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Limited Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Class III of Sri Lanka Administrative Service - 2010 (2012)

Limited Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Class III of Sri Lanka Administrative Service - 2011 (2012)

(03) Case Study

Two hours

- Study the case study given below and answer all questions set on it.

Establishment of the Department for Mitigation of Damages from Earthquakes and Tsunami

As a result of a policy decision of highest priority of the government the Department for Mitigation of Damages from Earthquakes and Tsunami (DMDDET) was established in January this year. Despite the fact that the people of this country have still not forgotten the unbearable damage done to the life and property by the Tsunami on 26.12.2004, several incidents occurred subsequently for people to be alarmed by earthquakes at various scales within the country as well as in the ocean. In 2011, a team from the United Nations Organization comprising of Japanese, American and British experts under an assistance programme conducted a thorough survey and exploration for a period of one month and has revealed that the core of the earth associated with Sri Lanka is now subject to earthquakes. It also confirmed that small scale earthquakes may occur frequently within the country and it has not precluded any chances of occurring larger scale earthquakes. They also have identified that the northern parts of the hill country as a highly risk area in the report. Further the report has pointed out that the larger scale earthquakes that can occur in the south east ocean may cause Tsunami situations affecting the coastal belt of Sri Lanka. The report while emphasising the importance of being prepared to face such situations it has also made several recommendations as a way forward.

The newly established department was empowered with full of authority in the subject. Most of the responsibilities related to Earthquakes and Tsunami incidents hitherto handled by the Meteorology Department and Geological Survey and Mines Bureau were removed from them and handed over to the new department. All the work units that handled work related to Earthquakes and Tsunami, sophisticated equipments, and trained staff etc. were also transferred to the new department. The top level as well as the rest of the staff of those two institutions were frustrated for taking away much of their authority and hard earned resources.

The new department was assigned under the newly established Ministry of Emergency Situations. The Minister in charge was a powerful MP represented the Galle District and he took steps to establish the head office of the new department at Galle city as the centre for entire Southern Province which was badly affected by the Tsunami in December 2004, with the view of providing services much effectively. Although several other Cabinet Ministers have expressed their concerns the decision was not changed. DMDDET was established as a "A" Grade Department and Mr. P Bhoopathi, a Class I SLAS Officer who held the position of a Senior Deputy Director of Social Services Department was appointed as its Director General. During the time he served in the Department of Social Services he had undergone a three month certificate course on Disaster Management in India. Mr. Bhoopathi is a person from Kegalle and his wife is a school teacher serving in the same area and residing at the Kegalle home with their only child that was a blessing for them after 10 years of their marriage life. Therefore, he used to travel daily from home to Colombo office during his previous job. Although he accepted the new position considering it as a career progression, Mr. Bhoopathi is facing enormous problems.

Mr. Bhoopathi, a person who always adamantly sticks to his own opinion, did not have much relationship with his staff out side the official work. The 40 officers attached from the Department of Meteorology and 35 officers attached from the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau are technical experts having special subject knowledge

and experience. With the rest of the staff received for the new department its entire cadre was 130. Among the staff received from the two technical departments there were 4 PhD and 10 Masters holders. It was a great relief that it received a new building with all facilities within the Galle city for the new office, required vehicles and modern communication systems with the intervention of the Minister. As well, the District Secretary Galle too is a close SLAS contemporary colleague of Mr. Bhoopathi.

By now, few months have elapsed since Mr. Bhoopathi resumed duties in his post. Interaction among officers are basically limited to official meetings and they generally communicate through files, remaining in their rooms. The efforts taken by Mr. A. Suhadasinghe, the Director (Administration) during the past few months to change the situation of functioning of separate groups by people who joined from the Department of Meteorology, Geological Survey and Mines Bureau and the other staff have not served any purpose.

Mr. Bhoopathi was very enthusiastic in having a set of objectives and formulating a pre-prepared five year plan for the new department. Although emphasized it at several staff meetings, it has not been done so far due to very poor contribution of the Directors in charge of technical subject areas of Earthquakes and Tsunami. Since it is an office functioning under his own Ministry located within his constituency, the Minister frequently visits the new Department and has recently expressed his frustrations over the issue of not preparing a future work plan. Though setting up of 10 regional offices in sensitive areas to control emergency situations is a hope of the government, it has been so far a dream as a result of this "cold war."

Last 10th April 2012, Mr. Bhoopathi received a phone call informing that his son was seriously down with high fever extended to fits. Therefore, with the objective of visiting his son and spending the new year holidays with the family Mr. Bhoopathi applied one week leave from the Secretary to the Ministry and left for Kegalle. Unexpectedly, since the condition of his son was serious, he had to be admitted to the hospital that day itself. While he was at the hospital bedside of his son on the 11th of April 2012, Mr. Bhoopathi received a phone call informing that a large scale earthquake of Richter Scale 8.7 has occurred in the sea bed near Sumathra Island and there is a high risk of Tsunami to Sri Lanka.

(This case is hypothetically created purely for academic purpose and the names, places, regions, situations and events are fictitious)

1. What are the factors that persuaded the government to establish the Department for Mitigation of Damages from Earthquakes and Tsunami? (10 marks)
2. Formulate a set of new objectives for the Department for Mitigation of Damages from Earthquakes and Tsunami. (Limit the answer only to five major objectives) (10 marks)
3. What were the steps that should have been taken by Mr. Bhoopathi at the crisis situation emerged on 11.04.2012? (10 marks)
4. Explain the salient features of the leadership style of Mr. Bhoopathi. (10 marks)
5. What are the advantages of setting up the head office of the new department at Galle and what problems have created as a result of it? (20 marks)
6. (i) Analyse the management problems that the Director General of the Department for Mitigation of Damages from Earthquakes and Tsunami has faced. (20 marks)
(ii) What are the remedial measures that can be taken to rectify the unsatisfactory situations prevailing in the Department for Mitigation of Damages from Earthquakes and Tsunami? (20 marks)