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REVIEW ARTICLE

TO INVESTIGATE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SHORTAGE OF TEACHING STAFF IN DEGREE COLLEGES OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play key role in imparting knowledge and educating society. They are responsible for production of leaders, bureaucrats, technocrats, doctors and engineers. They provide valuable citizen to the nation. Teacher is an agent who helps in economic growth of country through development of human capital. They are responsible for achievement of nation goals. The educational institutes without teachers are like a body without soul. Unfortunately, the Government Degree Colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are still deprived of teaching staff. In order to find out cause of teacher shortage a study was carried through qualitative approach. The data was gathered by observation, unstructured interview (Discussion) and available literature. The data revealed that still some colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are facing dearth of teaching staff. The reasons behind scarcity of teacher at colleges include teachers absenteeism, non-professional attitude of teachers, nepotism in recruitment, posting and transfer, political interference, posting of surplus teachers in colleges where their services are not required, biasness of administrative staff of education department, unnecessary detailment order by education department and lack of accountability. It has been suggested that fair policy in recruitment and posting may be ensured. New post in various subjects may be created as per need of colleges. All the staff members should be dealt on equity basis. The rules and regulations as pre-determined by administrative department should be implemented impartially without any discrimination.

KEYWORDS

Transfer, Posting, Leave, Absenteeism, political pressure and nepotism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are an awfully vital member of a country. They play important role in imparting education to young generation. They act as major factor in development of sound society. Teachers mould personality of children as per need of society. They are responsible for production of professional and leaders (Ministry of Education, 2009). John Adams quoted that "teacher is a maker of man. He is foundation of all Education, and thus of the whole civilization of mankind, present and future. No nation reconstruction is possible without the active cooperation of the teacher." Teachers act as an agent of change. They are real nation builder. Teachers perform multiple roles. They perform duty as mentor to prepare the learner physically, academically, emotionally and socially (Aneja and Neena, 2014).

The standard of education has been spoiled due to shortage of teaching staff and use of unfair mean in recruitment procedure of teachers. To overcome shortage of teaching staff teachers are recruited in haphazard manner without waiting for initiation of Prime Ministers Education Reforms Program. A large number of teaching posts are still vacant in educational institutes. Government educational institutes are looking for creation of new posts. Recruitment of teachers on urgent basis is desired

to lessen the burden of working teachers (DAWN TODAY'S PAPERS 2016).

Teachers' absenteeism cannot be controlled even after introduction of multiple monitoring bodies. Annual Status of Education Report 2015 reported that the rate of absenteeism is 11% per day in Pakistan. Lack of interest and motivation on part of teachers has deep rooted and spoiled the education system. A study conducted in 1989 on teacher's absenteeism, leave and students achievement revealed that students are less motivated towards learning and showed poor performance in cases where teachers excessive leave and absenteeism has been observed. Another research conducted in India in 2013 also revealed that significance improvement in academic achievement of students has been reported in educational institutes where the teachers' absenteeism rate was lower as compare to those institutes where the rate is higher (Mohsin et al., 2019)

The education department accepted that educational institutes in some areas have been closed due to scarcity of teaching staff. The speaker provincial assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa inquires about the matter wherein an officer of education department accepted that settle area are enjoying surplus pool of teaching staff while backward area of the

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province is opposing dearth of teaching faculty. The speaker directed to depute surplus teachers to educational institutes located at periphery of province on need basis. Rationalization policy was favoured and political interference in posting of teaching was condemned. It was proposed that teachers serving educational institutes located in settle area on detailment basis may be repatriated to original post (Ashfaq and Mohammed, 2012) Objection has been raised upon penetration of fake teachers in education sector due to non-availability of database. Proper check on teachers' absenteeism has not been maintained so far. In some educational institutes the number of teachers is far more than the requirement. However transfer of these surplus teachers to rural areas seems difficult as apart from enjoying facilities of urban area, urban allowance is also admissible to them. Such incentive is not allocated to teachers serving rural areas (Soomro and Asghar, 2013).

Teachers seem less motivated toward their profession as mostly they get opportunity of teaching by chance instead of by choice. Further discrimination in recruitment, promotion and posting transfer policy has worsened the situation. Corruption and political interference play major role in posting and transfer. Rural areas are usually deprived of transport and accommodation facilities. Teachers are reluctant to serve such duty station. The teachers upon transfer to rural area face overburdened timetable as classes of other discipline are assigned to them to cope the shortage of teaching staff (Saeed et al., 2013).

The availability and performance of teachers has been widely affected by nepotism in appointment, posting and transfer, violation of merit in promotion policy, political pressure and corruption. Teachers are reluctant to perform duty at areas which are deprived of basic facilities like accommodation and transport. The timetable in such area is commonly tough due to shortage of teaching staff, hence it may further demoralize teachers to dispose services at that region. A study held by Reddy et. al revealed that approximately 11% of academic session was wasted because of teacher absenteeism. In order to be benefited from long weekend rate of leave on Monday and Friday is more frequent as compare to other days of the week (Farooq and Kai, 2017).

It is recommended that teachers may not be indulged in tasks other than educational activities during peak session. They may be allowed to carry on their assignment of imparting education so as to minimize the dilemma of shortage of teachers'. Violation of merit due to political interference may be diminished. Moreover, shortage of teachers has been reported which may be overcome through hiring of candidates on contract or fund basis (Idara-e- Taleem o Aagahi 2013). It has been recommended that facilities in educational institutes may be increased to motivate teachers to render services at far flung educational institutes. Political intervention in educational matter may be eliminated. Recruitment and promotion should be made on merit basis to eradicate discomfort among the employee (Iqbal et al., 2013).

2. OBJECTIVES

To find out reasons behind teacher shortage in Degree Colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

To propose suggestion for improving teachers shortage in Degree Colleges.

3. PURPOSE

The study has highlighted the area of development of education sector. It will contribute as source of information regarding pitfall in the current system and help high ups to overcome hurdles and took remedial steps for support of education sector.

4. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

It was a qualitative study carried through available literature/document, observation and unstructured interview. Most of the data was collected from the available literature. All the female teachers serving government degree colleges were the population of study. The number of female teaching faculty serving government degree colleges is 2800. The sample

of study was selected through accidental sampling techniques. Almost 100 female teachers were interviewed. The data was gathered from available record and personal files of officers. Observation of teachers' activities was made. Opinion of teaching staff members was recorded.

5. FINDINGS

Officially and unofficially it has been reported that female teaching staff may avail maternity leave at the peak session by providing fake medical documents even though she may have given birth to baby either during off session or summer vacation. It has been reported that teachers may avail leave without any leave record. Such teachers mostly have powerful family background or have good terms with their head. Family members of few teachers admitted that their relative teachers had availed leave without informing high ups and violated government rules. Further it is common concept that medical leave is never ever regretted and cannot be challenged at any stage hence if teaching staff failed to avail leave through aforementioned mean then they go for option of medical leave. In number of cases fake medical document has been reported. In few cases teachers by themselves admitted unofficially that they provided fake medical documents.

The staff members whose family is residing abroad most probably adopt medical leave option if their request for long leave or Ex-Pakistan leave is regretted by competent authority. In certain fake medical cases doctor diagnose fatal disease like cancer in order to assist approval of leave on priority basis. A case has been reported wherein father of a female lecturer accepted that her daughter provide fake medical documents as she want to accompany her husband who is residing abroad and she had already availed round about 02 years leave hence further extension in leave seems impossible to her.

It has been noticed that the teaching faculty with political approach are declared entitled for leave with pay by Account office even after zero credit at their leave account. Such teachers left college without prior sanction of leave and on return from leave pressurize the parent department to sanction leave and adjust them at college of their choice instead of an institute where their services is required. The available record also showed that teachers absent for three to six month are later on declared present by principal and the lady was considered entitled for all benefit that a regular and on duty teacher can avail.

The teachers recruited on zonal quota are reluctant to serve their home town. They prefer to serve colleges located in settle areas. District Peshawar seems most favourite duty station for teachers. It is a matter of common observation that some of teaching staff members of different zone residing in Peshawar once recruited through zonal quota avoid to take charge at college located in that specific zone. They either refuse to take charge at said college or may visit college just for sake of taking charge. The said teachers use different means to convince principal not to stop their monthly salary and allow them to reside in Peshawar without disposing services. Another dilemma is that some colleges of different zone are facing extreme shortage of teachers. The vacant post is usually filled by newly recruited teachers. However fresh appointee may get transferred to duty station of their choice through political approach or other means even though tenure of such teachers is immature. Although as per rule they are bound to serve their duty station for minimum 2 to 3 years.

The data also prevailed that multiple teachers has been transferred to colleges where their service is not required. In certain cases services of teachers are direly needed at previous duty station as she may be single teachers of specific subject at that college. In some cases it has been noticed that teaching staff may get transfer to college wherein already surplus staff in subject concerned is working. This practice may not only affect students of former college as being single teacher of that specific subject but also affect students of another college as the new surplus teacher occupy post of another subject. In presence of surplus teachers, teachers of required subject cannot be adjusted at college due to non-availability of vacant position. Such vacancy is usually occupied by surplus

teachers through illegal mean among which prominent one is political interference.

The teachers are transferred to colleges where there is scarcity of teachers from time to time by higher authorities but the transfer/posting notification are rarely followed by teaching staff as they access to different officers of administrative department and political leader for cancellation of transfer order. Hence the posting of teaching faculty at their native town or villages where there is extreme shortage of teachers seems impracticable. The available data prevailed that political leaders, employee of secretariat and finance department have special influence on posting/ transfer.

Record showed that few government teachers had hired graduate and master degree holder candidate at low salary rate for disposing services at government colleges. Such teachers utilize official time in enjoying foreign trips, in completion of their higher study and taking care of family. The said practice has been reported in some colleges, but no strict action has been taken so far. A simple warning or explanation has been issued to them. This action of higher authority encouraged teachers to take benefit from malpractice and to challenge government rules as accountability is absent in the country. A number of similar nature cases exist in education department which has not been reported officially. Shortage of teaching staff has been criticized by few political leaders and they raised objection on the same on assembly floor, but no practical step has been taken till date to overcome shortage of staff.

There are few colleges that have been established by Minister of National Assembly (MNA) or Minister of Provincial Assembly (MPA) of the locality with the aim to recruit class IV employee so as to strengthen their vote bank. Such colleges failed to initiate academic session in true sense as they are devoid of facilities and teaching staff. Hardly few teachers are transferred and retained at such colleges. The staff adjusted at such colleges if failed to get transfer to other colleges of their choice either may take salary without rendering their services at duty station or may dispose services at another colleges through issuance of detailment order. Detailment is the procedure wherein the employee gets salary from his duty station however his services are placed at another station on temporary basis. As per rule detailment order should be issued only in circumstances when there is extreme need of services of staff member at certain place. However in context of education the detailment order is issued upon strong official reference of worker. The government rules also did not favour detailment procedure in routine.

A gradual increase in enrollment rate in M.Phil and Ph.D has been noticed after announcement of payment of M.Phil and Ph.D allowance @ "Rs. 2500/- and Rs.10000/- respectively in 2016. Some of the renowned universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offered admission in M.phil and Ph.D at morning time. The teachers enrolled in such university mark their attendance early in the morning and left the college for taking classes of higher studies. Few universities may offer M.phil and Ph.D in evening time i.e at 12:00PM however such university may be located at certain distance in several cases. The teacher enrolled in those universities also left college early in order to reach the university well in time. This practice has also affected study of students.

Secretary office has also issued order in 2018 with the remarks to direct teaching staff to avoid long leave as in Provincial Selection Board (PSB) a number of teaching staff was defer from promotion on account of long leave. Disciplinary proceeding is initiated against those teaching staff members who are absent for long time without prior approval of leave by sanctioning authority. However it has been observed that maximum number of defaulter may access the inquiry committee and influence the decision of committee members by using personal approach. Most of high ups working against prominent administrative posts of higher education department belongs to teaching cadre, therefore they also have soft corner towards the defaulter. The high ups play key role in exonerating the defaulter teachers from disciplinary proceedings. Hence the problem of teacher absenteeism cannot be controlled.

The data also prevailed that staff members whose services are placed at the disposal of federal or other provincial government initially for period of three years on probation basis may remain absent from duty for long time even after expiry of probation period. They neither reported to their parent department nor did they request for extension of probation period. Amazingly such faculty members are adjusted and promoted to higher grade without any inquiry and disciplinary proceeding. It has been reported unofficially that teachers and especially principal after transfer to undesired station may access to high authority for cancellation. Another serious issue is that there are colleges where sanction posts of various subject especially science subject are not according to the need of college. It takes long time to sanction post in various subject on need base. Further recently it has been noticed that the sanction of new posts was granted in those disciplines which are not required in college concerned. For example Pashto is native language of district Peshawar and periphery areas. However post of Pashto language has been created in those colleges of Hazara division where native language is hindko and none of student of the area was interested to opt Pashto as elective subject. Similarly in 2017 post of Pashto subject has been sanctioned in multiple colleges of Khyber pakhtunkhwa. The data revealed that in some colleges' services of single teacher of Pashto was sufficient due to low enrollment rate of students in this subject. But even then 2 or 3 post of Pashto subject was created in those colleges.

There are certain teachers who are indulged in getting examination duty throughout year. They are rarely available in college as for most of time they perform duty of invigilator in multiple examination i.e Annual and supplementary examination of Inter and Bachelor level. A number of teaching staff has been posted against administrative post in education department leaving behind empty post of teaching cadre without providing substitute. The adjustment of teaching staff at various administrative posts like Assistant Director, Deputy and Additional director and so on is made upon political interference or through approach to administrative staff serving key post at civil secretariat. This practice also seems one of the prominent factor responsible for shortage of teaching staff at colleges.

6. SUGGESTIONS

It is suggested that strict check may be kept on leave account of teaching staff as per practice in vogue in private sector. Further leave may be granted without pay to teaching faculty during initiation of academic session in order to diminish habit of availing leave at peak session. Teachers recruited against different zonal quota may be bound to serve their zone for minimum three to five years. A bond may also be taken from teaching staff in this regard. This rule may strictly be followed to resolve issue of shortage of teaching staff at different far flung colleges of Khyber pakhtunkhwa.

The practice of transfer order cancellation is common practice in education department. Teaching staff are reluctant to serve duty station located at their village or zonal quota. Hence once the transfer order is issued it should not be cancelled at any stage and the employee must be directed to complete tenure at their new assignment. The practice of serving one college for long time or throughout service may be prohibited. The rule may be created wherein faculty members may be transferred to various colleges once their tenure gets completed at certain college without discrimination. This practice will give chance to all teaching staff to served colleges of their choice for certain period of time and vice versa. Gathering of surplus staff in various colleges will be reduced to greater extent by following this rule.

Step should be initiated to reduce number of surplus teachers at various colleges of Khyber pakhtunkhwa. All surplus teachers may be adjusted in government colleges where their services are direly needed to manage the situation of shortage of teaching staff. The available record depict that head of institute report absence of teaching faculty but when main office asked them to forward complete absence case with factual position then they may either keep mum or change their statement. It seems that due to pressure imposed by teaching staff or by taking incentives from teaching

faculty the Principals step back from their statement. In such situation disciplinary proceeding may be initiated against absent staff as well as those administrative staff that are protecting defaulter.

The medical and maternity leave cases which give indication of being fake may be forwarded to medical board for verification. Such procedure may be kept secret so as to avoid access of employee to health department to influence the fair decision of team members on subject matter. The services of those staff members who remained absent for long time or are fond of availing long leave may be terminated to lessen the burden of education sector except in genuine cases. This practice may be followed strictly to up-grade the condition of education sector. The staff members who enjoy abroad visit or may be indulged in higher study and has hired less qualified staff on low income to serve their post may be removed immediately from services as the allegation are proved and the officer is found guilty. No warning or relaxation may be given to such cheater.

Attendance of teaching staff should be verified on monthly or weekly basis by accessing online biometric attendance. Penalty may be imposed frequently upon the defaulter so as to discourage the practice of absenteeism. Access may be given to accountant general office with the remarks to deduct salary from staff members who are habitual of late arrival and early departure. The staff members declared irregular by principal should be warned three to four times. However if the defaulter did not bring any modification in his practice then disciplinary action may be initiated against them with strict compliance.

Compliance of order that a teacher can perform duty as external examiner only one time throughout year may be assured. This practice will preserve precious time of students. It has been suggested that the number of jobless graduate is far enough in the country therefore the duty of invigilator or external examiner may be granted to fresh graduates of universities. This practice will not only help as financial aid to them but will also give them practical exposure to learning. Further this step can overcome the deficiency of staff in colleges at peak of academic session.

Teaching posts in various disciplines may be created on need basis instead of upon the choice of finance department. This practice will not only create job opportunities for fresh graduates but will also overcome shortage of teaching staff. The available record showed that different colleges need creation of new post in compulsory and science subject. It's time to speed up recruitment procedure of teaching staff so as to fulfill demand of colleges on emergency basis and to secure future of young generation. The teaching faculty serving administrative post may be adjusted at educational institutes where there is extreme shortage of teaching staff, so that their services may be utilized for the purpose they are recruited so. The practice of proceeding of teaching staff on deputation basis to different department may be minimized to overcome shortage of teaching staff.

7. CONCLUSION

The educational institutes are established to serve the youth of a nation. However due to acute dearth of teachers it seems difficult that goal set by government will be achieved. The study showed that teachers are adjusted in colleges upon their choices instead of the requirement of college. The

priority and demand of teachers seems more importance than the need of colleges. The major factor responsible for shortage of teaching faculty in degree colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa include slow recruitment procedure, creation of surplus pool at certain colleges, assigning tasks to teachers other than teaching during academic session, absenteeism, lack of accountability, shutting eyes over maintenance of leave record, political interference, biasness of competent authority of education department during posting, transfer, sanctioning leave and concluding disciplinary proceeding, unnecessary issuance of detailment order and adjustment of teaching staff on administrative post. It is suggested that accountability of leave and absenteeism record should be maintained to overcome shortage. New posts may be sanctioned in colleges as per need of college so that fresh recruitment and hiring may be made on priority basis to save precious time of students. Steps may be taken to diminished political interference in administrative issues. Transfer posting rules as stated in ESTA Code may be strictly followed. Issuance of detailment order and creation of surplus pool should be discouraged.

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