

## **Hindustan Times**

### **PCS exam: 'Give unlimited shots, cut age limit, don't add CSAT marks'**

The Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) has written to the state government to make the civil services aptitude test (CSAT) only a qualifying paper for the Punjab Civil Services (PCS) examination.

If it gets government's nod, CSAT marks will not be added to the marks scored by candidates in the preliminary stage and they will just have to score minimum 33 per cent marks in it.

Besides, the commission has recommended unlimited attempts for the candidates but wants upper age limit reduced from 37 to 35.

CSAT was made mandatory in the PCS's preliminary stage with general studies after the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) introduced it in all India Administrative Services examination in 2011.

Even as the UPSC eventually made it a qualifying paper last year on the demand of students, especially those from the humanities background, Punjab is yet to make these changes.

The last PCS examination held earlier this year had CSAT as a compulsory paper and its marks were added to the final results of the preliminary examination.

"Adding CSAT marks in the preliminary exam is a gross injustice to the students from the non-engineering background in Punjab. This debars several deserving students to qualify for mains. Since this exam gives edge to those having studied mathematics, the state government must create a level-playing field for students from other backgrounds," said Amanpreet Kaur, a student from Chandigarh.

Manjit Singh Dhaliwal, a student from Muktsar, said when Haryana and Himachal Pradesh have already made CSAT a qualifying paper in their civic services exams, Punjab should also follow the suit.

PPSC secretary (examination) Manjit Singh Cheema said the commission has made the recommendation on basis of students' feedback.

“For making these changes, the Punjab State Civil Services Rules, 2009, needs to be amended for which the department of personnel has already been requested,” he said.

Secretary (personnel) Raji P Srivastva said she would get back on this issue on Thursday.