

Examining Inclusive Policies and Practices in the Nepal Police: A Case Study of Recruitment and Selection of Inspectors

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Abstract

This paper examines the implementation and practice of inclusive recruitment and selection policies within the Nepal Police by comparing three public recruitment cycles of police inspectors, identifying distinct models based on reservation quota implementation. The study followed a comparative and longitudinal research design to interpret the data. The 2009 ‘Spillover’ model succeeded by allowing reserved-category candidates to compete in the open category, ensuring high integration and filling quotas. Conversely, the 2013 ‘Rigid Quota’ model failed; by selecting open-category candidates first, it drained qualified candidates from reserved groups, leaving quotas unfilled despite sufficient applicants. The 2014 ‘Precise and Protected’ model ensured all quotas were met, likely by using parallel selection processes that protected reserved seats from being drained. The findings demonstrate that administrative mechanisms, not applicant interest, are the critical determinant of reservation policy success. The study provides valuable insights that can assist the selection committee of the Public Service Commission of Nepal in effectively managing recruitment procedures, particularly those related to the Nepal Police.

Keywords: inclusive policy, Nepal Police, open and reservation, police regulation, recruitment and selection

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INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

Based on the universal principles that ‘the basic features of a democratic government system are justice and meaningful participation,’ worldwide movements towards inclusive representation have been a matter of concern within the state apparatus (Gurung, 2009). In Nepal, the phenomenon is most significant for balancing the grievances of women, Madhesi, Dalits, indigenous

peoples, and other marginalised groups, who were historically denied equal representation throughout state institutions. This exclusion has resulted in a social imbalance, opposing the ‘haves’ to the ‘have-nots’ and fostering potential social resentment. As a response, the ‘Preamble of Interim Constitution, 2007’ initiated a shift in governance paradigm that led to amendments in the ‘Police Regulation’ on November 19, 2007, to infuse inclusive representation into the recruitment process of the Nepal Police with an intention to

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transform this vision of governance into a reality.

The research problem arises directly from the problematic implementation of this inclusive policy in the Nepal Police, a core organisation needing effective leadership and 24/7 operations for public security. Ever since the policy was introduced, recruitment for vacancies of inspectors has been plagued with legal and procedural issues. One major issue arose in 2010 when some of the shortlisted candidates were not recruited because of disagreements over replacement candidates, leading to long court cases that ultimately compelled their recruitment. Besides, the hiring process has been criticised for transparency deficits and for allegedly being pro-open candidates as opposed to reservation quota candidates, thereby creating ethnic group dissatisfaction and fuelling the policy compliance and fairness in hiring issues (Gurung, 2009). To this is added the shortage of evaluating the field performance and contribution of Inspectors hired under the reservation scheme, thereby creating an integral missing link in measuring the policy's overall performance.

To conduct an issue-focused inquiry into these issues, this study acknowledges certain constraints. This study is confined to studying the common practices of selection and recruitment by the Nepal Police with a specific reference to the Inspector vacancy advertisements of 2009 (2066/6/16 B.S.), 2013 (2070/3/5 B.S.), and 2014 (2071/6/24 B.S.). By focusing on these specific recruitment cycles of inspectors within the defined study period, the present study aims to examine the implementation and practice of inclusive recruitment and selection policies within the Nepal Police.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following paragraphs present a review of the literature, covering both the conceptual framework and relevant previous studies.

Inclusiveness in Recruitment and Selection of Employees

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) institutionalises proportional inclusion in state bodies, requiring representation of women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups (Articles 42 and 285) (Government of Nepal, 2015). This principle is implemented through the Civil Service Act (1993, amended 2007), which reserves 45% of vacancies for marginalised groups: women (33%), indigenous nationalities (27%), Madhesis (22%), Dalits (9%), persons with disabilities (5%), and candidates from backward regions (4%) (Public Service Commission, 2025). The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy (2021) further emphasises mainstreaming inclusion across governance structures (National Human Rights Commission, 2024).

Recruitment and Selection Practices

Recruitment and selection create a gateway through which individuals enter an organisation as employees-the organisation members; therefore, this process plays a pivotal role in both the overall HRM framework and the functioning of the organisation (Sthapit, 2018; Singh & Sthapit, 2008). Recruitment and selection (R&S) are critical HRM functions for ensuring competent human resources. Lamsal (2024) notes that Nepal's civil service relies on competitive examinations and interviews but faces challenges such as politicisation, lack of proper job descriptions, and limited

meritocracy. Similarly, [Maharjan and Kim \(2016\)](#) identify systemic issues like corruption, bureaucratic resistance, and inadequate reforms, which undermine efficiency and inclusiveness in R&S processes. Historically, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has upheld merit-based recruitment since its establishment in 1951, but reforms have been slow to adapt to diversity needs ([Maharjan & Kim, 2016](#)).

Recent studies emphasise the growing role of technology in recruitment. [Dahal and Joshi \(2024\)](#) found that e-recruitment platforms would improve accessibility and efficiency, though usability and trust remain key determinants for adoption. Inclusive hiring practices globally advocate for bias-free job descriptions, diverse candidate pipelines, and structured selection methods ([Sthapit, 2015](#)) such as psychometric testing and assessment centres to enhance fairness and predict job performance ([Thapa Magar & Katel, 2023](#)).

Impact of Reservation on Recruitment

Affirmative action has increased representation of marginalised groups in civil service, particularly women, whose share rose from 8% in 2003 to 23% in 2018 ([Wagle, 2019](#)). However, elite capture and tokenism remain concerns, and progress towards proportional representation is slow-requiring over a century for some groups to reach parity at current rates ([Thapa Magar & Katel, 2023](#)). [Bhul \(2021\)](#) and [Sunam et al. \(2021\)](#) argue that affirmative action enriches meritocracy by addressing systemic exclusion, though structural and cultural barriers persist.

Inclusiveness: Historical Background of the Inclusive Principle

The inclusiveness principle is all about building a society in which all citizens and

groups can enjoy full participation in social, economic, and political life by eliminating institutional obstacles and enhancing access to opportunities for development ([Gurung et al., 2014](#)). The idea is best conceptualised against its antonymic counterpart, social exclusion, that excludes people from participating and results in poverty and inequality ([Silver et al., 1995](#)). Though exclusion promotes social conflict, inclusion guarantees peace, prosperity, and sustainable development. Inclusive governance as a pillar of democracy promotes participatory decision-making, and it is the majority view among scholars that inclusiveness is a fundamental principle of democratic theory and practice ([Lawoti, 2005](#)).

In striving to overcome historical exclusion and become inclusive, means like positive discrimination and reservation are applied. The concept was conceived in the United States to address systemic disadvantages for Black people, institutionally initiated by President John F. Kennedy's executive order of positive discrimination ([Regmi, 2013](#)). The policies are not ends but means for levelling the playing field for historically underprivileged groups ([Tamang, 2014](#)). Addressing underprivileged groups in policies such as quotas in education and the workplace, positive discrimination, and reservations aim to compensate for historical discrimination and integrate excluded groups into the governance and development mainstream.

Constitutional Provisions for Inclusiveness

The key significance of inclusiveness is formally recognised in Nepal's constitutional framework, which has decisively shifted from its past iterations. The traditionally exclusionary nature of the 1990 constitution resulted in a decade of conflict, highlighting

that promoting and protecting diversity is necessary to consolidate democracy (Lawoti, 2005). Noting this, the current Constitution of Nepal (2015) includes inclusiveness as a core state objective. It makes the state adopt inclusive policies and prohibits discrimination based on origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, economic status, language, region, ideology, or any other. The constitution also enforces this principle by ensuring provisions for the reservation and representation of women, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, and other excluded groups in all organs of the state, thereby ensuring social inclusion as the pillar of the nation's governance and planning for development (Das et al., 2014).

RESEARCH METHODS

According to Khan (2001), scientific knowledge necessitates specific evidence derived from scientific research. Thus, methodology describes a scientific approach to data collection. A comparative and longitudinal research design has been adopted as per the objective of the study. The data collection method used in this study is exclusively documentary analysis, drawing on pre-existing recruitment records, vacancy announcements, and statistical reports from the Nepal Police for the three recruitment batches of 2009, 2013, and 2014.

Study Limitations: One of the limitations of the study is that it includes only three recruitment and selection (R&S) cycles for Police Inspectors and does not incorporate more recent R&S practices of Nepal Police. Additionally, the study focuses solely on the Nepal Police and does not examine the recruitment and selection processes of other public security institutions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Following the introduction of the inclusive recruitment policy, three vacancy announcements for the position of police inspectors were published in *Gorkhapatra Daily* to ensure its effective implementation. They are discussed hereunder:

Recruitment in 2009 AD (2066 B.S.)

While applications for the open category were 70.27%, their final appointment was 56.25%. Conversely, reservation categories received 29.73% of applications but secured 43.75% of the appointments. Only six women passed the written exam against a quota of seven. The shortfall was filled by open category candidates. Several candidates from reserved groups passed both the open and reservation quotas, improving the overall success rate for marginalised groups. (See Table1)

Recruitment in 2013 (2070 B.S.)

The percentage of applicants from reservation groups increased to 37.86% from 29.73% in 2009. Following a state committee report, results were published first open, then reserved. This allowed high-scoring marginalised candidates to be selected in the open category, safeguarding the reserved seats. Despite a higher number of applicants, the final number of appointees from reservation categories (32) was significantly lower than the advertised quota (62), indicating a pass rate lower than in 2009. (See Table2)

Recruitment in 2014 (2071 B.S.)

This cycle saw the lowest proportion of applicants from reservation groups at 28.73%. Unlike previous years, all reserved quotas were filled precisely as advertised. The final appointment percentage for reservation

Table 1
Recruitment in 2009 AD

Category	Vacancy	Applicants	Final Appointees
Open	44	1,900	45
Reservation	36	804	35
- Women	7	171	6
- Aadiwasi/ Janjati*	11	350	11
- Madhesi	10	188	10
- Dalit	6	47	6
- Backward Area	2	48	2
Vacancy Advertisement: For 80 posts			
Total Applicants: 2,704			

Note. From Nepal Police; *Aboriginals/ Indigenous Nationalities

Table 2.
Recruitment in 2013 AD

Category	Vacancy	Applicants	Final Appointees
Open	76	2,076	106
Reservation	62	1,238	32
- Women	13	213	9
- Aadiwasi/Janjati*	20	551	15
- Madhesi	17	311	3
- Dalit	9	67	2
- Backward Area	3	96	3
Vacancy Advertisement: For 138 posts			
Total Applicants: 3,314			

Note. Information from Nepal Police; * Aboriginals/ Indigenous Nationalities

categories (46.04%) was the highest among the three cycles, exceeding the constitutional principle and showing a 1.04 percent benefit for marginalised groups. (See Table3)

Discussion

Based on the universal principles of democratic governance-justice and meaningful participation-Nepal introduced an inclusive recruitment policy for the Nepal Police to address the historical exclusion

of marginalised groups (Gurung, 2009). However, the policy's implementation was initially problematic, with literature citing legal disputes, transparency deficits, and a perceived bias toward open-category candidates, which created ethnic group dissatisfaction and raised questions about fairness and compliance (Gurung, 2009).

This study's comparative analysis of recruitment cycles validates these early

Table 3.
Recruitment in 2014 AD

Category	Vacancy	Applicants	Final Appointees
Open	68	2,076	68
Reservation	58	837	58
- Women	11	138	11
- Aadiwasi/Janjati*	17	373	17
- Madhesi	16	194	16
- Dalit	8	66	8
- Backward Area	4	63	4
- Martyrs' family & Disabled people	2	3	2
Vacancy Advertisement: For 126 posts			
Total Applicants: 2,913			

Note. From Nepal Police; *Aboriginals/ Indigenous Nationalities

shortcomings, particularly in the 2013 batch where a major shortfall in appointing reserved candidates occurred. Yet, the findings of this present study reveal a trajectory of improvement, with the 2009 cycle nearly fulfilling quotas and the 2014 cycle achieving perfect alignment with advertised numbers. This indicates a learning curve and growing institutional effectiveness in implementing the policy's quantitative goals, thereby better fulfilling the constitutional mandate for inclusion (Das et al., 2014; Lawoti, 2005). However, the research confirms a persistent critical gap noted in the literature: the absence of field performance evaluation for appointed inspectors (Gurung, 2009). This means that while progress has been made in achieving descriptive representation, the policy's success in ensuring transformative and effective participation, ultimately the goal of inclusive governance, remains unmeasured.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the 2009 AD (2066 B.S.) recruitment cycle, the Spillover' Success

Model demonstrated the most effective integration of marginalised groups. In this model, reserved category candidates were highly competitive, securing 44% of the appointments from only 30% of the applicants. Its key mechanism was a flexible 'spillover effect,' where many candidates from reserved groups qualified on merit through the open category, and the system focused on overall quality by allowing open category candidates to fill any shortfalls in specific quotas like the women's category.

The 2013 (2070 B.S.) cycle, in contrast, represents the 'Rigid Quota' Failure Model. Despite increased application rates from reservation groups (38%), the final appointments for these candidates were less than half of the advertised quota. The failure was driven by a critical change in mechanism: publishing results 'first open, then reserved.' This drained all high-scoring candidates from marginalised groups into the open category first, leaving the reserved seats vacant as the remaining candidates often failed to meet the minimum pass threshold, rendering the system substantively ineffective.

Finally, the 2014 (2071 B.S.) recruitment exemplifies the ‘Precise and Protected’ Success Model. This cycle was the most administratively successful, filling all open and reserved quotas exactly as planned and achieving the highest final appointment percentage for reservation categories. The implied mechanism was a protected, parallel selection process where results were likely announced in a manner that prevented the top reserved candidates from being drained into the open category. This ensured each reserved quota had its own pool, allowing the top scorers from each group to be appointed directly to their designated seats.

Implications

Based on the data results, the study offers the following implications.

Procedure is as Important as Policy: The stark difference between the 2013 and 2014 results highlights that how you implement a quota system is more critical than the quota numbers themselves. The sequence of result announcements can determine the success or failure of the entire recruitment drive.

The ‘Merit vs. Reservation’ False Dichotomy: The 2009 cycle effectively debunks the argument that reservation compromises quality. In that year, marginalised candidates were so competitive that they

secured a larger share of appointments than their application share, proving that a large pool of qualified candidates exists within these communities.

Data-Driven Policy Refinement: The Nepal Police’s experience from 2009 to 2014 serves as a perfect case study for evidence-based policy making. The failure of the 2013 method was directly addressed in the 2014 cycle, leading to a superior outcome. This shows the importance of monitoring and evaluating recruitment data.

Impact on Future Applications: The failure of the 2013 model could discourage future applicants from marginalised communities if they perceive the system as rigged to fail them. Conversely, the clear success of the 2014 model would build trust and encourage more applications, creating a virtuous cycle of inclusion.

In summary, the Nepal Police’s recruitment and selection (R&S) journey from 2009 to 2014 illustrates a learning curve in administering an affirmative action. The most effective model is one that either allows for a flexible spillover of talent (as in 2009) or strictly protects the reserved quotas through a parallel selection process (as in 2014), while the model of sequential announcement (as in 2013) is demonstrably counter-productive to the goals of diversity and inclusion.

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