

Module 13: Recruitment

Chapter 1

Recruitment

A. **Meaning**

The term recruitment, according to Marshal E. Dimock means, “securing the right people for the right jobs, and it may take the form of advertising for large groups of employees or tracking out a highly skilled individual for special work”.

The definition hits upon the most important aspect of personnel administration. Initial recruitment of the right person for each job is most essential to ensure good administration. It is the first step in manning the various positions in the Organisation and it is a vital step. No amount of in-service training or re-orientation programme or job rotation can set right the initial mistake of picking up a wrong man. It can inflict a grave and almost permanent damage on the organization. The process of recruitment, therefore, requires, utmost attention from the heads of organizations.

The importance of a sound recruitment system was first recognized by China where recruitment on merit through competitive examination was introduced as far back as 2^{nc} century B.C. In modern times Prussia was the first country to adopt this system. In India the merit principle of recruitment was introduced in 1853. In Britain it was adopted in 1857, but it took quite long to get settled. In USA the spoils system of recruitment continued for quite long and merit system was introduced only with the promulgation of Civil Services Act 1853 which established the Civil Services Commission for the first time.

B. **General Principles of Recruitment**

The most rational system of recruitment, which would promote efficiency in the organization and be in consonance with the democratic traditions, would be based on the following principles.

- i) Competence – so that the Government gets the services of intelligent people to perform its functions.
- ii) Equality of opportunity – to all the citizens who have the necessary competence.

- iii) Neutrality – so that civil servant can serve every Government with equal zeal.

To ensure the observance of these conditions the only method appears to be recruitment through an open competitive examination conducted by an autonomous organization.

C. Forms of Recruitment

Broadly speaking there are three forms of recruitment-

(i) Cadet System

In this system recruitment is made at a young age of 16-20 years. The cadets are trained and mould into the required culture. This is more used in Military.

(ii) General Mental Culture

The system was evolved first in India Youths between 21-24 years of age are recruited on the basis of their mental achievements. They are given a continuous career of 30-35 years. They have long salary scales and many automatic promotions.

(iii) Mature People with Special Qualifications

Mature people with special qualifications are recruited in USA between 18 to 45 years of age. It is based on position classification giving exact position of the job in the job specification chart and exact qualifications. Usually long careers are not indicated.

(iv) Lateral Entry

The advantage of getting rightly qualified person as in system (ii) is sought to be achieved in system (iii) by recruiting certain percentage of outsiders of mature age in senior positions.

D. Problems in the process of recruitment

The recruitment process involves a number of problems. Some important ones are indicated below:

- i) Location of recruitment authority – means which authority is most appropriate to recruit.
- ii) Methods of recruitments – means whether the recruitment should be from within or without.
- iii) Qualifications of the employees.
- iv) Methods of determining qualifications
- v) Administrative machinery for determining qualifications

E. Location of Recruiting Authority

This is a very important question – so much so that often the constitution itself makes provision for deciding the recruiting authority. There are two views on the subject. One view favours recruiting power should be with the electorate. This appears an impractical system and at the same time unnecessary for recruiting vast mass of the civil service. The democratic method may be suitable for electing only the:

- (i) Chief Executive, or
- (ii) Local Government Chiefs

The other view is that the Chief Executive may be elected. The power of appointing others may be formally vested in the Chief Executive, but selection process may be entrusted to a semi-autonomous organization called the Public or Civil Service Commission.

F. Method of Recruitment

There are two methods of recruitment:

- i) from within and
- ii) from without

The firstly really means promotion. Two methods are often used in a happy blend. Usually lower levels are filled by direct recruitment, middle levels by both methods and senior levels by promotion.

The advantages of direct recruitment are:

- a) It accords with the principle of democracy – fair to all.
- b) Government has a wider field of choice
- c) It ensures a continuous supply of young and fresh talent. This is essential for innovative spirit and new idea.
- d) These young people keep the Government attuned to the new socio-economic conditions.

The system of recruitment from within has following advantages:

- a) It ensures the advantage of the experience of the organization to be retained in the organization.
- b) It provides the employees the opportunity to work with the organization and advantage in career within the organization. It encourages them to work better for the organization and creates a bond between them.
- c) The cost of inducting training is avoided as the employees are already familiar with the organization.
- d) It reduces burden of Public Service Commission for making new recruitment which is a cumbersome process.
- e) Well-defined career prospects make the Government jobs attractive even though the emoluments may be low.
- f) Fresh recruitment to higher posts may not throw up right people as the selection processes are not fool-proof. The person who has worked in the organization over a long period gets known for his weaknesses and strengths
- g) To ensure career development, and to maintain the character of the career service it is essential that the top posts should also be available to officers seeking a career in the organization

The main disadvantages of the system are:

- a) It narrows down the area of selection and also shows signs of discrimination

- b) It provides for a closed system since there is no lateral entry. As a result, the organization becomes moribund.
- c) It puts premium of experience and neglects the brilliant young men. This encourages mediocrity.

G. Qualifications Required

Another important question in recruitment process is to decide as to which qualifications should be prescribed for which jobs. These are two types of qualifications required by the civil servants:

- i) General qualifications;
- ii) Special qualifications

General qualifications apply to all the public employees. They relate to civil statute, domicile, sex, age, etc. Special qualifications deal with education, experience, technical knowledge and personal traits.

(i) General Qualifications

- a) Citizenship – applicants for public service jobs should be citizens of the country.
- b) Domicile – Domicile of a state in addition to the citizenship of the country in Federal countries. The practice started in USA and spread to India also. Such restrictions, however, should not be carried beyond a point.
- c) Sex – sometime back, employment of women was a taboo in most countries. Such restrictions have been now removed in most of the countries.
- d) Age – There are two practices viz., to recruit young people or to recruit mature people. The first one means a career over ladders of promotions and long-term employment. The second is more or less a collection of discreet positions to be filled on the basis of technical qualifications for particular jobs. A healthy combination of two can be very useful. A general career system recruiting young persons with provision for lateral entry of more mature people at senior levels can be a very happy combination for the organization. India follows the first system while

America follows the second system where people can enter service between the age of 18 and 45 years.

(ii) *Special Qualifications*

a) *Educational Qualifications*

In England, the system of prescribing the educational qualifications is followed with emphasis on liberal education (classics and humanities). In India, the educational qualifications are prescribed, but no discrimination is made against scientific and technical subjects. In USA on the other hand, no educational qualifications are prescribed. Any one can appear in the competitive examination. This system confers no advantage on anyone, but increases the burden of recruiting agencies.

b) *Experience*

In USA, where the entry to public service can take place at any stage, a great deal of importance is attached to the relevant work experience.

c) *Personal Qualifications*

Public servant has to possess a number of personal qualities like tact, resourcefulness, energy, integrity, ability to get along with others, etc. Pfiffner and Presthus have listed these qualities as follows:

- i) A flexible, but essentially scientific mode of thought characterized by recognition of need for co-ordination.
- ii) Familiarity with subject matter of organization and management.
- iii) Ability at problem solving
- iv) A highly developed reading and writing ability.
- v) Ability to settle vexing situations through inter-personal contact.

d) *Technical Experience*

The Government has to employ a large number of economists, statisticians, accountants, engineers,

scientists etc. their employment raises the problem of proper relationship between technical and administrative personnel. No satisfactory solution to this problem has been found.

H. Methods of Determining Qualifications

Having determined the required qualifications, the next important problem is of determining which of candidates have these qualifications. On this question will depend the quality of personnel we are going to get. The following methods of determining qualifications are practiced by various countries today:

- i) The hire and fire system i.e. the personal judgment of the appointing authority.
- ii) Certificate of character, ability and education etc.
- iii) Record of previous experience – educational and occupational.
- iv) Examinations.

We discuss these methods below:

i) Personal Judgment of the Authority

This is the simplest method of determining the qualifications of the candidates. The appointing authority itself determines the qualifications. The main difficulties in using this system are:

- a) It is highly subjective much will depend upon the personal whims of the selector.
- b) If the organization is big, the number of appointments will be very large. The Chief Executive may not be able to find time to determine the qualifications of such a large number of candidates. Actually this itself has become an expert job.

However, the system works very well when only a few appointments are to be made at a fairly high level. This method is, in fact, used in India and many other countries for making very senior appointments.

ii) *Verification of Character, Ability and Educational Qualifications*

In this system, certificates from responsible persons, under whom the candidate has worked, are obtained to assess his suitability for the job. The main limitations of this method are:

- a) The certificates may tell about the suitability of the candidate for previous jobs, but not for the job he is seeking.
- b) The certifying officer may not have given the certificate on merit, but on extraneous considerations.

iii) *Record of Previous Experience*

This method is similar to the previous one, but is more detailed. The whole record of the candidate is examined including his educational record and occupational performance appraisals. The head of the department maintains a permanent record of the performance of the employee on periodic basis. This continuous record is a better measure of the whole performance than one or two certificates obtained from previous employees. In USA, a scientific system of maintaining such records has been developed. These records are called efficiency records.

The method can be very useful when the recruitment is made from within. However, this can't be the sole criterion and has to be used in conjunction with other methods.

iv) *Examination*

The above devices, though useful, leave loopholes for arbitrary personal judgment. The method of examination on the other hand, is most objective. Chinese used this method more than two thousand years ago. The term examination used in the context of recruitment to civil services means not only a test of the knowledge and ability of a candidate, but,

also his personal characteristics, service records, experience etc. this takes the following forms:

- a) Written examination
- b) Oral examination
- c) Performance demonstration
- d) Evaluation of education and experience.

The last is just what has been explained in the third method of recruitment. Performance demonstration is a testing device which requires a candidate to demonstrate his capacity to the work. This is done only in cases where work can be physically demonstrated e.g. typing, stenography etc. The written and oral examinations are used almost universally. Their relative weightage varies in each case. These methods of examination are described in some details below:

a) *Written Examination*

Public personnel recruitment is mainly based on written examination – and in any case more weightage is given to it. This is so because of its objectivity.

Test Criteria

There may be two testing criteria

- Short-answer type test
- Essay-type answer test.

In the first case, answer can be given as yes or no or as one of the given three or four alternatives. The scoring is mechanical. The system is easy and economical. The second system requires fully essay type answers to judge the power of expression standard of reasoning and continuity of thought of the candidate. Which of the system is better?

The dependability of a test is determined by validity and reliability. A test is valid when it measures what is supposed to measure; it is reliable if it does so

regularly during repeated use. In other words, the validity of the test indicates the degree of accuracy to which it measures the ability (i.e. memory, power of reasoning, aptitude, speed of reaction etc). of the candidate. This can be better done by essay type answers test than short answers tests. The reliability of a test is the extent to which a person would be marked in the same relative order by different scores. Now scoring is more objective and mechanical in short answer type tests. Hence, there is more validity and less reliability in free-answer type of tests; and there is more reliability and less validity in the short-answer type of tests. India, UK and European countries follow free-answer type tests while USA relies on the short-answer type ones.

Forms of Written Tests

The written tests fall into four categories:

- Test of general or specific mental abilities
- Aptitude test
- Achievement test.
- Personality test

We describe in brief these tests below:

The Ability Tests are given either in short-answer or in free-answer types. The purpose in both cases is to judge the general mental culture of the candidates. Besides, the general tests, some devices have been introduced to test the specific traits of mind. Some of them are –

General Intelligence Test – devised by Messers Binet and Simon of America. It is a device of measuring the mind through Terman Group lists of mental ability, Otis Group Intelligence Scale, Pressey Series, Classification and verification series etc.

Unit Trait System – It is a system for identifying unit traits of intelligence e.g. perception, verbal

comprehension, word fluency, memory, reasoning ability etc.

Social Intelligence Test – Quality of Social intelligence is defined as capacity to adjust to new situations involving relations with people and to ones way of thinking and doing. This trait is measured by a series of tests administered to a group of candidates who are made to live together with their examiner for a fortnight to a month.

Administrative Ability Test – The administrative ability were considered as a function of a number of variables connected with intellectual and temperamental qualities. These qualities were measured by Gottshcholl Test.

Mechanical Intelligence Test – is used a skilled and semi-skilled trades and positions involving use of machines. Assembly tests of Minhesota Mechanical ability were used for this purpose.

Aptitude Test – some universities of USA have devised methods of measuring the aptitudes of the candidates. These tests are employed to fill up trade and clerical positions.

Achievement Tests. The academic examinations are in fact achievement tests.

Personality Tests – are most difficult to devise. Very little work has been done in devising written tests to judge the personality traits. However, some personality inventories have been devised by psychologists.

b) Oral Examination

The most common method of personality test is the interview. The main aim is – (a) to have a look at the candidate, and (b) to detect positive and negative qualities.

The interview is used in conjunction with the written examinations.

Oral tests are mainly subjective. USA has been trying to make them objective. The interviewers use special rating forms and record the conversations. The candidates can appeal to law court who can examine these records.

In spite of the defects of oral or viva-voce test, it remains a useful test for selection of the candidates. Within a short time, it can give a rough assessment of many personality traits. Moreover, a lot of work done by public servants belongs to the category of oral interaction with superiors, subordinates and clients. Viva-voce can, therefore, be a good test of a candidate's alertness, intelligence, intellectual outlook, common sense, presence of mind etc. It is difficult to replace this test by another written or mechanical test.

I. Certification

After examination, written and oral the next step in the procurement of personnel, is certification, which means submission of eligible names to the appointing authority by the supplying agency which has conducted the selection process. There are two methods of certification. In one method the supply agency furnishes a list of finally selected candidates in order of seniority along with a waiting list. The appointing authority has no option but to make appointment according to the list in order of seniority except when there are overwhelming considerations to reject any candidate. The other method is called rule of three, in which the supply agency supplies a panel of three names for a particular position and the appointing authority has the option of picking up any one out of them.

J. Appointment and Probation

The next step in the process of recruitment is appointment which takes place when the appointing authority communicates its decision to the supply agency and the candidate. Sometimes process of character verification and medical examination intervenes between the selection and appointment. In fact, these

two processes can provide the overriding considerations for rejecting a candidate who finds his name in the select list. If a person suffers from some disease likely to interfere with the official work he may be dropped. The simplest example is that of a colour blind person seeking appointment to a military or police post. Similarly if police verification reveals links of a candidate with terrorists or criminal or actual involvement in a crime, such a candidate need not be appointed, even if he has done very well during the selection process.

Most of the permanent appointments are accompanied by probation for a specified period of one or two years. This is more or less an extension of the selection process and is meant to watch the performance of candidate at work even though they may have performed well during examination. The services of a probationer can be terminated at the end of probation period if the performance is not satisfactory.

The advantages of a probation system are:

- (i) An employee who does not perform well at work and does not show the right kind of attitude may be discharged fairly early without going through the cumbersome procedure of removing or dismissing him.
- (ii) This saves the organization a lot of time, effort and money and at the same time provides an opportunity to the employees, fairly early to seek alternative employment.
- (iii) It can create a good example before other employees and make them work better.
- (iv) A discharge after probation rids the organization of the evil very early. But, a demotion or denial of promotion or dismissal latter crates a lot of bad blood. In such cases, the organization remains saddled with dissatisfied and unwilling workers.

Since the probation system can prove so vital to the organization. It is necessary to safeguard it from the personal prejudices and undue influence. This can be ensured by keeping a constant record of the performance of the candidate and by consulting an independent body like Public or Civil Service Commission.

K. Placement

Placement is the assignment of the job to the employee. Even if we develop a sound system of recruitment and recruit very capable persons, it is not likely to give rise to an effective administration unless we are able to put proper persons in proper positions. It must be noted that placement is a continuous process. An employee may have to be put to different jobs throughout his career. A proper policy of placement must be able to extract maximum work from him. This will, of course, require a proper evaluation of the jobs as well as employees on a continuous basis and a proper matching of the two at all times.

L. Orientation

The final act in the process of personnel recruitment is to give proper orientation to the new entrants to various jobs. Orientation has many advantages. It familiarizes the employee with his new surroundings in the organization. If he is given good treatment and made to feel welcome in the organization, he would be willing to put in his best for achieving the goals of the organization. This aspect is very much neglected in our country where a new-comer is told more about his mechanical job rather than its human aspects.

M. Recruiting Agency

Usually recruitment is the job of the head of the organization. In the famous acronym, POSCORD 'S' stands for staffing. Since human beings are the most important assets of the organization, the job of staffing needs his full care and attention. As the organizations grow big – just as the modern Government has become big – the need to recruit a large number and variety of employees arises. A separate agency may then be needed to perform this recruitment or procurement operation. There are two possibilities – either a specialized agency may be created within the Government/organization to take care of this aspect or an independent agency may be set up for this purpose.

The advantages of an independent agency are:

- i) It can be more or less immune to outside and political pressures. In a democratic like India; where jobs are scarce, there may be pressures on the Government to appoint friends, relatives of the party people. A Government department may find it difficult to withhold such pressures whereas an independent commission can probably do so – atleast to some extent.
- ii) This agency, over a period of time can develop the necessary experience and expertise in the process of recruitment of personnel. This process, as it must have been noticed, requires judgment about human traits and personality and is a specialized job. Hence, an independent organization, which recruits administrators for the whole Government can be a better instrument for recruiting right people for the right jobs.

The disadvantages are:

- i) The agency may have developed expertise in judging people, but they cannot judge the jobs of each organization, better than the organization itself. They may recruit the best people, but may not be able to locate correct match between the available candidates and the jobs.
- ii) The pressure on the independent recruiting agency to look for such match will not be as high as on the user agency. The independent recruiting agency is after all not as much affected by the performance of the recruits as the user organization.

The balance of convenience will depend on the circumstances prevailing in each country. Where political interference is the problem and job applicants are large in number, independent agency may be a better proposition.