



# Issues in Indian public sector selection practices: A Literature review perspective

First Author

Gaurav Tiwari

Affiliation

Maharaj Vinayak Global University, Jaipur

Second Author

Dr. S. Gautam

Affiliation

Maharaj Vinayak Global University, Jaipur

**Abstract:** The human resource selection comprises the most important phase in attracting and allocating the desired human resources across organizational business goal realization. The selection of human resources is a challenge and effective selection is key to corporate interest articulation and realization. The organizational competitiveness capability to deliver and achievement of objectives; hinges on the quality of the human resources that an organization possesses. The phenomenon of theorizing human resource 'selection inappropriateness'; is a widely researched aspect in modern literature on subject matter. The subject matter as reviewed in literature seems to involve the issues of attributions that are either personal or individualistic in nature contextual in outlook or even the organization driven in nature and scope.

**Key Words:** Indian public sector selection practices, India, Government sector, recruitment

## 1.1 Background to problem

The phenomenon of human resource 'selection inappropriateness' in Indian public sector organizations; is a widely researched aspect in modern literature on subject matter. The subject matter as reviewed in literature [ CITATION Pau21 \l 1033 ]; seems to involve the issues of attributions [ CITATION Pau21 \l 1033 ] that are either personal or individualistic in nature [ CITATION Wiz18 \l 1033 ], contextual in outlook or even the organization driven in nature and scope. The studies even point towards the incidence of gross prevalence [ CITATION Zhu21 \l 1033 ] of fit issues as guiding the academic discourses on the subject. The literature [ CITATION Osb17 \l 1033 ] on the subject identifies the employee selection based appropriateness and inappropriateness as related with the formalized culture-fit propositions as well as rampant organizational culture in the government sector organizations.

The literature[ CITATION Bos21 \l 1033 ] calls for identification of the grey areas or the loopholes that widen the split between employee values and organizational adored value system. The literature[ CITATION Bri201 \l 1033 ] identifies the scope for culture as prevailing in the employing organization as playing the role of sharing the responsibility with the employee in preparing for the fit or being left out in the crowd. The studies[ CITATION Cap18 \l 1033 ] even identify the extent of decentralization in the government sector organizations as determining the post selection behavior of the employees.

The employees[ CITATION Bri201 \l 1033 ] selected in the government sector with formal and institutionalized selection mechanisms find varying levels of appropriateness along with those who are selected across informal channels or non-formalized channels of selection across government sector. In nutshell, the literature seems divided on the theoretical propositions being leveraged to understand and to reflect on the aspects that seem to guide the further academic discourses. The paper hence first explores the

## 1.2 Understanding Public sector in India

The public sector selection channels and decisions; in comparison with private sector, exhibits variants patterns and scope. The studies on recruitment and selection in public sector harps on the inherent processes, HR perspectives, practices and protocols that involve employee, selection procedure and embedded environment and culture. As per internal auditors body, public sector typically identifies as set of government and publicly controlled or publically financed agencies, bodies, enterprises or entities that aim at delivering the public goals, programs, missions, goods or services. The inclusion criteria for public sector is however different for different economies and nations worldwide. In Indian perspective[ CITATION Bos201 \l 1033 ], the public sector is in nearly equal participation across major economic sectors and public utility provision. The economic and social goods production, allocation and management is widely co-managed by public and private sector enterprises. The public sector[ CITATION Osb17 \l 1033 ] in Indian scenario involves the key employer with interests in basic governance to economic production, manufacturing and service provision in core infrastructure sectors. The macro economic reforms initiated in 1990s led to increase in participation of private sector yet still the public sector is a core employer.

The public sector[ CITATION Dhe15 \l 1033 ] in Indian perspective involves the government and governance structures, economic production and manufacturing in sectors reserved for national security, education and healthcare, defense as well as national strategic interests. The public sector[ CITATION GRI05 \l 1033 ] is a natural contributor in economic system as a core player in economic production, significant employer, as purchaser of goods and services and as a regulator and policy maker at national, regional and local level.

As per World Bank's 'Bureaucracy Labs' indicators[ CITATION Bai21 \l 1033 ], spread across demographics of private and public sector workforces, public sector wage premiums, relative wages, pay compression ratios, gender pay gaps and public sector wage bill; does shape the prospects for vibrancy of public sector employment and resultant issue sand challenges. The Indian public sector employment in 2018-19 was observed as 5 per cent of the national GDP and wage bill as 16 per cent of the public expenditure. In terms of size of public sector in India, this was observed as comprising 25 per cent of paid employment, 57 per cent of formal employment and as 9 per cent of total employment in nation.

In simpler terms, this is tantamount to observing that vis a vis the global standards, Indian public sector is large and is well positioned as a large and massive employer. The distribution statistics revealed the incidence of more employees (nearly 45 percent) in public sector with tertiary education and pointed to female share of employment in India as less than global average. The female employment in public sector was observed as 26 percent whereas in private sector as 15 percent which is far below the trends as evident on global stage. The industry distribution statistics revealed the prevalence of education and sectors other than healthcare as dominating the public employment in Indian perspective. The World Bank statistics revealed the incidence of larger than life share of public employment in Indian scenario across the years of data collection, as illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure 1: World Bank on India public sector**

Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2019/05/21/worldwide-bureaucracy-indicators-dashboard#2>

### 1.3 Issues before construct operationalization

The public sector recruitments and selection mechanisms[ CITATION Bud07 \l 1033 ] do seemingly vary considerably across the Indian public sector employment options. The Indian private sector was observed as characteristically different and rational vis a vis recruitment and selection based human resource practices in public sector. The respective issues of ‘construct operationalization’ in public sector derived human resource selection would be marred by the stakeholders, their type, their pattern and scope for interaction and possible coordination.

The construct operationalization cannot evade the reality that possible attempts for talent management[ CITATION Gal20 \l 1033 ] in public sector would be influenced by internal and external contexts alike. The contextually driven human resource management models explicitly point towards the incidence of environmental-macro and micro forces as shaping the construct operationalization. The challenges[ CITATION Bou15 \l 1033 ] before interpreting and understanding ‘selection inappropriateness’ in government sector have been observed as individual assigned as well as employer derived. The challenges identify as contextual, stakeholder based as well as environmental in nature yet their exact and adequate categorization remains an under explored aspect in literature.

**Table 1: Issues summarized**

Area Identified	Supporting Studies in literature
Individual	Over educated, Over qualification, Incompetent, Lack of participation and learning intent, Psychological Issues, Cognitive mindsets, Attitudinal and emotional immaturity, Behavioral Issues, Gender driven stereotypes, Agentic behavior
Employer HR policies	Job craft, Talent cycle management, Political interference, Change management and reforms in the human resource
Organizational practices	Administrative burden, Extent of decentralization and formalization of selection protocols,
Organizational culture	Political patronage and dual hiring [ CITATION Bri201 \l 1033 ]
Government policies	Intent for public good versus self goal, Outsourcing of HR, Contractual workforce norms, Corruption and lack of transparency

Source: Self composed from review of literature

### **Individual as responsible for selection inappropriateness**

A section of literature[ CITATION Bud07 \l 1033 ] identifies the individual resident notions as leading to selection inappropriateness in nearly all organizational situations. The individual's learning intent, participation tendencies and openness to change seems to matter. The literary studies[ CITATION Mor031 \l 1033 ] call for inclusion of individual short coming, liabilities and in competencies in adjusting and adapting to prevailing organizational culture; as subject matter for selection based inappropriateness. The individual's inability[ CITATION Sut11 \l 1033 ] to cope up with people and co-work with others under extreme or leasing circumstances; do seem to matter extensively.

### **Employer HR policies as responsible for selection inappropriateness**

The literature[ CITATION Sim05 \l 1033 ] identifies the growing trend of inculcation of change management and reforms in the human resource health in the public sector organizations worldwide. The prior literature on the management, commerce, accounting and organizational behavior; highlights the role of employee attribute screening processes as failing to capture the real personality of the prospective employee in focus. The extent of formalization of mechanisms[ CITATION Ker201 \l 1033 ] to assess and screen the person's fit across job craft and HR practices with regard to monitoring of fit often lead to dismal selection outcomes. The studies[ CITATION Mun21 \l 1033 ] even emphasize the role of political interference as limelight of human resource management in public sector organizations. The public sector human resource practices[ CITATION Gan17 \l 1033 ] often revolve around the aspects of merit, patronage and their vivid combinations.

### **Organizational practices as responsible for selection inappropriateness**

The studies on subject matter differ substantially with regard to notions of dual hiring and stumbling to political goals instead of economic motives. The theory of dual hiring (combining merit with patronage) often seems to guide practices in the public sector organizations. The public sector[ CITATION Mul21 \l 1033 ] often witnesses tendency for the co-existence of high skill and low skill job positions. Administrative burden [ CITATION Lin20 \l 1033 ] often figures as the prominent cause of the ill-fated and non-compliant HR practices and recruitment thrust .

## Organizational culture as responsible for selection inappropriateness

The extent of decentralization and formalization of selection protocols and the political interference do seem to matter in shaping and sustaining the organizational culture. The indulgence of politicians [ CITATION Bri201 \l 1033 ] in prioritizing meritocratic recruitment over patronage hiring for public sector positions in developing economies [ CITATION Mur20 \l 1033 ] has been identified as a rampant matter of debate and analysis. The conscious selection and recruitment based inefficiencies [ CITATION Fle20 \l 1033 ], malpractices and in competencies seem to weaken the employee engagement in organizational perspective amidst the backdrop of dominant culture as present in organization.

### 1.4 Proximal and distal influences

**Proximal determinants** are the ones that are closer to the phenomenon as it is happening. The closer circle in selection inappropriateness by government organizations hence involve the individual driven attributes.

**Distal determinants** identify as the ones that are exerting lateral and indirect as well as distant impact on the phenomenon as it is happening. The wider circle in selection inappropriateness by government organizations hence involves the aspects of neighboring environment and stakeholders.

**Table : Summarizing the determinants**

	Aspects	Supporting Studies
Proximal	Individual Incompetency, Individual's levels of motivation , Inferiority complex	[ CITATION Gan17 \l 1033 ], [ CITATION Mor031 \l 1033 ], [ CITATION Bou15 \l 1033 ]
	Employer HR policies	[ CITATION Mur20 \l 1033 ]
	Organizational practices	[ CITATION Sim05 \l 1033 ], [ CITATION Wiz18 \l 1033 ]
Distal	Organizational culture	[ CITATION Mul21 \l 1033 ], [ CITATION Sut11 \l 1033 ]
	Hiring Channels	[ CITATION Lin20 \l 1033 ]
	Organization's Cultural consideration in hiring decisions	[ CITATION Bri201 \l 1033 ], [ CITATION Cap18 \l 1033 ]
	Presence of formal mechanisms for employee socialization, Culture clash	[ CITATION Pau21 \l 1033 ], [ CITATION Bos201 \l 1033 ]
	Political pressures	[ CITATION Sut11 \l 1033 ]

The proximal and distal estimates comprise the vital interpretation of the influences that seem to shape the selection based inappropriateness in organizational perspective.



## 1.5 Conclusions

The human resource selection comprises the most important phase in attracting and allocating the desired human resources across organizational business goal realization. The selection of human resources[ CITATION Pau21 \l 1033 ] is a challenge and effective selection is key to corporate interest articulation and realization. The organizational competitiveness[ CITATION Ker201 \l 1033 ], capability to deliver[CITATION Cap18 \l 1033 ] and achievement of objectives; hinges on the quality of the human resources that an organization possesses. The phenomenon of theorizing human resource ‘selection inappropriateness’; is a widely researched aspect in modern literature on subject matter. The subject matter as reviewed in literature[ CITATION Pau21 \l 1033 ]; seems to involve the issues of attributions[ CITATION Pau21 \l 1033 ] that are either personal or individualistic in nature[ CITATION Wiz18 \l 1033 ], contextual in outlook or even the organization driven in nature and scope. The studies even point towards the incidence of gross prevalence[ CITATION Zhu21 \l 1033 ] of fit issues as guiding the academic discourses on the subject.

## 1.6 References

- Baig,Hasnain,Rogger. (2021). Introducing the Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators: A new global dataset on public sector employment and compensation. *Public Administration Review*, 81(3), 564-67.
- Bose. (2020). Public leadership in public sector. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 14(1), 66-67.
- Boselie,Harten,Veld. (2021). A human resource management review on public management and public administration research. *Public Management Review*, 23(4), 483-500.
- Bouton. (2015). Recruiting for cultural fit. *Harvard Business Review*, 45-46.
- Brierley. (2020). Combining Patronage and Merit in Public Sector Recruitment. *The Journal of Politics*, 83(1), 56-57.
- Budhawar,Boyne. (2007). Human Resource management in the Indian public and private sectors: An empirical comparison. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management: The future of Work*, 2(1), 346-69.
- Cappelli,Tavis. (2018). HR goes Agile: The new rules of Talent Management. *Harvard Business Review*, 79-81.
- Dhevan. (2015). Human Resource Management practices in public sector undertaking: A study. *IJMSRR*, 1(7), 67-69.
- Fletcher,Bailey,Madden. (2020). Mind the context gap: A critical review of engagement within the public sector and an agenda for future research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(1), 6-46.
- Gallardo,Thunnissen,Scullion. (2020). Talent Management: The context matters. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(4), 457-58.
- Ganakrishnan,Gopalakrishnan. (2017). The issue of selection errors in recruitment decisions. *International Journal of Commerce and Management Research*, 3(11), 16-20.
- GRI. (2005). Global Reporting Initiative: Sector supplement for public sector agencies. *GRI*.
- Kerdpitak,Jermstittiparsert. (2020). The impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Competitive Advantage. *Sys Rev Pharm*, 11(1), 443-452.
- Linos,Riesch. (2020). Thick red tape and thin blue line: A field study on reducing administrative burden in police recruitment. *Public Administration Review*, 80(1), 92-103.
- Morris. (2003). A meta analytic investigation of vocational interest based job fit and its relationship to job satisfaction. *ProQuest*, 121-23.

- Mullin. (2021). Learning from local government research partnerships in a fragmented political setting. *Public Administration Review*, 81(5), 979-80.
- Munoz,Romero. (2021). Organizational Innovation in Bureaucracies: An Impossible Mission? *Decision in Organizations*, 74(1), 54-66.
- Murlidharan,Singh. (2020). Improving the public sector management at scale. *NBER Working Paper Series*, 23-25.
- Osborne. (2017). Public Management Research over the decades: What are we writing about? *Public Management Review*, 19(2), 109-111.
- Paul. (2021). The role of the fundamental attribution error on the context of human resource management. *Psychology Research*, 11(2), 9-12.
- Simons. (2005). Levers of Organizational design: How managers use accountability systems for greater performance and commitment. *Harvard Business*, 47-49.
- Sutherland,Wocke. (2011). The symptoms of and consequences to selection errors in recruitment decisions. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 42(4), 23-24.
- Wizniuk,Kumar. (2018). The levers of HR and how it influences corporate culture. *AIP Conference Proceedings*, 3-5.
- Zhuang,Sarkis. (2021). Examining the antecedents,consequences and contingencies of proactive environmental strategy. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 28(1), 1475-79.

