



DECISION

Complaint No.	:	POS/4880/2024/Adv-Z
Name and address of the complainant	:	Mr. Muhammad Aslam S/o Muhammad Ayub Soomro, Room # B-3, Waheed Hostel, Marain Stop, K-Block, Model Town, Lahore
Name of the Agency Complained against	:	Sindh Social Protection Authority
Name & Designation of Investigating Officer	:	Fasihuddin Khan, Advisor 'Z'
Vetted by	:	-----
Subject	:	<u>COMPLAINT AGAINST ALLEGED VIOLATION OF MERIT IN RECRUITMENT BY THE SINDH SOCIAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY (SSPA)</u>

THE COMPLAINT

Mr. Muhammad Aslam submitted an online complaint on 12.10.2024 against the SSPA, Government of Sindh regarding alleged violation of merit in the recruitment of posts advertised by the Authority on 19.02.2023. He stated that the SSPA hired various professionals through Sindh Testing Services for the World Bank Project under an IDA Loan to strengthen social protection delivery system in Sindh Province. Accordingly, he had applied for the multiple positions i.e. Manager (Accounts & Audit), Audit Officer, Accounts Officer and District Coordinator (PPS 07/08). Later on, he appeared in the test as conducted by the STS Karachi and qualified it with top position for the posts of Manager (Accounts & Audit), Accounts Officer and Audit Officer respectively. Therefore, he was informed to appear in the interviews for all the three position, as scheduled on consecutive days i.e. Wednesday (Manager A & A), Thursday (Audit Office) and Friday (Accounts Officer). However, on the first day of interview for the post of Manager (A&A) he was asked to choose any one position from Audit Officer or Accounts Officer. As such he was not considered for Manager (A&A) and interview was conducted on his preference for the post of Audit Officer. At the end of the interview he was asked not to come for the remaining interviews. But later on, he was totally ignored for any single position at the time of

announcement of the results despite having required qualification, experience and being topper in the recruitment test. He, therefore, solicited our intervention for redressal of his grievance.

PROCEEDINGS

2. The complaint was admitted u/s 10 of the Establishment of the Office of Ombudsman for the province of Sindh Act, 1991 (amended upto date) by condoning the delay and subject to submission of original signed complaint, copy of CNIC and Affidavit on Form 'A'. After fulfillment of these mandatory requirements, the matter was taken up with the Secretary, SSPA, vide letter dated 10.12.2024. In response the Agency submitted its comments vide letter dated 19.12.2024 stating therein that the applications for multiple vacancies were invited by it for the World Bank Project "*Strengthening Social Protection Delivery System in Sindh*". The recruitment was carried out through a three step process as per guidelines of the World Bank.

In the first step, candidates were shortlisted for eligibility. In the second step, a written test was conducted by Sindh Testing Service. The minimum passing marks for the written test were 40 and only candidates securing 40 marks or above were invited for the third step; an interview by a five-member committee. Weightages of 60% and 40% were assigned to the written test and interview, respectively to calculate the cumulative marks. Merit lists were subsequently issued and those with the highest cumulative marks were selected as principal/alternate candidates.

3. It further added that in view of cumulative marks obtained by the complainant for the post of Manager (Accounts & Audit) he secured 5th position in merit. As such his position was lower compared to those selected as Principal or alternate candidates. The complainant's contention of not being considered for this post on the day of interview (Wednesday) is not correct as he was indeed interviewed for the said position and assessed accordingly. As limited vacancies were advertised for each post, only top ranking candidates in the merit list were offered the positions.

The complainant failed to appear in the interview for the posts of Accounts Officer and Audit Officer. The complainant's claim that he was asked not to appear in the interview for the posts of Accounts Officer and Audit Officer is incorrect. It may be noted that interviews for different posts were scheduled on different days and separate interview call letters were issued to qualified candidates for each post. As such, the Complainant's claim is denied as unfounded and without substance.

4. The above mentioned report of the Agency was sent to the complainant vide letter dated 01.01.2025 for rejoinder. His response was received in this office on 27.01.2025 wherein he reiterated his stance as already taken in the original complaint.

Thereafter, hearing in the matter was conducted by the Investigating Officer on 06.02.2025 attended by the complainant as well as the General Manager (Admn) and the Assistant Director on behalf of the SSPA. The complainant contended that in view of his eligibility and relevant experience for three positions called for interview by the SSPA he should have been offered anyone position, if the selection was based purely on merit. According to him the interviews were scheduled on consecutive days i.e. Wednesday (Manager A&A), Thursday (Audit Officer) and Friday (Accounts Officer), whereas on the very first day of interview he was given an impression that he was being considered for the position of Audit Officer and he need not come for interviews to be held on Thursday and Friday. But surprisingly he was totally ignored afterwards at the time of final announcement of recruitment. In rebuttal, the representatives of the Agency stated that the entire recruitment process for the said project since its inception in 2022 has an unblemished reputation of transparency and merit. The subject recruitment was also carried out the same way as per guidelines of the World Bank. The complainant's stance is without any substance and is denied on the basis of record of the whole process of recruitment as submitted during the investigation.

The complainant could not provide any documentary evidence to support his narrative.

(4)

CONCLUSION

5. After scrutiny of documents on record and hearing both the sides at length it is transpired that interviews for different positions were scheduled on different but consecutive days and separate call letters were issued to the qualified candidates for each position by the Agency. The complainant's claim of being told to appear in a single interview by any member of the Interview Committee is not substantiated. The eligibility criteria for each post was duly advertised on 19.02.2023 according to which final merit of the candidates was based on cumulative marks of the written test as well as the interview obtained by them. Accordingly, keeping in view his lower cumulative marks and corresponding merit he was not selected as principal or alternate candidate. The stance of the complainant to be deserving of any of the posts does not carry weight and seems to be based on his misunderstanding of the recruitment process.

DECISION

6. In view of the above and in exercise of powers vested in me u/s 11 of the Act 1991, the complaint is disposed of as rejected and file consigned to record.
7. An identical complaint in the same matter by Mst. Moonsal Soomro filed vide Reg.No.POS/5085/2024 dated 30.10.2024 is also disposed of as rejected on the same grounds after due proceedings of investigation on the said complaint.

Given under my hand and seal of office.

Sd /-
(MUHAMMAD SOHAIL RAJPUT)
Sitara-e-Imtiaz - PAS
Ombudsman, Sindh

Karachi, dated 12th June, 2025

