

The origins of the Public Services Commission (PSC) can be traced back to 1947 when the colonial government accepted the recommendations of the Haragin Committee for the establishment of public services commissions in the colonies, including the Gold Coast, Nigeria, the Gambia and Sierra Leone.

The objective for the establishment of the Commissions in the colonies was to effect a desirable consolidation and extension of existing arrangements regarding human resource and other associated matters in order to secure the confidence, fairness and impartiality of the general public and government appointees.

In 1948, the Coussey Committee, which was appointed in the aftermath of the 1948 riots to draft a constitution for the country, recommended a full-fledged PSC that would resort to a more rigorous policy of training and appointment of Africans to all Classes of Posts in the Civil Service and give preference to African candidates in all appointments, where they possessed the requisite qualifications.

The 1951 Constitution (Order-in-Council) of the Gold Coast Created, for the first time, the PSC to advise the Governor on issues relating to Appointments, Transfers and Disciplinary control of the public officers. However, the Governor was not required to necessarily act in accordance with the advice given him by the Commission.

In 1954, the G.C. Order-in-Council (Constitution) of 1954 made the exercise of the governor's powers, in relation to the Public Service, subject to the recommendation of the PSC – except when the Governor in any particularly case directed the contrary,

At Independence, the Governor-General was to act on the advice of the PSC in similar matters as in 1954. In the case of "Special Posts", i.e. Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department, the Governor-General acted on the advice of the Prime Minister, given in consultation with the PSC. The PSC was made fully independent of the Executive.

Indeed, the noble objective for the establishment of the PSC for the Gold Coast, now Ghana has not changed. However, it is important to note that the periods immediately after independence up to 1979, the management of the public services human resource was marked with the struggle for identification and emphasis of source of control over the public servant. During these years, the executive authority in the state was much prominent in all matters relating to public or civil servant promotion, transfers and discipline.

However, the third Republican Constitution of 1979 restored the position of the PSC in the scheme of managing human resource within the public sector. The drafters of the 1979 constitution reported that "We remain convinced that the only dependable way of guaranteeing the independence and integrity of the Public Service is to remove them from the direct or indirect control of the Executive.

We, therefore, propose that the Public services Commission should be retained in the constitution as the controlling authority of the Public Services, with the responsibility and power to advise on the appointment of persons to hold offices in the Public Services, except in case where the power to advise is entrusted by the constitution to another authority.” they emphasized as that “the only way of getting (our) Public Services back to the required level of efficiency is to propose that the Constitution should state firmly and unequivocally that no member of the Public Services shall be victimized or discriminated against, for having discharged his duties faithfully in accordance with the Constitution.”

Today, Article 194 (1) of the fourth Republican Constitution of 1992 states that “there shall be a Public Services Commission which shall perform such functions as assigned to it by this Constitution or by any other law. Article 196 of Constitution of 1992 further states that “The Public Services Commission shall have such powers and exercise such SUPERVISORY, REGULATORY AND CONSULTATIVE functions as Parliament shall, by law, prescribe, including as may be applicable, the supervision and regulation of entrance and promotion examinations, recruitment, appointment into or promotions within the Public Services and the establishment of guidelines on the terms and conditions of employment in the public services”

The PSC Act, 1994 (Act 482) giving effect to the above constitutional provisions, provides details of the composition of the Commission, its functions and the secretariat that supports the functions of the Commission.