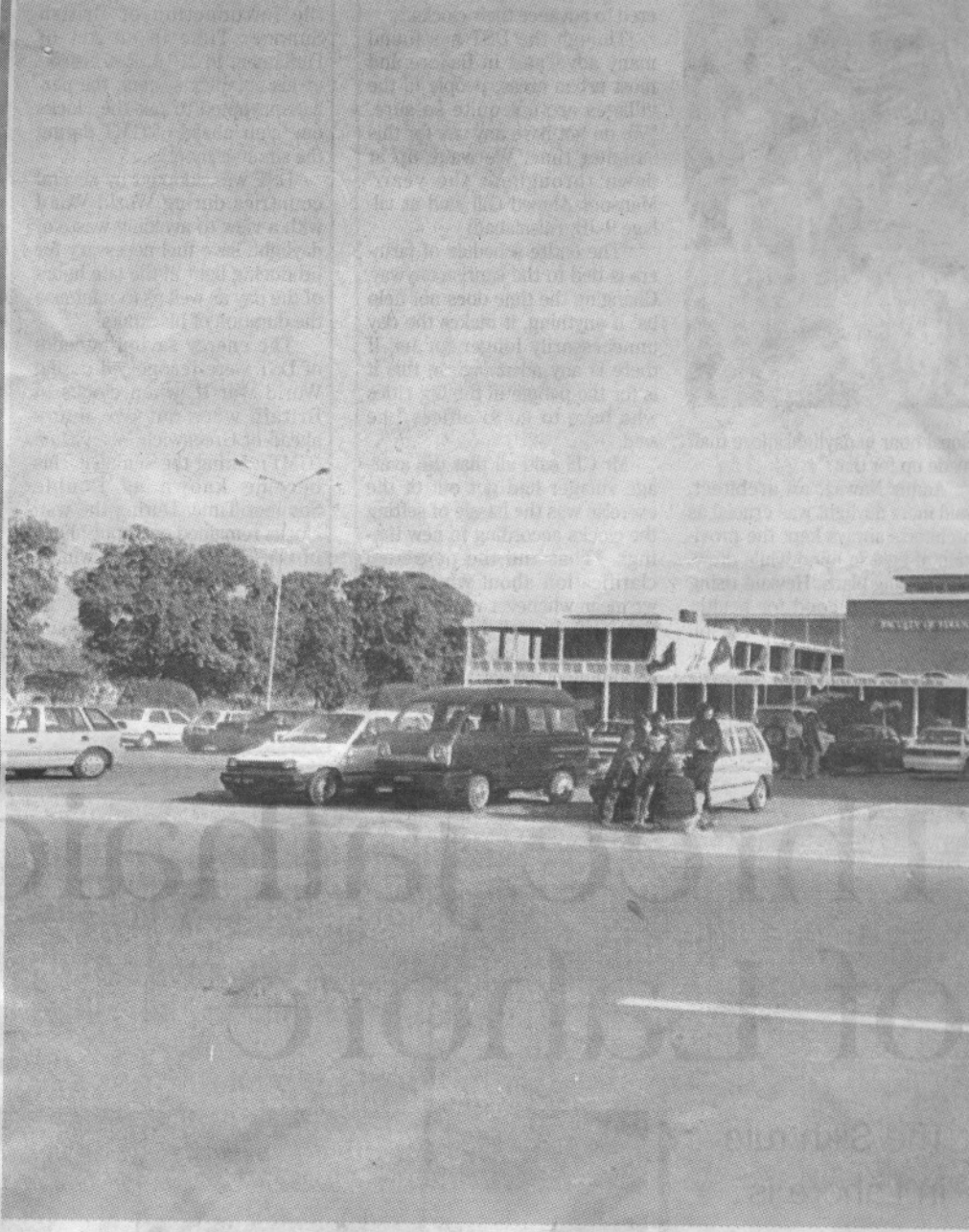


Institute of
Education and
Research of the
Punjab
University can
no longer apply
for the posts of
secondary
school
educators

By Ahmad Waleed

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News



Teachers not educators

education

The students of the Institute of Education and Research (IER), Punjab University, recently boycotted classes and staged protest demonstrations. They were protesting against the government's decision to not consider MED (Masters in Education) degree holders for filling the vacant posts of

school teachers in Punjab. The recruitment is the responsibility of the district governments. So far only four district governments have completed the appointment process. Around thirty provincial districts are yet to hire teachers on five-year contracts. According to the students, MED degree holders from IER were not being considered for the posts while those with MA and BED degrees have been declared suitable for the Secondary School Educators (SSE)

posts. "We were all astonished at the government decision to bar IER graduates from seeking government jobs as SSE," Zartasha, student of IER, told TNS. She said it sounded illogical that the graduates of MED could teach at the college and university level, but not in schools. Initially the students tried to ask the Punjab University administration to convey their grievances to the Punjab Education Department authorities, but in vain. They then staged



The Institute of Education and Research at the Punjab University. Photos: Rahat Dar

Commission had recognised M.Ed as equivalent to MA/MSc degrees.

“So Punjab government has no authority to declare it not equivalent to MA/MSc,” said President of Alumni Association IER Punjab University.

protest demonstrations in front of the Lahore Press Club. They were contacted by a representative of the Punjab Governor who assured them that their concerns would be addressed.

“We were made to end our protests and boycott of our classes, which lasted for more than 20 days, on the assurance that our demands would be met,” said Muhammad Farooq, a student of MA Elementary Education at the Institute.

“The government prefers MA in subjects as varied as Punjabi, Sociology, Economics, etc with an additional BEd degree while posting people at schools, but it is not understandable why the graduates of IER with MEd degrees are not eligible for recruitment as SSEs.”

“Here we are taught teaching methodology; a variety of subjects; and teacher training. Thousands of graduates of our institution have taught at the school level in the last many years. It’s beyond our understanding why the policy makers have framed these new

discriminatory rules now,” Farooq asked.

“The graduates of our institution can get admission into PhD classes but while granting jobs the Punjab government does not consider our degrees equivalent to MA/MSc.”

According to Syed Waqar, President of Alumni Association IER Punjab University, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had recognised MEd as being equivalent to MA/MSc degrees. “The Punjab government has no authority to declare that they are not equivalent to MA/MSc,” Waqar told TNS.

“The alumni association will move the court against the discriminatory policy devised by officials of the Punjab government,” he added.

Dr Saeed Shahid, another office-bearer of the Alumni Association, said the decisions concerning the education sector were made by non-specialists without any planning and debate.

“Moreover, I think they will not be able to fill all the vacancies throughout the

province by implementing the new policy of recruitment as there are not enough MA/MSc degree holders available in the market,” he said.

Every year around 700 students graduate from the Institute. The students told TNS they had been waiting for the government announcement for their recruitment as school teachers for a long time. But they were disappointed by the new policy.

Khursheed Ahmed, student of MA Education (Elementary) Final Year, termed the policy biased. He was of the opinion that any change in the recruitment policy should be made public through advertisements in the press. “We paid the fees and spent time in studying for this degree in the hope that one day we will get a job in the education department as teachers,” he said.

According to Asma, MA Islamic Education (Part-II), the policy would particularly affect women. “Hundreds of girl students come to Punjab University to secure a degree in MEd from this oldest and

the biggest institute of education in the country. Their hope is to find a job in a school but now their dreams may not be realised any more.”

“It came like a bolt from the blue. We are in the middle of the session and have no choice but to continue. We cannot opt for another subject now,” Munazza, student of MA Education (Elementary), told TNS. She said the students at IER were taught how to teach and control students in the classroom, while master degree holders in other subjects were given no such training. “Those with MA degrees can teach at the college or university level where there is no requirement of an additional BEd or MEd degree.”

The students said that they were waiting for some written notification from the authorities concerned. “We have given the authorities till October 20 to resolve the issue. If our demands are not met by then, we are planning to hold even bigger demonstrations and sit-ins in front of the Governor’s House,” one student warned.

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