

## Youths' first choice govt jobs

Mosabber Hossain. Dhaka | Update: 18:09, Dec 30, 2019



The number of applicants in preliminary examinations in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) has broken all the previous records last year, Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) officials have said.

They said the number is 200 times higher against the available posts.

Over 5 million employment aspirants applied for six categories of government jobs.

Mainly, class one gazetted officers are recruited through BCS exams. However, the government has started recruiting non-gazetted posts from those who passed BCS examinations for avoiding hassle in the recruitment.

Statistics show over 8 thousand applicants applied against a single post in other government jobs.

Experts think, although getting a government job takes a long time, handsome salary and other facilities have played a major role behind the rush for government jobs.

There are nearly 2.4 million unemployed graduates in the country. Alongside the government job, the competition for private jobs is very high. Employers said there is no available employment opportunity in the private sector. However, employers claim they struggle to get eligible candidates.

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and BRAC University jointly conducted a youth survey in last August.

The survey finds out that 57 per cent female and 42 per cent male graduates want to get government jobs.

Former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder said the youth are interested in government jobs due to adding various facilities in recent times.

He told Prothom Alo that salary scale had almost doubled in every grade of government jobs in 2015. Other facilities and pension were also raised. There is more security in government jobs, Ali Imam Majumder added.

The private sectors, the top bureaucrat noted, failed to create employment in line with the reported economic growth.

Referring to Brac's youth survey, BIGD executive director Imran Matin said, most of the youth search for government jobs as long as they have the required age. They opt for private jobs after expiry of the age limit for government jobs.

Moreover, the private sectors suffer as a big chunk of eligible candidates go for government jobs, he added.

### **Frenzy over government jobs**

Youths were seen waiting in long queue to enter Public Library in Shahbagh in a November morning. At least 10 of the youth said they have come to study for preparing government jobs.

Bangladesh Agriculture University graduate Golam Raihan said he has passed BCS preliminary examination. He regularly comes to the library to take BCS written exam preparations.

“Good salary, job security, social acceptance and pension facilities attract me for government jobs,” Raihan said.

Administrative officer of the library, Mahbubur Rahman, told Prothom Alo that the number of readers had increased four to five times comparing to five years back.

The reading rooms, an accommodation for 600 to 700 readers, barely remain vacant, he added.

Mahbubur said many readers wait outside the library long before the opening hours and many study up to closing time.

Same scenario is seen at Dhaka University library.

BBA fourth year student Ahmed Faisal said he is preparing for BCS from now on.

According to BPSC, the number of applicants for 28th BCS in 2008 was slightly less than 125,000. The number of applicants increases to almost 350,000 for 38th BCS in 2017.

The number of applicants sets a new record in the 40th BCS exams with over 400,000 applying for roughly 2,000 posts. Some 216 candidates vied for a single post. A class one officer gets monthly salary of Tk 35,000 in total immediately after joining.

BPSC chairman Muhammed Sadique told Prothom Alo that the young job seekers' confidence rose on BCS jobs due to fair recruitment process. Moreover, the authorities now try to recruit in non-cadre posts from those who pass the exams.

BPSC's former member Samar Chandra Paul attributes the rise in applicants' number to the social acceptability of government jobs.

Normally the number of applicants is higher in BCS, government primary schools, food department, public banks and narcotics control department recruitment posts.

As many as 6 million applied for jobs in these sectors against a total of 23,000 posts in last year.

### **Job applications and exam delay**

Narcotics control department published a circular in 2017 for 242 posts. As many as 900 applied against a single post. The authorities found even primary selection very difficult. Among the vacant posts were nine sub inspectors (SI). Over 8,500 applied against a single SI post.

Food department published a circular for 1,100 posts last year. Nearly 1,400 persons vied for each post. The number of candidates against each assistant food inspector was around 2,500.

A senior official of food ministry told Prothom Alo that they failed to take exams despite repeated attempts.

The authorities this year published circular for the recruitment of 11,000 teachers in primary schools where 2.6 million candidates applied.

Struggling to arrange examinations for such a huge number of candidates, the authorities deferred the date of exams for five times. They later had to take exams in different dates in four phases. Five applicants passed against each post.

In last September, BPSC published circular for the recruitment of teachers in government high schools. As many as 118 applied against each post.

In 2018, 1.1 million applied for over 7,000 posts in different public banks. Bankers Selection Committee (BSC) said so many applicants never applied for bank jobs in the past.

Former BSC chief and Bangladesh Bank's general manager Mosharraf Hossain said the applicants' number rose for coordinated application system. Besides, the applicants do not have to pay any application fees, which might contribute to the rise.

Former managing director of Sonali Bank Pradip Kumar Dutta said that alongside good salary and job security, bank jobs are lucrative because of different types of loan facilities for the employees.

Unemployment is another reason for rise in applicants' number, he added.

### **Unemployment among educated youth**

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) labour force survey, there were around 2.7 million unemployed in 2016-17. 90 per cent of them are educated and more than 400,000 (15 per cent) are university graduates. Around 60 per cent of the unemployed have at least SSC and HSC level education.

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) report, the number of unemployed persons may hit 3 million this year. Bangladesh ranks the 3rd among the eight south Asian countries in terms of unemployment rate.

Conducted among 15,000 youth, a recent survey of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) revealed that one third of them are unemployed. Rate of unemployment is higher among undergraduates and post graduates. Around one third of them are unemployed despite obtaining good results.

A deputy commissioner, in condition of anonymity, said that the candidates with higher qualification apply for lower jobs in government sector because of job security and social status.

### **What is the way out?**

Ali Imam Majumder said such an inclination for government jobs is not a good sign. Unemployment of educated youth cannot be reduced if enough jobs are not created in private sector, which will subsequently lead to social instability, he said.

Ali Imam Majumder also underscored the need for government initiatives to create entrepreneurship.

Chief executive of bdjobs.com Fahim Mashrur said, competition is higher in private sector too.

Around 100,000 to 150,000 candidates apply against 15-20 posts.

A big portion of the job seekers have lacking in competence, he added.

Fahim said graduates with good academic background often found to have serious lacking in qualifications.

ACI Limited's human resource director Moinul Islam echoed the same.

Corporate Coach's chief consultant Jishu Tarafder urged the youth to get training in different computer skills, video editing and photography alongside their studies.

***\*This report, originally published in Prothom Alo print edition, has been rewritten in English by Galib Ashraf.***