

From 2011, an aptitude test for civil services – 11.03.2010

Aspirants for the civil services will face a different pattern of examination from next year as the government has approved a proposal to introduce an aptitude test in place of the existing preliminary examination to shortlist candidates for the main exam.

Accordingly, the candidates will have to appear in two objective type papers having special emphasis on testing their “aptitude for civil services” as well as on “ethical and moral dimension of decision making” under a Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT).

Both these papers — having equal weightage — will be common to all candidates in place of the one common paper (general awareness) and one optional paper (any particular subject of choice) under the existing system which lays greater emphasis on subject knowledge. *As of now, the change will be effective only for the first stage of the Civil Services Examination from 2011 onwards. The second and third stages — CS (Main) Examination and interview respectively — may remain the same till a committee of experts goes into various aspects of the system and submits its report.*

Confirming the change for the first stage of CSE, minister of state for personnel Prithviraj Chavan told the Lok Sabha on 10.03.2010 that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has approved the proposal for introduction of CSAT in place of the existing CS (Preliminary) Examination. In his written reply, he said: “CSAT is expected to come into effect from CSE, 2011.” The proposal to this effect was sent to the PMO last year by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) which conducts CSE every year to select candidates for elite all-India services, including IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS and others Group ‘A’ and Group ‘B’ central jobs.

Officials familiar with the proposal which has got the PM’s nod explained that the changes were suggested by various committees, including the second Administrative Reforms Commission, in their reports submitted over the years. Most of the panels had advocated laying greater emphasis on the “aptitude” of candidates than their knowledge of a subject, arguing that specialists or experts in any particular subject may not necessarily be good civil servants.
