

Chapter 4

Present Status of Implementation of e Recruitment for Public Services in India

In order to take a snapshot of the present status of implementation of e Recruitment, a structured check list was prepared including various activities of e Recruitment like Website, Online applications, Communication with candidate, online examinations. Based on the information available on the respective websites of the organisations and telephonic confirmation with the officers of the organisations, situation emerging is as contained in the succeeding sections.

Almost all the public service recruitment organisations studied have their own websites. Out of all state public service commissions, Telangana Public Service Commission is the latest which has been formed recently and at present does not have its own website. Remaining all State Public Service Commissions, have their own websites.

It is seen that most of the websites are hosted and maintained by National informatics Centre. However, in terms of availability of information and ease of access, all the websites are quite different with variety of designs and look and feel. Status of implementation of e-Recruitment processes in the public service recruitment organisations has been compiled under five distinct heads – Availability of key information on website, result related information on the website, online application system, Use of ICT in communication with the candidates and online examinations. In order to show the status information in graphical form, the organisations included in the study have been grouped as following –

- a) National / Regional level recruitment organisations – Union Public Service Commission, Staff Selection Commission, Department of Post, Railway Recruitment Cells have been grouped together. UPSC, SSC and DoP recruit at national level. Railway recruitment cells, although have regional jurisdiction, are controlled centrally from Railway Board at least from policy perspective. Hence these organisations have not been clubbed with the state level recruitment organisations.

- b) State level recruitment organisations – All State Public Service Commissions and Delhi Subordinate Service Selection Board have been grouped and the scores have been shown with the help of thematic maps which bring out the regional trends clearly.

Availability of Key Information on website

Calendar/Schedule of Examinations – Most of the Recruiting bodies decide the tentative schedule of notifications and examinations for a year or so for internal purpose as it helps them plan their work. In case of national level recruitment organisations such as UPSC and SSC, the yearly schedule is placed well in advance on their websites. This helps not only the candidates but also the other recruiting organisations as regional / state level organisations try to avoid holding examinations coinciding with the major examinations dates declared by UPSC/ SSC. All recruitment organisations hold their written examinations on Sundays, as they utilize the infrastructure of educational institutes (Schools/ Colleges) which proves to be inadequate if two or more major recruitment examinations are scheduled on the same day due to large number of candidates. Providing the schedule or calendar of notifications or examination on the website is very helpful for the candidates as they can also plan for the same.

Notifications – Notifications or Advertisement of recruitment is the most basic information which is available on all websites studied. Traditionally, the advertisements were published in Employment News and other newspapers. Even now, the recruiting organisations publish the Notifications in the traditional way apart from making it available on the websites.

Sample/ Old Question Papers – It is seen that many recruiting organisations provide old question papers on the website. This is perceived as a move to provide much required information to the prospective candidates for preparation.

FAQ/ Guidelines – Many websites studied provide Frequently Asked Questions/ Guidelines. This is the most basic information which can be provided by the recruiting organisations to the candidates. Providing response to frequently asked questions regarding eligibility conditions, certificate requirement etc., is not only of

great help to the candidates but also reduces a large number of queries being handled by the recruiting body.

In the following figures, present status of website content availability of the abovementioned four types of information is shown for the national/ regional recruitment bodies and for the state recruitment organisations respectively.

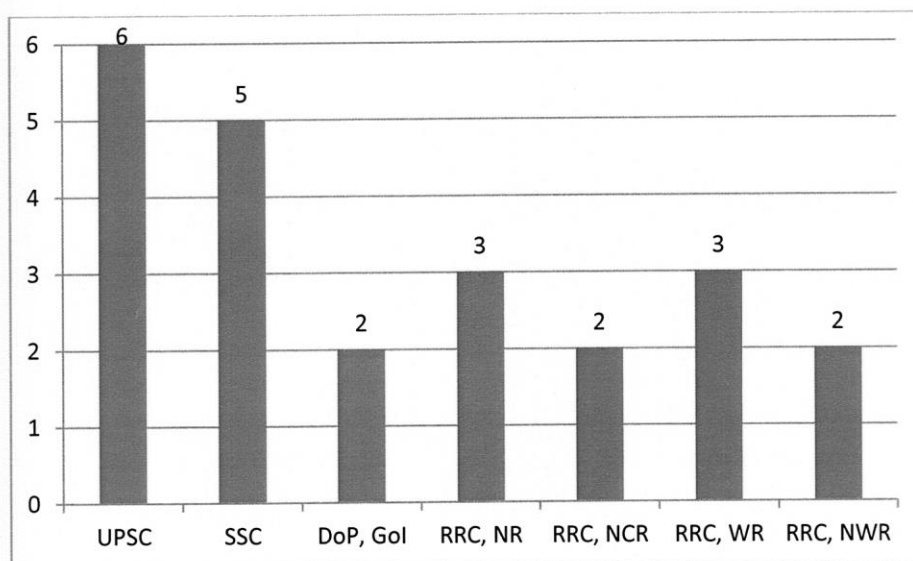


Figure 3: Scores for availability of key information on website for national/ regional organisations

It is seen that UPSC website has all the four key information. SSC is a close second with only sample papers missing whereas other organisations are at 2-3 scores. Notifications are uploaded by all the organisations on their website. FAQ/ Guidelines which seem to a very basic type of information by any organisation dealing with public, is not given on the website by most. It may be due to the fact that the notifications contain basic instructions for the candidates for the particular examination and hence recruiting bodies do not feel the need of a separate FAQ on the website.

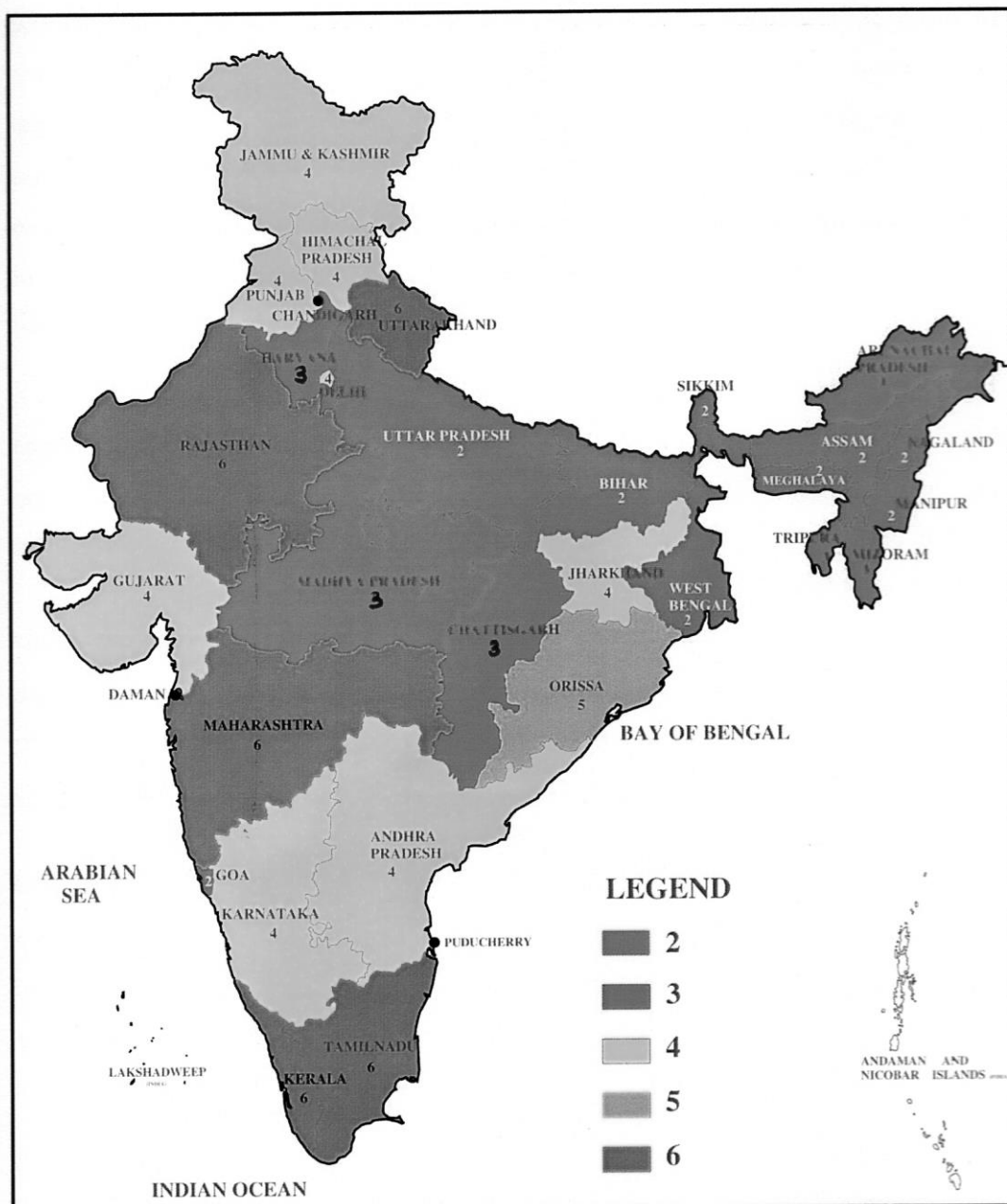


Figure 4: Availability of key information on website scores in public service commissions of states

It can be seen from the figure above that the state public service commissions of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Uttarakhand states have all the listed key information on their websites. Minimum score is 2 as all the organisations place at least recruitment notifications on the websites. Calendar/ schedule is not given by many organisations as it seems that for many state level organisations, recruitment is made as and when requisition is received and no yearly schedule is made. (For details see Annexure V.)

Availability of Information related to the Result

All the organisations covered publish the intermediate as well as final result of recruitment on their websites. Earlier, entire result used to be published in employment news or other newspapers and was simultaneously displayed on the notice boards of recruiting organisations/ Press Information Bureau offices. Now, most of the times only a small notification regarding declaration of result is published in print asking the candidates to visit the websites for knowing the details of the result like list of short listed / selected candidates.

It is seen that 13 recruiting organisations provide the details of category wise cut off applied in written examinations for short listing the candidates on their websites. 10 organisations have provided online facility for the candidates to know their own marks by entering candidate specific data like a combination of Roll No/ Date of Birth / Control number etc. 14 organisations provide the marks of candidates in list form which can be seen by anybody for selected candidates/ candidates appeared in interview. One organisation i.e. Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission even provides an online facility of accessing the answer sheet in case of objective type exams to the candidates. Providing such details is seen as a step towards transparency. In the absence of such online communication of the details, candidates have to file applications under RTI (Right to Information Act) and these organisations are duty bound to provide the information. Hence, implementation of such measures not only improves transparency and makes accessing the details easier for the candidates but also reduces a lot of work which may get generated in the recruiting organisations in handling such queries/ RTI applications.

Answer Keys – Objective type question papers along with OMR (Optical Mark Reader) answer sheets is the most common method of testing for recruitment. However, as the question papers are prepared with utmost secrecy and confidentiality with help of experts, thorough checking for the same is not possible and there are chances that some ambiguities in the question/ printing errors/ wrong answers remain undetected. To avoid any complications due to this after declaration of results, some recruiting organisations upload the answer key on the website and invite objections if any from the candidates within a given time period. After due consideration of the objections raised by the candidates, revised key is again uploaded by some

organisations. In view of the officers involved in the recruitment activities, this process provides a sense of transparency and participation in the process to the candidates. Another way of dealing with the issue is to scrutinize the answer key thoroughly immediately after the exam (so that secrecy concerns are not there) with the help of multiple experts along with results of item analysis. Item analysis is an elaborate analysis which involves studying the actual responses of the candidates who appeared in the exam versus the answer key. Details regarding whether such item analysis is done is not included as it comes under internal/ backend processing.

Following figures show the status of availability of result related information on websites of national/ regional organisations and of state level organisations.

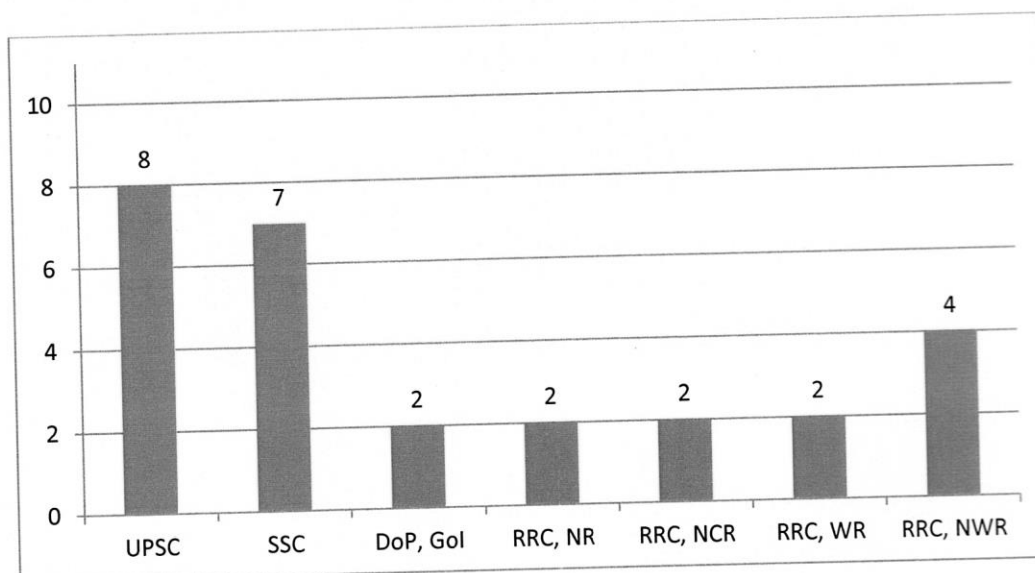


Figure 5: Availability of Result related information on website scores for national/ regional organisations

It is seen that UPSC, closely followed by SSC has the highest score as they provide most of the listed result related information online. Others provide basic result list on website except RRC NWR which also provides cut off marks information.

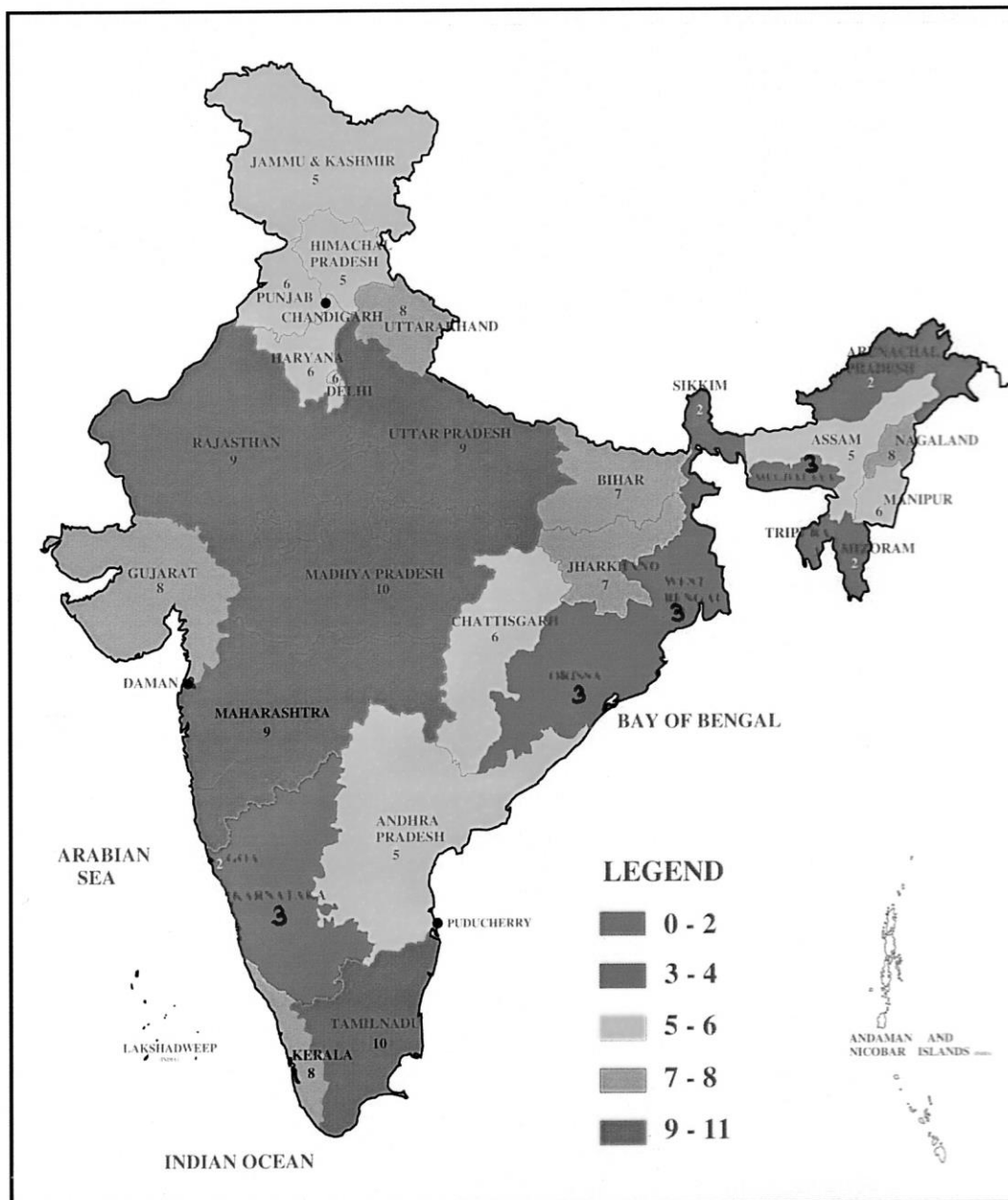


Figure 6: Availability of online result related information scores in state level recruitment organisations

Highest transparency in terms of availability of result related information on website is demonstrated by the public service commissions of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh whereas organisations of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Sikkim have the lowest scores as they provide only the basic select list on the website.

Online Registration/ Application

Online registration/application system is one of the main IT initiatives taken by most of the recruitment organisations. It is at various stages of implementation in various organisations. (See Annexure V for details). Along with system of online applications, various ways to make payment of examination fee have also been devised. Some of them are –

- 1) Offline payment through Bank / Post office challans – Applicant has to take a print out of the challan form from the website and deposit cash for exam fee at designated bank or at post office. This is the most commonly used way of payment. However, there are two ways in which the reconciliation of fee payment is made –
 - a. Candidate fills the payment details along with a unique transaction id on the online application portal which links the payment with the individual application identified by another unique id known as registration id or application id.
 - b. There is back end integration of the Bank/ Post office system with the online application system. In this case candidate submits his application fully and then has to make the payment within a given last date. Linking of the payment with application is made by interlinking the database of online application system with that of the Bank/ Post office.
- 2) Online payment through Net banking/ Credit cards/ Debit cards – This makes the entire process online. Candidate can fill the application as well as make payment in one stretch.
- 3) Payment through CSCs (Common Services Centres) - Implemented under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY), Government of India, the Common Services Centers (CSCs) are ICT enabled front end service delivery points at the village level for delivery of Government, Financial, Social and Private Sector services in the areas of agriculture, health, education, entertainment, FMCG products, banking, insurance, pension, utility payments, etc. Some state public service commissions are utilizing these centres or

similar centres created by state governments for extending the facility of filling online applications as well as collecting examination fee.

One Time Registration

One time registration is a facility provided by some recruiting organisations to applicants to register themselves once and fill all their personal data required for any recruitment like Name, Date of Birth, reservation category, Educational Qualification details, photographs, scanned signature etc. Once registered, candidate can log in to the system any time to apply for posts advertised by the recruiting organisation from time to time. This is very convenient to the applicant as filling the same set of information time and again is not required. Whenever there is any change in the data, candidate can make the modifications. This system is also very useful from the recruitment organisation's view point. This reduces the chance of errors committed while filling the data. Such errors, if remain unnoticed, create a lot of problems afterwards if they have a bearing on the result processing such as data related to reservation category. This also reduces the burden on the technical infrastructure in terms of server time because, after the initial registration, data already stored in the candidate database need not be collected for each application. Due to a very large number of applicants dealt by the recruitment organisations and the tendency of applicants to apply towards the end of the period specified for applying for a particular recruitment, (Notification period which is normally to the tune of 1 month), recruitment organisations face a problem of server overload in the last 2-3 days of notification period. There have been instances when recruiting organisation had to extend the last date of application submission by a few days as applicants could not fill applications on line due to server overload.

Following figures show the status of implementation of online application system for national/ regional organisations and of state organisations respectively. (Details at Annexure V).

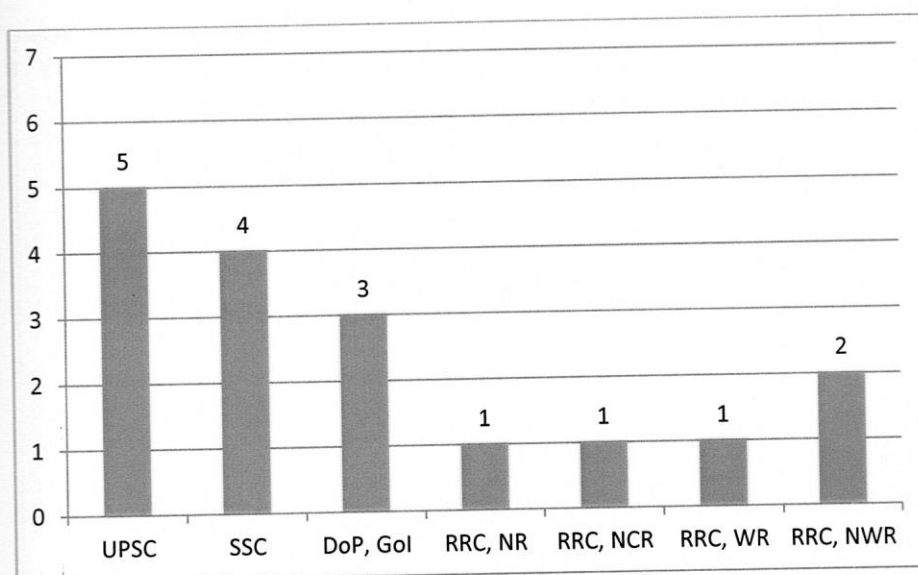


Figure 7: Implementation of online application scores for national/ regional recruitment organisations

None of the organisations shown in the figure above have started one time registration for their main exams. UPSC has started one time registration for direct recruitment not for the main examinations. The Railway Recruitment Cells are having very low scores but in view of the decision taken to introduce 100% online applications from the current year onwards, the situation is expected to change soon. Department of Post has implemented the online application system but facility of online payment is not there. UPSC and SSC are almost on similar footing in terms of online applications but SSC is still continuing with the option of offline mode along with the online mode.

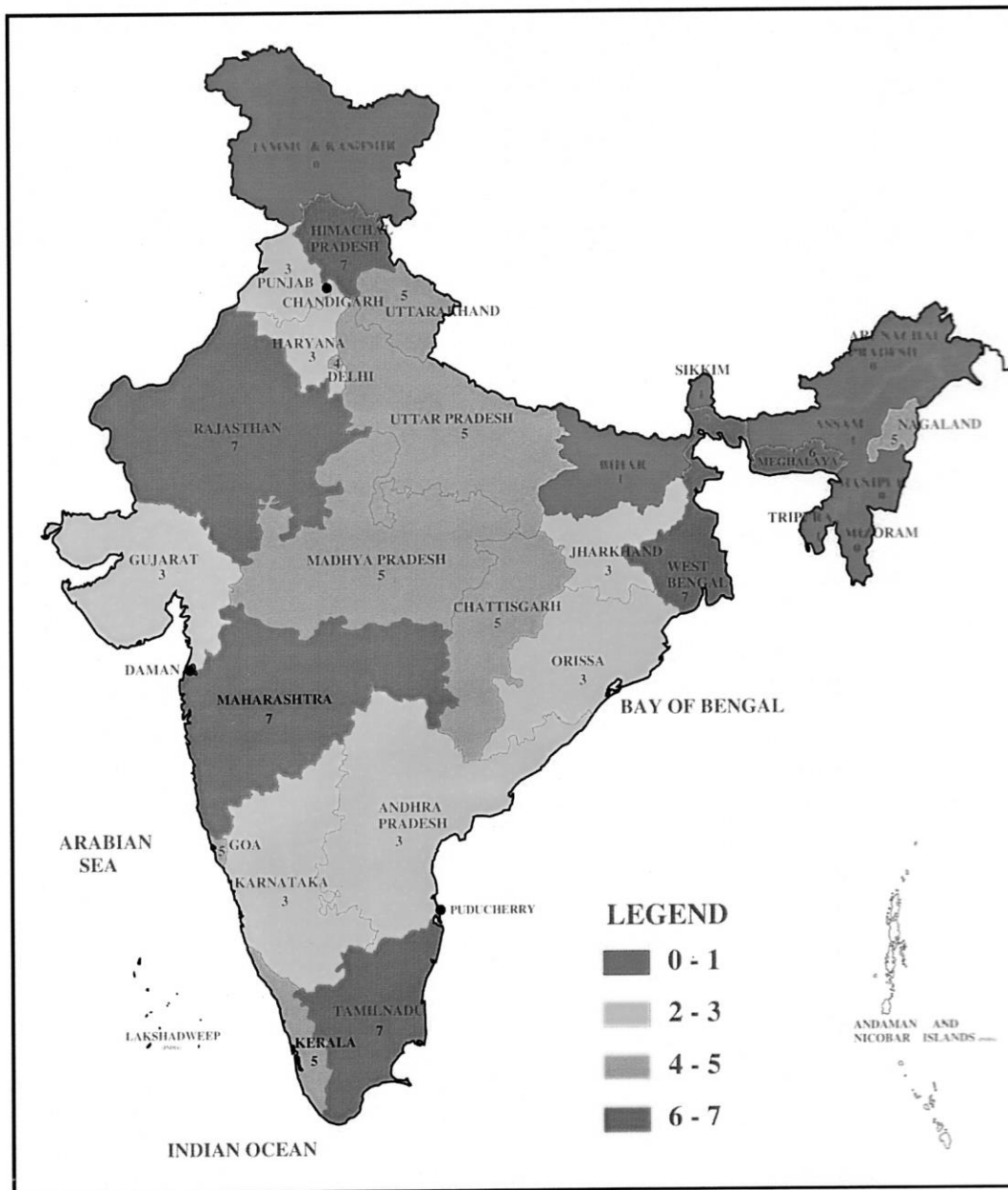


Figure 8: Online application implementation scores for state level recruitment organisations

It is seen that online application system has not been started by the public service commissions of Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura. On the other extreme are the states of Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal where online applications have been mandatory along with the facility of one time registration and online payment. (Details at annexure V)

Communication with Candidates

Admit Cards/ Call Letters – This is the most basic communication which is required for each stage or tier of recruitment cycle. Traditionally, admit cards were sent by the recruiting organisations by post to the candidates. There was also a practice of asking the candidates to enclose self-addressed envelope along with the application form for sending the admit card. The main issue with this system is the delay or loss in the postal network. In such cases, candidate has to approach the office of the recruiting organisations. Hence, many organisations have started to upload the admit cards on their website. Out of the 36 organisations covered, 31 provide the facility of downloading admit cards or call letters for written examinations/ skill tests or interviews. Only two organisations are continuing with sending the postal copy of the admit cards along with the facility of downloading the admit cards through websites. Others have discontinued sending the admit cards by post. Apart from online availability of admit cards, other candidate friendly measures like sending the information about issuance of admit cards by e-mail or SMS have been started by 6 organisations.

Online Grievance Redressal Mechanism – Only two organisations have some online mechanism with a format to raise a query or communicate grievance for the candidates. Several organisations have provided e-mail ids on their website for communication while some accept objections on answer key through emails.

Following figures show the status of implementation of online application system for national/ regional organisations and of state organisations respectively. Details are contained in tables at Annexure V.

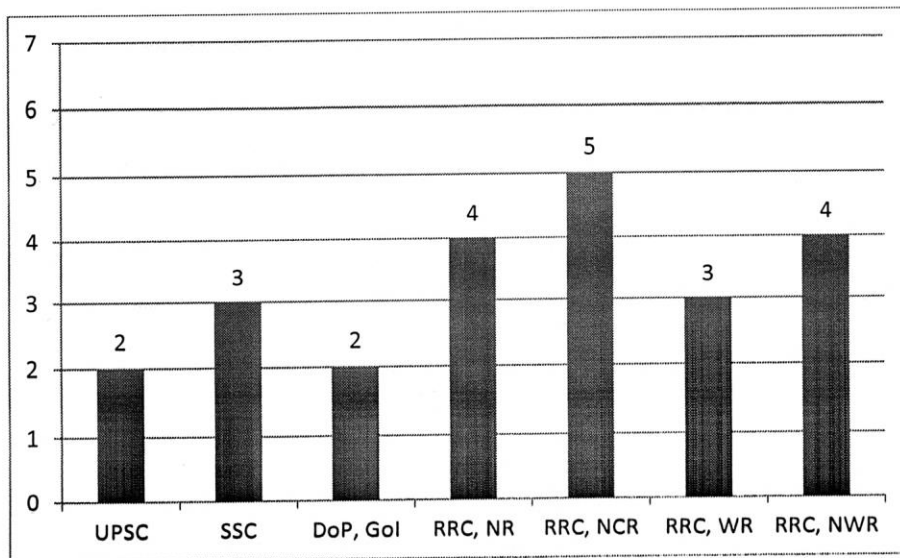


Figure 9: Scores for use of ICT for communication with candidates for national/ regional organisations

It is seen that all the national/ regional recruitment organisations allow downloading of admit cards on their websites. However, SSC is still continuing with sending the postal copy apart from download facility. RRCs have experimented with use of SMS and e-mails and hence have higher scores. Online grievance redressal mechanism is provided by only one organisation i.e. SSC.

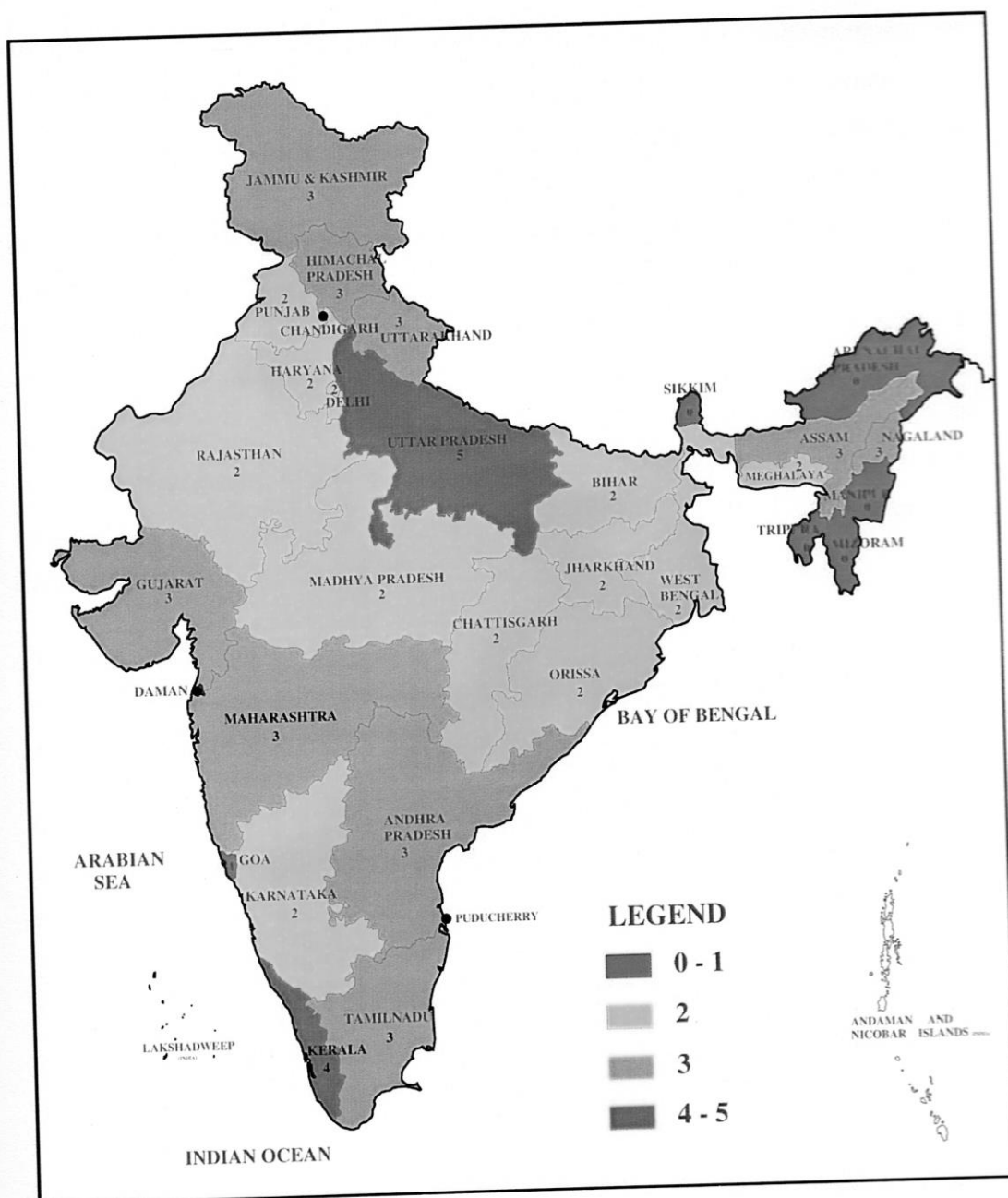


Figure 10: Scores for use of ICT for communication with candidates state recruitment organisations

Uttar Pradesh and Kerala state public service commissions make use of SMS to communicate with the candidates apart from uploading admit cards/ call letters on website. UPPSC also sends e-mails to shortlisted candidates after declaration of results. Organisations of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura have the lowest score as the communication is totally offline. Goa public service commission has started uploading the admit cards on website but has not discontinued sending postal copies of admit cards.

Online Examinations/ Computer Based Testing

Six organisations included in the study reported to have started online examinations. OMR based examinations is still the most commonly used examination format by the public service recruitment bodies. Some descriptive type testing is also being used which is primarily done in the later stages of examination after preliminary screening is over. Most of the PSCs have a preliminary exam which is OMR based and is used for screening while the main examination taken by the short listed candidates is of descriptive nature. While the descriptive examination format is not convertible to online mode, OMR based objective type examination format is amenable to be administered in online/ computerised format. While the recruiting organisations are seen to be experimenting with the Computer based online examination, it is yet to be adopted at a large scale. The organisations, which have started online examination, have used it for only a few exams having limited number of candidates.

Amongst the national/ regional public service recruitment organisations, only UPSC has started online examinations. Others have been awarded zero score for this head. (Data at Annexure V)

Amongst the state level recruiting organisations, seven i.e. Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Punjab have started online examinations although at a small scale. Following figure shows the scores of state level recruitment organisations for implementation of online examinations. Tamil Nadu PSC conducts online examinations only for technical posts with limited number of candidates. Other PSCs have also held examinations online only up to a few thousand candidates.

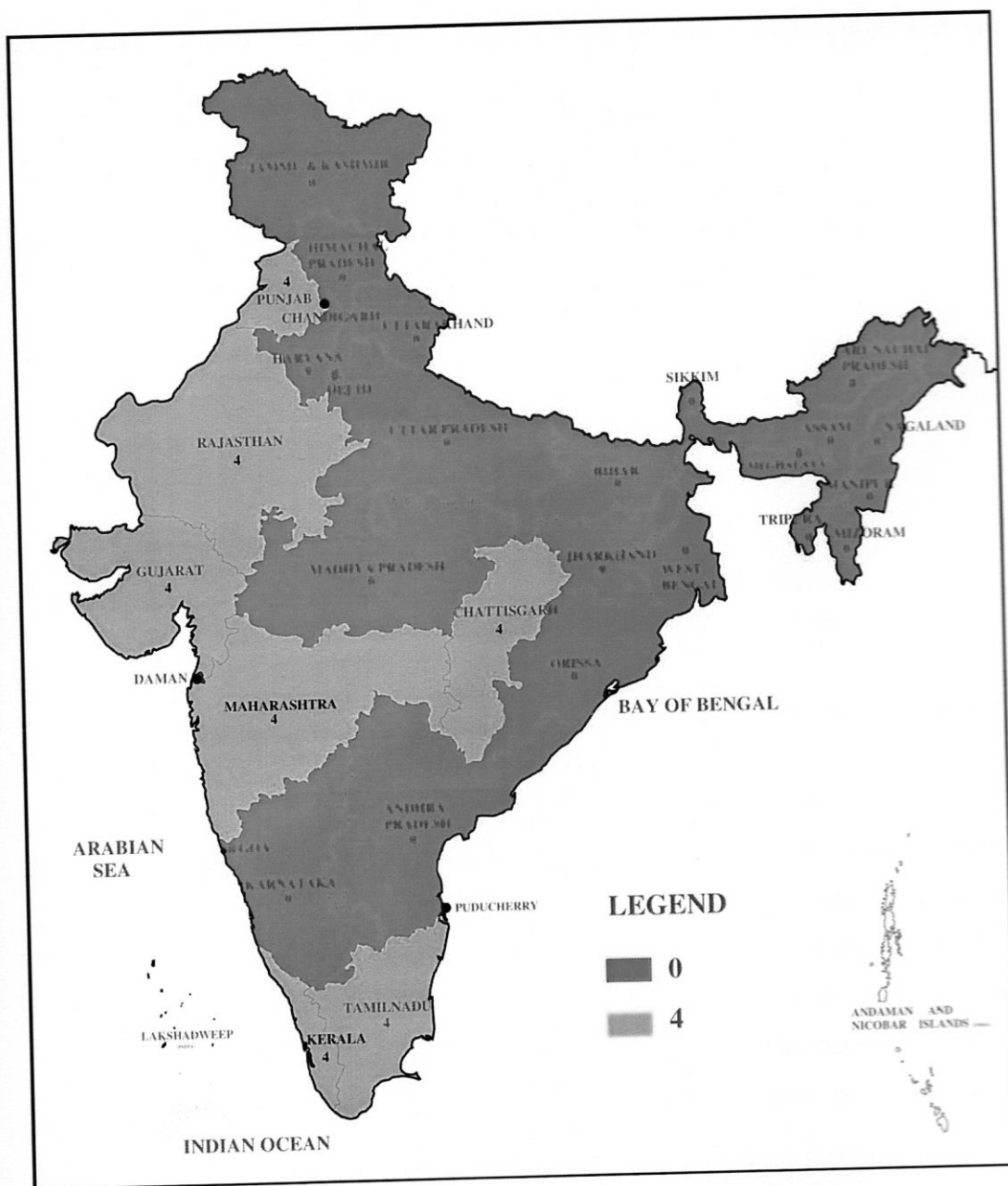


Figure 11: Online examination implementation scores for state level recruitment organisations

Overall implementation of e-Recruitment and Region wise Pattern

To analyse the current status of implementation of e-Recruitment process in public service recruitment organisation, the final scores have been calculated by adding scores under different types of activities as given in the previous sections of this chapter. Following figures show the status of overall implementation of e-

Recruitment processes in national/ regional level recruitment organisations and in state level recruitment organisations included in the study.

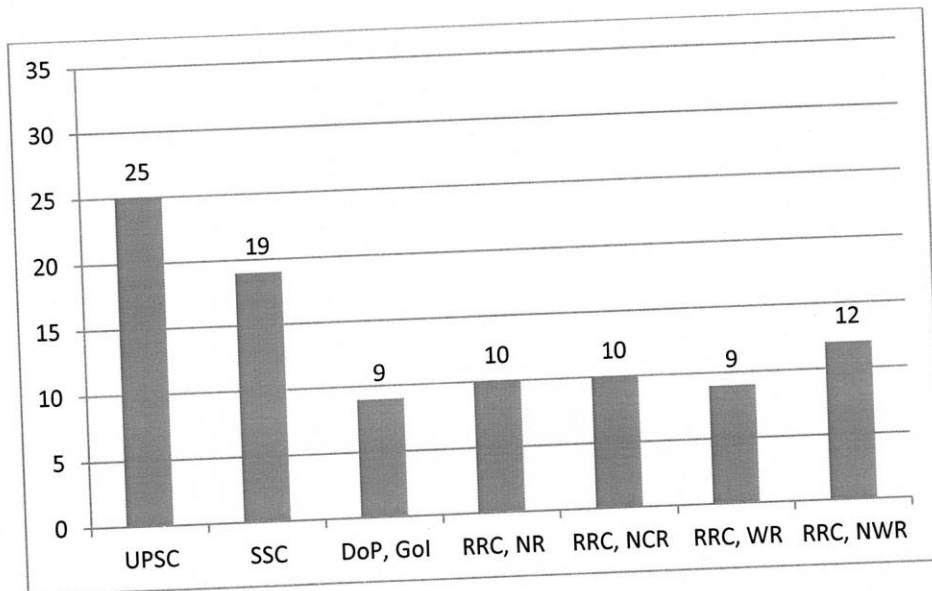


Figure 12: Overall e-Recruitment implementation scores for national/ regional recruitment organisations

It is seen that UPSC is the highest scorer followed by SSC. Railway Recruitment Cells have a very low score as till recently online applications/ admit cards etc. were not implemented. However, Railway board has already decided that these organisations will have 100% online applications and online examination from the next recruitments to be made in 2015 hence the scores which seem to be low at present will definitely improve. In case of Department of Post, main issue seems to be unavailability of recruitment related information on website and the same needs attention.

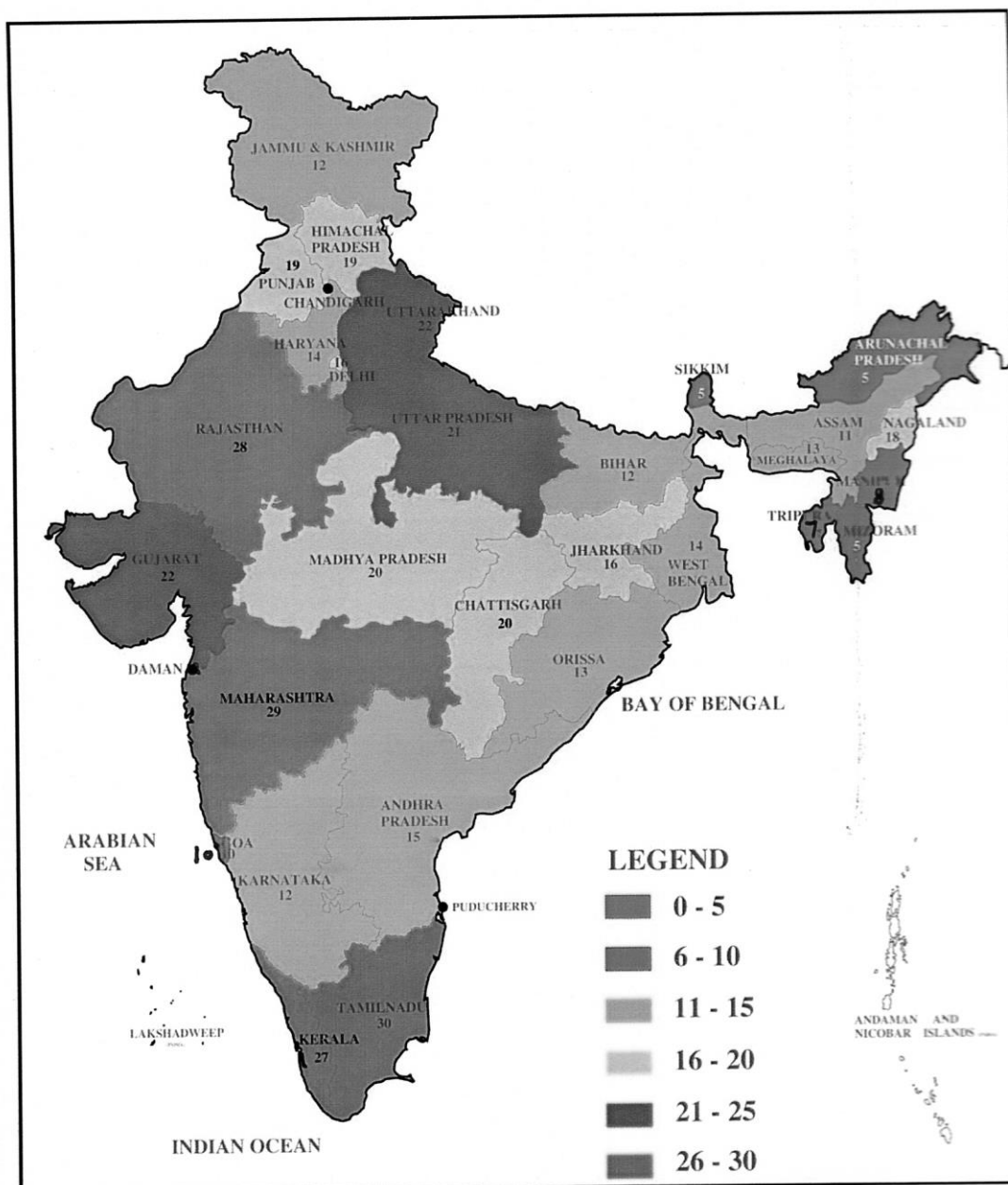


Figure 13: Overall e-Recruitment implementation scores state recruitment organisations

It is seen that Public Service Commissions of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have the best performance and are having scores even higher than UPSC which is the highest scorer amongst national/ regional recruitment organisations. They are also the pioneers in starting some of the e-Recruitment processes in the country. Kerala is the only organisation studied which is establishing own infrastructure in the form of captive centres for conduct of online examinations. It also has developed most of the IT systems in-house.

Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh come in the next rung who are slightly below UPSC in terms of overall scores.

Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim are having the lowest scores followed by Manipur, Tripura and Goa.

To see any regional pattern, states have been grouped in geographical regions and the minimum, maximum and average values of total scores out of a score of 35 is listed in the table below.

Table 2: Region wise Comparison of e-Recruitment implementation scores

Region	Average Score	Min	Max
National/Regional Organisations	13.43	9	25
North	17.57	14	22
Central	20	20	20
West	22.25	10	29
South	21	12	30
East	13.75	12	16
North east	9	5	18

Average region wise scores have been shown graphically in the following Figure which shows a regional pattern.

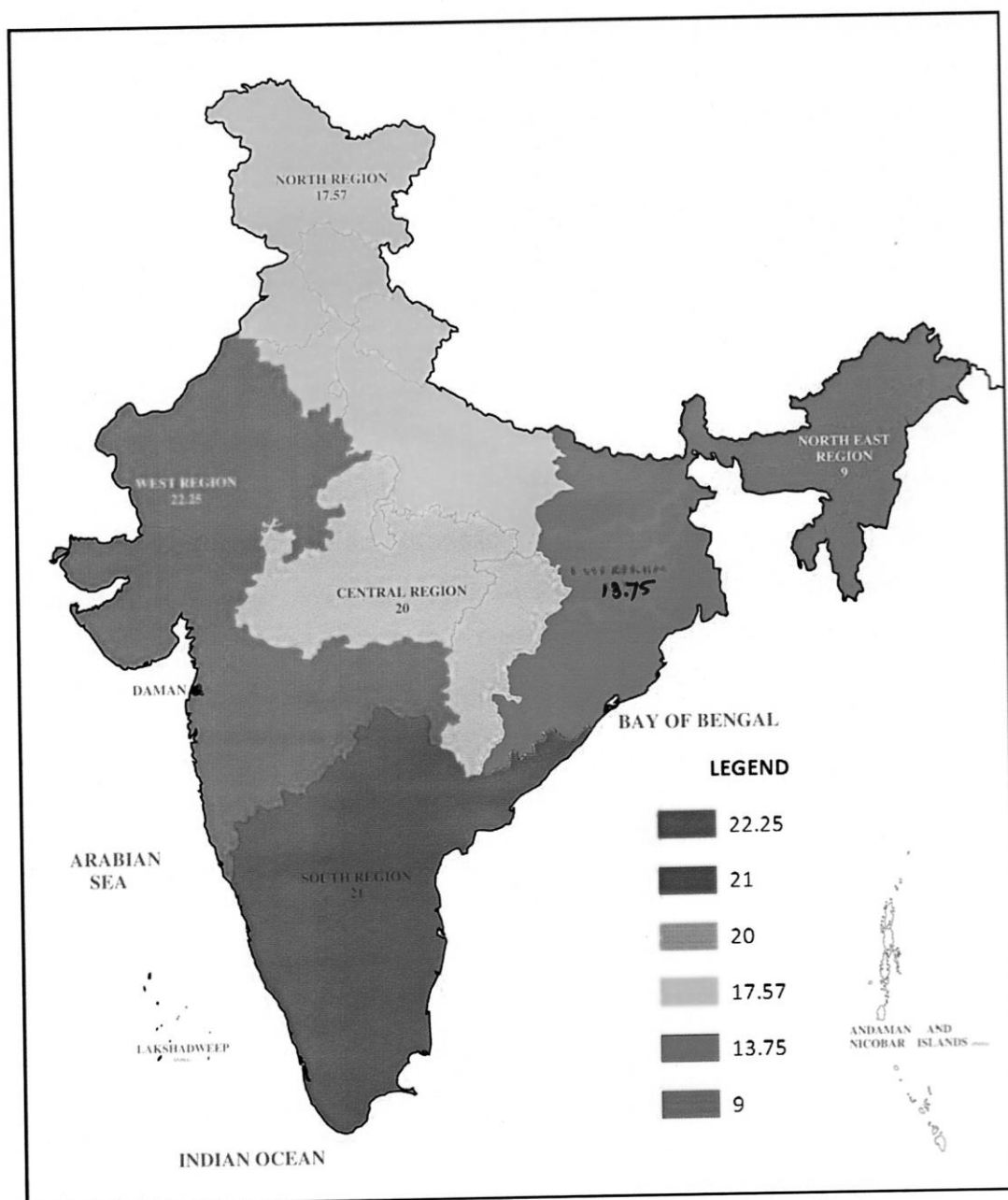


Figure 14: Region wise e-Recruitment implementation level (average scores) for state public service recruitment

From the above table and figure of region wise comparison of scores it is apparent that the organisations in the Western states of India are taking the lead in implementation of e-Recruitment processes followed by Southern, Central and then the Northern States. However, organisations in Eastern states and more specifically North-eastern states are lagging behind. This may be due to the issue of limited availability of internet access as has been discussed in Chapter 5. As compared to the state recruitment organisations, level of implementation of e-Recruitment in the

national/ regional level organisations is on lower side and is slightly better than the north eastern states. This is understandable as the national level policies have to take into account the readiness of all the regions of the country. Out of the national/ regional level organisations, UPSC is the front runner in terms of implementation of e-Recruitment which may be due to the fact that it mostly makes recruitment for higher level posts involving graduate level candidates unlike other organisations which conduct majority of the examinations with essential qualification as Matriculation or Higher Secondary level.

However, it is also seen that there is wide variation in the scores within a region. In the North Eastern states, Nagaland Public Service Commission stands out in terms of implementation of most of the basic e-Recruitment processes. Similarly, Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission and Jharkhand Public Service Commission which have large rural and tribal population demographics in their respective states have implemented many e-Recruitment processes apart from 100% online applications. Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission has even started online examinations.