

Unemployment: A Digital Historical Study of Post-Independence India

Jahangir Alam, Research Scholar, Dept of History, CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya, India

Abstract

Unemployment has remained an important economic and social issue in post-independence India, reflecting changes in population, economic structure, education, industrialization, agriculture, and technological development. This study presents a digital historical perspective on unemployment in India from independence to the contemporary period, focusing on the changing nature, measurement, and interpretation of employment conditions. Digital tools provide new opportunities to organize, visualize, and analyze historical employment data obtained from government reports, population censuses, labour surveys, economic records, and other archival sources. The study examines major phases of India's employment history, including the early planning period, agricultural transformation, industrial development, economic liberalization after 1991, and the subsequent expansion of the service and digital economies. It also considers the transition from traditional forms of employment toward informal, contractual, platform-based, and technology-enabled work. Digital databases, geographic information systems, statistical software, and data-visualization techniques can help identify regional, gender-based, educational, and rural–urban variations in unemployment over time. At the same time, differences in definitions, survey methodologies, data availability, and historical comparability present challenges for long-term analysis. The study emphasizes that unemployment should be understood not only as the absence of work but also through dimensions such as underemployment, employment quality, labour-force participation, and access to productive opportunities. A digitally supported historical approach can therefore provide a more systematic understanding of changing employment patterns and contribute to informed research on India's economic and social development.

Keywords: Unemployment, Post-Independence India, Economic History, Employment, Labour Force, Digital History, Historical Data, Data Visualization, Rural–Urban Employment, Economic Development.

