

## PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TEACHERS' RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IN AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR (AJK)

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching workforce plays a dynamic role in transforming societies but if recruited through inappropriate mechanism it generates low quality education. Present research attempted to analyze existing system of recruitment and selection in public sector schools of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan. Qualitative data of various researches and selection practices of the world were analyzed. Two major policy documents were also analyzed in view of quality and transparency. Findings revealed that there were many hindrances in fair and meritorious selection of teachers. Ongoing selection was lacking proper policy, educational training, accreditation, bias free selection, districts support, proper recruitment methodologies and effective selection practices. Recommendations were proposed for establishment of separate human resource department with its full infrastructure and autonomy within the region.

### INTRODUCTION

In 21<sup>st</sup> century a teacher is not limited only to the process of teaching, teacher in this technological age has to interact with many challenges both in and outside of school. Therefore teacher must be equipped with diverse qualities for a teaching profession. A teacher in today's cultural change must possess the knowledge about teaching planning, teaching practice, technology education, distance education, peace education and gender education. (Karacaoglu, 2008). In recent hi-tech revolution selection process of teachers is important to be analyzed on a systematic policy. A lot of decisions are taken by the educational organizations in hiring process of teachers. The prime objective is to get pertinent information about better human skills and performance for quality teaching. Therefore selection process takes place to search best talent keeping in view financial and physical resources of the organizations. (Wilk & capelli, 2003).

There's an imbalance in demand and supply of public school teachers. This disequilibrium persists due to attrition and population increase and it stands increasing day by day. It also results in improper selection and poor teaching in view of economic outcomes. There is a need of long term planning to fill such teaching positions with the help of school management. (Lee, Peng & Hsion, 2009). Hammond (2003) described that although teacher attrition is a major issue in proper supply of teachers in schools, but despite of this issue preparation of teachers for teaching profession is very important. Because of less teacher preparation most of financial resources are utilized on hiring and mentoring. Hence system of hiring is needed to be reviewed to make it profitable and less cost effective for educational sector.

UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2012) described that there is a severe shortage in primary school teachers in all over the world and nearly 1.7 million new teachers are required to be enrolled in 114 countries of the world. South and west Asia has a large amount of these teachers to be hired. As a result number of pupil-teacher and pupil-class ratio is increasing and quality of public schools is deteriorating.

Concept of migration, relocation and cultural change has enhanced teaching needs in different corners of the world. On the other side trade and technology too has changed the fabric of school culture. Therefore in such environment an ordinary teacher would never be successful. Cross cultural needs have emphasized for more talented teaching force therefore hiring of such teachers needs a keen judgment and overview of system. (Teachers preparation for global age, nd). Recruitment at the credit of state is an important source of income but flow of teachers in public sector schools is not up to the mark therefore quality of education is being seen in peril. Competition of labor market has decreased contribution of labor market from these public schools. (Green, Machins, Murphy and Zhu, 2007).

The territory of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) comprised ten school districts which had more than 680 public sector schools. The education system was controlled by the Directorate of Education in the capital of state. The schools were distributed geographically in mountainous locations and a decentralized system of

selection for the teachers was adopted. The selection process comprised two major stages as initial selection and final interview. Jurisdiction of selection for various cadres and posts were categorized differently by the school districts. (www. ajk.gov.pk). The major purposes of the study were to:-

1. Analyze the existing selection process of teachers in view of quality and international practices in AJK.
2. Propose succinct guidelines to region to establish a fair and transparent system of selection.

#### **METHOD & PROCEDURE OF STUDY**

In view of nature of research problem an extensive review of related researches and analysis of qualitative data was carried for recruitment and selection of public sector teachers in AJK, Pakistan. The existing policy of recruitment and selection was also examined in view of existing needs and international trends. In view of geographical relevance study was delimited to region of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) in Pakistan which comprised ten school districts. The study involved analysis of existing two major policy documents for teachers' selection one of which was about required general and professional qualification for various cadres while the other was about tests and interviews. Because study was confidential in nature therefore permission was acquired from Secretary Education (Schools) Government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir for access of policy documents on an authority letter. Prior to conduct the research Department of Education National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad and Institute of Education & Research (IER) Peshawar were consulted for study guidelines. Qualitative data was carefully examined to analyze procedures and to devise categorical framework of solution of the problem understudy. The discrepancies in view of quality management and transparent procedures were also noted after a complete analysis of policy documents. Pre selection, selection and post selection strategies were proposed for a successful selection. After an analysis of consulted qualitative data of extensive review and policy documents shortcomings were noted on the way to meritorious and transparent selection of teachers. Figure 1 is the description for method and procedure of study.

#### **ONGOING SELECTION TRENDS AND PERSISTANT SHORTCOMINGS IN THE SYSTEM**

In view of analysis of qualitative data and policy papers following latest trends and issues were explored and shortcomings were examined in recent selection mechanism in AJK.

##### **Lack of human resource planning**

Recruitment and selection involves two different stages of hiring which takes place one after the other. Dessler & Varkkey (2009) described that forecasting human resource plan for recruitment means to find or attract different applicants to fill employer's open positions. According to Wilk & Capelli (2003) selection decisions about employees are central and result oriented for individual and society. A sole purpose of selection is to collect important information about applicants so that the best of them may be differentiated to offer a job.

##### **Change in physical environment**

Despite of growing needs of competent teacher, their selection procedures are still lacking from first to the last stage. Change in physical environment of institutions and social culture has demanded effective and competent hiring panel to recruit new teachers. Changes of political climate, cultural needs, system of policy making and accountability all has influenced fair selection. On the other side feudalism, tribalism and cultural biases are prominent barriers in translucent selection of teachers. (Iqbal et al, 2013).

##### **Lack of teachers' qualification and self-interests**

Memon (2007) described that some of prominent problems diagnosed in fair selection of teachers are lack of qualification at the time of entry, lack of professional training and issues in accreditation of teacher certification. There are also other problems in fair selection like pressure of regional and political groups which also intrude selection system. Likewise excessive self-interests in the profession of teaching are alarming to acquire goal of quality education.

##### **Political pressure and cultural issues**

Quality of teaching is also decreasing with respect to pupil-teacher ratio. Zakar (2013) denoted that pupil-teacher and pupil-class ratio is among increasing factors due to rapid augment in enrollment of schools. These problems arise because of less professional training, political influence and poor coordination in teaching which also downgrades quality. Hameed & Waheed (2011) described that shortage of female teachers is also a crucial indicator because of various gender discriminations prevailing especially in less developed countries. Gender discrimination and disparity of class and color may need to be addressed to provide equal chances of entry in teaching profession. Political influence has drawn back the quality of teacher in less developed countries. This

practice is rapidly increasing to build up vote bank for politics instead of teaching progress; hence teachers instead of taking part in professionalism take part in personal and political matters. (Punab & Jamil, nd).

#### **Lack of selection mechanism and policy**

Vazir & Retallic (2007) stated that mechanism and proper methodology of selection of teachers is a problem in many parts of the world. Similarly if such mechanism or methodology persists there is no authority for its proper implementation and accreditation. The majority of problems in teachers' selection are seen at the level of management of selection. Such problems come as a result of poor policy, unsuitable executive procedures and their implementation. These problems also consist in the form of lack of transparency in documentation, testing, check and balance, trained human resource, poor coding, confidentiality, inappropriate test administration, accreditation of teachers' certification issues, favoritism and personal interests. Resultantly a bad teaching force occupies these public schools which become a blockade in national progress. (Atashak, 2011).

#### **Job satisfaction and insecurity**

Teachers' job satisfaction and security is another arising issue. Most of teachers leave their jobs because they think it less attractive and insecure or environment provided to them is not peaceful. These incidents are seen in contract selection which sluggish morale of teaching force. These dangerous issues also result in slow quality enhancement. Most of teachers show lack of interest and motivation in their profession. (Ministry of Education, 2004).

#### **Unhealthy role of districts and local bodies**

Role of districts or their local bodies cannot be ignored because these bodies determine feasibility of teaching force in view of infrastructural needs. Jerome (2012) highlighted that in process of selection districts have a greater role and schools too have to play a prominent part because education is a labor intensive endeavor. But unfortunately role of districts in meeting all these needs have not yet been made up to the national demands.

#### **Selection strategies for future teachers**

In view of analysis of related research, policy documents and open ended views of teachers' suitable suggestions were incorporated by respondents which were finally included. In a nutshell, for an organized and progressive system of selection following important steps are required to be followed in three different spans of selection for future teachers in public sector school of Pakistan.

#### **Proposed Selection Mechanism for Teachers Selection**

On the basis of diagnosed issues from consulted literature and review of selection policy of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Following other findings for pre selection, selection and post selection phases of recruitment and selection of teachers were examined from various advance research studies:-

#### **Pre-selection phase**

In all circumstances teaching may be seen only as a high quality profession. Institutional mission, goals, objectives, outreach marketing needs and policy developments are important steps in teachers' selection. Districts should play a keen role in making essential decision for demand and supply of teachers. (Vidak, 2008). In order to seek an effective teaching force in view of demand and supply, policy makers should determine their line of action to meet their educational targets. District and school management both have to develop a framework of fair recruitment and selection. (Guarino et al, 2006). Streamlined policies will also provide a good direction of selection to fill vacant posts. Both centralized and decentralized policies are adopted to meet demands of teachers' recruitment. Local needs determine rural or urban background and positions of placement of teachers. (Hobson et al, 2010). A clearly documented quality policy for selection of teachers should be framed as teaching has become 'a part of community. Recruitment on the basis of academic marks or degrees cannot examine the capabilities therefore a well directed policy will lead the selectors. (Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007).

Lack of advance certification is also a problem in fair selection. Certification from standardized and accredited institutions helps to hire competent teachers. Different criteria are developed by various countries. Both pre and in service programs are launched but they must be accredited by some quality assessment board or institution. (Wang, Coleman, Coley & Phelps). Professional standards of country designed for quality of teachers must also be kept in mind while selection of real educational professionals. These standards serve as pathways to find skillful teachers. Knowledge, skills and professional disposition all may be examined while hiring of teachers. (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008). Certification and licensing enhances quality education so different countries adopt different procedures for licensing and certification of

new teachers. Both formal and advanced certification is asked by various countries. Criteria of certification must be higher in view of quality management process. (Ruth & Sawali, 2000 ; Levin, 2006).

For quality recruitment and selection responsibilities at the level of management of selection should be keenly reviewed. Screening and reference check, training of selection panels, participation of sufficient staff, prevention of administrative problems and use of proper selection tools with practical applications may be made mandatory. (Chao et al, 2012). Local schools needs in their cultural context and conformity to environment should also be reviewed by local selection boards and member of district committees. (Clifford, 2012). In advanced countries other conditions despite of testing and interviewing are also asked from teachers. Levine (2006) stated that Criminal background check and child abuse clearance are the conditions necessary for a teacher to qualify for award of initial teacher certification and it stands valid for two years only. These conditions also apply for renewal of certificate in few countries. The advanced teacher certification is awarded by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in USA.

Post & Hammond (2000) suggested that two major aspects, subject knowledge and professional knowledge are dominant as overall quality of teaching profession. These competencies serve as basic skills for teacher's success in profession. Studies revealed that technology mediated recruitment and selection activities are replacing the formal methods of recruitment and selection. Recruitment only through newspapers, job fairs, college recruitment, bulletin boards and notices is no more followed. Recruitment and selection through online and internet supported techniques helps to provide an extended talent from a wide range of population across a large geographical area. (Balter & Duncombe, 2005). System of technology has rapidly changed the system of recruitment and selection. Chapman & Lievans (2009) highlighted some innovative approaches of selection in the light of environmental and technological changes in which induction ways are changing into online and audio-video based testing. These measures are less cost effective and also time saving. Schools are also adopting these new ways of selection in those countries which are comparatively better in their technology.

Needs of millions of schools especially in primary education may be analyzed to uplift and develop teaching through proper assessment, teacher's support and monitoring of teaching standards. Therefore complete system may be reviewed step by step in view of persistent hindrances. (National Education Policy, 2009).

### **Selection phase**

In selection process assessment of teaching competencies is very important. Teacher must be with the ability to understand rights, entitlements and privileges about the profession and also legal, sociological and philosophical concepts of teaching. (Competence profile, 2010). Teaching competencies are needed to be explored from all candidates. There are a lot of indicators for teaching competencies of teachers. Berk (2005) stated that peer evaluation, self-evaluation, videos, interviews, rating scales and student's achievements are famous measures to explore teaching competencies. In this view these methods could be used if a teacher is needed to be examined for appointment of a teaching post.

Iqbal & Qadir (2013) highlighted that inner zeal and missionary spirit of a teacher are two major forces which renovate learning of early classes. Interest and motivation of a teacher other than missionary spirit are forces which mend students' abilities in early classes and these may be explored while selection. Qualities of a teacher are explained differently by different experts. Haberman (1995) stated the qualities of teacher by highlighting as "star teacher" for a successful profession. He described that selection panel should explore a star teacher having qualities of affection, human relations, organizational ability, emotional stability, style of teaching, exploring and conveying success factors and motivation. A star teacher also accepts mistakes and believes that every one learns from mistakes. Mulkeen, Chapman, Dejaeghere and Leu (1999) stated that motivation is an enlightening force in view of inner spirit and it must be explored by selection panels. Females can also be examined in view of inner motivation to choose field of teaching because in early childhood education female teachers can become beneficial guides.

According to Florida Department of Education (2011) skills required in early classes include knowledge of growth and development, language and physical development, theories of learning, cognitive development, research standards, current issues, technology, community and family, program development, curriculum, guidance and counseling. Hindsman & Strong (2006) described that there are many pre-requisites for personal and professional knowledge which are a part of teacher quality index while selection. Verbal ability, content and teaching knowledge, experience, motivation, class management, assessment, teaching strategies, monitoring and evaluation are very famous.

Personality of a teacher is a dominant factor in teaching and influencing learning. Teacher stands as a role model and personality of a teacher moulds personality of a student. Composition of a balanced personality of a teacher with good traits changes personality of a child. Personality of teacher is examined by different methods. Most of schools examine five factors of personality through Big five personality inventory. Therefore both hidden and obvious traits of personality may be examined by selectors. ( Kneipp et al, 2010). Culture and family background influence personality of a teacher, however most important trait of personality for teaching are agreeableness, respectfulness, enthusiasm, honesty, adaptability, responsibility, expectation, and friendliness. (Gao & Leu, 1999). There are different controversies about previous teaching experience that either during selection it may be given precedence or not, but mostly a minimum experience or licensing has been strongly supported. (Ahmed, 2013).

Clement,(nd) stated that while selection Behavior Based Interview (BBI) is a borrowed technique from business world. It is an enforcing element of teachers' selection. This technique is supportive to know performance skills needed for a particular job. Despite formal questioning administrators and panels must formalize a new system of BBI techniques. Teachers' selection is a comprehensive and disciplined process which must be organized under a planned activity. Interviewing and testing tools must be made valid and reliable by experts. Vitale (2009) described that online versions of tests have been very famous which are easily to be administered and scored. These tests have also a high level of validity and reliability. They cover a specific time and aspects of teaching which are needed to be examined. These include Gallup Teacher Perceiver Interview (GPTI), Teacher Insight Interview (TII), Interactive Computer Interview System (ICIS), Star Teacher Interview and Urban Teacher Selection Interview (UTSI). There are other tests like Teacher Quality Index (TQI) and five factor personality tests to measure teacher effectiveness.

In order to make process of selection fair and free, agenda and methodology of interview should be uniform both for internal and external candidates. All discrimination should be kept aside and tests should be validated. Sometimes pre-employment background checks and the choice of salary is a part of selection in addition before sending a final offer of appointment. (Klug, 2011). Autonomy and independence of selection panel and power of decision making must be taken into consideration to avoid any external pressure. In this way autonomy of selected teachers will increase too and they will become better decision makers. (Bracy & Moinar, 2003).

#### **Post-selection phase**

Discrepancies in test making, test taking and result declaration about actual scores or merit listing produce a prolonged decision instead of timely and fair selection. It creates a psychological stress for a job success. (Memon, 2010). After conduct of tests, interviews and other needed criteria of selection confidentiality and preservation of test results is important. Proper documentation, preservation and recording of data in whole selection process is very essential. In the similar fashion all followed steps in process of recruitment and selection like advertisement, screening, test taking, interviews, scoring, reference check, background check and mental and physical fitness are essential to be followed. At the end complete activities may be re-analyzed in the light of fair and meritorious selection. Process flow chart in Figure "2" highlights sequential steps of recruitment and selection of future teachers in the light of existing shortcomings.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Recruitment and selection of public sector school teachers have been an alarming issue for the last many decades. There is an acute shortage of public school teachers due to rapid population increase and high attrition rate in Pakistan. The empirical data and policy documents reflect that there is no clear and well directed agenda of top management to ensure transparency and merit policy. Existing system was observed very weak in its professional spirit and competency of selection. An urgent need was that an independent, autonomous and qualified selection body may be designed. Situation is going worse because of changes in physical, technological, political, cultural, racial and managerial scenarios. Politicization of selection, cultural biases, racism, inadequate qualification, lack of selection policies, poor mechanism, lack of districts support, improper conduct of selection and lack of training of selection panels are major problems. Criteria of age gender and qualification are also necessary to be established for selection.

There is an essential need of time to devise comprehensive selection strategies by taking steps of de-politicization of recruitment and selection, well directed policies, proper mechanism of selection activities, job security, validity and reliability of tests, technology mediated selection activities, autonomy, accreditation, impartiality of selection panel and training of selectors. Teachers' competency according to academic and professional skills, personality traits and experience is required to be analyzed thoroughly. Preservation of test records and related documentation is necessary for future reference and fairness. Physical fitness, background



check of references, verification of degrees and experience is to be carried out prior to placement of a teacher to make existing system transparent and affluent.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of in depth analysis of extensive literature, policy documents and study conclusion author recommends following measures for territory of AJK for future selection process of teachers:-

1. The existing selection system must be continuously reviewed and all hindrances and flaws be noted to carry an effective recruitment and selection.
2. A documented quality policy and procedure of selection may be designed with experts for latest educational needs.
3. A separate human resource (HR) department may be established for selection with a clear code of conduct and monitoring.
4. Professional knowledge, subject knowledge and personality tests may be carried out with validity, reliability and scoring procedures. Medical fitness and documents verification may also be carried.
5. System of documentation, recording and preservation may be updated and all types of discriminations and biases be avoided in all process.

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**Figure 1: Procedure of study**



**Figure 2: Proposed Process of recruitment and selection for future teachers in AJ&K**

