

REGISTERED



**GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
31-Sher Shah Block New Garden Town, Lahore**

ORDER

No. SO(Estt.)10-239/2008. WHEREAS, Riffat Iqbal, ex-Headmistress (BS-18), Govt. Special Education Center, Narowal filed appeal against the order dated 14.09.2023 passed by the **Secretary Special Education/Competent Authority whereby major penalties of *"recovery of Rs.5,30,413/-"* and *"forfeiture of past service of three years"* were imposed upon the appellant under the **PEEDA Act, 2006**.**

2. AND WHEREAS, comments were obtained from the Administrative Department. **Mr. Mubashar Ahmad Khan, Member-III (Inquiries), S&GAD** was appointed as Hearing Officer to afford personal hearing to the appellant and submit a comprehensive report to arrive at a definitive decision.

3. AND WHEREAS, the Member-III (Inquiries), S&GAD after affording personal hearing to the appellant in the presence of the Departmental Representative of Special Education Department submitted hearing report stating therein that the appellant reiterated the points already raised in her appeal. She contended that she has been residing in the Principal's residence alongwith her family which is situated inside the school premises and was performing her official functions at the time of visit of DEO (Special Education), Gujranwala. She always tried her best to maintain human dignity, respect and official decorum of school. The appellant further stated that she was not involved in any financial embezzlement and always performed her official duties with honesty and has complete control over her subordinate staff. The appellant prayed that she might be exonerated from the charges levelled against her by setting aside the impugned order dated 14.09.2023.

4. AND WHEREAS, on the other hand, the Departmental Representative stated that on receipt of complaints through Special Education Department's helpline 1162 lodged by parents of special students studying in Govt. Special Education Center, Narowal regarding non-provision of incentives, rude behavior and maltreatment with special students, absenteeism of teachers and lack of interest

towards learning of special students, the DEO (Special Education), Gujranwala visited the said center on 06.07.2021 at 9:30 A.M. to probe into the complaints. He submitted report to the Director General, Special Education on 09.07.2021 stating therein that Headmistress and all staff, except Abdul Shakoor, Senior Clerk came to the school after 9:30 A.M and that the main gate of the center was found open without a Chowkidar. The appellant remained absent from duty w.e.f. 02.07.2021 to 06.07.2021 and left the station without prior approval. Later on, she marked the attendance by tampering the attendance register. The appellant withdrew an amount of Rs.13,46,573/- from government exchequer during the financial year 2020-21 for purchase and repair of various items against different heads of accounts but neither the same were entered into the cash book nor were they physically purchased/repared. The payments were found to be made to contractors through open cheques instead of cross cheques. The Secretary Special Education/Competent Authority initiated disciplinary proceedings against the appellant and appointed an Inquiry Officer, who submitted his inquiry report to the effect that out of five, four charges stood proven against the appellant. However, merits of the case and vital points were ignored and so, Mr. Shafaat Ali (PMS/ex-PSS/BS-20), the then D.G. Special Education, Punjab, Lahore was appointed as Inquiry Officer, who after conducting the enquiry submitted report and recommended imposition of major penalties of *"recovery of an amount of Rs.9,79,421/-"* and *"reduction to lower post and pay scale in BS-17+10% from the regular post of Headmistress (BS-18) for two years"*.

5. AND WHEREAS, the Secretary Special Education/Competent Authority did not agree with the recommendation of the Inquiry Officer and ordered to hold a *denovo* inquiry. Therefore, Mr. Waseem Sana Ullah, Principal (BS-19), Govt. Higher Secondary School for the Blinds, Lahore was appointed as Inquiry Officer who, after conducting the enquiry, submitted that all the charges stand proven against the appellant and recommended the imposition of the impugned penalties upon the appellant. The Secretary Special Education / Competent Authority issued show-cause cum personal hearing notice dated 03.07.2023 under the PEEDA Act, 2006. The appellant submitted reply which was found unsatisfactory. The Secretary Special Education/Competent Authority, after affording personal hearing through the Additional Secretary, Special Education Department, passed the impugned order.

6. **AND WHEREAS**, after examining the record/material available in the case file, considering the appeal of the appellant and the report of the Hearing Officer, it is observed that the appellant failed to justify her stance. The principles of procurement as stipulated in the Punjab Procurement Rules, 2014 were not complied with in letter and spirit, which resulted in loss of public exchequer. Therefore, the Secretary Special Education/Competent Authority has rightly imposed the impugned penalties upon the appellant in accordance with law. The appellant could not produce any material to rebut the evidence already available on record to prove her innocence. Thus, she failed to substantiate her stance in the appeal.

7. **NOW THEREFORE**, under the circumstances, I, **Zahid Akhtar Zaman**, Chief Secretary, Punjab, in exercise of powers conferred upon me under Section 16 of the PEEDA Act, 2006, do hereby **reject** the appeal of **Riffat Iqbal**, being devoid of merit and substance.

-sd-

(ZAHID AKHTAR ZAMAN)
CHIEF SECRETARY, PUNJAB

Dated: Lahore the 29 February, 2024

No. & Date Even.

A copy is forwarded to the:

1. **Accountant General**, Punjab, Lahore.
2. **Director General**, Directorate General of Special Education, Punjab, Lahore.
3. **Deputy Secretary (Service Matters)** to Chief Secretary, Punjab w.r. to Note dated 28.02.2024.
4. District Education Officer (Special Education), Gujranwala to ensure delivery of this order to the appellant under intimation to this department.
5. Headmaster/Headmistress, Govt. Special Education Centre, Wazirabad.
6. Appellant concerned / **Ms. Riffat Iqbal**, Headmistress (BS-18), Govt. Special Education Centre, Wazirabad.
7. PS to Secretary Special Education Department.

SECTION OFFICER (ESTT.)
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT