This quota system is one of the main ways of inducting incompetent persons in the civil service. According to the present policy, the merit quota is only 45%, while the district quota is 55%, which is further superimposed on by special quotas, which are 30% for freedom fighters’ children, 15% for women and 5% for tribal people (Siddiqui, 2006:97-98). The existence of quota for freedom fighters’ children is a major source of controversy. There is evidence when less qualified candidates are selected because of the quota system, a candidate who stood 7000th in the merit list (The New nation, March 11, 2007).

The present state of the recruitment and selection process in Bangladesh civil service indeed reveals a gloomy picture. In existing system, a meritorious bright student has to overcome a number of hurdles if he decides to enter into the civil service. First of all, he has to forget about the negative attitude of the civil service, has to make up his mind to enter into a service, which may not allow him to

perform his duties effectively. Secondly, he has to go through a selection process, which lacks validity and reliability. If he can overcome this problem, he has to face a bigger one- the corruption that exists within the PSC. If he is lucky enough to overcome that, there is a pretty good chance that yet he may not be selected due to the quota system. In many cases, the bright students are not interested to go through this painful process as a very competitive private sector is waiting for them. Personally they do not loose anything but in the long run, the nation is deprived of the service of her most worthy sons- this can not be good for any country.

If we go to through the problems again, we will see there is only one big problem- the inefficient role of the PSC. If the PSC can play its role, things can change dramatically. If there is no corruption in the selection process, if the PSC thinks about making a little more modification in the existing exam structure, it will definitely solve the problems regarding the throughput, which can make the brightest one interested in joining the civil service. In addition, may be the output will be better than- a better performance of the civil service.

6. Recommendations

Max Weber in his classic analysis of bureaucracy pointed out that political democracy is indeed destined to come into conflict with the bureaucracy. It is inevitable as, "...wherever possible, political democracy strives to shorten the term of the office by election and recall and by not binding the candidate to a special expertness" (Gerth & Mills, 1977:225-226). Actually, that is the scenario of Bangladesh. The post-90s democracy tried its best to take control of the bureaucratic machinery and thus polluted the entire recruitment and selection process to the civil service. The democracy, in fact did not hesitate to sacrifice the performance of the civil service while concentrating on taking control.

However, the recent change in the political battlefield in Bangladesh, which is ultimately witnessing the presence of a non-elected government in power, may create a significant positive change to restore the positive image of the civil service. The following recommendations may be helpful in creating an effective recruitment and selection process once again:

First of all, reconstitution of the PSC has become a necessary task. Most experts and former officials feel that the PSC needs to be urgently reconstituted. According to one former official-, "This institution is now above 99 percent corrupt. The entire place has to be cleaned up, necessary changes made and finally strong group of honest and officials employed" (New Age Xtra, February 16- 22, 2007). However, at the same time it should be remembered that mere reconstitution is not good enough. On the other hand, efforts should be taken to develop an appointment policy through which future chair and members will be appointed. The TIB in its recent study on PSC proposed the creation of a search committee consisting of the Chief Executive, Chief Justice,

Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament, Eminent retired Civil Servant of impeccable record and credibility, non-partisan and professionally acclaimed educationist and civil society member and a media person with similar credibility.

This search committee will appoint the Chairman and members of the PSC by following a number of steps. First, it will create a short list of competent persons and then it will send the list to the Anti Corruption Commission to assess the credibility of these persons. After that, the name of these persons will be published in electronic and print media and parliament will have a general discussion regarding this matter. Parliament, after completing its discussion will send the lists to the search committee and the search committee will finally appoint the Chairman and members (Karim, 2007).

Secondly, a committee should be formed immediately to assess the present examination structure, question patterns and others. This committee should further take into account the standard and pattern of this kind of examination of the other countries and thereby make necessary recommendations to modify the present exam procedure.

Thirdly, a country's civil service should consist of the best of the country. Undoubtedly, the present quota system is creating a problem about this. The aim of the quota reservation is mainly to ensure equitable representation. Besides recent literature on public administration suggests that quota reservation is also necessary to make the administrative system a diversified one (Rice, 2005: 3-11). However, if we take a look at the existing quota reservation policy, we shall find out that it is helping in neither case. Reserving 30% posts for children of freedom fighters is indeed useless as it is hindering the entrance of meritorious persons in the civil service (Siddiqui, 2006: 57-58). On the other hand, in order to increase the gender diversification of the civil service, quota reservation for the women should be increased. The entire quota reservation policy should be revised in order to create a competent and diversified civil service.

Fourthly, the primary research conducted for the purpose of the paper reveals a number of important facts. First of all, the civil service is suffering from severe image crisis and secondly, the prospective candidates in most cases have very

little idea about the civil service. In order to attract the bright students into the civil services, some attempts should be taken. For instance, this paper suggests-

- Overall, there are some sectors where our civil service has performed quite brilliantly. Our success in case of disaster management is praiseworthy. Our civil service has also succeeded in providing some basic services like primary education, food etc. What the governments should do is to let people know these success stories. An image building of the civil service is indeed necessary.
- In this competitive market scenario, the private sector service providers, many a times come in close contact with the students. In almost all universities, the private sector organizations meet with the students and explain in details their success and the role they are playing. As a result of this, while in university, many a times, and a student finds himself attracted to a challenging career in private sector. May be the time has come for the public sector to think beyond the box and arrange continuous meetings, seminars in various universities. This will help in two ways. First, it will help the students to realize what a career in public sector actually means and secondly, it will encourage them to join the civil service.

7. Conclusion

To function properly the government needs to maintain an able and efficient workforce. To do so the government must ensure that the civil service remains an attractive career choice. Interviews conducted for the purpose of the paper reveal that the recruitment process and civil service salaries diminish the competitiveness of a public service career relative to employment in the private or NGO sectors. However, both the problems can be solved if the party in power can show a little bit of sense and possess the political will to bring about the change. The search for political will has been “a search for El Dorado” in our country. But fortunately, the recent change in political arena has finally brought a chance to introduce some reforms. It will not be unwise to expect that the reform, the change will be a positive one.

Unfortunately, historically we have shown enthusiasm to “institution-substitution” rather than reforming the institution. An interim government has taken up the task but we have to make it sure, that a political government, after coming into power must continue these reforms.

Syed Mujtaba Ali was a famous writer of this subcontinent. One of his stories is about a crazy man, who loves to bang his head on the wall. When asked why he does so, that particular crazy man answers with a smile, “well, when I do not do so, it feels so great.” Ironically, the present interim government is giving us the feeling when we have stopped banging and we must remember that is not the solution. We have to go through a psychological treatment; otherwise, all will be in vain.

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