**Reducing unfair recruitment: Police in Pakistan**

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Being a police officer is a challenging and rewarding role if inducted in the time of true merit. The police hierarchy designed a process to identify candidates who give their best to demonstrate that they have the potential of becoming dedicated police constables. Similarly, on the account of promotion from Head Constables to ASIs, SIs, all of them try their best to show their potential at every respective rank they reach in the Police Department. In this regard, the authority looks for the best candidate for recruitment across Punjab from amongst thousands of candidates. In the prevailing selection process, the following stages are involved, from advertising the post in the public through print and electronic media, to submitting the application forms, various written and physical tests and lastly, interviewing the selected candidates before final recruitment.

Such a process is mandatory for constable recruitment in Punjab Police. In light of the current scenario, we have observed that passing the exam by some of the candidates through various unfair means simply lessens the credibility of the rest of the candidates contesting for the particular post. The example of Chiniot, where some of the candidates were arrested for using unfair means and malpractices in passing the test, comes to mind. The issue came in the limelight when some of the candidates had no knowledge regarding the written test which they passed with flying colours.

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With respect to Lahore Police during this course of action, no such case was reported owing to the competent and responsible team deputed for the task. It would be pertinent to say that no such malpractice has been observed in the last five years in the city of Lahore. But the real question still prevails; why is the system of nepotism and such illegal means used by candidates?

Considering the example of the other parts of the world where people are progressing day and night with due dedication and hard work, youngsters of this generation are found more in using such practices because they are not used to hard work and many are simply taking legal rights of those who work hard. The other reason is the prevailing situation of unemployment in the country. Pakistan is a country where COVID-19 has also heightened the concerns of the general public, especially the youth who are the most vulnerable when it comes to the point of seeking employment in the country. Peer and societal pressure, especially from the family, increases the burden on individuals, such that he has to achieve goals otherwise he is not acceptable at any point. These are some reasons as to why candidates have indulged in such malpractices.

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Above all, the real solution to deal with unfair means used by candidates to compete in such examinations is to regulate the system with accountability at all levels in order to keep a check on bribes and other malpractices that individuals engage in, especially invigilators. In the same way, video surveillance can also refrain candidates from doing such things; with evidence they would be strictly penalised for it. Lastly, counselling is another important factor which can give awareness to both the youth and their parents for not indulging in societal pressure and supporting youngsters to work hard instead of using unfair means to secure their future.

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