National Recruitment Agency

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet has decided to create National Recruitment Agency (NRA).

What is the NRA?

- The NRA would be an independent, professional, specialist organisation.
- It would conduct a screening examination for non-gazetted jobs.
- This will eliminate the need for candidates to take separate examinations of the RRB, SSC and IBPS.
- [RRB - Railway Recruitment Board, SSC - Staff Selection Commission, IBPS - Institute of Banking Personnel Selection.]
- There would also be an emphasis on creating advanced online testing infrastructure in 117 aspirational districts.
- Overall, the posts coming under the ambit of the proposed NRA would cover about 1.25 lakh jobs a year, which attract about 2.5 crore aspirants.

What are the benefits of NRA?

- The single examination may be offered at the district level in the regional language.
- The gains from a single examination, as opposed to a multiplicity of tests in far fewer locations are self-evident.
- Candidates would no longer have to travel to urban centres at considerable expense and hardship to take an employment test.
- Opportunities to improve performance, subject to age limits, and 3-year validity for scores are positive features.

What should the government concentrate on?

- The long-term relevance of such reforms will depend on the governments' commitment to raise the level of public employment and expand services to the public.
- Both of this is low in India. The governments should work on this.

What are the concerns?

- As a share of the organised workforce, the Central government employment

appears to be declining.

- New posts are sanctioned periodically, but a large number of vacancies remain unfilled.
- With growing emphasis on transferring core railway services to the private sector, there may be fewer government jobs on offer in the future.
- Moreover, jobs under the Centre, predominantly in the railways and defence sectors, constitute around 14% of public employment.
- The rest of the jobs fall within the purview of States.

How should the reform be?

- The reform must have a wider reach to achieve scale.
- It must be marked by well-defined procedures, wide publicity and open competition, besides virtual elimination of discretion.
- The NRA can potentially cut delays, boost transparency and enable wider access.
- The entire process of candidate selection must be a model, raising the bar on speed, efficiency and integrity.

Source: The Hindu

