

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
A STUDY OF PAKISTAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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The success of an organization depends mainly upon the quality of personnel employed in it. If they are scientifically and carefully recruited, selected, trained to perform the jobs best suited to them and are given proper working conditions, adequate rewards and ample chances of promotions, they are likely to serve the organization efficiently and economically. The modern system of local public service is based upon three important principles: (i) competence; (ii) equality of opportunity; and (iii) neutrality.⁽¹⁾ In order to ensure these principles in human resource management, a system of recruitment through competitive examinations conducted by an autonomous body is established and a system of permanent nature is established. Those, who are not found up to the mark and are dissatisfied with their salaries and other service conditions or lack of promotional opportunities, are likely to lose interest in their jobs. These bring bad name to the organization. Therefore, all the process of recruitment, selection, training, certification for appointment, classification, determination of pay scales and other condition of service, promotion, conduct and discipline, superannuation arrangement and employee-employer relations must be made satisfactorily and seriously.

The right person for the right job could be found if following methods are successfully adopted:

- i) Job analysis and specification
- ii) Attractions for the suitable candidates
- iii) Proper selection of the best candidates
- iv) Encouraging and training the employees to put

their best into the organization.(2)

Obviously an autonomous body must be constituted which should be responsible for the recruiting the staff. It must know the service and other conditions, job requirements and mental capacities required for it. The body must know the physical and other prospects linked to the job. A clearcut idea about the job specification must be available to the body responsible for the human resource management.

For attracting the suitable candidates, the most effective method is the press advertisement. The help wanted or situation vacant advertisements must have main features of job description so that a candidate may have a clearcut idea about the requirements of the job advertised in the press. The applications from the intending candidates received, must be carefully scrutinized and sorted out before the candidates are called for interview. There must be a written test and viva voce. After qualifying the written test, viva voce or interview must be held for about 20 minutes. These few minutes are very important and autonomous body (i.e. public service commission) should find out the suitability of the candidates.

The recruitment and selection process always have a residue of intuition and luck but there are means available to eradicate serious errors. The National Institute of Industrial Psychology, London evolved a seven point plan for the assessment of the suitability of a candidate. The points are as under:-

i) Physical capacities, it includes health, fitness, general appearance etc.

ii) Knowledge, it includes general education and general knowledge for the job advertised.

iii) Ability to learn: it is distinct from what he has already learnt.

iv) Aptitude: it is inclination to undergo the particular type of training and readiness to learn.

v) Disposition: this is natural tendency in the person while dealing with other people. It covers the human relationship aspect. It also includes effectiveness of a person in his work that is energy, drive, and care that he takes in the work.

vi) Aims and interest: they include relation to the work he may be required to perform.

vii) Opportunity: this involves events he has in relation to the use he has to make of.⁽³⁾

For inviting applications, the best way is to prescribe an application form which has the advantage of assembling all the required facts regarding candidates' educational qualifications and other details etc. Such applications can be quickly checked and compared and short listed easily for the candidates to be interviewed.

For pre-interview elimination. The current device is to hold an intelligence test in writing to assess the ability of the applicants for the job. This requires quickness and accuracy. Such intelligence test must be handled with great care. A great scope by this test only suggests that the candidate has the intellectual ability job. But there is no measurement of the ability one will have to put in effec-

tive use in a particular atmosphere. One must not assume that an intelligent person must also be disciplined and rational. There is no correlation between the level of one's intellectual ability and character or judgement and the capacity to use one's ordinary common sense.

Efficiency and satisfaction of the job produce good results if an employee is suited to the job he selects potentially for himself or is called upon to perform.

An American firm has developed certain techniques for test and interview. The selector and interviewer may keep in mind these techniques and should apply them in the required situation. Some of these techniques are serialized as under:⁽⁴⁾

- i) Adequate time in each interview be allowed so that candidate could express his ideas clearly. Before each interview there must be some time to go through the available information about the candidate to be interviewed.
- ii) The object of the interview must be kept in mind. An attempt should be made to find out much information about the candidate in order to assess the suitability of the job.
- iii) Matching of the job and the applicant be kept in mind and only such applicants be selected who are almost sure to be successful for that particular post.
- iv) The interview should be held in congenial atmosphere.
- v) The interview board should call the candidate

courteously by name and he may be asked to occupy the seat. All measures should be taken so that candidate may feel comfortable.

vi) The questions to be asked in the interview should be fully prepared in advance. Some short and simple questions should be asked in the beginning. This will help the candidate in developing confidence. As interview proceeds such questions may be asked which may encourage the candidate to talk freely. The interviewer should also make tactful enquiries in the end about the background of the candidate and his interest outside the work.

vii) An interviewer should not give impression that he is a busy person and has a meagre time for the candidate otherwise he will not get anything useful from the candidate.

viii) The candidate should be given the clear instructions with regard to his duties and responsibilities, pay and fringe benefits. These may have bad and good aspects.

ix) At the end of the interview a candidate should be asked about the job applied for.

x) The candidate must be explained about the selection process. He should be told that he has to go a medical test after interview, then his suitability is to be adjudged.

The merit of the candidate has to be assessed with the help of information and documents provided by him. His personality and behaviour may also be counted. It must always be remembered that it is not possible to find out a perfect person for the job but the best the inter-

viewer can do is to select a person who is most likely to succeed in the particular post.

After going through the process of selection, the list of the successful candidates in order of merit should be prepared. The best available person should be offered job in order of merit. Sufficient time may be given to the candidate to join the post. In case he does not join the job, the next in merit should be given chance. In this way selection board could save itself from another full-dress drill for selecting a suitable person for the job.

The recruitment and selection of personnel is important in all the organization but in local government organizations it is more important as they are the basic public utility organizations providing door to door service to the people. If a suitable person is not occupying the right job in a local body, he may not only be cursed but may bring bad name to the organization, government and country as a whole. A permanent selection board composed of the senior officers of the local government service be constituted for the recruitment and selection of local government personnel on the pattern of Federal/Provincial Public Service Commission. Such board must include members and psychologists.

The local government bodies in Pakistan do not carry a good image in the eyes of the ordinary public. The main reason is that the appointments in the local bodies have so far been made on the political grounds. The politicians have been recruiting their own people in local government bodies for their own interest to service. A large number of employees working in the local bodies are not suitable for the job assigned to them as they are appointed on political grounds. At this stage their services can not be dispensed with but they may be asked to undergo proper

training so that they could perform their jobs satisfactorily.

For further appointments, a permanent selection board consisting of professionals is only the remedy. The recruitment of the officials for the local bodies, preference may be given to the local people as they have a better knowledge of the local problems. The officials of the local bodies must be posted quite near to their residences so that they should have some moral obligation to the locality side by side with their official responsibilities.

It should be noted that Municipal corporations of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras in India have permanent Municipal Service Commission comprised of highly qualified and experienced persons performing the recruitment work, training of municipal employees, their pay structure, promotion cases, conduct and discipline and superannuation etc.⁽⁵⁾ Before the partition days, Karachi Municipal Corporation had been holding regular departmental examinations for determining the promotional cases. It is a good practice to be followed.

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