

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions and Suggestions

In the civil services result of 2009 the top three positions went to women candidates while fourth was a physically challenged candidate who took his exams in Punjabi. In 2010 a Kashmiri Muslim doctor who lost his father to militants stood first. A son of rickshaw puller stood 14<sup>th</sup> in 2008, while in 2011 a women candidate again stood first. These are random examples of candidates from disadvantaged categories coming out trumps in one of the toughest exams of the Country. The other thing common among these candidates is that they all are brilliant academically<sup>48</sup>. With its impartiality and objectivity, UPSC selects candidates on pure merit. However it also plays its role in achieving social justice goals of Constitution and the State.

Shri N.C.Saxena (retired Secretary to Government of India and current member National Advisory Council) while delivering lecture to 37<sup>th</sup> APPPA listed UPSC as one of the few institutions that country should be proud of for its impartiality, integrity and objectivity<sup>49</sup>. Despite of its very high reputation among those who have interacted with it, there is hardly any public discussion in media and elsewhere. One view is that UPSC being a service organization

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<sup>48</sup> These are part of UPSC folklore. There are other similar examples of brilliance and representative civil service

<sup>49</sup> The lecture was delivered on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011 on 'definition of poverty line'

no discussion about it means satisfactory performance as service organizations normally are in news only for wrong reasons. However public apathy of an institution meant to strengthen democracy by recruiting meritorious civil servant may lead to its falling on the wayside. Also increasing corruption in bureaucracy will put pressure on UPSC to innovate as regards its selection process. Being in public glare keeps an institution on its toes and forces it to innovate, modernize and be more transparent.

The role of a recruitment agency like UPSC is also to fulfill the public policies and Government legislations especially with regard to affirmative action. We have seen in previous chapters that the track record of the Commission in filling up direct and backlog vacancies of SC/ST/OBC categories have been very good. In fact every year almost 150 unreserved vacancies are filled up by these categories on basis of pure merit. We have also mentioned individual success stories right at the beginning of this chapter. UPSC is also taking proactive measures like waiver of examination fees from female candidates and as far as possible having experts from women and minority community in each interview board apart from statutory requirements regarding members from SC/ST/OBC categories. However we have also seen that urban and middle class profile appears to dominate amongst the candidates. Hence there is a need to reach out to more poor and rural candidates by having an appropriate media, publicity and orientation plan. Also it is felt that the long time-cycle for selection deters some meritorious

candidates. UPSC has taken steps both internally and externally to reduce the time-cycle but more may be required.

We have seen that by and large Government has high respect for UPSC as there are hardly any cases of disagreement. We have seen there are hardly 8-10 cases of non-acceptance of Commission's Advice every year. Constitution makers had also spent considerable time and effort in ensuring independent and autonomous nature of UPSC. However because of importance of UPSC in recruiting higher civil service posts Parliament and Government directly or through various Commissions and Committees have undertaken various changes in recruitment regime. Some of these changes are desirable as they improve the system while in others one feels that it encroaches upon the functions of UPSC. There is also lurking suspicion among some that the removal of certain posts from the purview under UPSC (exemption from consultation) Act 1958 is due to the desire of executive keep them under their control. The Act needs to be revisited as the desire of our Constitution appears to be to make UPSC the supreme and sole recruitment body for posts in the higher civil service with exemptions being exceptions rather than the rule.

We started this study in search of answers to some questions we posed in chapter 1. Now we can say that UPSC has to a large extent fulfilled its constitutional mandate. We have seen that UPSC has ensured integrity and impartiality in its selection process with its very large clientele i.e. the candidates, having full faith. Without sacrificing the merit criteria UPSC has

ensured fulfillment of affirmative actions towards weaker sections as envisaged in the Constitution. By selecting meritorious civil servants from all strata of society, UPSC has in its own way contributed to the national goal of efficiency, equity and inclusive growth. But we have seen that there are limitations, weaknesses, challenges and threats to the functioning of UPSC. There is growing public apathy and also effort by some agencies is to hive off some functions of UPSC. There is concern over rising corruption in the bureaucracy and the need for curbing it even at the recruitment level. Since recruitment process is a dynamic one hence there is a need for continuous improvements. We have seen that UPSC has carried out certain reforms to improve its functioning like introduction of CSAT paper in Civil Services (Preliminary) examination, modernization of website and active use of IT in reducing time-cycle.

### **Suggestions:**

- a) Chairman/UPSC announced during annual lecture series<sup>50</sup> that a committee has been set up to suggest reforms in Civil Service (Mains) Examination structure. (Already reforms have been carried out in the Prelims examination by introducing two common papers. One of the papers will test the aptitude of candidates for civil services. This reform may also reduce the time cycle). Reforms in Main examination should on one hand try to trim it while on the other hand change the syllabi to reflect the highest standards in the subject. Also intensive

<sup>50</sup> From 2009, UPSC is organizing Annual lecture on broad theme of 'Governance and Public Administration. 3<sup>rd</sup> lecture in the series was delivered by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011

testing in subjects required to be a good civil servant should be introduced.

- b) For other examinations also committees should be set up to suggest changes in syllabus to introduce latest subjects/topics. The committees should also suggest ways to reduce time cycle without compromising on quality.
- c) We have seen that civil servants from diverse backgrounds, especially rural and disadvantaged act, as agents of change and social transformation. Already many civil servants are from these backgrounds and this trend needs to be strengthened. Such civil servants are generally more proficient in specific subjects and less in English and interview. This aspect should be kept in mind while finalizing the syllabus of various examinations.
- d) There is a need for UPSC to have an effective media plan which on one hand aggressively reaches out to the maximum number of candidates specially belonging to poor and rural areas, while on other hand presents its point of view to policy makers, media and the general public. To woo its core clientele—candidates, UPSC should intensively make use of IT. It should make its website more interactive and all information required should be uploaded regularly. This should invariably include the job profile so that eventually right man may apply for right job. In the social networking and other sites visited by the youth the advertisements may be flashed. SMSs and e-mails may

be used to inform candidates about venues, interview dates and results. UPSC may have tie ups with Universities so that its advertisements are given wide publicity and also officers of the Commission can interact with students. Advertisements should be shown on Doordarshan and aired on all India radio/FM which are generally used in rural areas and by youth. Rural post offices and Panchayats may also be used to disseminate information regarding UPSC's advertisements. Use of common service centers (CSCs)/computer centers opened or in the process of opening in all Panchayats to launch awareness campaign about UPSC will be very effective. Thus effective media plan may in due course attract more candidates thereby improving the quality of selections. UPSC has to also engage with political executive, media and public from time to time to put forth its views and concerns. This may be done on special occasions like Foundation Day on 1<sup>st</sup> October every year, annual lecture series, laying of Annual Report on the table of both the Houses of Parliament, and declaration of result of flagship Civil Services Examination. Chairman/Secretary of the Commission can interact with media through press conference and interviews. Initially UPSC will have to take initiative and as the interest of public is rekindled the media interest will be automatic<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Many of the points have been taken from the suggestions given by the respondents during survey on media habits

- e) UPSC has taken number of steps for using IT to make its process more effective and less time consuming. Some steps have been enumerated before but more steps are required to be taken. UPSC has already taken steps to have online applications for all its exams in phased manner. Next logical step would be to have online examination for more and more selections. Already one recruitment online exam has been successfully completed. More internal processes should be reviewed and by use of latest IT innovations the efforts should be to reduce time cycle. In field of promotion and disciplinary cases, innovation of 'single window system' has been introduced with dramatic results. Now the efforts should to link all client Ministries with UPSC so that all proposals relating to promotions, disciplinary cases and recruitment rules can be sent online so as to reduce time and improve quality of proposals.
- f) An effective media plan can also work out to be a sort of antidote to those who want to unjustifiably encroach upon the legitimate functions of UPSC as the media and the public may ask questions. However to start with, UPSC should ask the Government to revisit the issue of exemptions of certain posts from its purview. We are of firm belief that our Constitution makers spent so much time and devoted eight Articles on UPSC/PSCs in order to make them supreme recruitment authority of Central and State Government respectively. Their efforts were not to exclude posts from UPSC's purview. The facility of

exemptions was given only to be used in emergency with proper justification. As we have seen earlier UPSC has competence to make selections to many of the exempted posts. The high reputation of UPSC may raise the acceptability of the selections to these posts. Supreme Court in its recent judgment decided that UPSC should prepare the panel for the post of DGP in States—task never done by it so far.

- g) UPSC needs to relook at its interview policy. An interview of 40-45 minutes may not be adequate to judge the personality of the candidate. There is a feeling that over a period of time a stereotype pattern of civil servants have emerged against which the candidates are interviewed. Also there is concern regarding increase in corruption and bowing down to political pressure by the bureaucrats. Thus it is suggested that army type interview may be conducted wherein psychological tests; aptitude tests and tests under different and stressful conditions should be conducted over a period of few days. This may help in finding whether the candidate has right aptitude and character for the job. There should be tie up between training academies and UPSC. The probationer undergo around two years training at the respective academies. Both UPSC and academies should evaluate the probationers on the criteria of integrity and character required for the job with a right to dismiss the probationer if he/she is found failing in these attributes. The Chairman and Members

of the Commission should interact with serving civil servants of different levels on regular basis to know the changing requirements and challenges of the job so that content of written exams as well as interviews can change accordingly.