

Parliamentary committee recommends to reduce Civil services examination cycle

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In news— Recently, a Parliamentary Committee has asked the UPSC to reduce the civil services examination's selection cycle.

What did the panel say?

- It has said that nearly 15 months (**from the date of issue of notification to the date of declaration of the final result**) long recruitment process wastes candidates' prime years besides taking a heavy toll on their physical and mental health.
- It asked the Union Public Service Commission to **examine the reasons for the low turnout of candidates in the civil services examination.**
- **The Committee is of the opinion that the duration of any recruitment examination should not ordinarily exceed six months** as long and protracted recruitment cycles waste prime years of a candidates' life besides taking a heavy toll on their physical and mental health.
- The Committee, accordingly, recommends that UPSC **should take steps to reduce the duration of the recruitment cycle significantly without compromising the quality.**
- On the low turnout, it said out of approximately, 32.39 lakh candidates who had applied for examinations conducted by UPSC in 2022-23, only 16.82 lakh candidates, (51.95%) actually appeared for examinations.
- For instance, 11.35 lakh candidates applied for the civil services examination in 2022 but only 5.73 lakh candidates (50.51%) actually appeared for the examination.

- The **Committee recommended UPSC furnish the details of examination fees collected from the candidates during the last five years.**
- It also **asked the UPSC to provide the details of expenditure incurred by it on the conduct of the examinations** for the same period.
- The panel has **recommended forming an expert committee** to assess if the present scheme of recruitment through civil services examination provides an equal opportunity to both English-medium-educated urban candidates and non-English medium-educated rural candidates.
- **The panel said an expert group or committee should be appointed to assess the impact of changes made in the scheme of examination,** pattern and syllabus of civil services examination in the last ten years on the quality of recruitment and administration at large.
- This group may also assess whether the existing pattern of preliminary and mains examination provides a level playing field for all candidates irrespective of their academic background.
- The Committee is of the considered opinion that the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) and UPSC should consider making further changes in the scheme and syllabus of civil services examination** in the light of the findings of the impact assessment study.
- The panel was also apprised that the UPSC releases the answer key of the preliminary test of the civil services examination only after the completion of the entire process of the said examination.
- In other words, the Commission is depriving the candidates of an opportunity to contest the answer key before progressing to the next stage of the examination, the report said.
- The Committee, therefore, recommended that **UPSC may take steps to publish the answer key right after the preliminary stage of the civil services examination and allow candidates to raise objections.**

- The Committee said UPSC may also collect feedback from the candidates and effect improvements in the examination system from time to time to ensure more transparency, fairness and candidate friendliness.
- The examination is conducted annually by the UPSC in three stages – preliminary, main, and interview – to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.