

**Copy of Punjab Government letter No. 6468-GS-60/20806, dated Chandigarh, the 17th June, 1960 from Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab, addressed to all Heads of Departments.**

**Subject :—Procedure to be followed in selection of officers/officials for promotion to higher posts—  
Greater emphasis on merit than on seniority.**

I am directed to refer to letter No. 9129-G-56/3964, dated the 17th September, 1955, from the Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab to your address on this subject and to inform you that a question has been put to Government as to whether the executive instructions, conveyed in this letter override the provisions of Service Rules, where these exist, laying down that promotions to a particular class of posts shall be strictly on merits and seniority alone shall confer no claim to a particular promotion. I am to clarify the position in this matter.

2. The executive instructions referred to above provide procedure for considering names for promotion, the general rule being that three names should be considered for each post. Where a service rule lays down that within a particular service, promotion shall be made by selection, on the basis of merit and suitability in all respects and no member of the Service shall have any claim to such promotion as a matter of right or mere seniority or has provision somewhat to this effect, namely making it quite clear that promotions are a matter of merit and not merely of seniority, Government is advised that the Department making the selection is not limited to choosing between three fit persons for a single post. It may apply such criteria for suitable competitive selection as it wishes and considers fair and appropriate and in doing so need not limit it self to three names for each post. In other words, the executive instructions do not override or restrict the provisions of a statutory service rules which distinctly provides for selection on merit without necessary reference to seniority.

3. I might add also that the above clarification is within terms of Government policy in which the emphasis increasingly must be towards selection on merit rather than merely on seniority. This does not mean that seniority will not be a consideration at all in assessing the suitability and merits of candidates because other things being equal or near equal, a person who is senior has certainly to be regarded as more suitable from the point of view of experience and maturity. It would follow therefore, that even where Service Rules categorically provide for selection entirely on merits, seniority would still be one of the considerations in making an assessment on merits regarding a particular case, though in the final selection, it will not necessarily be the determining factor.