INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT (NIU) AMONG POSTGRADUATE YOUTH
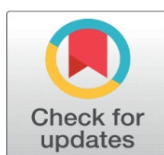
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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the influence of demographic factors on the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) Scale among postgraduate unemployed youth in Madhya Pradesh, India. The NIU Scale, developed by the researcher, is a psychometric tool designed to assess the adverse effects of unemployment across three domains: unrest, mental health issues, and personal life issues. A total of 83 unemployed postgraduates participated in the study. Using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Independent t-test at the 0.05 significance level, the findings indicated significant variations across age, gender, and family income groups. Respondents aged 30–32 years recorded the highest NIU scores, suggesting that prolonged joblessness intensifies its negative impact. Gender differences were highly significant, with males reporting higher NIU scores than females, reflecting the cultural expectation of men as financial providers. Similarly, family income showed a strong effect, with youth from lower-income households (₹5,001–10,000) experiencing greater negative consequences compared to those from higher-income groups. Overall, the study concludes that unemployment is not merely an economic issue but a multidimensional challenge influencing the psychological and social well-being of educated youth.

Keywords: Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU), Postgraduate Youth, Unrest, Mental Health, Personal Life Issues, Demographic Factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the most critical socio-economic challenges in India, particularly among educated youth. Despite acquiring higher qualifications, many postgraduates remain unemployed, which not only affects their financial stability but also exerts profound psychological, social, and personal consequences. The problem of unemployment extends beyond the lack of income—it often results in frustration, disillusionment, and a sense of unrest, thereby contributing to wider youth dissatisfaction and instability (Adebayo, 1999; Lawordo, 2021).

The Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) Scale, developed for this study, measures these multidimensional consequences under three domains: unrest, mental health issues, and personal life issues. Unrest refers to the collective dissatisfaction experienced by youth due to unmet expectations and limited opportunities, which can manifest through protests, agitation, or withdrawal from social engagement. Mental health issues include depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, which are heightened by prolonged unemployment (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Personal life issues encompass delayed marriages, social stigma, criminal involvement, and decline in family reputation (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences [NIMHANS], 2021). Together, these domains provide a holistic picture of how joblessness disrupts the psychological and social well-being of young people.

In India, youth unemployment remains a persistent concern. According to the International Labour Organization (2023), unemployment rates among postgraduates are disproportionately high compared to less educated groups, leading to what scholars describe as the "educated unemployed paradox." For young men, the inability to secure stable employment undermines their role as primary earners, while women may face pressure regarding marriage and social expectations. Family income further shapes these experiences, as youth from lower-income households often face compounded stress and limited coping mechanisms.

The problem is particularly acute in Madhya Pradesh, where structural unemployment, limited job creation, and high competition for both public and private sector opportunities exacerbate the psychological burden of young graduates. Understanding how demographic variables—such as age, gender, and family income—affect the NIU is therefore essential for identifying at-risk groups and designing interventions that address both the economic and psychosocial consequences of unemployment.

The present study seeks to examine the demographic determinants of the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) among postgraduate youth. By analyzing NIU scores across age, gender, and family income groups, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how unemployment influences psychological well-being and social identity.

1.1. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the variation in the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) across different age groups of postgraduate youth.
- To analyze gender differences in NIU scores among unemployed postgraduate youth.
- To examine the effect of family monthly income on NIU scores of unemployed postgraduate youth.

Hypotheses:

H01: There is no significant difference in the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) across different age groups of postgraduate youth.

H02: There is no significant difference in the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) between male and female postgraduate youth.

H03: There is no significant difference in the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) across different levels of family monthly income of postgraduate youth.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It is based on primary data collected from postgraduate unemployed youth in Madhya Pradesh. The methodology adopted for the study is presented below:

Sampling:

The Universe of the Study is 332, out of which a total of 83 respondents (25% of Universe) were selected for the study. Respondents were unemployed postgraduates, chosen using purposive sampling to ensure representation from different age groups, genders, and income categories.

Tool of Data Collection:

The Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) Scale was developed by the researcher to measure the psychological, social, and personal consequences of unemployment. The scale consists of three domains:

1) Unrest – capturing dissatisfaction, communication gaps, and participation in protests.
2) Mental Health Issues – assessing anxiety, depression, substance use, and stress.
3) Personal Life Issues – covering marriage delays, unproductive activities, criminal tendencies, and social stigma.

Each domain carries equal weightage of 10 points, giving a total possible NIU score of 30. Responses were recorded on a dichotomous scale (Agree = 1, Disagree = 0). Raw scores were then converted proportionately to domain scores.

Scoring and Levels:

1) 1–10 points: Moderate negative impact

2) 11–20 points: High negative impact
3) 21–30 points: Severe negative impact

Variables:

- **Dependent Variable:** Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU)
- **Independent Variables:**

Age group (24–26, 27–29, 30–32 years)

Gender (Male, Female)

Family monthly income (₹5,001–10,000; ₹10,001–15,000; ₹15,000 and above)

Statistical Tools Used:

- **One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** Applied to test the difference in NIU across age groups and family income categories.
- **Independent t-test:** Applied to test gender differences in NIU.
- **Significance Level:** 0.05 was considered as the threshold for statistical significance.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques such as One-Way ANOVA and Independent t-test.

Table 1 Statement Showing Demographic Variables and Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) Scores

Sr. No.	Demographic Variable	Categories	Mean NIU	SD	Test of Significance	Test Statistic Value	p-value
1	Age group	24–26 yrs	9.67	3.97	ANOVA	4.35	.014
		27–29 yrs	10.67	3.68			
		30–32 yrs	11.61	3.66			
2	Gender	Male	12.42	3.58	t-test	7.28	<.001
		Female	9.64	3.34			
3	Family Monthly Income	₹5,001–10,000	12.07	3.92	ANOVA	8.41	<.001
		₹10,001–15,000	10.25	3.64			
		₹15,000 & above	11.57	3.29			

From the above table, In the age group analysis, a one-way ANOVA test indicates a statistically significant difference in NIU scores ($F = 4.35$, $p = .014$). Respondents in the 30–32 years group recorded the highest mean NIU ($M = 11.61$, $SD = 3.66$), followed by those aged 27–29 years ($M = 10.67$, $SD = 3.68$), while the lowest mean score was found among the 24–26 years group ($M = 9.67$, $SD = 3.97$). This suggests that the negative consequences of unemployment intensify with age, likely due to prolonged joblessness, missed opportunities, and the increased pressure of social and economic responsibilities.

Similarly, gender was found to be a significant factor in determining NIU scores. The independent sample t-test ($t = 7.28$, $p < .001$) revealed that male respondents reported substantially higher NIU scores ($M = 12.42$, $SD = 3.58$) compared to females ($M = 9.64$, $SD = 3.34$). This difference highlights the cultural and financial expectations placed on men as primary earners in their households, which intensifies the negative psychological and social impacts of unemployment.

Furthermore, family monthly income was shown to significantly affect NIU outcomes. The ANOVA test ($F = 8.41$, $p < .001$) indicated clear variations across income groups. Youth from low-income households (₹5,001–10,000) reported the highest mean NIU score ($M = 12.07$, $SD = 3.92$), followed by those from high-income families (₹15,000 & above) with

a mean score of 11.57 (SD = 3.29). In contrast, respondents from middle-income families (₹10,001–15,000) reported the lowest NIU score (M = 10.25, SD = 3.64). These results suggest that financial background plays a critical role in shaping the psychological and social impact of unemployment, with economically weaker groups experiencing greater levels of stress, unrest, and personal difficulties.

Overall, the analysis confirms that the Negative Impact of Unemployment is not uniform but varies significantly across demographic factors, with older individuals, males, and low-income groups facing the greatest challenges.

Hypothesis Testing:

Table 2 Statement Showing Testing of Hypotheses

Sr. No.	Null Hypothesis (H0)	Test Applied	Test Statistic Value	p-value	Result
H01	There is no significant difference in the NIU across different age groups of postgraduate youth.	ANOVA	F = 4.35	.014	Rejected
H02	There is no significant difference in the NIU between male and female postgraduate youth.	t-test	t = 7.28	<.001	Rejected
H03	There is no significant difference in the NIU across different levels of family monthly income.	ANOVA	F = 8.41	<.001	Rejected

4. FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of data and hypothesis testing, the following findings have been derived:

- A significant variation was found in the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) across different age groups. Respondents in the 30–32 years age group reported the highest mean NIU score, followed by those in the 27–29 years group, while the lowest scores were recorded among the 24–26 years group. This indicates that prolonged joblessness intensifies the negative psychological and social consequences of unemployment.
- A significant gender difference was observed in NIU scores. Male respondents reported substantially higher NIU scores compared to females. This reflects the greater socio-economic and cultural pressure on males to secure employment and contribute financially to their families.
- A significant effect of family monthly income on NIU was found. Respondents belonging to lower-income families (₹5,001–10,000) reported the highest NIU scores, followed by those with higher income (₹15,000 & above), while the lowest scores were recorded among the middle-income group (₹10,001–15,000). This suggests that financial background strongly influences the degree of negative impact experienced due to unemployment.

5. SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the findings of the present study, the following suggestions are put forward to minimize the negative impact of unemployment among postgraduate youth:

- **Targeted Employment Policies:** Government and policymakers should design age-sensitive employment programs. Since older unemployed youth (30–32 years) experience a higher NIU, they should be given priority through special provisions such as relaxation in age limits for competitive examinations and reservation in recruitment drives.
- **Gender-Specific Interventions:** As males reported higher NIU scores, counseling and career guidance centers should be established to address their mental health concerns, stress, and financial anxiety. At the same time, initiatives must encourage female youth participation in the workforce through skill training, flexible work models, and entrepreneurship support.

- **Financial Support for Low-Income Families:** Youth from lower-income groups (₹5,001–10,000) are more negatively affected by unemployment. Thus, income-support schemes, interest-free loans, and stipends should be provided to ease financial burdens and reduce psychological stress during job-seeking periods.
- **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Training:** Universities and employment exchanges should integrate skill-building programs aligned with local and global market demands. Special training in digital skills, start-up incubation, and self-employment schemes (such as Mukhyamantri Udyam Kranti Yojana) should be strengthened.
- **Mental Health Programs:** Given the mental health issues highlighted in the NIU Scale, psychological counseling services, stress management workshops, and peer-support groups should be provided at district and university levels to improve coping mechanisms among unemployed youth.
- **Awareness and Social Support:** Society often stigmatizes unemployed individuals, further worsening their well-being. Campaigns to reduce social stigma, along with active community support networks, can help mitigate the personal and family-level negative impacts of unemployment.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study analyzed the influence of demographic variables—age, gender, and family income—on the Negative Impact of Unemployment (NIU) among postgraduate youth in Madhya Pradesh. The findings revealed that the negative impact of unemployment significantly varies across demographic categories. Older respondents (30–32 years) reported higher NIU scores, indicating that prolonged joblessness worsens psychological and social stress. Gender differences were also evident, with males recording higher NIU scores than females, reflecting greater socio-economic expectations placed upon them. Furthermore, family income emerged as a strong determinant, as youth from lower-income households experienced a higher negative impact compared to those from better-off families.

The study highlights that unemployment is not only an economic problem but also a psychological and social challenge that affects the overall well-being of educated youth. It influences their mental health, personal life, and sense of social identity. The findings underscore the urgent need for age-specific, gender-sensitive, and income-targeted interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment. Employment generation schemes, mental health support, and social awareness campaigns are critical in reducing the negative consequences captured by the NIU scale.

Thus, addressing unemployment requires a holistic approach that combines economic empowerment with psychological resilience and social support systems, enabling postgraduate youth to overcome the challenges of joblessness and contribute meaningfully to society.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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