India is staring at one of its biggest crises: Unemployment of the educated

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Special Intensive Revision. Corruption. Caste equations. Out-migration. Education. Yes, Bihar is weeks away from speaking its mind. Like any election — experts, observers and shoot-in-the-dark psephologists are deconstructing “strategy” and “stance”. Over the next few weeks, your neighbour, your niece in her second year of undergraduate studies, and your uncle will turn into electoral pundits. Lots of chatter. Lost in all of this is an important conversation about a 12-letter word that does not get the importance it deserves election after election. Unemployment.

Gautam Sharma (name changed) had a chat with me recently. This soft-spoken young man in his twenties drives for a ride-hailing company. Here’s what he told me: “I never thought I would be doing this. I wanted to be a web analyst. I even got a BTech degree. But I couldn’t crack college

placements. Eventually, my friend's dad helped me land a job at a reasonably well-known firm. My salary just about covered my rent and some very basic monthly expenses. No chance of savings. But now I make about Rs 40,000 a month driving a car — considerably more than what I was earning."

India is staring at one of its biggest crises: Unemployment of the educated. In 2017, over 12,000 people interviewed for 18 jobs as peons in Rajasthan. The candidates included engineers, lawyers, and chartered accountants. In 2024, over 46,000 graduates and postgraduates applied for jobs to be contractual sanitation workers in Haryana.

Consider this. A student spends four years at one of India's top government colleges, paying nearly 10 lakh rupees for a degree, only to graduate with no job in hand. In 2024, two out of every five students who graduated from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) did not get placement. This pattern isn't limited to IITs. The trend is playing out across the National Institutes of Technology (NIT), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT), and other top institutions. According to the government's own data, more than one in 10 graduates and postgraduates were unemployed last year. For women, it's worse. One out of five women graduates and postgraduates did not have a job.

Seventy to 80 lakh youth enter the workforce every year. Where are the white-collar, reasonably paying jobs for graduates and postgraduates? Even though corporate profits are at a 15-year high, companies have been actively cutting jobs. Data from three major information technology (IT) firms in the country indicates that they have together cut about 64,000 jobs in FY24. The pace of growth in net white-collar employment of the four biggest companies has nearly halved in 2023, from what it was five years ago.

Overall Analysis

This editorial shines a piercing light on one of the most pressing yet under-discussed issues in India — **educated unemployment**. It combines personal narrative, statistical evidence, and political

context to expose how the promise of education is increasingly failing to translate into dignified, secure employment.

The piece opens amid the political buzz of upcoming elections in Bihar, using that backdrop to point out how unemployment rarely receives sustained focus in political discourse. The use of everyday imagery — "your neighbour," "your niece," "your uncle" turning into pundits — lends immediacy and relatability. The tone is conversational but quickly turns urgent, reminding readers that unemployment is the silent crisis behind all political chatter.

Through the story of *Gautam Sharma*, the writer personalizes the crisis. The narrative of a BTech graduate now working as a cab driver humanizes the abstract statistics and reflects the **underemployment trap**— where the educated are forced into low-skill, low-paying jobs. The phrase "I never thought I would be doing this" captures the disillusionment of an entire generation that finds formal education no longer a reliable ladder to upward mobility.

The editorial's core argument rests on hard data: highly qualified candidates applying for menial jobs, staggering competition for low-skill posts, and plummeting placement rates even at elite institutions like the IITs. These figures build a grim picture of **a broken link between education and employability**, a mismatch between aspirations and opportunities.

The language throughout is clear, urgent, and data-driven — avoiding emotional overstatement while letting facts speak. Phrases like *"India is staring at one of its biggest crises"* and *"two out of every five IIT graduates did not get placement"* underscore the magnitude of the challenge. The tone becomes critical and questioning when pointing out corporate job cuts despite record profits, exposing structural imbalances in the economy where productivity gains aren't translating into employment growth.

In essence, the editorial serves as both diagnosis and warning: India's demographic advantage risks turning into a liability if economic expansion continues without job creation. The author's style balances **narrative storytelling** with **analytical precision**, making it compelling and credible.

Important Vocabulary (5)

1. **Underemployment** – when people work in jobs that do not use their skills or offer sufficient income.
2. **Disillusionment** – a feeling of disappointment after realizing something is not as good as expected.
3. **Aspirations** – strong hopes or ambitions for achieving something.
4. **Employability** – the set of skills and attributes that make a person capable of getting and keeping a job.
5. **Demographic Dividend** – the economic growth potential that can result from changes in a country's age structure, especially when the working-age population is larger than dependents.

Conclusion & Tone

The editorial warns that India's education-to-employment pipeline is faltering, creating a generation of skilled yet jobless youth. It urges policymakers to treat employment not as a campaign slogan but

as a national emergency demanding long-term structural reform — in education, industry policy, and labor markets.

Tone: Analytical, urgent, and cautionary — blending empathy for the young with sharp critique of policy neglect.