AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE EXISTING SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF BCS OFFICERS

SUBMITTED

BY

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATED TO

My Beloved Kids

Tahmid Fahad and Tasnim Fariha

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Abstract

The need for performing routine administrative duties is present in both the developed and the developing countries. But, in a developing country, the additional function of promoting development must also be done. Bangladesh, as a developing country, needs a civil service of high quality and integrity. Merit-based recruitment practices are considered to be correlated with the effectiveness of the civil service. Sound recruitment policy gives emphasis on merit, rather on any other considerations. However, in the recruitment to the civil service of Bangladesh, merit is not given due importance. The majority of the posts here are reserved for preferred groups through quota system. Besides, there are also a number of factors that go against the principles of merit and equality in the BCS officer selection process. The traditional civil service of Bangladesh, however, needs to be modernized in order to enable them to cope with the modern-day challenges and to perform their functions efficiently and effectively. The focus is on the objective criteria in the selection of civil servants who are allowed to function without fear or favor, while keeping in view public interest within the framework of laws and regulations.

The purpose of this study is to examine how far this selection process is consistent with the principles of equality and merit in job opportunity, and also to identify the scope for improvement of the existing BCS officer selection process. Both the primary and the secondary data have been used in this study. The primary data has been collected through questionnaire survey method. The secondary data has been collected from various published documents in the form of books, journals, government circulars and recruitment rules, annual reports of PSC, newspapers, research reports, and internet. Two categories of respondents have been considered for this research, i.e. the existing BCS officers and the BCS candidates. The total number of respondents is 111. Among them, 50 respondents are from the existing officer category, and 61 respondents are from the BCS candidate category. Both male and female respondents are considered for maintaining a balance in gender. In this study, the obtained data has been analyzed through quantitative method by using statistical tools like SPSS, MS-Excel, and other arithmetic methods of data analysis

that are available and viable. In some cases, to present findings of the data, graphics manner have been used with the aid of charts and tablature presentation.

The present study deals with the existing officer selection process for direct recruitment to civil service, especially in the cadre service (BCS). It includes, BCS examination system, distribution of marks for written and viva, exam curriculum, barriers to the merit, duration of the selection procedure, eligibility criteria, etc. This study has made a number of findings to examine the above-mentioned areas of BCS officer selection process. Almost all the respondents of this study are dissatisfied with the existing selection process for the recruitment of officers in BCS. They think that the existing figure of quota (55% of the posts) should be reduced drastically, and that at least 75% posts should be distributed purely on the basis of merit. The existing BCS officer selection process has been considered as a lengthy process. So, most of the respondents have suggested maximum one year for the completion of the whole selection process. Almost all the respondents think that the preliminary examination for making a short list of candidates should continue. A significant number of respondents think that the curriculum for the written examination should be modified. In this study, the major portion of respondents suggested that 800-1000 marks for BCS written examination does not show the significant difference with the existing pattern of marks. On the other hand, most of the respondents proposed maximum 100 marks for BCS viva-voce in place of the existing 200 marks. A significant number of respondents think that political interference and corruption have also an important role on the existing officer selection process. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the existing eligibility criteria required for the BCS applicants. They don't support the idea of special consideration on the age limit; and they recommend similar age limit for all applicants. 32 years of age limit has been suggested by the majority of the respondents. On the basis of the above-mentioned findings, this study has made a number of recommendations to get rid of this situation, thus create equality in job opportunity and build a merit-based civil service for ensuring better governance in Bangladesh.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCS   Bangladesh Civil Service

BPSC   Bangladesh Public Service Commission

BRAC   Building Resources Across the Community

CSP   Civil Service of Pakistan

ICS   Indian Civil Service

DFID   Department for International Development

IGS   Institute of Governance Studies

MCQ   Multiple Choice Question

MoPA   Ministry of Public Administration

PSC   Public Service Commission

SPSS   Statistical Packages for Social Sciences

TIB   Transparency International Bangladesh

CHAPTER-ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction to the research study. Here has been an attempt to highlight the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and scope of the study. Furthermore, the end of this chapter presents an outline or structure of the research report.

1.1 Background of the Study

Critical issues on civil service recruitment comprise several factors: patronage versus merit, role and relative importance of personal, family, tribal, ethnic, religious, gender, regional, and any other miscellaneous considerations, such as "old boys" network in the selection of public personnel. These issues have been resolved in many countries in favor of a merit-based civil service. The public personnel process is essentially a political process, and civil service as the main instrument or agent of public action will always have this pressure to be biased in favor of individuals or groups who wield controlling political power, and who would also like to have civil servants work in their favor (Rahman, 2001).

Bangladesh largely follows a "closed entry" system where Class 1 level officers are recruited at the entry level, through open competitive exams held for 29 cadres (currently 28 cadres), that comprises functional and professional streams. At the mid- and upper-management levels, and in case of specialized positions, 10% of the positions can be filled up through contractual appointments or on deputation from other public sector organizations. However, this injection of "fresh" human capital is used sparingly, thereby reducing competitive pressures within the system (World Bank, 1996).

Bangladesh needs a civil service of high quality and integrity for mobilizing and utilizing its domestic resources (Kim and Monem 2008:2).The need for performing routine administrative function is present in both developed and developing countries. But, in the latter type, the additional function of promoting development must also be performed. Today developing countries face a wide range of problems. These need to be solved. Moreover, several goals are to be achieved simultaneously. They have

embarked on the road to development with the bureaucracy as the principal vehicle. Since no other agency appears to be capable of accomplishing this essential and difficult task, and governments are dependent and have some more trust on the bureaucracy, this institution has to take on this additional responsibility.

The traditional civil service, however, needs to be modernized in order to enable it to cope with the present challenges and to perform its functions efficiently and effectively. The focus is on the objective criteria in the selection of civil servants who are allowed to function without fear or favor, while maintaining the public interest within the framework of laws and regulations. Merit-based recruitment practices are considered to be correlated with the effectiveness of the civil service. Appointment of public officials based on their intellectual ability to perform a job and accomplishments in academic studies is a common practice in both developed and developing countries. The need for efficient personnel to staff the public service is great in developing countries where they perform a number of essential functions. Recruitment of public officials based on merit is compatible with development administration and is still the most "rational" known method.

1.2 Problem Statement

Civil service becomes an essential part of governance in the modern era. The civil service that constitutes the administrative part of the government symbolizes the image of 'good' or 'bad' governance of a state. The achievement of the government's vision and mission depends on capable civil servants in the right place. The efficiency of government depends largely on its personnel. In addition, to build up an efficient personnel system an ideal selection process, which is the best of its kind, is a prerequisite. However, a sound selection process for the recruitment of quality civil servants does not exist in the civil service of Bangladesh. The process has been the centre of criticism for a long time. If recruitment is not fair and competitive, it fails to attract the meritorious and competent candidates. Various studies suggest that there are many loopholes in the existing recruitment and selection process for which the civil service is losing its appeal as the best career choice for many competent persons. The systems of the examination, syllabus, distributions of posts, etc. are yet full of various demerits. And, as a result, many bright candidates are deprived of entering the civil service. An efficient civil service is essential for effective implementation of

public policy and delivery of public services. To build up an efficient civil service system, it is now high time to take required action so that the really bright and meritorious persons can enter the civil service. This paper deals with the ideal selection process for the civil service, especially the cadre services known as Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS).

1.3 Objectives

This research is aimed at fulfilling the following objectives:

1. To examine the existing selection process of Bangladesh civil service (BCS).

2. To identify the scope for the improvement of existing selection process and give some suggestions for further development.

1.4 Research Questions

In view of the above-mentioned objectives, the following research questions have been raised:

 (a) What are the present practices of selection process in BCS?

 (b) What are the problems behind the existing selection process of BCS officers?

1.5 Scope of the study

In Bangladesh, thousands of civil servants are recruited in various cadres almost every year. The quality of civil service is very much dependent on the caliber of the individuals recruited. Here lies the importance of recruiting the best and the brightest candidates for the civil service, who can make bureaucracy an efficient, innovative, dynamic, and powerful force to respond to the needs of the society. Sound recruitment policy gives an emphasis on merit, rather than on any other considerations. But, in the recruitment of the civil service in Bangladesh, merit is not given due importance. The majority of the posts of civil service are reserved for preferred groups through quota system. Moreover, there are many claims like leakage of questionnaire, massive deviation of marks in viva-voce, lengthy exam system, irregularities and corruption, political interference, and ineffective curriculum, etc. Against these backdrops, it is assumed that there is room for improvement of the existing selection process for ensuring merit-based recruitment in Bangladesh Civil Service. This research intends to find out the scope for the improvement of selection process and makes some

recommendations to get rid of this situation in order to create equality in job opportunity with efficiency for better governance in the country.

1.6 Outline of the Study

Chapter One provides an introduction to the research study. It covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, and scope of the study. The structure of the research report is also outlined at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Two gives an insight into the existing literature of the research topic. It includes the concepts of civil service, structure of Bangladesh Civil Service, idea of recruitment & selection, legal basis of selection process for the recruitment of officers in BCS, components of existing BCS officer selection process, and problems of the existing officer selection process. It also includes the conceptual framework of the research study.

Chapter Three presents the methodology of this research study. This chapter explains the research design, process, and data analysis techniques used for this study.

Chapter Four shows the analysis of primary data collected through questionnaire survey. It presents the major findings of the study.

Chapter Five concludes this research study along with a review of the research objectives and recommendations based on the findings in the study for the improvement of existing selection process.

CHAPTER-TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an insight into the existing literature of the research topic. It includes the concepts of civil service, structure of Bangladesh Civil Service, idea of recruitment & selection, legal basis of selection process for the recruitment of officers in BCS, components of existing BCS officer selection process, and problems of the existing officer selection process. It also focuses on the conceptual framework to carry out the research.

2.1 Civil Service

Civil service of a country generally includes all permanent functionaries of the government, which distinctly excludes defence service, although some civil servants work in the defence ministry and its various departments. A member of the civil service is not a holder of political or judicial office. The civil servants of a state are collectively called civil service. According to Rai and Singh, civil service means a professional body of neutral experts in the administration who are dedicated to serve without regard to its own gains or without reference to party political views or class interests (Rai and Singh, 1979:26).According to Finer, civil service is a professional body of officials permanent, paid and skilled.

Policy formulation is the function of cabinet/ministry, but policy implementation the main aspect of development, is the function of the civil servants. Although policy formulation is the jurisdiction of cabinet/ministry, it depends largely on the civil servants for the data of policy formulation. According to a British writer, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, ministers simply accept the views of civil servants, and sign their names on the dotted line. So, a state may run without ministers, but it cannot run a day without civil servants (Ahmad, 2002:455). Here lies the importance of recruiting the best talents for the civil service with a view to make the public sector a relevant, dynamic, and powerful force of change.

2.2 Civil Service of Bangladesh

Bangladesh inherited the administrative structure and civil service system developed in Pakistan, which was a continuation of the system of the British India. British Civil Service was considered as the most distinguished civil service in the world. The Civil Service of Pakistan, though very small in size, was considered effective. During the turbulent years immediately following the independence, the government faced many urgent problems (Morshed, 1997). When Bangladesh came into being after a bloody war, for filling in the void created due to the departure of the civil servants of West Pakistan, a sizable number of recruitments were made without framing new recruitment rules (Ali, 2004), which were *ad hoc*, unsystematic, irregular, and chaotic (Khan, Kar and Bhuiyan, 1992).

Currently, Bangladesh Civil Service is vertically structured into four categories: namely Class-I Officers, Class-II Officers, Class-III employees, and Class-IV employees (Ahmed and Khan, 1990:29). The officers are also classified as gazetted officers and non-gazetted officers. The officers whose appointment, posting, transfer, promotion, and the similar are notified in government gazette are known as gazetted officers (Ahmed, 2002:334). All Class-I officers and some of the Class-II officers are treated as gazetted officers. Of the Class-I officers, some belong to different cadre services.

Cadre service means the organization of civil servants in well-defined groups, services, or cadres. Cadre service generally exists in the countries with the British colonial heritage. Cadre is the distinct functional sub-division of the government bureaucracy. Cadre services are those services, which are constructed under law with a number of positions or structure and recruitment and promotion rules (Morshed, 1997:77). On the other hand, non-cadre services are mostly based on position, with no definite structure of mobility, either horizontally or vertically. A cadre system entails the organization of civil servants into semi-functional occupational groups or cadres. Cadre service in Bangladesh was first officially recognized in 1981, when Bangladesh Civil Service Recruitment Rules of that year was introduced. Bangladesh Civil Service, more popularly known by its acronym BCS, is the elite service in the country. BCS inherited the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), which was the legacy of Indian Civil Service (ICS), the most distinguished civil service in the world.

Previously, there were 29 cadres in Bangladesh Civil Service. In November 2007, lower judiciary in Bangladesh was separated from the executive. As a result, BCS (Judiciary) has become a separate service known as Judicial Service and it is no more a cadre of BCS today. Currently, there are 28 cadres in the BCS. Some cadres are general, such as BCS (Administration), BCS (Foreign Affairs), BCS (Police), BCS (Food), BCS (Customs & Accounts), BCS (Information) , BCS (Economics), etc. while others are professional/technical, such as BCS (Health), BCS (General Education), BCS (Technical Education), BCS (Agriculture) and the similar.

2.3 Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection are the central aspects of the civil service because an organization's ability to attract and retain capable employees can be the most important determinant of organizational effectiveness. Recruitment is the process by which organizations locate and attract individuals to fill up vacant posts. The primary purpose of recruitment is identifying and attracting potential employees. Recruitment is the process of searching prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization (Flippo and Edwin, 1984:141). Recruitment determines the nature of the applicants' pool from which new employees are selected. The recruitment to civil service in Bangladesh is of various types. They are: direct appointment through competitive examination, appointment by promotion, appointment by transfer and appointment on ad hoc basis and then regularization. Here we shall deal with the direct recruitment to the officers while focusing on the cadre services.

On the other hand, selection is the process by which organizations decide who will or will not be allowed to enter the jobs by assessing their qualifications through the utilization of appropriate methods, techniques, and procedures. The objective of selection is to pick up the right candidates who must meet the requirements of the job and the organization best. No element of the career service system is more important than the recruitment policy" (Commission of Inquiry on Public Service Personnel, 1935:37, quoted in Stahl 1962:51). Recruitment is the cornerstone of the whole personnel structure. Unless recruitment policy is soundly conceived, there can be little hope of building a first rate staff (Stahl, 1962: 51). Broadly, there are two major methods for recruitment in the civil service: (a) merit system through competitive

examination and (b) spoils system. Under the typical civil service law, the central personnel agency, commonly called Public Service Commission, is responsible for conducting competitive examination. Spoils system (also known as a patronage system) is an informal practice where a political party, after winning an election, gives government jobs to its voters as a reward for working towards victory, and as an incentive to keep working for the party—as opposed to a system of awarding offices on the basis of merit, independent of political activity.

2.4 Legal basis for the selection of BCS officers

It should be noted here that the recruitment policy was first introduced in Bangladesh by an executive order in September 1972, called Interim Recruitment Rules 1972, before the constitution came into operation in December of that year. In 1976, recruitment rules for appointment of superior positions were framed. This has undergone changes from time to time (Ali, 2004). The rules for recruitment of Civil Service cadres followed the framing of rules for the creation of BCS cadres in 1980. The recruitment rules were notified in January 1981. These rules mainly dealt with the procedure for recruitment, period of probation, and conditions of confirmation in service. In 1982, elaborate recruitment rules were framed for appointment to various cadres of BCS. These rules prescribed criteria for eligibility in respect of age and qualifications of candidates to be recruited directly to various services.

The constitution of Bangladesh has granted equal employment opportunities for citizens. The constitution declares, "There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the Republic" (Article 29 [1]). "No citizen shall, on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth be ineligible for, or discriminated against, in respect of any employment or office in the service of the Republic" (Article 29 [2]). However, under Clause (3) of the same Article, the constitution has provided certain exceptions that read as follows: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from (a) making special provision, in favor of any backward section of citizens for the purpose of securing their adequate representation in the service of the Republic; (b) giving effect to any law which makes provision for reserving appointments relating to any religious or denominational institution to person of that religion or denomination; (c) reserving for members of one sex any class of employment or office on the ground that it is considered by its

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nature to be unsuited to members of the opposite sex (Article 29 [3]). This constitutional provision indicates that civil service recruitment policy in Bangladesh is an admixture of merit and quota.

2.5 Agency for BCS officers Selection

Bangladesh Public Service Commission, shortly known as PSC, is a constitutional body (Articles 137-141), like its predecessors in British India and the united Pakistan. The constitution has assigned PSC to conduct tests and examinations for the selection of suitable persons for appointment to the services of the Republic. The PSC is also empowered to advise the President in framing recruitment rules, promotion, and other matters related to civil service. The Chairman and the Members of PSC are appointed by the President following the advice given by the Prime Minister. Their tenure is five years or the attainment of 65 years, whichever is earlier. Currently, PSC consists of a Chairman and 14 Members. The constitution provides for establishing one or more PSCs. Accordingly, after the independence of Bangladesh, two types of PSC were constituted. The PSC (First) meant for the recruitment to Class-I officers and PSC (Second) for Class-II officers. But, the two commissions were merged into a single one in 1977 through the PSC Ordinance of that year; and, the number of members was fixed between 6 (minimum) to 15 (maximum) including the Chairman. Before 1982, no competitive examinations, in the present sense of the term, were held in Bangladesh. Civil servants were then recruited either only through interview or through short written examinations and interviews conducted by the PSC. But, the majority of the officers were appointed on ad hoc basis and latter they were regularized by PSC. Regular competitive examinations have been held since 1982 when BCS Recruitment Rules 1981 was introduced. From 1982 to 2012, the PSC conducted 32 BCS examinations. Besides, written examination of 33rd BCS was completed in October 2012. Of the total 32 BCS examinations, 18 are general, for all cadres, while the rest are special in nature.

The current recruitment system of BCS is that the MoPA gathers staffing requirement from ministries and government bodies to determine the number of vacant posts and then transmits the same to the PSC for administering the recruitment operation. After receiving the requisition, PSC makes advertisement for the vacant posts through newspapers, thus inviting eligible candidates to apply against the available post.

2.6 Steps for BCS officers Selection Process

BCS officer selection process consists of several steps that are stated below (Table-1):

Activities of BPSC	Invitation of Applications
	⬇
	Preliminary Test
	⬇
	Written Examination
	⬇
	Viva-Voce
	⬇
	Publication of Results List of selected candidates is sent to MoPA With the recommendation for appointment
Activities of MoPA	⬇
	Medical Test
	⬇
	Police Verification
	⬇
	Final appointment given by MoPA through Gazette Notification

Table-1: Steps taken for BCS officers' selection process

2.6.1 Eligibility criteria for Applicants

The eligibility for entry into various civil service cadres is codified in Article 133 of the constitution of Bangladesh. The constitution requires that, consistent with its provisions, the Parliament may by law regulate the appointment and conditions of service. It also lays down that until such law is made, the President may make rules regulating such appointment and conditions of service; and, the rules so made shall have effect, subject to the provisions of any such law. The rules are also to be consistent with the provisions of the constitution. However, the Parliament is yet to make any such law for governing the appointment. In the absence of any specific act governing the appointment and other terms and conditions of service, the rule-making authority of the President has been put in place to fill up the void.

In 1982, elaborate recruitment rules (BCS Recruitment Rules, 1981) were framed for appointment to various cadres of BCS. Today, admission to different cadres of the

BCS is open to candidates at least a Bachelor's degree from any recognized university in Bangladesh or abroad. Currently, it is who have at least 4-year graduation or 3-year graduation along with post-graduation. The minimum age limit has been set at 21 and the maximum at 30 years. The age limit is 32 years for specialized groups (freedom fighters, doctors and engineers). A non-citizen or one who is married to a foreigner is debarred from applying for a position in the civil service. A candidate has to specify in his/her application form the names of the cadres in order of preference he/she desires to be considered.

2.6.2 Preliminary Examination

The MCQ Preliminary Examination is a screening test of 100 marks on Bangla, English, General Knowledge, Bangladesh and International Affairs, General Science and Technology, Mathematical Reasoning and Mental Ability, and Everyday Science (Wahhab, 2009). It is used to make a short list of BCS applicants for sitting in the written examination.

2.6.3 Written Examination & Viva-voce

When the open competitive examination for BCS recruitment started in 1982, each candidate had to sit for an exam of 1600 marks in 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. The 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, PSC initiated a reform of the BCS written examination system to match better contemporary needs. In 2004, 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. Currently, it has been made 1100 marks with 200 marks in viva-voce. Candidates for both General and

Technical cadres are to attend the written exam of 1100 marks and viva-voce consisting of 200 marks (Public Service Commission Report, 2011). The subjects and the marks allocated BCS examination are shown in Table-2.

Table-2
Subjects of BCS Written Examination and Viva-voce along with Marks

Subjects for general cadres	Marks	Subjects for professional/technical cadres	Marks
General Bangla	200	General Bangla	100
General English	200	General English	200
Bangladesh Affairs	200	Bangladesh Affairs	200
International Affairs	100	International Affairs	100
Mathematical Reasoning and Mental Ability	100	Mathematical Reasoning and Mental Ability	100
General Science & Technology	100	Two Papers for post-related subject	200
Viva	200	Viva	200
Total	1100	Total	1100

Generally, the respective ministries, directorates, divisions, departments, and statutory bodies inform the PSC about the number of vacant posts through the Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA). PSC, through the national newspapers, invites applications for the vacant posts. Eligible candidates are asked to appear at the Preliminary Examination of 100 marks. The applicants who qualify in the Preliminary Examination are invited to appear at a Written Examination that consists of 1100 marks, including 200 marks for viva-voce (Table-2). The candidates obtaining 50 percent marks in the written test are qualified for viva. The minimum qualifying marks for the viva-voce is 40 percent. If a candidate fails in the viva-voce, he/she will not be considered for final selection. The merit list is prepared on the basis of marks obtained in written exams and viva-voce. After completing the merit list, the candidates are selected for different types of quota. PSC sends the final list of selected candidates to MoPA with recommendations for appointment to the vacancies. Police verification and medical check-up of the selected candidates are arranged by MoPA respectively with the support from the ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Health. The Final appointment is given through the notification by MoPA.

2.6.4 Predominance of Quota in BCS officers Selection Process

Today, recruitment process follows the Bangladesh Civil Service Recruitment Rules of 1981. While Bangladesh largely follows a closed entry system, there is a provision for 10% "lateral" entry into the civil service to more senior grades from outside the service. In addition, the PSC is required to reserve appointments of Class-I posts according to the following quotas:

30% reserved for freedom fighters or the children of freedom fighters

10% reserved for women

5% reserved for tribal groups

10% reserved for different districts (based on district population density)

This quota system leaves only 45 percent of the posts for recruitment to be filled up by following a merit-based open competitive system. The current quotas were introduced in March 1997 (DFID, 2004). Recently, the government has introduced 1% quota for physically handicapped persons. Previously, the 30-percent reserved quota was for freedom fighters only; it did not include their children. Since 1987, PSC has recommended for modifications in the quota system (Ali, 2004:125).

In the light of Clause (3) of Article 29 of the constitution, the government has introduced the quota system (reservation of posts) in case of direct recruitment to BCS, which had undergone changes from time to time. Details of the quota system and the subsequent changes made are shown in Table-3.

Table-3
Distribution policy of Seats for BCS among the different groups of candidates

Groups of candidates	1972	1976	1985-Till to date
Merit	20%	40%	45%
Freedom Fighters	30%	30%	-
War-affected women	10%	10%	-
District Quota	40%	20%	-
Wards of Freedom Fighters	-	-	30%
Women	-	-	10%
Tribal	-	-	05%
District Merit	-	-	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Recently, the government has introduced 1% quota for physically handicapped.
Source: Compilation from different Rules

Table-3 reveals that, for the recruitment in cadre services, 45 percent of the total available posts would be filled up through open competition (merit based recruitment), while the remaining 55 percent would be based on different types of quota (on the basis of equity or positive discrimination). However, quota is distributed among the qualified candidates on the basis of merit in their respective groups. In BCS, both principles of merit and equity are used in recruitment and selection process. Merit entails a process whereby the very best are selected, thereby placing emphasis especially on competitive excellence. Equity implies that public sector positions are distributed approximately, proportionally to, or representative of the population at large (Zafarullah and Khan, 1989:80). Therefore, we can say that BCS recruitment policy is an admixture of merit and quota (Wahhab, 2009:4).

Table-3 clearly indicates that since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 till to date, different types of quota have dominated recruitment policy to civil service including BCS. However, quota is distributed among the candidates on the basis of merit in their respective groups. After the independence of Bangladesh till 1976, only 20 percent of civil officers were recruited on the basis of merit. In 1976, recruitment based on merit increased from 20 to 40 percent; in 1985, it became 45 percent, and, after a long break now, the percentage for the meritorious applicants is 45%, which is still in effect. In other words, from 1985 till to date – for the last 24 years- there has been no significant change in merit policy for civil service recruitment.

It may be mentioned here that in the case of Class-III and Class-IV employees, there is no national merit policy. They are recruited district-wise. Of these employees, 30 percent are reserved for freedom fighters/their wards, 15 percent for women, 10 percent for orphan and disabled, 10 percent for Ansars and VDPs, 5 percent for tribal people and the rest 30 percent are reserved for general district merit. The main argument for not prescribing merit in the case of Class-III & IV employees is that their jobs are unskilled and it is very difficult to measure the merits of candidates for such jobs. The main debate is for the recruitment by observing the quota in Class-I posts, especially cadre posts who are engaged with policy-making as well as providing sophisticated services in favor of the state.

2.7 Problems behind the existing officers' selection process

According to the literature, there are a number of problems lying behind the existing BCS officer selection process. Among the problems, faulty and lengthy examination system, Reservation of Seats (Quota), corruption and irregularities, political interference, the process of abusing the marks in the viva-voce, leakage of question papers, etc. have been mentioned in different published literatures as the major problems that lie behind the existing officer selection process. It has been thought that the above-mentioned problems behind the BCS officer selection process are hampering the system of recruitment of quality officers in Bangladesh Civil Service. Literatures on the above-mentioned problems are discussed in below:

2.7.1 Faulty and Lengthy examination System

The existing procedure of BCS examination is now considered archaic, outdated, questionable, and time- consuming. Preliminary test was introduced in 1989, mainly to reduce the huge number of candidates for the written examination. The screening method helped reduce the number of total competing candidates by as much as 30 to 40 percent through an objective manner (Ali, 2002:130). However, one-hour MCQ Preliminary test is not enough the proper method to drop out the less qualified candidates. Instead, consideration of the candidates' past academic performance can reduce the number of candidates (Jahan, M. 2012).

The questions set for the BCS Examination are not only considered to be of poor quality, but have also failed to test the skills required from a modern civil servant. The contemporary examination tools, such as question banks, random scrambling of questions on examination papers, and computerized marking, have never been used (IGS, 2008:5).

The question papers set for the BCS examination are not rich enough to test the skills of the candidates or identify the deserving candidates for the Class-I civil service posts. In case of written examination, papers are basically based on essay type method which offers little opportunity for creative thinking and analytical ability. Most of the candidates memorize study guides, write the answers mechanically, and pass (Jahan,

F. 2006:10).The contemporary examination tools, such as question banks, random scrambling of questions on examination papers, have never been used.

The list of selected candidates for the viva-voce is prepared based on marks received in the written examination only. It is unfortunate that throughout the entire process of BCS examinations, past academic records of the applicants are totally overlooked. Therefore, we propose to add marks obtained by the candidates in their academic career with the marks received in the written examination to prepare the list for viva-voce; and, the ratio should be 50:50. This not only ensures justice, but also minimizes corruption, including bribery, as alleged against BCS examinations (Wahhab,2009:9).

One of the causes for the lengthy process of BCS examination is a separate preliminary examination to screen out the less qualified applicants. Screening out of less qualified candidates is essential because of a large number of applicants. For example, in recent preliminary examination of 29th BCS examination, held on August 14, 2009, there were 1,23,745 applicants for 1,581 post (*Shamokal*, a daily Bengali newspaper, August 14, 2009). It is difficult for a single PSC to conduct the written examination of such a huge number of applicants allover the country. Moreover, one-hour MCQ test is not enough or the right method to drop out the less qualified applicants. A good candidate with good results throughout his entire academic career incidentally may cut a sorry figure in a one-hour examination. On the other hand, incidentally, a weak candidate, who could not achieve good results through out his past career, may do better in this examination. So, we propose to abolish MCQ Preliminary Examination. In place of MCQ Preliminary Examination, past examination marks of academic career may be considered to drop out the less qualified applicants. This is an easy way, which not only saves time, but also an effective method to drop out the less qualified candidates without any corruption (Wahhab, 2009: 9).

Another major problem in the BCS examination is that it does not take into consideration the need for specialization of different cadres, particularly in relation to general cadres. This frequently results in a mismatch between the skills needed for a job and the candidates selected (IGS, 2008:6).

Largely, owing to the big number of intakes, PSC could not act as the watchdog of merit. At present, a huge number of candidates are appearing in BCS examinations, which necessitate a large number of examiners. Apart from the quality of examiners, this creates inevitable variation in grading (Khan and Ara, 2005:920). Besides, BCS examination includes a viva-voce (interview component). PSC forms multiple viva boards that include PSC Chair/Members as well as academics, civil servants, and other qualified members of the civil society and the private sector. Prior to the reconstitution of the PSC, these boards had been accused of being a major source of corruption and humiliation/ harassment of the candidates. Besides, a number of viva boards composed of a variety of interviewers interview the candidate, which generally comes up with quite different ratings. The PSC forms multiple viva boards that include PSC Chairman and Members as well as academics and civil servants. These boards have been accused of being a major source of corruption and harassment of the candidates. Certainly, questions have been raised in the reports regarding the reliability of the examination marking schemes. Another serious drawback is that candidates are not provided with marks sheets and they are not allowed to challenge the result for re-examination either.

BCS examination process is also extremely lengthy. According to a study, average time spent for a general BCS examination is 24.75 months and for special 14 months (TIB, 2007: 73). PSC is blamed for taking too much time starting from publishing advertisements to the final selection. One of the possible negative outcomes of this long recruitment process is the loss of competent candidates to other organizations.

2.7.2 Reservation of Seats (Quota)

Recruitment policies regarding BCS are characterized by reservation of posts based on the principle of representation and special consideration shown to specific groups of people (See table-3). The prevailing system, which is quite complex and based on many factors, has an anti-merit bias. 55 percent post reservation for various categories deny meritorious individuals from entering the civil service (Jahan, M. 2012). Quota may be necessary for the advancement of backward sections in the society, but it can never continue for an indefinite period as it is going on at present in Bangladesh. Due to quota policy, relatively poor caliber officials get entry into the civil service. So, long-term bad impact of quota system is evident in the civil service of Bangladesh. In

this situation, we propose to abolish quota from the civil service recruitment process except in the case of tribal people (5%); but not for Chakmas who on an average are financially better off than the general people of Bangladesh; and also their literacy is higher, around 75 percent, and than the general literacy in Bangladesh, which is 63 percent. Thus, Chakmas in no criterion belong to the backward section in Bangladesh (Wahhab, 2009: 8). Akbar Ali Khan, a former Adviser to the Caretaker Government, said that allocation of appointments based on quotas should not be greater than based on merit; it gives people an impression that the less efficient people get appointments through the quota system and, thus, the quality of public administration drops.

In both general and technical cadres, candidates having lower marks in written examination are getting recommendations for cadre posts. But, a great number of candidates having comparatively higher marks are not getting recommendations for cadre posts. The following statistics of 29th and 30th BCS published by BPSC in its Annual Report, 2011has been shown in Table-4 & Table-5 as evidences in favor of the above-mentioned statement. Within the existing legal framework, this discrimination can happen due to the present quota system for the selection of BCS officers.

Table-4: Statistics of 29th BCS Examination

Marks obtained	For General cadres		For Technical cadres	
	No. of candidates passed in written examination	No. of candidates recommended for cadres	No. of candidates passed in written examination	No. of candidates recommended for cadres
50-52	1298	3 (0.70%)	871	523 (40.48%)
52-54	1262	4 (0.93%)	880	183 (14.16%)
54-56	1162	35 (8.14%)	864	211 (16.33%)
56-58	831	54 (12.56%)	719	184 (14.24%)
58-60	511	94 (21.86%)	489	122 (9.44%)
60+	435	240 (55.81%)	403	50 (3.87%)

Source: Annual Report 2011, published by BPSC.

Table-5: Statistics of 30th BCS Examination

Marks obtained	For General cadres		For Technical cadres	
	No. of candidates passed in written examination	No. of candidates recommended for cadres	No. of candidates passed in written examination	No. of candidates recommended for cadres
50-52	1290	10 (1.34%)	1006	767 (47.37%)
52-54	1462	19 (2.54%)	1010	130 (8.03%)
54-56	1480	48 (6.42%)	1055	180 (11.12%)
56-58	-	-	940	196 (12.11%)
58-60	998	152 (20.32%)	742	181 (11.18%)
60+	1128	439 (58.69%)	869	165 (10.19%)

Source: Annual Report 2011, published by BPSC.

Due to reservation of posts, for freedom fighters' wards there has been emerged the question as to whether it infringes upon the constitutional right of every citizen to an absence of discrimination on account of birth. It inflicts a further blow on the principle of merit (Jahan, M. 2012). The 30 percent quota for the wards of freedom fighters "though sanctioned by a wave of sympathy and gratitude has not a legal leg to stand on unless the beneficiaries proved to be disadvantageous (Khan and Kazi 2008: i). If we really want help the wards of freedom-fighters, we should ensure their better education by providing stipend as we already did for female education which has yielded good results (Wahhab, 2009: 9).

As for women quota, it may be mentioned here that civil service officers are mainly recruited from among the graduates of different universities. There is no female quota for admission to the universities of Bangladesh. Both male and female students get admission to the universities based on merit. A large number of female students are pursuing their studies in different universities and other educational institutions. And, they are doing well there. Therefore, there is no justification of keeping quota for women in the civil service recruitment process (Wahhab, 2009: 9).

Moreover, quota has always been implemented without transparency. The appointments under quota have never been made public, either by PSC, or by MoPA,

in official documents and gazette notifications (TIB, 2007: 9). According to the annual report of the PSC for 2011 that was presented in the Parliament, the implementation of the current policy regarding the quota system is 'very much complex, difficult and requires (too) much time'. It is almost impossible to select eligible candidates following a 100 percent perfect way for the complexity in the current quota system. It is warranted to simplify the current quota system in order to select candidates through BCS examination. "Otherwise, it is not possible to be free from the complexities to implement the current quota system," the report said. In addition, it proposed appointment of candidates in quotas for freedom fighters, women, and small ethnic groups by categorizing them nationally. "The complexity will increase if they are appointed on the basis of districts, division or size of population." (Source: bdnews24.com, 29 May 2012). Practically, most of the researches and analyses on Bangladesh Civil Service have recommended a modification of the existing quota system in the country.

2.7.3 Interference of Political Forces and Corruption

The reputation of PSC as an independent body carrying out its duties impartially and with probity has been significantly undermined over a period of several years. It has been said that governments in the past have appointed politically aligned persons as the Chairman and Members to establish a partisan control over the civil service recruitment process (IGS, 2008:2). As a result, there are allegations of recruiting candidates who are aligned to the ruling party. This trend has badly affected the quality of BCS. There have been blatant examples of partisan recruitments in the important cadres like Administration and Police (TIB, 2007: 8).

The attempts to politicize the bureaucracy bring back the spoils system (patronage appointment and political favor) in the government, thus damaging the efficiency of civil service. Recruitment based on political connections has brought a decline in the standard and quality of human resources in the civil service. It also puts barriers to attracting qualified candidates and reduces their morals (Jahan, M. 2012).

Leakage of BCS question papers has been happening on a regular basis. PSC had to cancel the 24th BCS Preliminary Test due to the alleged leakage of question papers. Corruption in viva-voce, discrimination against religious minorities, changing marks, and giving extra-ordinary marks to some particular candidates, and bribe-taking by

the Members, officials, and staff of the PSC are among the serious allegations made against the PSC which have damaged the credibility of PSC as well as civil service examination process (TIB, 2007).

All these problems have not only created anomalies, contradictions, confusions, and deficiencies in the recruitment and selection process of the country, but also have helped undermine the people's trust in the recruitment process (Zafarullah and Khan, 1983:132). 'Successful recruitment and selection depend on an adequate supply of competent or educable workers, an effective information network that reaches the appropriate population of prospective employees, a sufficiently attractive organizational environment to entice the desired job candidates, a clear sense of organizational priorities, and a reliable means of choosing the applicants who are the most highly qualified" (Hays and Sowa, 2010).

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Selection is the process by which an organization decides who will or will not be allowed to enter the jobs by assessing their qualifications through the utilization of appropriate methods, techniques, and procedures. Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) performs most of the activities related to the BCS officer selection process. The Ministry of Public Affairs (MoPA) conducts some of these. This research covers only the activities performed by BPSC. BPSC is the respective authority to call applications from candidates and conduct open examinations for selecting the officers for recruitment in Bangladesh Civil Service. It acts within the existing legal framework. BPSC selects officers for different cadre services through open exams by observing the criteria defined by the existing recruitment rules for the recruitment in Bangladesh Civil Service. Based on literature review discussed in this chapter, we see that the whole selection procedure mainly depends on some selection criteria and eligibility of the candidates defined by the existing recruitment rules. Selection criteria includes variables like preliminary exam, written exam, viva-voce, distribution of marks for written examination & viva-voce, reservation of seats (Quota), duration of selection procedure, etc. and eligibility criteria considers mainly the age and educational qualification of applicants. However, it is believed that there are few external factors like political interference, corruption & irregularities, etc. have also influence upon the BCS officer selection process. After considering all the

factors mentioned above the following conceptual framework can be sketched for this study to examine the whole selection process.

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐
│      SELECTION CRITERIA          │              │                     │
│  • Examination system            │              │                     │
│  • Marks distribution for written│ ──────▶      │                     │
│    examination and viva-voce     │              │                     │
│  • Examination curriculum        │              │                     │
│  • Reservation of seats (quota)  │              │      BCS            │
│  • Duration of the selection     │              │   OFFICERS         │
│    process                       │              │   SELECTION        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘              │   PROCESS          │
                                                  │                     │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐              │                     │
│      EXTERNAL FACTORS            │              │                     │
│  • Political interference        │ ──────▶      │                     │
│  • Corruption & irregularities   │              │                     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘              │                     │
                                                  │                     │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐              │                     │
│   ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS      │              │                     │
│  • Academic requirements         │ ──────▶      │                     │
│  • Age limit for applying        │              │                     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────┘
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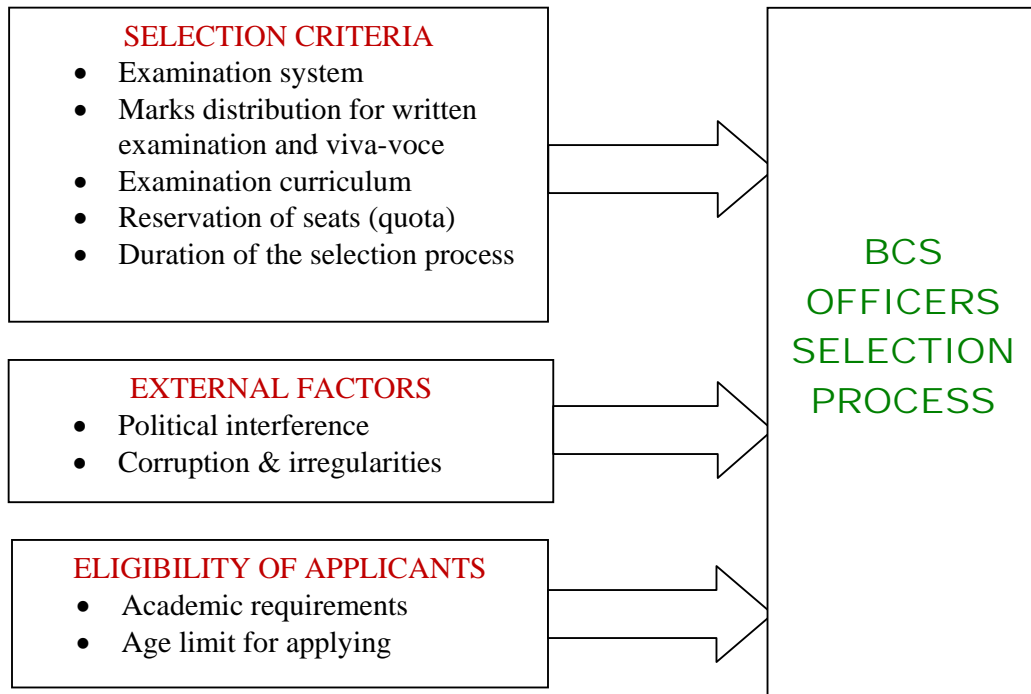
Figure-A: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER-THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of this research study. It explains the research design, process, categories of respondents, way of questionnaire development, and data collection & analysis techniques used for this study. It also covers the limitations of this study.

3.1 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

3.1.1 Research Method

Research method is the functional action strategy to carry out the research in the light of the theoretical/analytical framework and guiding research questions and / or the proposed hypotheses (Aminuzzaman, 1991). According to Creswell (2003), there are three broad types of methodology to carry out any research: quantitative method, qualitative method, and mixed method. In the present study, data were collected using the quantitative method.

3.1.2 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. However, this research is mainly dependent on the primary data collected through the questionnaire survey method. It is considered as an effective method to seek a large sample size for quantitative data analysis. Secondary data have been collected from various published documents in the form of books, journals, government circulars and recruitment rules, annual reports of PSC, newspapers, research reports, and internet browsing.

3.2 Survey Respondents

Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) is authorized to conduct competitive examinations for selecting BCS officers for different cadre services. It operates the selection procedures that follows specific terms and conditions defined by the existing rules and executive orders. The two main stakeholders of this process are candidates of BCS examination and the existing officers of different cadres. BCS candidates have got a perception on the existing officer selection process for the recruitment officer in the civil service. On the other hand, the existing civil service officers are

experienced in this process. Therefore, two categories of respondents have been considered for this research, i.e. the existing BCS officers and BCS the candidates for future recruitment. In the existing officer category, data have been collected from the officers of 13 different cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service, which cover both general and professional/technical cadres. In the BCS candidate category, respondents are the people who are eligible to apply for BCS and targeted to join in a post of BCS. Both male and female respondents are considered for gender balancing. It also considers the respondents having diverse educational backgrounds.

3.3 Sample Size

The total number of respondents is 111. Among them, 50 respondents are from existing officer category, and 61 respondents from BCS officer category. In BCS candidate category, data have been collected from the people who are eligible for applying in BCS and interested to join in the civil service of Bangladesh. In the existing officer category, data have been collected from the officers of 13 different cadres and it covers both general and professional/technical cadres.

3.4 Research Instruments

This piece of research has been performed through questionnaire survey method. This study mainly depends on the primary data collected through questionnaire survey. Therefore, the questionnaire prepared for the survey is the main research instrument of this empirical study.

3.4.1 Questionnaire development

Two categories of respondents have been considered for collecting data by the survey by using questionnaire as research instruments. As a result, two sets of questionnaire have been prepared for this study. One set is for the existing BCS officers; and another set is for the BCS candidates. Questionnaires for both categories of respondents contain 18 questions for every respondent. Each questionnaire has got two parts: Part-A contains personal & academic/professional information, and Part-B contains stipulated questions for collecting data to perform the targeted research work. The questionnaire includes both open-type and closed-type questions. Sometimes, it has used symbolic scale and ranking measurements for multiple variables in the same question.

3.4.2 Pre-test of prepared questionnaires

The prepared questionnaires have been tested by one of the PSC personnel, Mosta Gausul Hoque, and my fellow colleagues- Md. Sadek Ahmed, Md. Fukrul Karim, Muhammad Ansar Uddin, A.K.M. Masud and Md. Masudur Rahman Mollah before performing the targeted survey for collecting primary data to carry out the research work.

3.4.3 Questionnaire Administer

Two sets of questionnaire have been prepared for collecting primary data through questionnaire survey to perform the stipulated research work. The researcher under the direct supervision of Dr. Md. Zohurul Islam has administered both sets of questionnaire.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is where the researcher continually reflects on collected data, thus moving deeper for understanding and representing the data, deriving an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell 2003:190). The essence of this study is to convert large quantities of data into condensed forms to facilitate an easy interpretation and understanding for the readers. In this study, the obtained data has been analyzed through the quantitative method. After getting the data collected through Questionnaire Survey, they will be categorized and analyzed by using statistical tools like SPSS, MS-Excel and other arithmetic methods of data analysis available and viable. In some cases, to present the findings of data, graphic manner can be used with the aid of charts and tablature presentation.

3.6 Limitations of the study

The study is expected to be based on empirical data from the existing BCS officers and the BCS candidates. The desired number of BCS officers coming from different cadres is not available in one area. Due to time and resource constraints, it is not possible to cover all cadres for collecting data. Nevertheless, within the stipulated time this study has tried to cover the maximum number of cadres. On the other hand, most of the BCS candidates are selected from the City of Dhaka. Not time and not even resource allows covering the whole country for data collection for this particular study.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the survey data and analyses them in accordance with the research objectives and given appropriate arguments with findings. It also provides a comparative study between the findings of the present research and those of other relevant researches under the title of discussion. The aim of this chapter is to convert large quantities of data into condensed forms to facilitate an easy interpretation and understanding for readers.

4.1 Respondents' Particulars

There are two categories of respondents: existing BCS officers and BCS candidates. Respondents have been selected based on availability. Different particulars of the respondents, especially gender, cadres, educational qualification, and batches of BCS have been considered for this study.

4.1.1 Particulars of the existing BCS officers (respondents)

4.1.1.1 Gender of the respondent BCS officers

In the category of existing BCS officers, 78% of the respondents are males and 22% are females (see figure-1).

Figure-1: Percentage of respondent officers' gender

female 22%

male 78%
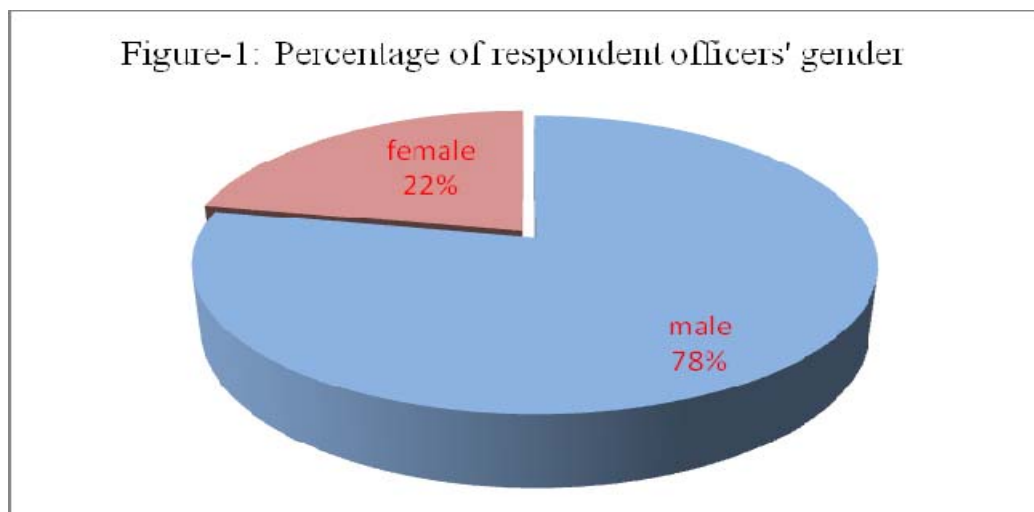
4.1.1.2 Educational qualifications of the respondent BCS officers

Among the respondents of this category, 90% officers have Master's degree, and the rest 10% officers have Graduation degree (see figure-2).

Figure-2: Percentage of respondent officers' education
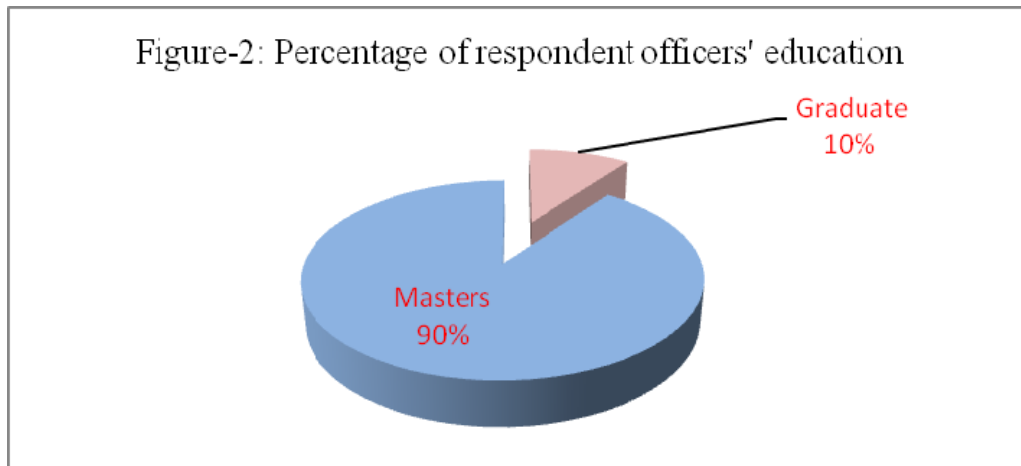
4.1.1.3 Cadres of the respondent BCS officers

Respondents of the existing officer category have been selected both from general and professional cadres based on availability among different cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS). 24% officers are from BCS (Administration) cadre, 30% from BCS (Information) cadre, 10% from BCS (Education) cadre, 6% from BCS (Agriculture) cadre, 6% from BCS (Economic) cadre, 4% from BCS (Taxation) cadre, 4% from BCS (Police) cadre, 8% from BCS (Cooperative) cadre, and the rest 8% respondents from other cadres (see figure-3).

Figure-3: Percentage of respondent officers' cadres
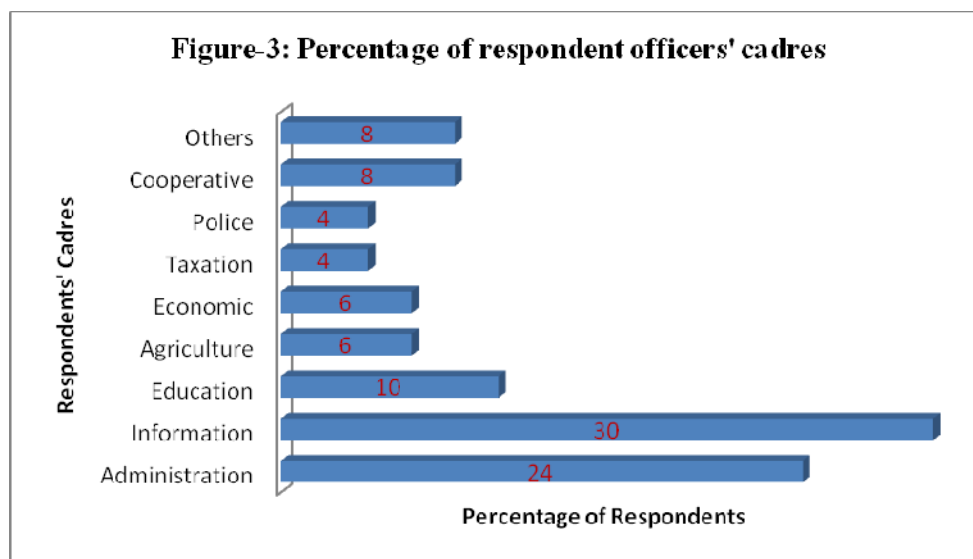
4.1.1.4 Batches of the respondent BCS officers

Existing BCS officers have been selected from different batches of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS): they are from 31st BCS to 9th BCS. Among them, 4% respondent officers are from 31st BCS, 4% from 28th BCS, 14% from 27th BCS, 16% from 25th BCS, 28% from 24th BCS, 6% from 22nd BCS, 10% from 21st BCS, 14% from 27th BCS, 4% from 18th BCS, and 14% from others batches of BCS (see figure-4).

Figure-4: Batch of respondent BCS officers

	31st	28th	27th	25th	24th	22nd	21st	18th	others
■ Percent	4	4	14	16	28	6	10	4	14
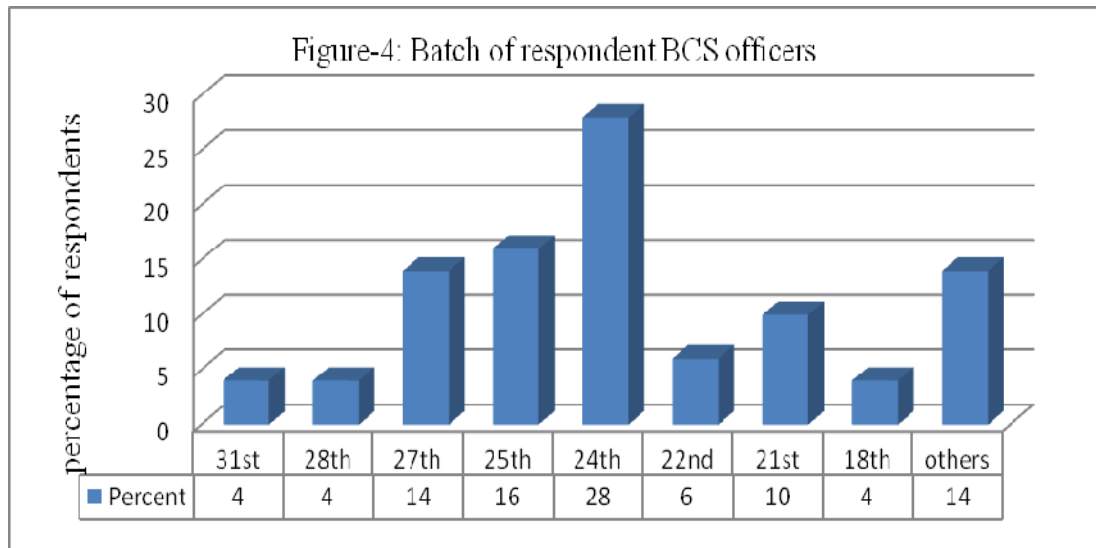
4.1.2 Particulars of the BCS candidates (respondents)

4.1.2.1 Gender of the respondent BCS candidates

BCS candidates who are eligible for BCS examination is another category of respondents. In BCS candidate category, 74% respondents are males and 26% are females (see figure-5).

Figure-5: Percentage of respondent BCS candidates' gender

Female 26%

Male 74%
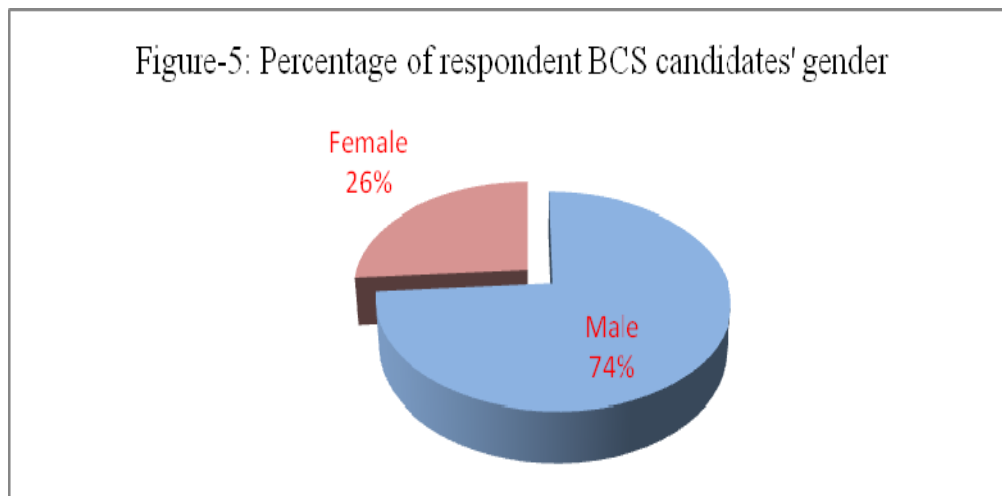
4.1.2.2 Educational qualifications of the respondent BCS candidates

Among the respondents of BCS candidate category, 56% respondents have Master's degree and 44% Graduation degree (see figure-6).

Figure-6: Percentage of respondents BCS candidates' education
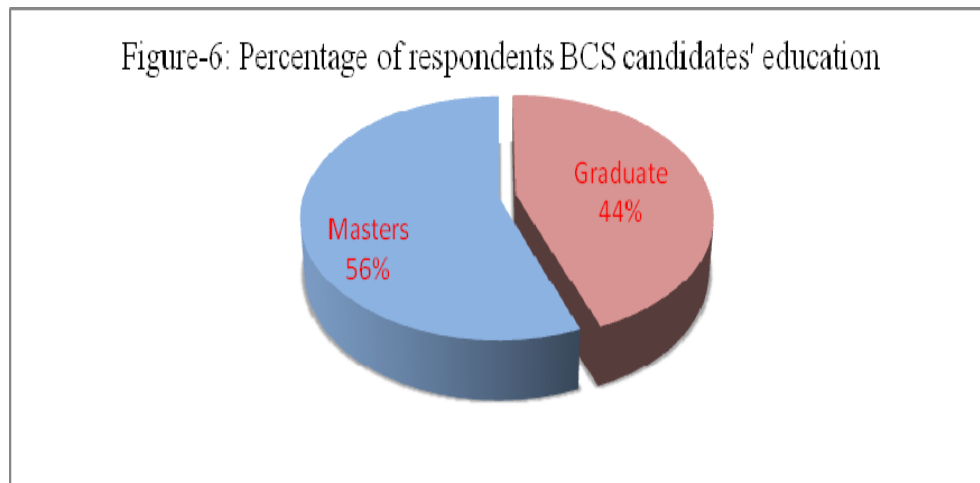
4.2 Satisfaction level of the respondents on the existing selection process

The satisfaction level of the respondents about the existing selection process of BCS for the recruitment of officers in Bangladesh Civil Service has been measured here through a scale which includes five levels of satisfaction characterized by- 'Not satisfied', 'Less satisfied', 'Fairly satisfied', 'Satisfied', and 'Highly satisfied'.

4.2.1 Satisfaction level of existing BCS officers

Respondents of existing BCS officer category from different cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service expressed their opinion regarding the existing selection process of BCS for the recruitment of officers in Bangladesh Civil Service. Among the existing BCS officers, 28% respondents are not satisfied, 34% less satisfied, 24% fairly satisfied, 14% satisfied, and none of the respondents is highly satisfied (see figure-7). This result indicates that only a few percentages of respondents are satisfied with the existing selection process of BCS whereas most of the respondents are below the desired level of satisfaction- 58% of them are poorly satisfied, and a significant percentage of respondents are completely dissatisfied (termed as 'not satisfied' in the designed measuring scale of satisfaction level).

4.2.2 Satisfaction level of the BCS candidates

Respondents of BCS candidates' category who are eligible to sit in BCS examination also expressed their opinions on the existing selection process of BCS. Among the respondents of this category, 51% respondents are not satisfied, 34% less satisfied, 12% fairly satisfied, 3% satisfied, and none of the respondents is highly satisfied (see figure-7). This indicates that only a very few percentage of respondents are satisfied with the existing selection process of BCS, whereas most of the respondents are below the desired level of satisfaction. Half of the respondents of this category (51%) are completely dissatisfied (termed as 'not satisfied' in the designed measuring scale of satisfaction level), and 46% of respondents are poorly satisfied.
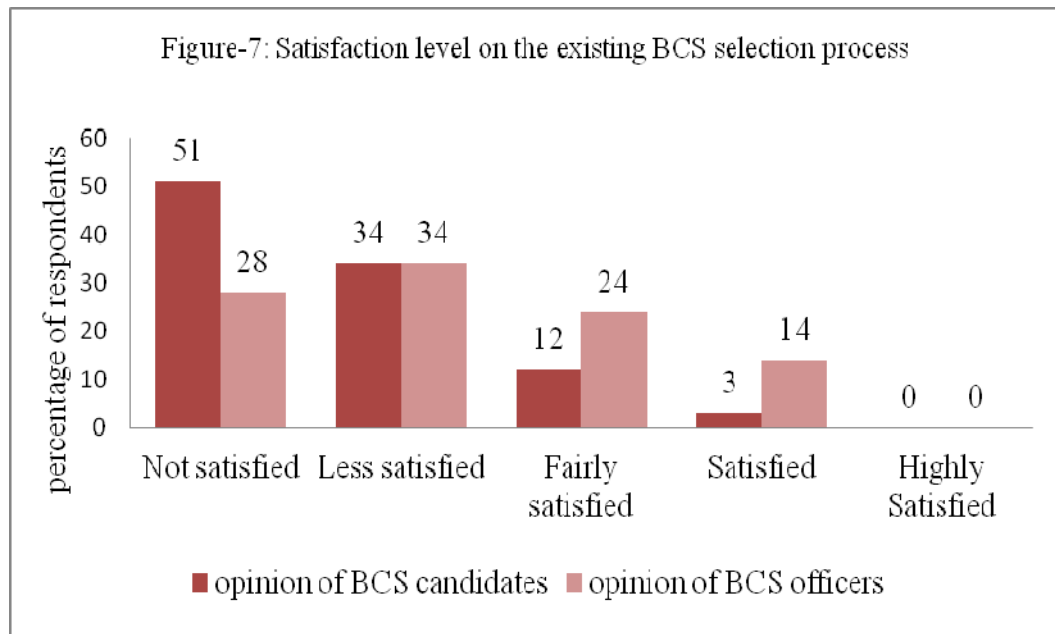
The data found from both the categories of respondents (existing BCS officers and BCS candidates) indicates that the satisfaction level of the respondents is below their desired level of satisfaction. Simply we can say that most of the respondents are not satisfied with the existing selection process for the recruitment of officers in Bangladesh Civil Service.

4.3 Problems ranking by respondents

There are five major problems identified for existing BCS selection process through the review of various literatures, like articles, research reports, books, and publications. These are reservation of seats (quota), lengthy examination system, political interference, corruption and irregularities, and excessive marking in the viva-voce. Respondents ranked the listed five problems as Problem-1, Problem-2, Problem-3, Problem-4, and Problem-5.

4.3.1 Ranking of problems by the existing BCS officers

As respondents of this study, the existing BCS officers of different cadres have ranked the listed five main problems identified through literature review as R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, and R-5. 'Reservation of Seats (Quota)' in the existing BCS officers selection process has been ranked as Problem-1 by 62% respondents of this category, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 6% respondents, as Problem-3 by 6% respondents, as Problem-4 by 14% respondents and as Problem-5 by 12% respondents. Among the respondents of this category, 14% respondents ranked 'Lengthy exam system' for the existing BCS officers selection process as Problem-1, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 18% respondents, as Problem-3 by 14% respondents, as Problem-4 by 12% respondents, and as Problem-5 by 42% respondents. 'Political Interference' in the existing officers selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service has been ranked as Problem-1 by 2% respondents of this category, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 36% respondents, as Problem-3 by 28% respondents, as Problem-4 by 24% respondents, and as Problem-5 by 10% respondents. 12% respondents of this category ranked 'Corruption and Irregularities' in BCS officers selection process as Problem-1, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 10% respondents, as Problem-3 by 40% respondents, as Problem-4 by 24% respondents, and as Problem-5 by 14% respondents. Among the respondents of the existing BCS officers category, 10% BCS officers treated 'Excess marks in Viva-voce' for the officers selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service as Problem-1, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 30% officers, as Problem-3 by 12% officers, as Problem-4 by 26% officers, and as Problem-5 by 22% respondent BCS officers from different cadres (see figure-8). This indicates that around two-thirds of the respondent officers think- 'Reservation of Seats (Quota) is

31

the biggest problem of BCS officer selection process, and 'Lengthy exam system', 'Corruption and Irregularities', and 'Excess marks in Viva-voce' have also a significant role against the selection process for the recruitment of quality officers in Bangladesh Civil Service.

Figure-8: Ranking of problems by the existing BCS officers

	Reservation of seats	Lengthy exam system	Political interference	Corruption & irregularities	Excess of marks in viva-voce
R-5	12	42	10	14	22
R-4	14	12	24	24	26
R-3	6	14	28	40	12
R-2	6	18	36	10	30
R-1	62	14	2	12	10
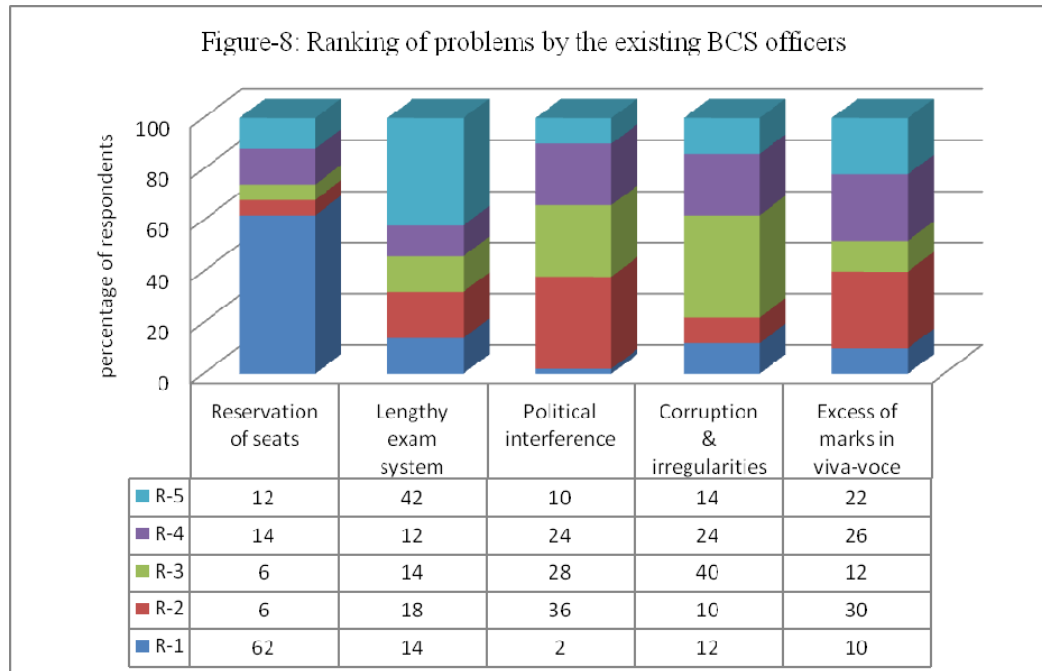
4.3.2 Ranking of problems by the BCS candidates

Ranking of problems for the BCS officers' selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service has been done also by the BCS candidates who are eligible for sitting in BCS examination. 72% respondents of this category ranked the 'Reservation of Seats (Quota)' as Problem-1, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 13% respondents, as Problem-3 by 7% respondents, as Problem-4 by 3% respondents, and as Problem-5 by 5% respondents. 13% respondents treated the 'Lengthy exam system' as Problem-1, which is followed by presenting it as Problem-2 by another 13% respondents, as Problem-3 by 10% BCS candidates, as Problem-4 by 26% respondents and as Problem-5 by 38% of them. 'Political Interference' has been ranked as Problem-1 by 7% respondents of this category, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 52% BCS candidates, as Problem-3 by 15% of them, as Problem-4 by another 15% respondents, and as Problem-5 by 11% respondents. 2% respondents of this category ranked 'Corruption and Irregularities' in BCS officer selection process as Problem-1, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 11%

respondents, as Problem-3 by 56% of them, as Problem-4 by 21% BCS candidates, and as Problem-5 by 10% respondent BCS candidates. Among the respondents of existing BCS officer category, 7% BCS officers has treated 'Excess marks in Viva-voce' for the officers selection process in BCS as Problem-1, which is followed by ranking it as Problem-2 by 10% candidates, as Problem-3 by 13% candidates, as Problem-4 by 34% of them, and as Problem-5 by 36% respondent BCS candidates. This indicates that around three-fourths of the respondent candidates (72%) think that 'Reservation of Seats (Quota)' is the biggest problem on the BCS officers selection process for the recruitment of quality officers and 'Lengthy exam system' has been ranked in the second position (13%) of the measuring scale as a problem of BCS officers selection process. Besides, 52% BCS candidates ranked the 'Political Interference' as Problem-2, and 56% respondents showed the 'Corruption and Irregularities' as Problem-3 which indicates that these two problems also interrupt the BCS officers selection process significantly.

Figure-9: Ranking of problems by BCS cadidates

	Reservation of seats	Lengthy exam system	Political interference	Corruption & irregularities	Exxcess of marks in viva-voce
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Rank-5	4.92	37.71	11.48	9.84	36.06
Rank-4	3.27	26.23	14.75	21.31	34.43
Rank-3	6.56	9.84	14.75	55.74	13.11
Rank-2	13.11	13.11	52.46	11.47	9.84
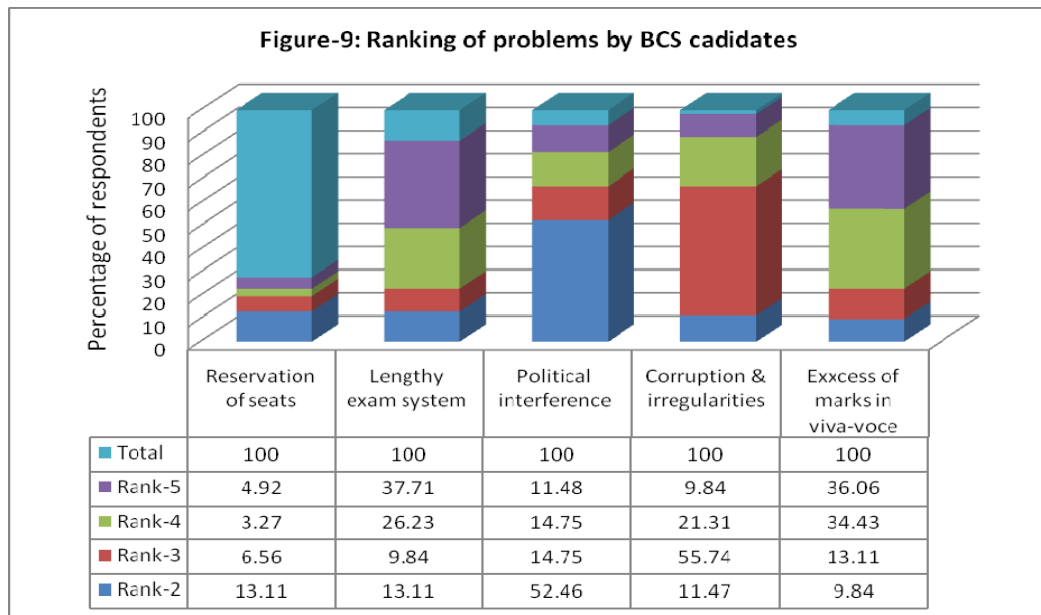
By summarizing the above-mentioned data collected both from the opinion made by the existing BCS officers and the BCS candidates, we can say that 'Reservation of Seats (Quota)' is the biggest problem in the BCS officers selection process towards the recruitment of quality officers in Bangladesh Civil Service, and 'lengthy exam system' has also been treated as the second largest problem of the BCS officers

selection process although the other problems listed here have also got a significant role against the quality officer recruitment in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS).

4.4 Duration of BCS officer selection process

4.4.1 Existing duration of selection process

Literature review of this study presents the existing BCS selection process as a lengthy system. This study has surveyed the time spent for the BCS examination of respondent BCS officers from different cadres and different batches of BCS. 74% respondent officers said that 2 to 3 years time is spent for the officer selection process in case of their respective BCS examination. Time spent for 20% respondents is above 3 years, and for 6% respondents it is below 2 years in their respective BCS examination (see figure-10). This indicates that most of the respondents used 2 to 3 years in their BCS examinations i.e. the average range of time used for the existing BCS officers selection procedure is 2 to 3 years.

Figurte-10: Time spent by the respondent officers in the BCS exam

	below 2 years	2-3years	above 3 years
■ Percent	6	74	20
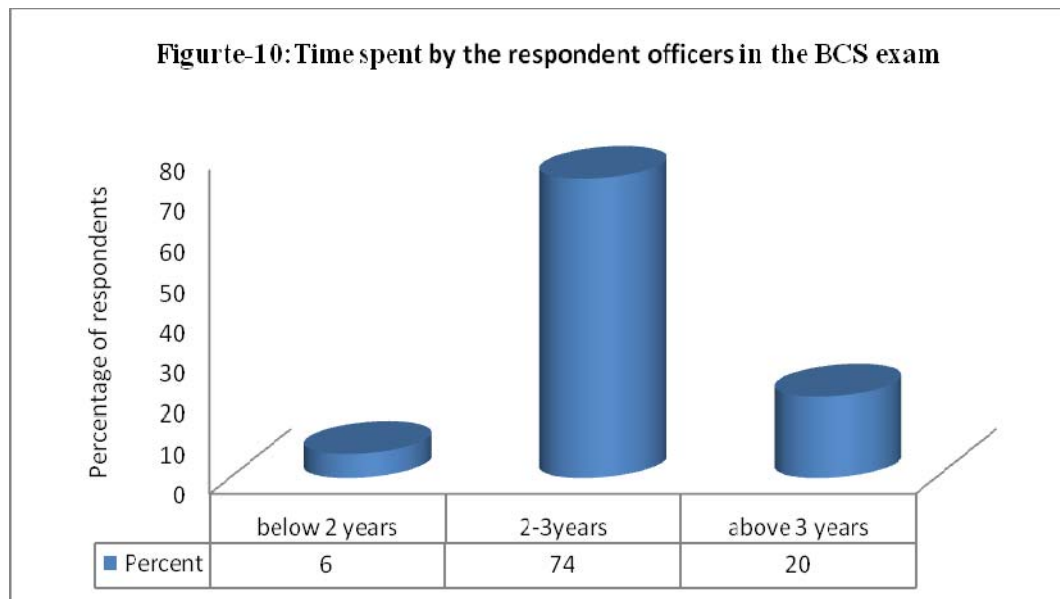
4.4.2 Opinions of BCS officers regarding the existing duration of selection process

100% respondents of the BCS officers category provided their opinions regarding the existing duration   of selection process for the recruitment of BCS officers in Bangladesh Civil Service (see figure-11). They think that such duration of BCS officers selection process is not acceptable which indicates that the existing selection process is lengthy and time- consuming.

Figure-11:Opinions of BCS officers on the time spent in the BCS examination

Not acceptable 100%
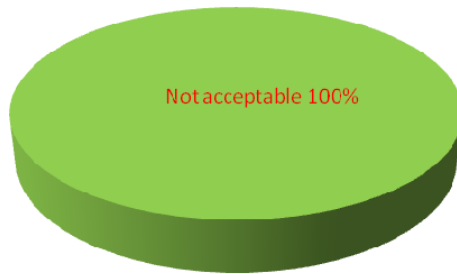
4.4.3 Opinions of BCS candidates on the existing duration of the selection process

In this study, satisfaction level of BCS candidates regarding the existing duration of BCS officer selection procedure has been measured through a scale characterized by- 'Not lengthy',' Less lengthy',' Fairly lengthy',' Lengthy' and 'Too much lengthy'. 49% respondents of this category think that the selection process as 'Too much lengthy' while 46% of them think that it is 'Lengthy' system. This is followed by thinking it as ' Fairly lengthy' by 2% respondents, and as' Less lengthy' by 3% of them; none of the respondents thinks that it is a 'Not lengthy' process. It indicates that almost all the respondents (95%) of this category consider the BCS officer selection procedure as a lengthy process.

Figure-12:Satisfaction level of BCS candidates on the existing duration of BCS officer selection process
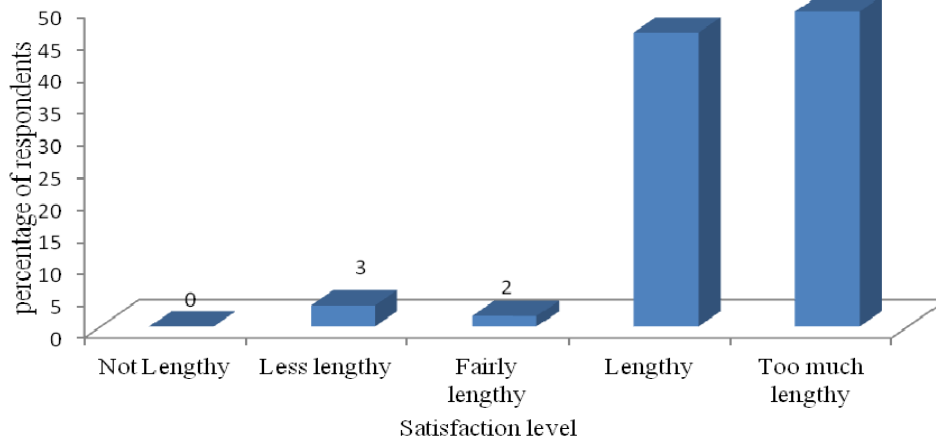
4.4.4 Optimum duration for BCS officer selection process

This study also covers the information about the optimum duration for BCS officer selection process proposed by the respondents. 41% respondents of BCS candidate category think that the optimum time for BCS officer selection procedure should be between 6 to 10 months; 54% of them think that it should be 1 year; the rest 5% respondents propose 1 to 1.5 years; and, none of the respondents thinks it should be above 1.5 years for this (see figure-13). It indicates that almost all the respondents (95%) of this category think that the optimum time for officer selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service should be a period within one year.

Among the respondents of BCS officers category, 34% respondents think that the optimum time for BCS officer selection procedure should be 6 to 10 months; 62% of them think that it should be 1 year; the rest 4% respondents propose 1 to 1.5 years; and, none of the respondents thinks it should be above 1.5 years for this purpose (see figure-13). This indicates that almost all the respondents (96%) want that the optimum time for the BCS officers selection procedure should be a period within one year.

Figure-13: Optimum time for BCS selection process

	6 to 10 months	1 year	1-1.5 year	above 1.5 year
Opinions of BCS candidates	40.98	54.1	4.92	0
Opinions of BCS officers	34	62	4	0
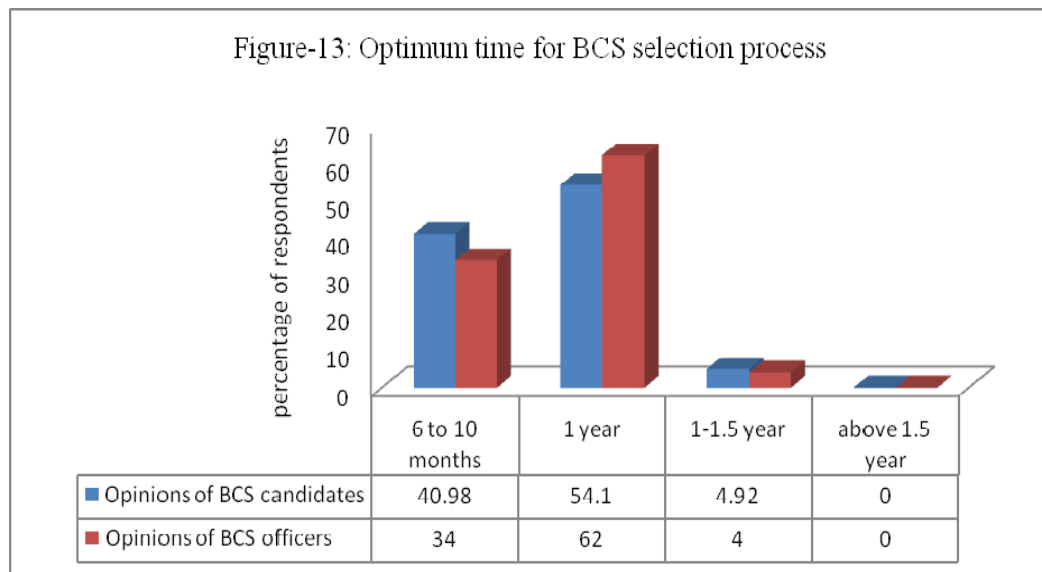
By summarizing the above-mentioned data (see figure-13) getting both from the opinions of the BCS candidates and the existing BCS officers, we can say that most of the respondents think - the optimum time for the BCS officer selection process should be a period within one year and, of course, it should not be above one year.

4.5 Opinions of the respondents regarding the existing BCS examination system

4.5.1 Opinions of the respondents on the Preliminary Examination

98% respondents from BCS candidates' category think that the Preliminary Examination in BCS officer selection process should be continued and the rest 2% respondents of this category thinks that it should not be continued. On the other hand, among the respondents of BCS officer category, 92% respondents think that the Preliminary Examination for making a short list of candidates should be continued and rest 8% of them think that it should not be continued (see figure-14). Both categories of respondents provide the same observation on the Preliminary Examination. Almost all the respondents think that the Preliminary Examination in the BCS officer selection process should be continued.

Figure-14: Opinions of respondents on Preliminary Exam
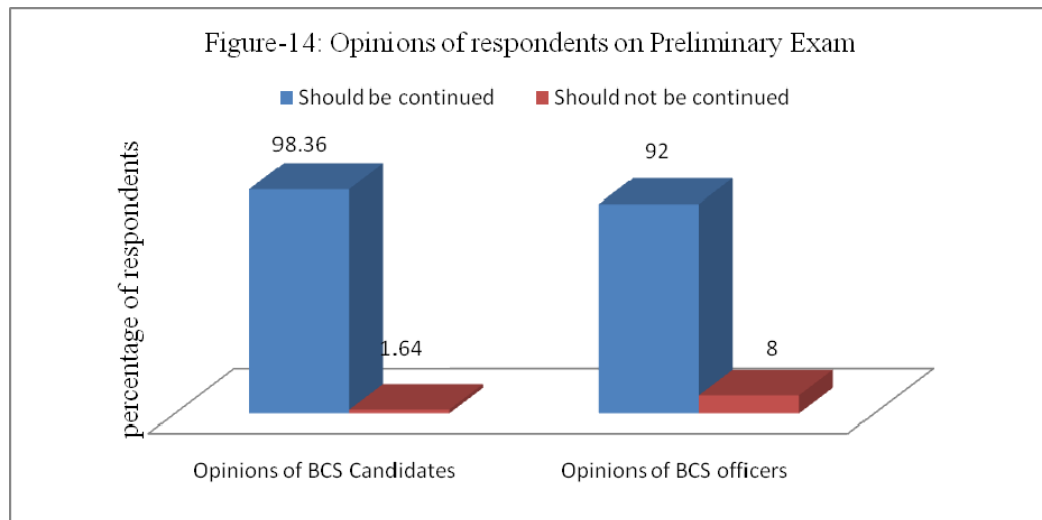
4.5.2 Opinions of respondents on written examination curriculum

43% respondents of BCS candidate category think that BCS written examination curriculum should be shortened; and, 42% of them think that it should be modified. 13% of the respondents consider it as an acceptable curriculum; and, the rest 2% think that it should be extended. Among the respondents of the BCS officers category, 56% respondent officers think that it should be modified; and 14% of them think that it should be shortened; 30% BCS officers take it as an acceptable one; and none of the respondents is in favor of the extension of BCS written curriculum(see figure-15). By combining the above-mentioned data collected from both the categories of

respondents, it can now be summarized that the demand is in favor of the modification of the curriculum of the written examination.

Figure-15: Opinions on the curriculum of the written exam

	Acceptable	Should shorten	Should extend	Should modify
■ Opinions of BCS candidates	13.11	42.62	1.64	42.62
■ Opinions of BCS officers	30	14	0	56
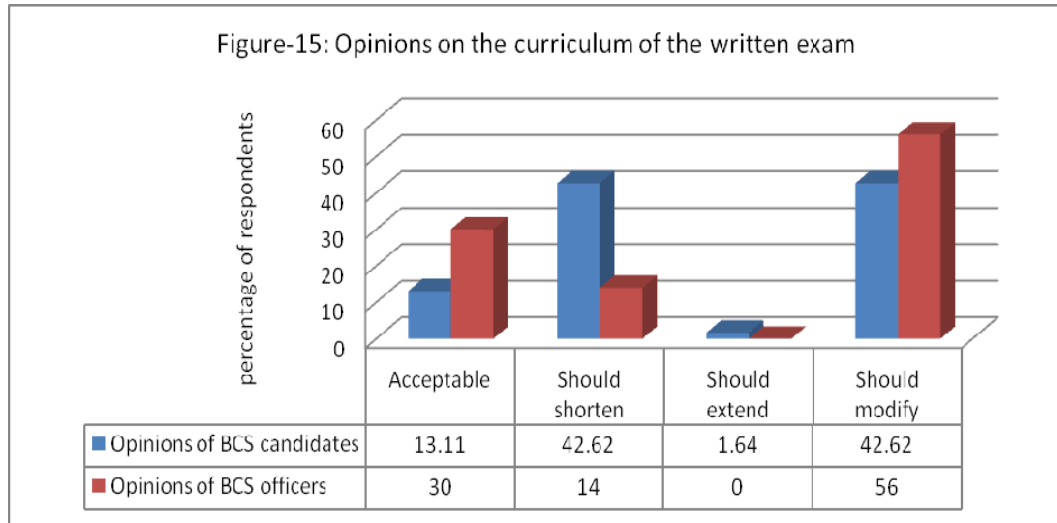
4.5.3 Marks proposed for written examination

44% BCS candidates proposed 400-600 marks; 13% candidates proposed 601-800 marks; 40% of them proposed 801-1000 marks; and, only 3% respondents of this category proposed above 1000 marks for BCS written examination. On the other hand, among the respondents of BCS officers category 18% respondent officers proposed 400-600 marks; 13% officer proposed 601-800 marks whereas 68% of them proposed 801-1000 marks; and, none of the respondent officers proposed above 1000 marks for BCS written examination (see figure-16). The above-mentioned data indicates that the major portion of respondents suggested 800-1000 marks for BCS written examination.

Figure-16: Marks proposed for the written exam

	400-600 marks	601-800 marks	801-1000 marks	above 1000 marks
■ Opinions of Candidates	44	13	40	3
■ Opinions of Officers	18	14	68	0
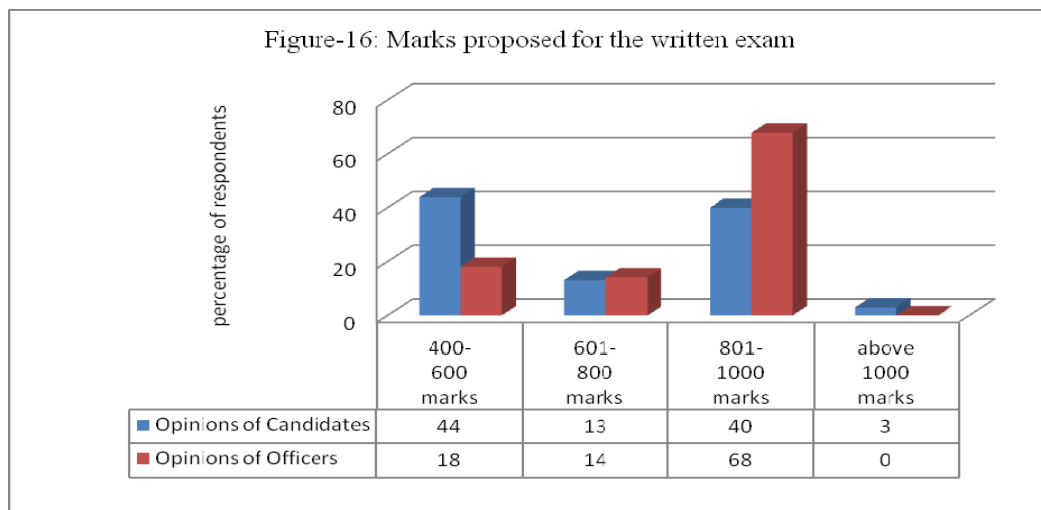
4.5.4 Marks proposed for viva-voce

71% BCS candidates proposed 100 marks, 23% of them proposed 50 marks, 3% respondents proposed 200 marks, and another 3% candidates proposed 201-300 marks for viva-voce in BCS officers selection process. On the other hand, among the respondents from the existing BCS officers category, 70% officers proposed 100 marks, 20% proposed 50 marks, 6% proposed 200 marks, and another 4% candidates proposed 201-300 marks for viva-voce (see figure-17).This indicates that most of the respondents from both the categories suggested 100 marks for viva-voce in BCS officers selection process.

Figure-17: Marks proposed for viva-voce

	50 marks	100 marks	200 marks	201-300 marks
BCS candidates' opinions	23	71	3	3
BCS officers' opinions	20	70	6	4
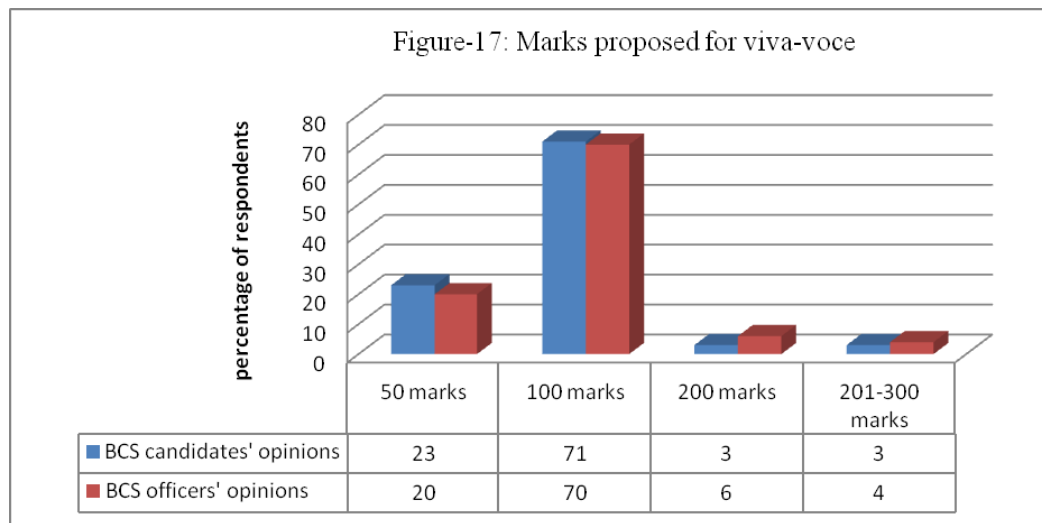
4.6 Status of merit-based selection in BCS

There are a number of factors that have been identified through the review of literature for this study. Among them, reservation of seats (Quota), political interference, and corruption & irregularities have drawn special attention. Literature shows that these factors are affecting the merit-based selection process of BCS. To examine the dimension of these factors, this study covers the opinions of respondents in this regard.

4.6.1 Opinions of the respondents on the merit-based selection in BCS

90% respondents of BCS candidate category think that the existing officer selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service is not merit-based while the rest 10% of them consider it as merit-based process. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officer category, 96% respondents think that the BCS officer selection process is not merit-based and only 4% of them take it as a merit-based process (see figure-18). This

indicates that most of the respondents from both the categories think that the existing officer selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service is not merit-based.

Figure-18: Opinions of respondents on merit-based selection

	opinions of candidates	opinions of officers
YES	10	4
NO	90	96
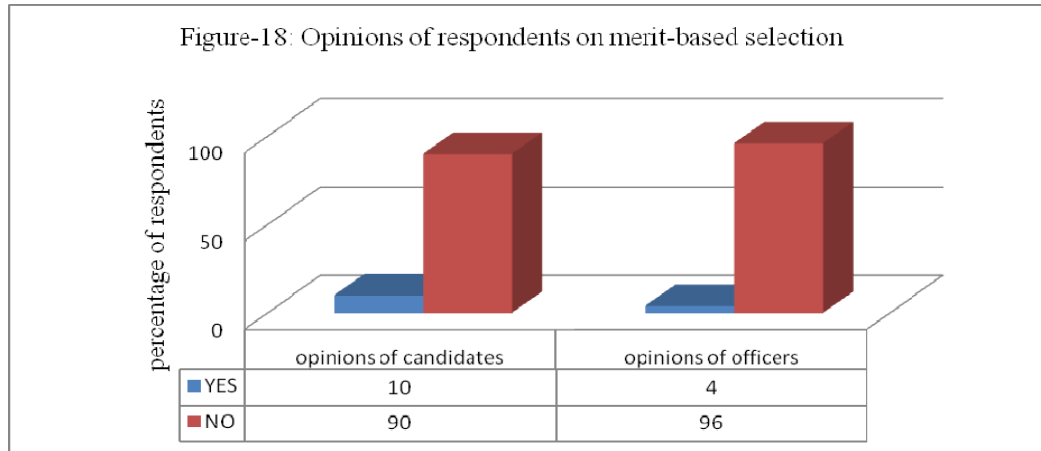
4.6.2 Ranking of barriers to merit by respondents

4.6.2.1 Ranking of barriers to merit by BCS candidates

80% BCS candidates have ranked the 'Quota (reservation of seats)' as Barrier-1, which is followed by the act of ranking it as Barrier-2 by 2% respondents and as Barrier-3 by 8% of them. 'Corruption' has been ranked as Barrier-1 by 7% respondents, which is followed by the act of ranking it as Barrier-2 by 41% respondents of this category, and as Barrier-3 by 42% of them. 3% respondents from the BCS candidates have ranked 'Political interference' as Barrier-1, which is followed by the act of ranking it as Barrier-2 by 48% BCS candidates, and as Barrier-3 by 39% respondents. 10% respondents from this category have shown no comments about it (see figure-19). This indicates that most of the respondents have identified 'Quota (reservation of seats)' as the main barrier to the merit-based officer selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS).

Figure-19: Ranking of barriers to merit by the BCS candidates

	rank-1	rank-2	rank-3	No comment
Political intrference	3	48	39	10
Corruption	7	41	42	10
Quota	80	2	8	10

40
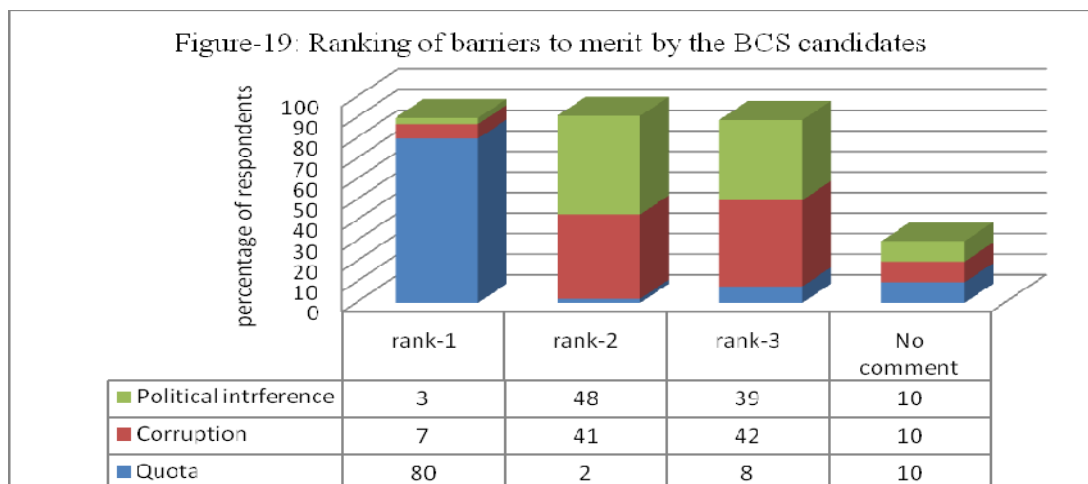
4.6.2.2 Ranking of barriers to merit by the existing BCS officers

70% BCS officers have ranked the 'Quota (reservation of seats)' as Barrier-1, which is followed by the act of ranking it as Barrier-2 by 6% respondents, and as Barrier-3 by 20% of them. 'Corruption' has been ranked as Barrier-1 by 12% respondents, which is followed by the act of ranking it as Barrier-2 by 46% respondents of this category, and as Barrier-3 by 38% of them. 14% respondents BCS officers have ranked 'Political interference' as Barrier-1, which is followed by the act of ranking it as Barrier-2 by 44% BCS candidates, and as Barrier-3 by 38% respondents. 4% respondents from this category have pressed no comment about it (see figure-20). This indicates that most of the respondents have considered 'Quota (reservation of seats)' as the main barrier to the merit-based officer selection process in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS).

Figure-20: Ranking of barriers to merit by the BCS officers

	rank-1	rank-2	rank-3	No comment
Political interference	14	44	38	4
Corruption	12	46	38	4
Quota	70	6	20	4
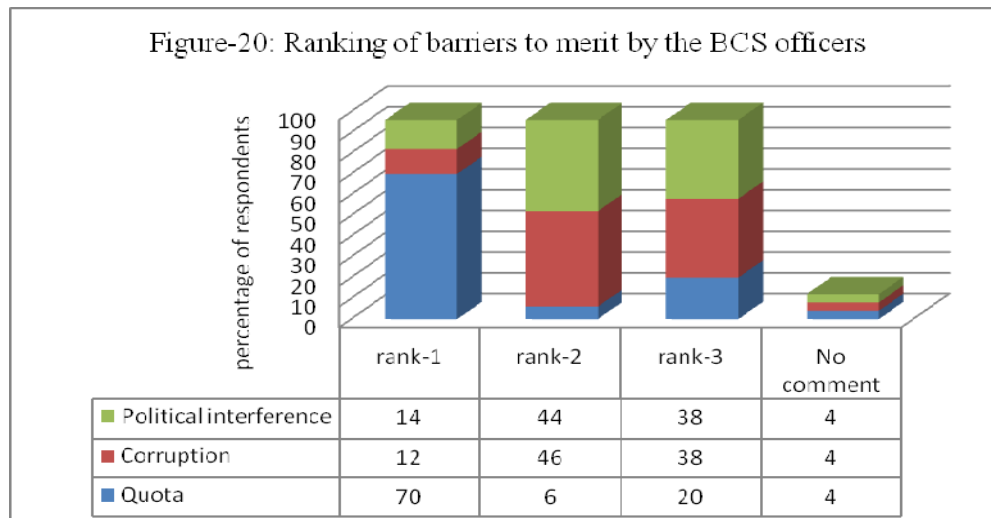
By summarizing the data collected from both the categories of respondents mentioned in section 4.6.2.1 & 4.6.2.2, we can now say that the existing quota system in the BCS officers' selection process is the main barrier to recruit quality officers in Bangladesh Civil Service.

4.7 Recommendations made by the respondents on the distribution of quota

4.7.1 Recommendations on the freedom fighters quota

90% respondents from the BCS candidates' category proposed 1-10% reserve posts (quota); 5% proposed 11-20% quota; and another 5% respondents proposed no reserve posts for the wards of freedom fighters. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officer category, 70% respondents proposed 1-10% quota; 8% officers proposed 11-20% quota; 2% officers proposed 21-30% quota; and 20% respondents

proposed no reserve posts (quota) for the wards of the freedom fighters (see figure-21). This shows results that most of the respondents suggested around 10% reserve posts for the wards of the freedom fighters.

Figure-21: Recommendations made on the freedom fighters Quota

	0%	1-10%	11-20%	21-30%
opinions of BCS candidates	5	90	5	0
opinions of BCS officers	20	70	8	2
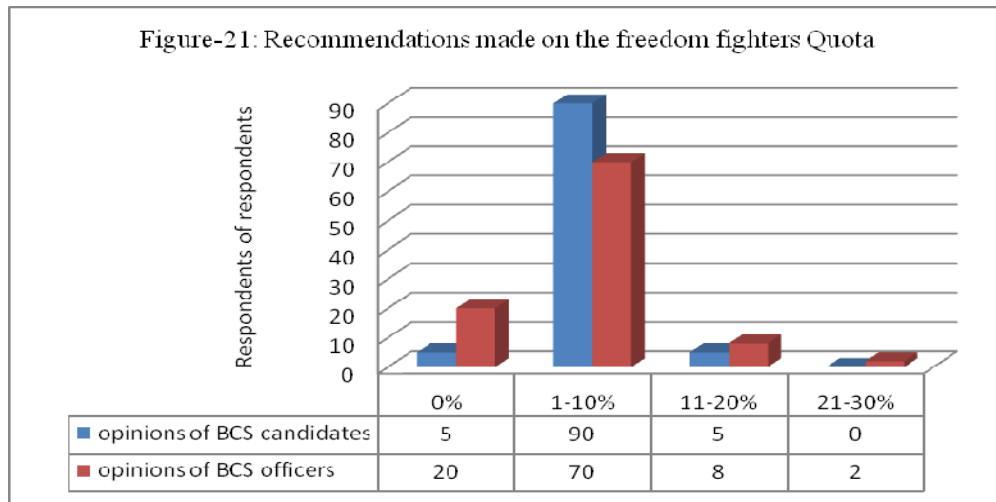
4.7.2 Recommendations made on the female quota

56% respondents of BCS candidate category proposed 1-5% reserve posts (quota); 33% proposed 6-10% quota; 3% proposed 11-20% quota; and the rest 8% respondents proposed no reserve posts for females. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officer category, 44% respondents proposed 1-5% quota; 34% officers proposed 6-10% quota; 4% officers proposed 11-20% quota; and, 18% respondents of this category proposed no reserve posts (quota) for females (see fiigure-22). The above-mentioned data indicates that most of the respondents suggested around 5% reserve posts for female candidates.

Figure-22: Recommendations made on the female quota

	0%	1-5%	6-10%	11-20%
Opinions of BCS candidates	8	56	33	3
Opinions of BCS officers	18	44	34	4

42

4.7.3 Recommendations made on the Tribal Quota

80% respondents from the BCS candidate category demanded 1-3% quota; 15% respondents demanded 4-5% quota; and 5% BCS candidates demanded no reserve post for the tribal candidates. In the category of existing BCS officers, 42% respondents demanded 1-3% reserve posts; 36% officers suggested 4-5% quota; and, 22% respondent officers demanded no reserve posts for the tribal (see figure-23). This indicates that most of the respondents recommended maximum 3% reserve posts for the tribal candidates.

Figure-23: Recommendations made on the Tribal Quota

	0%	1-3%	4-5%
Opinions of BCS candidates	5	80	15
Opinions of BCS officers	22	42	36

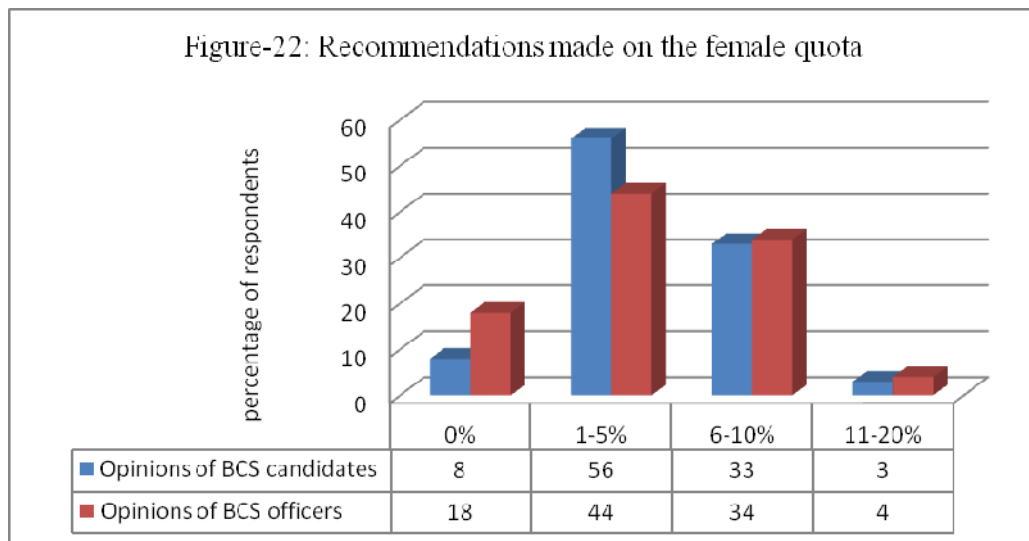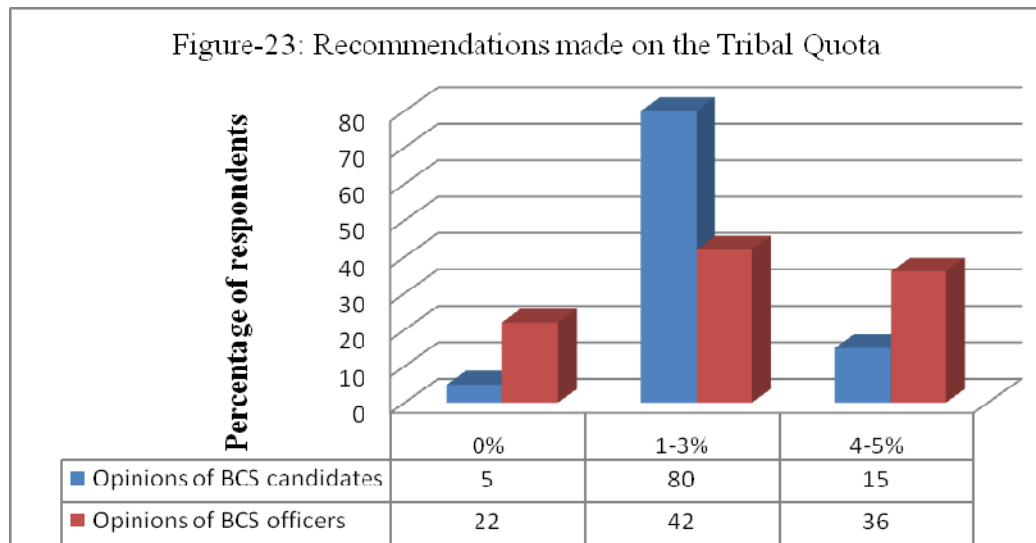### 4.7.4 Recommendations made on the Quota for the physically handicapped applicants

66% respondents from the BCS candidate category proposed 1% reserve posts (quota); 15% candidates proposed 2-3% quota; 16% of respondents proposed 4-5% quota; and, 3% of them proposed no reserve posts for the physically-handicapped applicants. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officers category, 50% respondents proposed 1% quota; 10% officers proposed 2-3% quota; 2% officers proposed 4-5% quota; and, 38% respondents of this category proposed no reserve posts (quota) for the physically-challenged people (see figure-24). The above-mentioned data collected from both the categories of respondents' show that most of the respondents' recommended around 1% reserve posts (quota) for the physically handicapped applicants.

Figure-24: Recommendations made on the quota for the physically handicapped

	0%	1%	2-3%	4-5%
Opinions of BCS candidates	3	66	15	16
Opinions of BCS officers	38	50	10	2
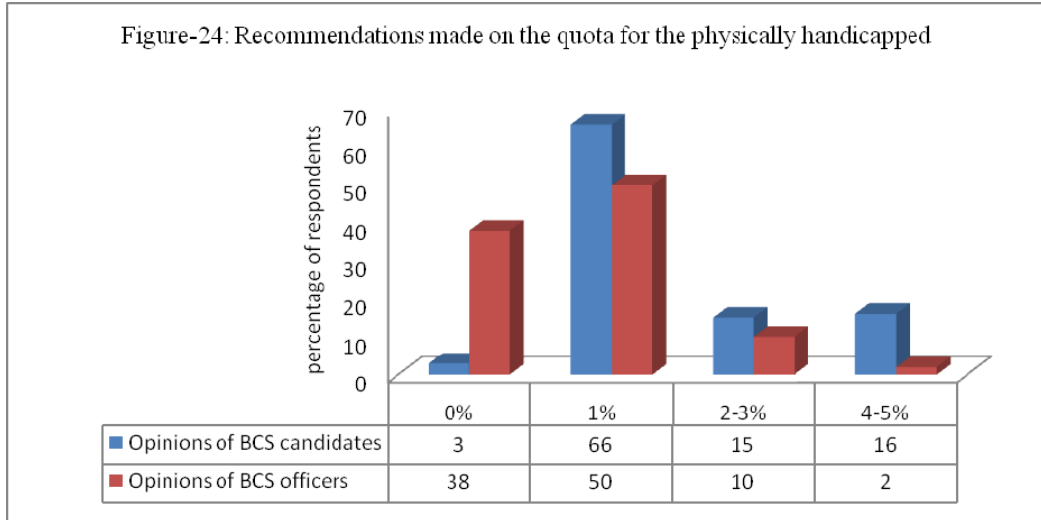
4.7.5 Recommendations made on the District Quota

39% respondents from the BCS candidates' category proposed 1-5% reserve posts (quota); another 39% of them proposed 6-10% reserve posts; 2% respondents proposed 11-20% reserve posts; and, the rest 20% respondents proposed no reserve posts for district-wise distribution. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officers category, 36% respondents proposed 1-5% quota; 22% officers proposed 6-10% quota; 12% officers proposed 11-20% quota; and, 30% respondents of this category proposed no reserve posts (quota) for district-wise distribution (see figure-25). By combining the data collected from both the categories of respondents, we see that a bigger portion of the respondents demanded reduction of the percentage of reserve posts in the district quota to around 5% along with the demand for no district quota that was proposed by a significant number of respondents.

Figure-25: Recommendations made on the District Quota

	0%	1-5%	6-10%	11-20%
opinions of BCS Candidates	20	39	39	2
opinions of BCS officers	30	36	22	12
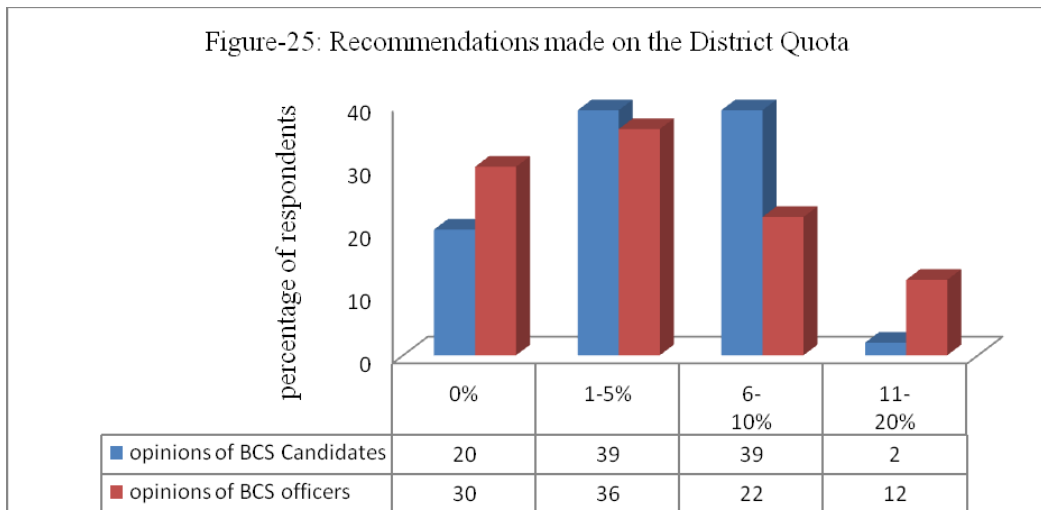
4.7.6 Recommendations made on the entire Quota system

Among the respondents from the BCS candidate category who are eligible to sit in the BCS examination, 5% BCS candidates proposed 1-10% posts from quota; 46% candidates proposed 11-20% posts from quota; 20% candidates proposed 21-30% posts from quota; 26% of them proposed 31-40% posts from quota; only 3% candidates proposed 41-50% posts from quota; and, none of the respondents of this category proposed above 50% quota in BCS. On the other hand, among the respondents from the existing BCS officers category 12% respondent officers proposed no reserve posts from any groups; 14% BCS officers proposed 1-10% posts from quota; 28% officers proposed 11-20% posts from quota; 20% of them proposed 21-30% posts from quota; 14% officers proposed 31-40% from quota; only 2% of them proposed 41-50% posts from quota; and, 10% respondents from this category proposed above 50% posts from quota in BCS (see figure-26). Both the categories of respondents have shown the same observation on the existing quota system for the recruitment of officers in Bangladesh Civil Service. Most of the respondents suggested below 30% reserve posts (quota) from different groups of people along with the demand for 11-20% quota that was proposed by the largest group of respondents.

Figure-26: Recommendations made by the respondents on the entire Quota system

	0%	1-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	above 50%
opnions of BCS Candidates	0	5	46	20	26	3	0
opinions of BCS officers	12	14	28	20	14	2	10
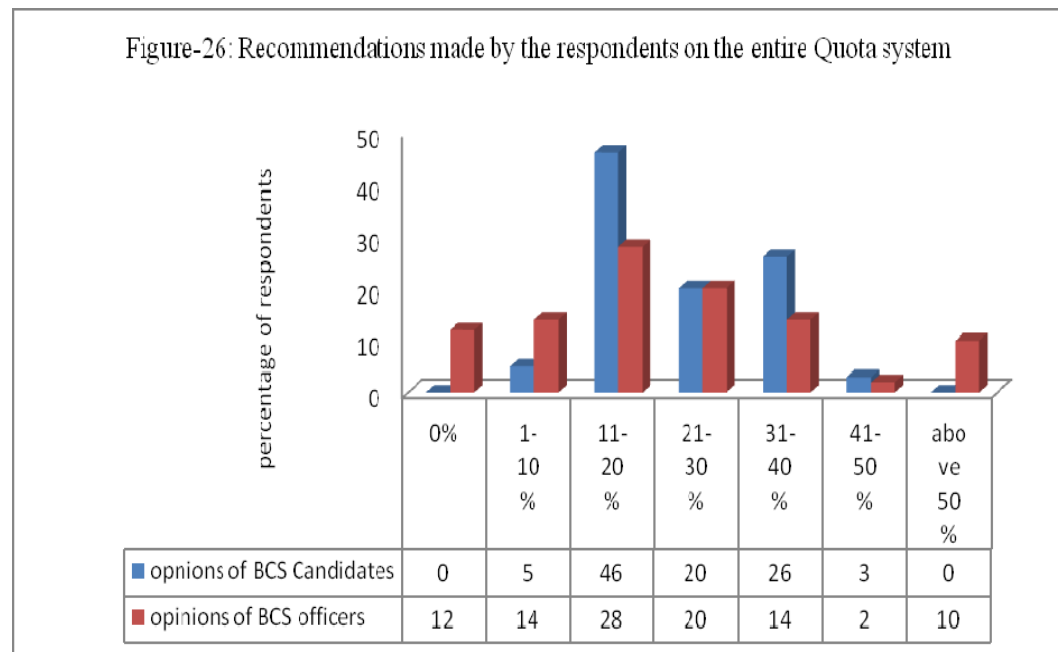
4.8 Opinions made by the respondents on the existing eligibility criteria

4.8.1 Satisfaction level of the respondents

In this study, satisfaction level of the respondents on the existing eligibility criteria for applicants has been characterized as 'Not satisfied', 'Less satisfied', 'Fairly satisfied', 'Satisfied', and 'Highly satisfied'. The existing eligibility criteria for applicants has been defined as 'Not satisfied' by 10% BCS candidates; as 'Less satisfied' by 2% candidates; as 'Fairly satisfied' by 11% of them; as 'Satisfied' by 74% respondent candidates; and, as 'Highly satisfied' by 3% respondents from this category. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officers category, 4% BCS officers termed it as 'Not satisfied'; 10% officers as 'Less satisfied'; 12% officers as 'Fairly satisfied'; 62% as 'Satisfied'; and, the rest 12% respondents from this category termed it as 'Highly satisfied' (see figure-27). This indicates that most of the respondents from both the categories are satisfied about the existing eligibility criteria for applicants.

Figure-27: Satisfaction level on the eligibility criteria for the BCS applicants

	Not satisfied	Less satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Satisfied	Highly satisfied
Opinions of BCS candidates	10	2	11	74	3
Opinions of BCS officers	4	10	12	62	12
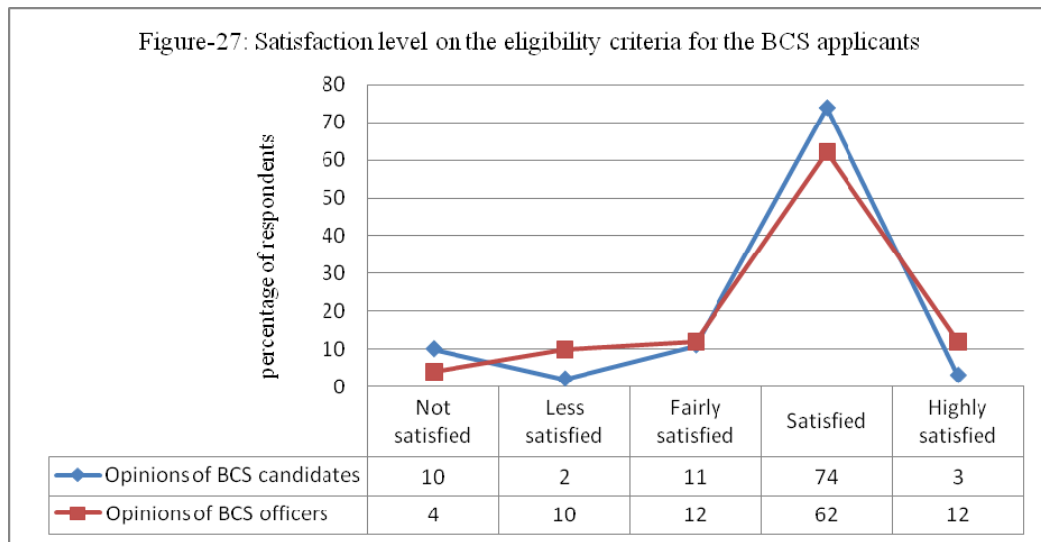
4.8.2 Opinions on the special consideration for age limit

In the existing eligibility criteria, a group of applicants (wards of the freedom fighters, doctors, engineers etc.) gets special consideration regarding the age limit for applying in BCS. This study covers the opinions of the respondents on this special age limit for applicants. Among the BCS candidates, 98% have put their opinion against the practice of special consideration on age limit, and the rest 2% have shown their opinions in favor of it. Among the respondents from the BCS officers' category, 90%

put their opinions against the practice of special age limit for applicants, and the rest 10% of them put their opinions in favor of it (see figure-28). This indicates that most of the respondents do not support the practice of special consideration on the age limit.

Figure-28: Opinions made on the special age limit
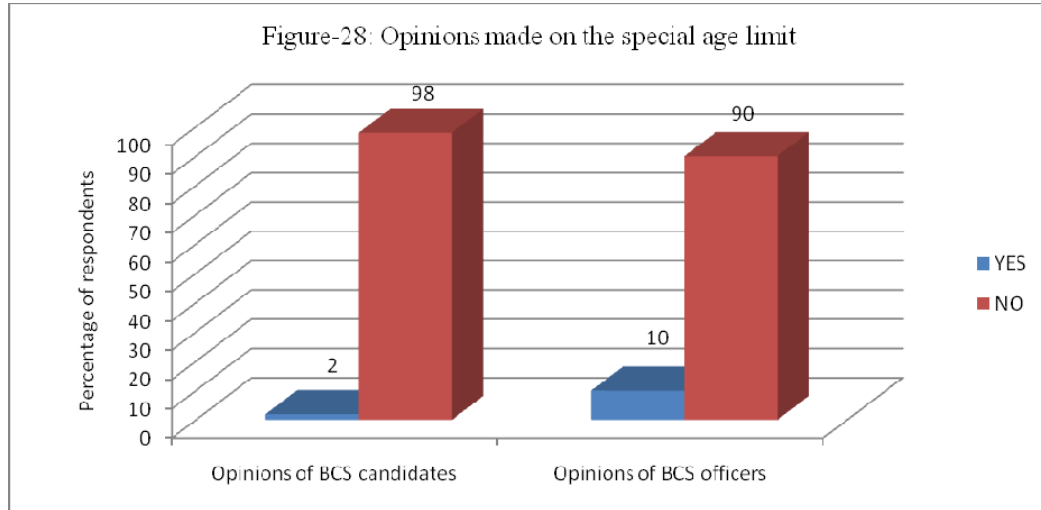
4.8.3 Opinion on the similar age limit for all

98% respondents from the BCS candidates' category put their opinions in favor of similar age limit for all applicants; but the rest 2% respondents expressed their opinions against it. Among the respondents from the existing BCS officers' category, 90% officers put their opinion in favor of similar age limit, and the rest 10% respondents put their opinions against similar age limit for all applicants (see figure-28). This indicates that most of the respondents support similar age limit in BCS for all applicants.

Figure-29: Opinions made on the similar age limit

	Opinions of BCS Candidates	Opinions of BCS Officers
YES	98	90
NO	2	10
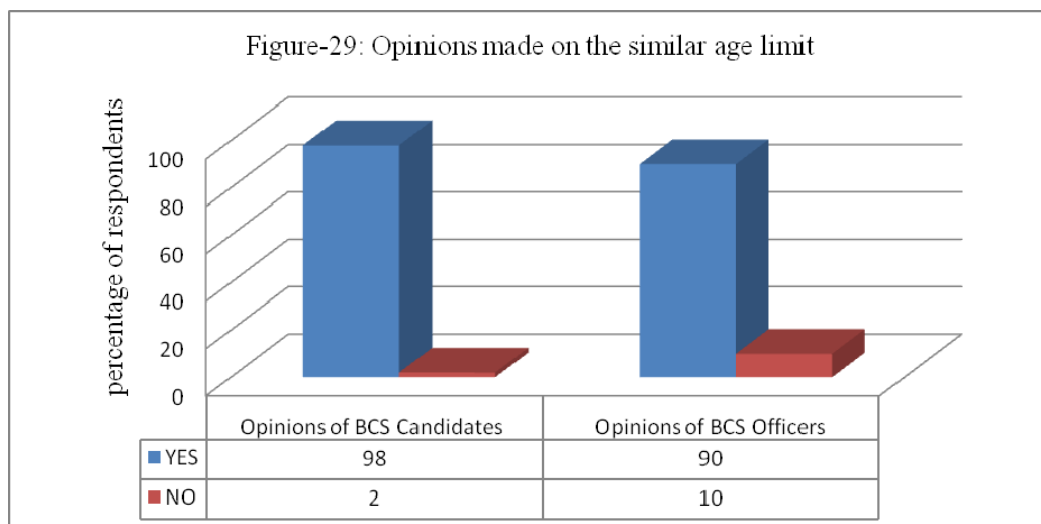
4.8.4 Opinions on the existing age limit for BCS applicants

18% BCS candidates proposed 30 years; 76% proposed 31-33 years; and 6% respondents proposed 34-35 years as the age limit for all applicants. Among the respondents from the BCS officers' category, 6% officers proposed 27-29 years; 40% proposed 30 years; 42% proposed 31-33 years; and, the rest 12% officers proposed 34-35 years as the common age limit for applying in BCS (see figure-30). The above-mentioned data from each category of respondents indicates that most of the respondents demanded 31-33 years of age limit for all BCS applicants.

Figure-30: Proposed age limit for the BCS applicants

	27-29 years	30 years	31-33 years	34-35 years
■ Opinions of BCS Candidates	0	18	76	6
■ Opinions of BCS officers	6	40	42	12
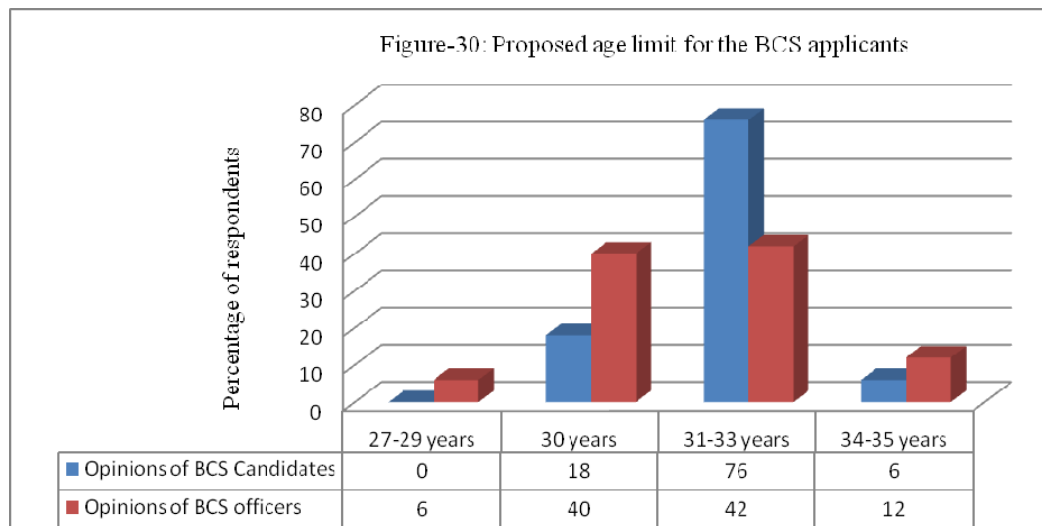
4.9 Discussion

From the above-mentioned findings of this study, it can be mentioned here that the present civil service in Bangladesh is not able to ensure merit-based recruitment in BCS through its existing selection process. It is due to some loopholes that are in the existing BCS officers' selection process. Almost no respondents are satisfied with the existing BCS officers' selection criteria. They think that this selection process is not merit-based. Reservation of seats (Quota) has been considered as the main barrier to the existing selection process for the recruitment of meritorious officers in different cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service. Most of the respondents of this study proposed to reduce the present figure of (55% of the total posts) reserve seats (quota) drastically; and, they recommended maximum 10% quota for freedom fighters' wards, 5% quota for female candidates, maximum 3% quota for the tribal candidates, 1% quota for the

physically handicapped applicants, and 5% quota for district-wise distribution. The same observation found by M. Abdul Wahhab (2009). He said that quota system in no way can supersede the universal principle of merit for ensuring equal employment opportunities for all citizens without any discrimination and that it is against the spirit of constitution. Lengthy exam system in BCS has been treated here as the second largest problem lying in the existing officers selection process. A significant number of respondents think that political interference and corruption have also an important role in the existing officers' selection process against the selection of quality officers in civil service. TIB (2007), IGS (2008), and Momtaz Jahan (2012) support this observation. TIB (2007:8) has reported that there are allegations about recruiting candidates who are aligned to the ruling party, which has badly affected the quality of BCS officers and that there have been blatant examples of partisan recruitments in the important cadres like Administration and Police. TIB (2007) has disclosed also that corruption in viva-voce, discrimination against religious minorities, changing marks and giving extra-ordinary marks to some particular candidates, bribe taking by members, officials, and staffs of the PSC are among the serious allegations made against PSC, which have damaged its credibility as well as of the civil service examination process. IGS (2008:2) has shown in its' report that the reputation of PSC, as an independent body carrying out its duties impartially and with probity has been significantly undermined over a period of years. And, it has been blamed that governments in the past have appointed politically-aligned persons as the Chair and Members to establish partisan control over the civil service recruitment process. Momtaz Jahan (2012) commented that attempts to politicize the bureaucracy have brought back the spoils system (patronage appointment and political favor) in the government, thus damaging the efficiency of civil service, and, recruitments based on political connections have brought a decline in the standard and quality of human resources in the civil service.

Three-fourths of the respondent BCS officers spent 2-3 years in their respective BCS examination. No respondent supports it. They think that the duration of BCS officer selection process should be maximum one year. The same observation is found by TIB (2007). According to the study of TIB, the average time spent for a general BCS examination is 24.75 months. Almost all the respondents think that the Preliminary Examination for making a short list of candidates should continue. However, M.

Abdul Wahhab (2009) has a shown a different observation on the Preliminary Examination. He proposed to abolish it and made a suggestion to consider ones' previous marks in his/her academic career in place of MCQ Preliminary Examination to drop out the less qualified applicants. A significant number of respondents think that the curriculum for the written examination should be modified. IGS (2008:5) and Jahan (2006:10) have supported this observation. According to IGS, the questions set for the BCS examination are not only of poor quality, but also ineffective to test the skills required from modern civil servant. Jahan said that the question papers are based on essay type method, which offers little opportunity for creative thinking and analytical ability. Most of the candidates memorize study guides, write the answers mechanically, and pass in the examination. In this study, the major portion of the respondents suggested 800-1000 marks for BCS written examination that does not show any significant difference from the existing pattern of marks allocation. On the other hand, most of the respondents suggested a reduction from the present 200 marks to maximum 100 marks for viva-voce in BCS. M. Jahan (2012) and TIB (2007) have supported this finding in their studies. M. Jahan said that a number of viva boards composed of a variety of interviewers generally come up with quite different rating. According to the report made by TIB, high marks are given arbitrarily in the viva-voce to the candidates who are under contract or those who are political cadres and activists. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the existing eligibility criteria required, especially the present educational requirements for the BCS applicants. They do not support the idea of special consideration on age limit and have asked for a similar age limit for all applicants, which is around 32 years. However, no research is found to be compared with the findings of the present study on the existing eligibility criteria (educational requirements and age limit) for BCS applicants.

CHAPTER-FIVE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An efficient civil service is essential for effective implementation of public policy and delivery of public services. The efficiency of the government depends mainly on its personnel. An ideal selection process is a prerequisite to build an efficient civil service. Bangladesh Civil Service has got a lack of sound selection process for the recruitment of quality officers. Today, BCS officer selection process is facing mainly three categories of problems. The first one is reservation of seats (Quota). The majority of the posts in civil service are reserved for the preferred groups through quota where merit is not given due importance. The second one is the faulty exam system, which includes lengthy exam procedure, poor quality of question papers, weak written examination curriculum, abuse of the marking system during the viva-voce, etc. The third one is politicization and corruption which leads to faulty selection and low quality of civil servants. Besides, eligibility criteria (academic requirements and age limit) of applicants have also a significant impact on the selection process.

This study has covered the above-mentioned factors related to the officer selection process in BCS. Almost all the respondents are dissatisfied with the existing selection process. Reservation of seats (Quota) has been considered by three-fourths of the respondents as the main barrier to the merit-based selection process. Most of the respondents of this study proposed to reduce the present figure of (55% of the total posts) reserve seats (Quota) drastically, and recommended maximum 10% quota for freedom fighters' wards, 5% quota for female candidates, maximum 3% quota for tribal candidates, 1% quota for physically-handicapped applicants and 5% quota for district-wise distribution. Lengthy exam system in BCS has been treated here as second largest problem in the existing officer selection process. Three-fourths of the respondent BCS officers spent 2-3 years in their respective BCS examination. No respondent supports it. They think that the duration of BCS officer selection process should be maximum one year. Almost all the respondents think that the Preliminary Examination for making a short list of candidates before sitting in the written examination should continue. A significant number of the respondents think that the written examination curriculum should be modified. In this study, the major portion of the respondents suggested 800-1000 marks for BCS written examination, which does

not show any significant difference from the existing marks. On the other hand, most of the respondents suggested maximum 100 marks for BCS viva-voce in place of existing 200 marks. A significant number of respondents think that political interference and corruption have also an important role in the existing officer selection process against the selection of quality officers in civil service. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the existing eligibility criteria required, especially the present educational requirements for the BCS applicants. They do not support special consideration on the age limit; and, they recommend similar age limit of 32 years for all applicants.

Recommendations

On the basis of above-mentioned findings, the following recommendations can be made to create equality in job opportunity and to build a merit-based civil service:

I. A Reform Committee should be framed to modernize the BCS officer selection process and criteria meeting the challenges of the service for which recruitments are made, with special emphasis on merit-based recruitment and complete abolition of political interference or any other irregularities in the officer selection procedure.

II. The Chairman and Members of the Public Service Commission must be persons of high integrity, strong moral courage, personality and commitment to make the officer selection process effective for the recruitment of quality officers in Bangladesh Civil Service by overcoming the influence of partisan politicization and corruption.

III. The present figure of quota (55% of the posts) should be reduced drastically for prioritizing merit-based selection. At least, 75% of the posts should be on purely merit basis, while the remaining portion can be distributed to different preferred groups for affirmative action.

IV. Existing 200 marks for BCS viva-voce should be reduced to maximum 100 marks for prohibiting discrimination in marking during the viva-voce examination.

V. Written examination curriculum should be modified to make the BCS officer selection process up to the mark and uniform for all candidates.

VI. Time needed (duration) for the completion of officer selection procedure should be reduced. All the activities of the selection process must be completed within one year.

VII. Age limit for applying in BCS should be similar for all applicants. Special age limit for different preferred groups (freedom fighters' wards, doctors, engineers, etc.) should not be considered; and, a common age limit of 32 years can be considered for all applicants.

VIII. The Marks sheets for the successful candidates should be given to the examinees on compulsory basis immediately after the result is published; and, the result sheets of all examinees (both successful and unsuccessful) must be published on the website.

In fine, it may now be said that if the recommendations stated above are implemented, we can expect an impartial and efficient civil service for ensuring better governance and fulfillment of different development goals of the country.

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Questionnaire

(For Existing BCS Officers)

[The following information will be used only for academic research purpose]

Part-A:

Respondent's Name (optional):

Gender: Male/Female

Address/Location:

Designation:

Educational Qualification:

Date:

Part-B:

1. To what extent you are satisfied on the existing selection process of BCS? Please rate in the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5

[Not satisfied=1, Less satisfied=2, fairly satisfied=3, Satisfied=4, highly satisfied=5]

2. If you are not satisfied, please rank (1, 2, 3.......) the following problems behind it?

Problems	Rank
Lengthy exam system	
Reservation of seats(Quota)	
Political interference	
Irregularities & Corruption	
Excess marks in viva-voce	

If any other problem, please mention:

3. In your case – please reply on the following issues:

    I.   Which Batch of BCS are you from?

    II.   How much time was spent in your BCS exam (from application to final selection)?

    III.   Do you think that such duration for the BCS selection process is acceptable?

YES		NO

    IV.   If NO, what would be optimum time for BCS selection process?

4. What do you think about the preliminary exam?

- o It should be continued
- o It should not be continued

5. If it should not be continued, what can be the alternative?

- o Academic results
- o Higher educational qualification
- o Others

6. What is your opinion about the written exam curriculum?

- o Acceptable
- o Should shorten
- o Should extend
- o should modify

7. Do you have any comment on the question pattern of BCS written exam?

8. What should be the marks distribution for written exam and viva-voce?

Exam	Marks
Written exam	

Viva-voce	

9. Does the existing selection process ensure the merit-based recruitment in BCS?

<div>YES   NO</div>

10. If NO, please rank (1, 2 ...) the following barriers to merit-based recruitment?

Barriers	Rank
Quota system	
Irregularities & Corruption	
Political interference	

If any other barrier, please mention:

11. What is your suggestion for ensuring merit-based recruitment?

12. Please, put your recommendation on the existing Quota system in BCS?

Types of Quota	Existing (%)	Recommendation (%)
Freedom fighter Quota	30	
Female Quota	10	
Tribal Quota	5	
Quota for physically challenged	1	
District Quota	10	

13. What is your satisfaction level on the existing eligibility criteria for applicant in BCS?

1	2	3	4	5

[Not satisfied=1, Less satisfied=2, fairly satisfied=3, Satisfied=4, highly satisfied=5]

14. If you are not satisfied, what should be the minimum educational requirement for BCS?

15. Do you support specialized group (freedom fighter, Doctor, Engineer) would be given special consideration on age limit?

YES	NO

16. Do you think that age limit would be similar for all?

YES	NO

17. What should be the age limit?

18. Do you have any other observation about the selection process of BCS?

Thanks for the cooperation

Questionnaire
(For BCS Candidates)

[The following information will be used only for academic research purpose]

Part-A:

 Respondent's Name (optional):

Gender: Male/Female

 Address/Location:

Occupation:

Educational Qualification:

Date:

Part-B:

1. To what extent you are satisfied on the existing selection process of BCS? Please rate in the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5

[Not satisfied=1, Less satisfied=2, fairly satisfied=3, Satisfied=4, highly satisfied=5]

2. If you are not satisfied, please rank (1, 2, 3.......) the following possible problems behind it?

Problems	Rank
Lengthy exam system	
Reservation of Seats (Quota)	
Political interference	
Irregularities & Corruption	
Excess marks in viva-voce	

If any other problem, please mention:

3. Please rate in the following scale about the present duration of the selection process of BCS?

1	2	3	4	5

[Not lengthy =1, Less lengthy =2, fairly lengthy =3, lengthy =4, Too much lengthy =5]

4. What do you think about the preliminary exam?

- o It should be continued

- o It should not be continued

5. If it should not be continued, what can be the alternative?

- o Academic results

- o Higher educational qualification

- o Others

6. What is your opinion about the written exam curriculum?

- o Acceptable

- o Should shorten

- o Should extend

- o should modify

7. Do you have any comment on the question pattern of BCS written exam?

8. What should be the marks distribution for written exam and viva-voce?

Exam	Marks
Written exam	
Viva-voce	

9. Does the existing selection process ensure the merit-based recruitment in BCS?

YES   NO

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10. If NO, please rank (1, 2 ...) the following possible barriers to merit-based recruitment?

Barriers	Rank
Quota system Irregularities & Corruption	
Political interference	

If any other barrier, please mention:

11. What is your suggestion for ensuring merit-based recruitment?

12. Please, put your recommendation on the existing Quota system in BCS?

Types of Quota	Existing (%)	Recommendation (%)
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13. To What extent you are satisfied on the existing eligibility criteria for applicant in BCS? Please rate in the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5

 [Not satisfied=1, Less satisfied=2, fairly satisfied=3, Satisfied=4, highly satisfied=5]

14. If you are not satisfied, what should be the minimum educational requirement for BCS?

15. Do you support specialized group (freedom fighter, Doctor, Engineer) would be given special consideration on age limit?

YES		NO

16. Do you think that age limit would be similar for all?

YES		NO

17. What should be the age limit?

18. Do you have any other observation about the selection process of BCS?

Thanks for the cooperation