

## Changes in quota rules for handicapped in civil services

Physically challenged candidates who make it on their own merit in civil services examinations under the criteria for general category will not eat into the quota set aside for them, it was announced Friday.

In other words, they will also be eligible for selection under the general category.

'It has also been decided that physically challenged persons belonging to the general category will be eligible for seven attempts against the existing four attempts,' said an official statement.

With this, the rules for inducting the physically challenged have been brought on par with those for candidates belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes, the statement added.

The government also decided that reservation for three categories of disability - visual impairment, hearing impairment and locomotor disability or cerebral palsy - shall be made separately.

'But interchange in the vacancies among the three categories will be possible in case of non-availability of people from a specified category,' the statement said.

'The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) will recommend physically challenged candidates after ensuring that they meet the prescribed eligibility criteria in terms of abilities, disabilities for identified services where vacancy exists.'

The eligibility for availing reservation against the quota for physically challenged persons would be the same as described in the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.

'Specific eligibility criteria as set by the government for identified services or posts will have to be met by physically disabled candidates. Implementation of these decisions shall be with prospective effect.'

According to the 2001 census there are close to 22 million physically challenged people in the country. The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People claims there are approximately 9 million blind people in India.

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