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## Extent of Underemployment among Government Service Employees in Kerala

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***Abstract:** Underemployment in the public sector is defined as a situation in which government employees are employed below their education or skill level, or their availability. It is a social problem that affects job growth, career growth and the emotional health of underemployed workers. The study checked the extent of underemployment among Kerala government service employees in the context of their education, age and gender wise analysis. The result revealed that age matters in the perception of employees on underemployment and is negatively related to underemployment. In the case of lower age people, they consider them as underemployed while aged people do not bother about it. Gender and qualification do not play a role in the employee's perception of feeling on underemployment.*

**Key Words:** Government Service, Employees, Underemployment, Kerala.

### 1. Introduction

Recently, underemployment among the educated was probably the most critical problem in Kerala. Though the state has achieved much progress in the spread of education, health services, social welfare measures and infrastructural development, she has not been able to solve the problem of underemployment to any significant extent during the last thirty years. When a large number of educated people compete for a small number of available jobs, the less educated are pushed out by the more educated. This in turn results in the devaluation of higher education leading to underemployment and misemployment of the educated. In this situation of underemployment, people with good education and skills are forced to work less than their

potential. It is a situation where there is a mismatch between the employment opportunities and the skills and education levels of employees.

The proper utilization of educated, especially professionally and technically qualified manpower is important, as this category of manpower involves heavy educational investments (Ajith Kumar K R and Karunakaran N, 2021), both on the part of the individual and of the society as a whole. The oversupply of educated manpower reflects the misdirected and wasteful investment of scarce capital in education. When the supply of workers is greater than the demand for workers it happens. It is a social and economic problem that affects job growth, career growth and emotional health of underemployed workers. Underemployment is a vicious cycle in which each effect is linked to the next.

It is a serious matter when highly qualified employees work in lower qualification required positions in the public sector. It is due to a lack of opportunity or a lack of demand for qualified workers, rather than a lack of educated labor. In recent years, there has been a growing trend of people opting for government jobs. Besides the salary factor, there are pension and other benefits and most importantly job security that make government jobs in India more and more popular. The person who is working in a government sector will get financial and job security as well as honor in serving the public compared to the person who is working in the same designation in a private concern. Not limited to this, government employees have lots of benefits, a fixed income, an increment, etc.

**1.1. Review of Literature:** Rao (1961) conducted a study on Delhi University graduates and found that 3.3 per cent of those who graduated in 1950 and 7.2 percent of 1954 were still unemployed. Mark Blaug *et. al* (1969) made the first comprehensive analytical study on the unemployment of the educated in India. Dhar T.N. (1979) examined the problem of graduate unemployment in India and examined the implications of the social and political framework within which manpower and educational planning are taking place. Bhattacharya A.K. (1982) and Bose *et al.* (1983) conducted a comprehensive study to ascertain the pattern of employment and unemployment among graduates in West Bengal. Usha Kundu (1990) had analyzed the employment position of educated women. Marinakis (1994) discussed that the development of the public sector is based on two main factors, employment and wages. Scurry T and Blenkinsopp J (2011) and

McKee-Ryan and Harvey (2011) explained the overqualification, relative deprivation, self-perceived inferiority and disadvantaged employment situation. Maya John (2022) reported the problem of massive job insecurity among India's youth.

**1.2. Objectives:** The Objectives are

- | to analyze the extent of underemployment and determining factors in public sector employees, and
- | to examine the employee perception regarding underemployment in the public sector

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The study is relied upon primary data. The extent of underemployment among Kerala government service employees has been analyzed on the basis of primary data collected collectively from Kannur Civil Station and Collectorate Kannur, by using a questionnaire method specifically prepared for this purpose. Seventy one samples who are non gazetted government employees mainly focuses on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (tenth qualified job) and 4<sup>th</sup> grade (seventh qualified job) workers was taken. The collected information has been analyzed using percentages, average, chi-square test, and dummy variable regression analysis. The Likert scale has been applied to find out the score value of each respondent about their feelings on underemployment, which was used on the basis of age, gender and qualification. The chi square tool is used to analyze the behavioral relationship between employees' gender and their current job satisfaction level.

## **3. Results, Analysis and Discussion**

**3.1. Extent of Underemployment among Kerala Government Sector Employees:** From table 1, qualification and grade of employees in public sector are more from the third grade rather than 4th grade. Majority of employees are graduated and above qualified. In addition, professionally and technically skilled people also work in the tenth based job.

**Table 1: Analysis of Qualification Attained and Grade of Employees in Public Sector**

| <b>Educational qualification</b> | <b>No. of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade employees (%)</b> | <b>No. of 4<sup>th</sup> grade employees (%)</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Matriculation                    | 6.67                                             | 9.9                                              |
| Plus two/PDC                     | 11.67                                            | 9.9                                              |
| Graduation                       | 43.33                                            | 45.45                                            |
| Post-Graduation                  | 18.33                                            | 9.09                                             |
| Diploma/certificate              | 8.33                                             | 27.27                                            |
| Professional                     | 11.67                                            | 0                                                |

Source: primary data

People working with only required minimum qualification (tenth qualification) are below 10% for both grades. When a large number of educated people compete for a limited number of government jobs, the less educated are pushed aside in favour of the more educated. This results in the devaluation of higher education leading to underemployment and misemployment of the educated.

**Table 2: Educational Qualification and Duration in Between Getting the Job**

| <b>Duration between education and getting job</b> | <b>SSLC</b> | <b>Plus-two</b> | <b>Diploma</b> | <b>Degree</b> | <b>PG</b> | <b>Professional</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------|
| Less than 1 year                                  | 0           | 0               | 0              | 0             | 1         | 1                   | 2<br>(2.8%)   |
| 1 to 3 years                                      | 0           | 0               | 1              | 2             | 2         | 2                   | 9<br>(12.7%)  |
| 3 to 5 years                                      | 0           | 2               | 3              | 8             | 1         | 5                   | 19<br>(26.8%) |
| 5 to 10 years                                     | 3           | 4               | 2              | 9             | 5         | 3                   | 26<br>(36.6%) |
| More than 10 years                                | 3           | 0               | 4              | 8             | 0         | 0                   | 15<br>(21%)   |

Source: Primary data

It is clearly evident that only 2.8% are getting jobs within one year after studying; even though they are not attaining a job that is apt for their qualification (table 2).

**Table 3: Reasons for Non-Gazetted Officers to Improve Qualification After Getting Job**

| Response                           | Desire of improvement (%) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Improving career or better job     | 38.09                     |
| Facilities offered by organization | 4.76                      |
| Service benefit                    | 42.85                     |
| Out of curiosity                   | 4.76                      |
| Any other reason                   | 9.52                      |

Source: Primary data

**3.2. Employee Perception Regarding Underemployment in Government Sector:** About 38.09% of people had their qualification extended after getting job. The majority are obtaining additional qualifications mainly focusing on the scope for promotion; and a few for changing job category. About 39.4% are trying for other posts; the majority of 29.6% of females are not interested, and are not trying for other job categories or posts. Some people consider a job to be their most desired even if it is below their level of qualification (table 3). Women are more satisfied with the scale of pay than men. Females consider the under value of job than under payment. In the case of men, more concentrate on payment, and both considers the underemployment situation.

**3.3. Chi Square Analysis of Satisfaction Level of Employees with Respect of Current Job on the Basis of Gender:** Table 4 shows that gender has no role on the satisfaction level on present job in the public sector.

**Table 4: Expected Value of Chi Square with Satisfaction Level of the Non-Gazetted Employees with Respect to the Current Job**

| Satisfaction level | No of non-gazetted employees |        |             |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--------|-------------|
|                    | Male                         | Female | Grand Total |
| Satisfied          | 18                           | 13     | 31          |
| Not satisfied      | 23                           | 17     | 40          |
| Grand Total        | 41                           | 30     | 71          |

$X^2=1.9$

Source: Primary data

**3.4. Extent of Underemployment with the Factors Age, Gender, and Qualification:** The extent of underemployment and age of the employees are negatively significant. That is, aged people do not consider or feel them as underemployed. But in the case of lower aged employees, the extent of underemployment is greater. In other words, when the ages of employees are small, the level of underemployment is more visible. Gender is not a significant factor for the extent of underemployment of employees in the public sector. Gender and qualification of employees do not affect much on the ceiling of underemployment.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the study, it is expressed that, public sector involves underemployment in the sense that a lower aged person can feel it more than a more aged worker. The majority of the employees working in the tenth or seventh qualified job are highly educated and also involve professionally qualified people. This suggests that both the less educated and the more educated are competing for a limited number of minimum qualification jobs, with the less educated being pushed out by the more educated. The employment opportunities in the state have not increased as much as the increased supply of educated manpower. It can be seen that a large number of graduates and post graduates have taken up jobs, that do not require their skills. This is mainly due to students' plans about their interests, which inspire them to get more qualifications to get the first position in the queue of the job market, and for occupational mobility, thus making them more educated. After completing their education and waiting for a job for many years, people will stay for a job that is lower than their qualifications.

#### **5. Suggestions**

- | To provide new trend-based courses in the Universities
- | To establish practical courses in the Technical and Arts and Science Colleges rather than theoretical courses.
- | To remove outdated courses in the Colleges
- | The government should ensure that fourth grade jobs are carried out by the employees who have minimum qualification only.
- | To give more preference to lower educated people for lower qualified jobs.

- | The government must avoid the tight competition between highly educated people and lower educated for the fourth-grade jobs.
- | Government must provide more technical and skill-based opportunity in public sector.
- | Encourage public-private partnership on providing employment opportunity.

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