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GIG ECONOMY: A BLEND OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The gig economy has emerged as a transformative force in India's labour market, reshaping traditional employment structures across various sectors. Characterized by short-term, flexible work arrangements, the gig economy has expanded rapidly, driven by digital platforms, technological advancements, and evolving workforce preferences. While the phenomenon has been extensively analyzed in sectors such as transportation and e-commerce, its implications for the education sector remain relatively underexplored. Even though it has been continuously growing as a job platform but at the same time it is subject to job insecurity. This paper examines the growing prevalence of gig-based employment in education sector with special emphasis on teachers working on contractual basis.

KEYWORDS: *Gig Economy, Education Sector, Digital Platforms, Flexible Employment, Labour Market, Policy Implications*

INTRODUCTION

The structure of employment in the modern global economy is undergoing a transformative change, driven by technological innovations, economic liberalization, and the demand for flexibility in labor markets. One of the most significant outcomes of this transformation is the rise of the *gig economy*—a labor market characterized by short-term, flexible, and freelance work engagements as opposed to traditional, long-term employment contracts. The term "gig" originally gained popularity in the music industry, denoting temporary performances, but today it broadly encompasses a wide range of occupations across sectors such as IT, logistics, design, consultancy, and education.

In India, the gig economy has emerged as a significant force, propelled by digital platforms, urbanization, and changing employer-employee dynamics. According to a report by NITI Aayog (2022), India had around 7.7 million gig workers in 2020-21, and this number is projected to rise to 23.5 million by 2029-30. In India, where the demand for education is high but public spending on education remains relatively constrained, the gig economy framework in teaching is becoming increasingly normalized. This shift necessitates a deeper understanding of how contractual employment is reshaping the academic landscape—not only in terms of employment policies but also in terms of educational quality, teacher motivation, and student outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Mr. Chenna Upendra Maddur, Ms. Gergi Neerajana Sai Niveditha and Dr. M. Venkateswarlu conducted a study on the topic and concluded that India is reportedly planning to join eight other nations – including Brazil, China, Bangladesh, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Indonesia – in a push to hasten digital learning and gain from the global digital education programme. Together, the nations are anticipated to accelerate the move from a traditional educational approach to a digital one and expand chances in the global digital education market.
2 **The NITI Aayog's report titled India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy** was published in June 2022. The report estimates that India's gig workforce will grow from 7.7 million in 2020-21 to 23.5 million by 2029-30.
3 Dr. Kaberi Bezbarua (2020) conducted study titled ***Sustainability of Higher Education in GIG Economy: Evaluating the correlation of different fundamentals with special reference to Assam*** and concluded that In Assam also, the gig economy has grown steadily, with increasing number of people subscribing for application based platform for services such as booking a car or getting food delivered at the doorstep, etc. Thousands of people are employed as delivery men, cab drivers, etc which implies that the GIG economy contributes to the job market.

4 Mahon, Kathleen (2018) in her study found that Universities serve several important functions in the society, but not least helping people to leave meaningfully in society and to create a world worth living. This paper explores this concern by explicating the notion of critical educational praxis and examining enablers and constraints for critical educational praxis drawing on an empirical study conducted in one university setting and their impact on the society.

5 Roy and Shrivastava, (20200 The supply of gig work often comes from developing nations like India, the Philippines, Pakistan, and others, while demand typically comes from developed nations like the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. But when it comes to employment, affluent nations rely on their own citizens, whereas underdeveloped nations receive 90% of their gig work from other nations.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed study tends to relies on secondary data comprising of previous publications, magazines, government reports and studies published by other important institutions from time to time.

OBJECTIVES

- To study about socio economic condition of gig workers
- To study the problems faced by gig workers.
- To give recommendations addressing their problems.

The trend of gig work is not only witnessed in India but also prevalent around the world in every country. It provides online opportunities for millions of youths through different platforms where the work and earn. Not just that, there is growing trend of gig work where workers/skilled persons are hired purely on contractual basis for a specific period.

There are numerous universities, colleges, and even higher secondary schools in India where teachers are engaged purely on contractual basis in specific subjects. No doubt gig work can be thought of an opportunity where an educated person delivers and at least earns to lessen financial burden even though for a shorter period of time. But at the same time such gig platforms whether online or offline become challenge instead of opportunity because of their temporary nature. Some of the pros and cons of gig economy are as follows:

Opportunities

Gives short term financial relief.
It provides intellectual environment to educated people.
It is cost effective for hiring agencies/authorities because employees are available to work at a nominal amount/wage.

Challenges

These platforms provide short term opportunities for specific period.
Not all but only highly skilled people get opportunity.

Low Salary

Salary against the work is very low especially in education department. In Jammu and Kashmir CRCs (cluster resource coordinators) are engaged in higher secondary schools for specific subjects at Rs. 25000/month and contractual lecturers at college level are engaged for Rs.28000/month which is not according to UGC norms of Rs. 57,500.

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Government of Jammu and Kashmir
DIRECTORATE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION
MUTHI CAMP JAMMU-181205

Sub: Advertisement Notice for hiring of "Cluster Resource Coordinator for Teaching Support" till end of Academic session 2023-2024 (31st March 2024) for Govt. High and Higher Secondary Schools.

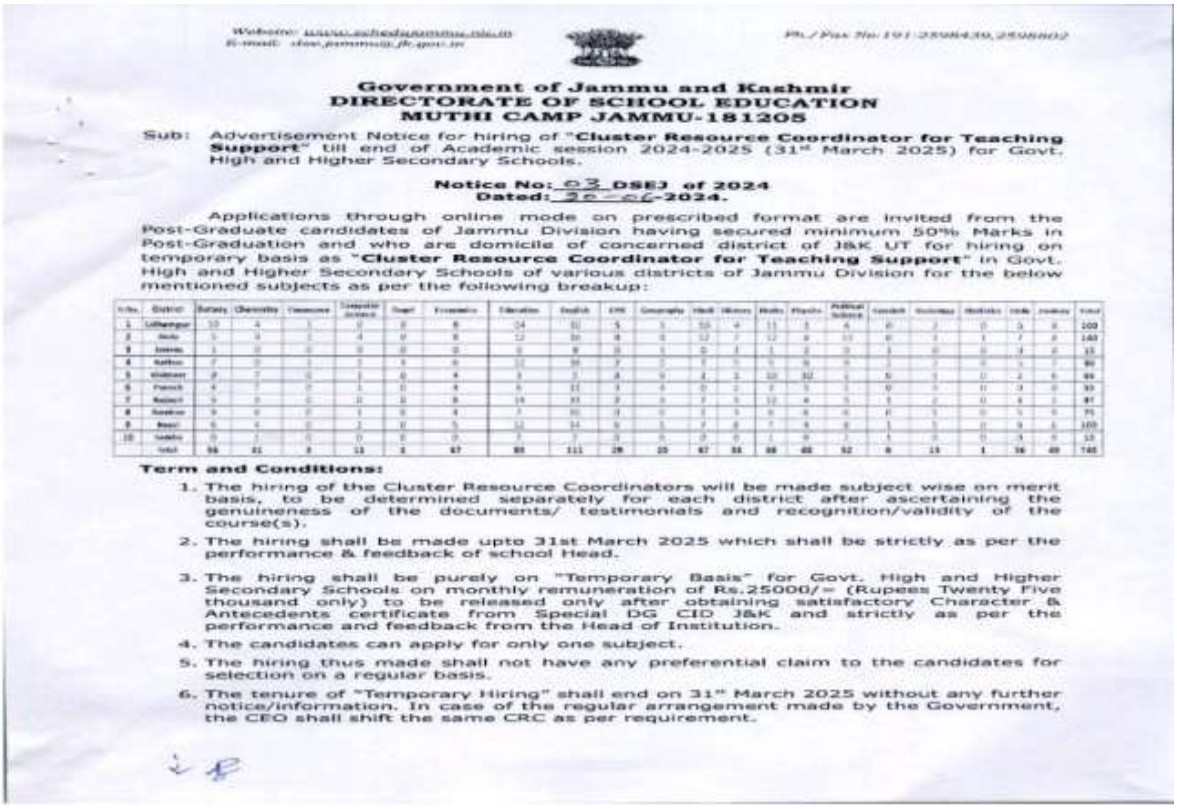
Notice No: 01 DSEJ of 2023
Dated: 09-08-2023.

Application through online mode on prescribed format are invited from the Post-Graduate candidates having secured minimum 50% Marks in Post-Graduation and who are domicile of UT of J&K for hiring on temporary basis as **"Cluster Resource Coordinator for Teaching Support"** in Govt. High and Higher Secondary Schools of various districts of Jammu Division for the following subjects as per the following vacancies:-

Botany	Chemistry	Commerce	Economics	Education	English	Geography	Hindi	History	Dogri	Maths	Physics	Political Science	Sociology	Statistics	Urdu	Zoology	Computer Science
80	30	15	75	75	110	10	20	20	05	110	18	40	10	10	35	70	15

Term and Conditions

1. The hiring shall be made purely on "Temporary Basis" at Higher Secondary Level (& Secondary level as per need) on monthly remuneration of Rs.25000/= (Rupees Twenty Five thousand only).
2. The Selection will be based on merit which will be determined separately for each district subject wise.
3. The hiring shall be made upto **31st March 2024** which shall be strictly as per the performance & feedback of school Head.
4. The hiring thus made shall not have any preferential claim to the candidates for selection on regular basis.
5. The tenure of "Temporary Hiring" shall end on **31st March 2024** without any further notice/information or till regular arrangement is made by the Govt. whichever is earlier.



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Sub: Advertisement Notice for hiring of **"Cluster Resource Coordinator for Teaching Support"** till end of Academic session 2024-2025 (31st March 2025) for Govt. High and Higher Secondary Schools.

Notice No: 03 DSEJ of 2024
Dated: 20-06-2024.

Applications through online mode on prescribed format are invited from the Post-Graduate candidates of Jammu Division having secured minimum 50% Marks in Post-Graduation and who are domicile of concerned district of J&K UT for hiring on temporary basis as **"Cluster Resource Coordinator for Teaching Support"** in Govt. High and Higher Secondary Schools of various districts of Jammu Division for the below mentioned subjects as per the following breakup:

Term and Conditions:

1. The hiring of the Cluster Resource Coordinators will be made subject wise on merit basis, to be determined separately for each district after ascertaining the genuineness of the documents/ testimonials and recognition/validity of the course(s).
2. The hiring shall be made upto 31st March 2025 which shall be strictly as per the performance & feedback of school Head.
3. The hiring shall be purely on "Temporary Basis" for Govt. High and Higher Secondary Schools on monthly remuneration of Rs.25000/= (Rupees Twenty Five thousand only) to be released only after obtaining satisfactory Character & Antecedents certificate from Special DG CID J&K and strictly as per the performance and feedback from the Head of Institution.
4. The candidates can apply for only one subject.
5. The hiring thus made shall not have any preferential claim to the candidates for selection on a regular basis.
6. The tenure of "Temporary Hiring" shall end on 31st March 2025 without any further notice/information. In case of the regular arrangement made by the Government, the CEO shall shift the same CRC as per requirement.

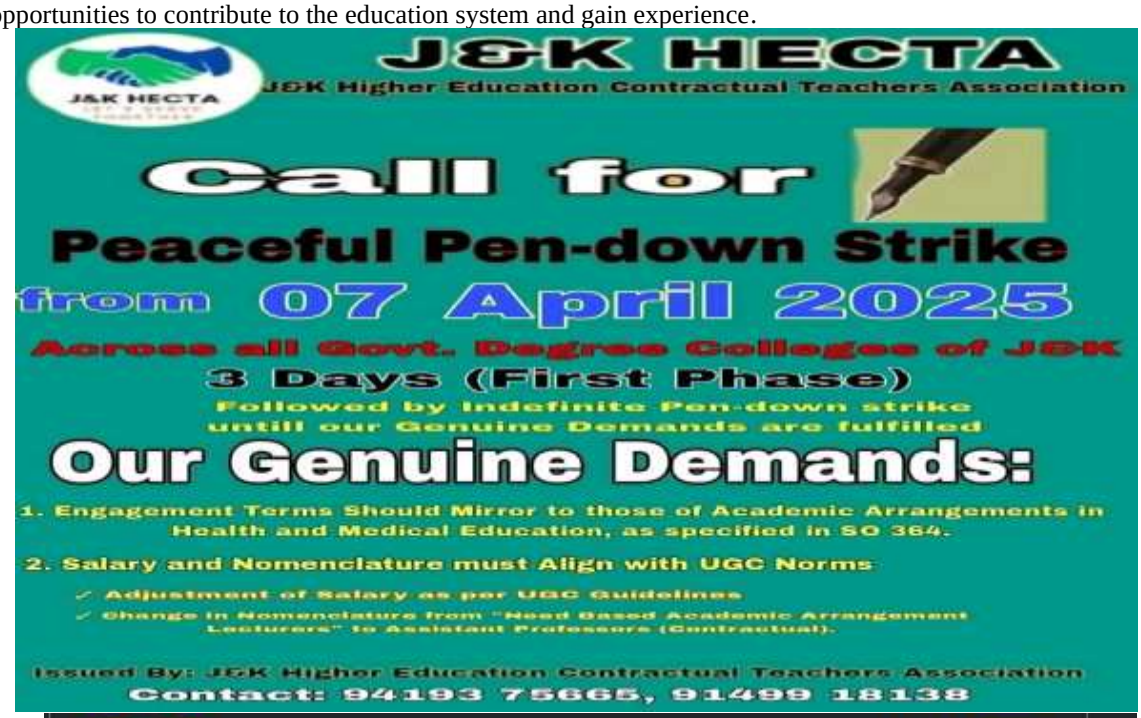
The above two advertisements shared haven been issued by directorate of school education Jammu for the year 2023 and 2024 respectively in which it can be clearly seen that CRCs (cluster resource coordinators) are engaged up to 31st of March of the year. After that they are disengaged and it takes around three to four months to recruit CRCs through fresh recruitment process as application and documentation involves a lot of time consumption.

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They have to remain unemployed for the period of three to four months and after that there is no guarantee they will fall in merit for next session which is primarily because of change in seat matrix of different subjects.

Likewise there is no proper policy for college lecturers. They are supposed to do a lot of official work apart from the academic curriculum at low salary. They have been continuously demanding hike in their salary as per UGC norms but unfortunately there demands are not fulfilled yet. It de motivates young aspiring minds to work in prestigious institutes like college.

Further, at all India level contractual teaching staff in India face challenges like job insecurity, lower pay and benefits compared to regular teachers, and limited opportunities for professional development, while also having opportunities to contribute to the education system and gain experience.





Jammu- Kashmir college contractual lecturers demanding salary hike as per UGC norms.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, it cannot be ruled out at all that that gig the culture of gig work has emerged as a hope not just for free lancers but for certain offline works especially education. Talking from the prospective of education field, they educated youth take this opportunity as a source of their income till they get permanently settled somewhere. In that sense it can be thought of as an opportunity. But its peculiar aspect is again its temporary nature. Because there is no job security. Yes, one must admit that government cannot provide permanent job to every educated person because india is the most populated country of the world and 70% of Indian population is youth providing job is a big challenge in itself. What government can do is to make a proper policy for educated youth. Government should continue these people at a nominal salary corresponding to the current rate of inflation instead of disengaging as it really discourages them. Finally, if proper strategy is prepared for gig workers , it will not only address the financial problem of educated youth but also lessens the burden of unemployment on government.

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