



FROZEN FILES OF SILENT RECRUITMENT: - RECRUITMENT RULES (WITH REFERENCE TO JAMMU AND KASHMIR): A CRITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In a land where jobs have vanished, and recruitment promises remained on paper, every unopened notice felt like a trap, and the youth began to realise the invisible and unseen forces which are covering with secrets and are the reason behind unemployment. The question is “Who will survive now”? Well! This article offers a socio – economic and legal analysis of recruitment rules in Jammu and Kashmir, which have undergone some major changes in recent years. The changes have affected public employment, which includes major issues like frozen posts, delayed examinations, stagnation in career growth, etc. The paper critically analyze the history of Recruitment rules and present scenario, Statistics of frozen posts from various departments, which includes Gazetted, Non – Gazetted and Multi – Tasking Staff like Health and Medical education Department, Public Works, Animal Husbandry Department, Industries and Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture production and Farmers welfare, Power department, Food and Supplies Department, Finance and Revenue Department, Jal Shakti, School Education Department etc, Comparative Analysis with selected jurisdictions like Delhi, Chandigarh, and Puducherry. The article highlights the Socio – Economic and Legal impact on unemployment, job freeze policies, and legal framework with leading case laws like Sapna Devi & Anr v. Sheetal & Ors (Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh HC), Altaf Hussain & Anr v. Union of India & Ors (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh HC) and Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir v. Candidates (J&K and Ladakh HC). Also, it suggests the need for reforms to address structural unemployment.

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INTRODUCTION

The recruitment in Jammu and Kashmir has become one of the hottest debated issues. After the constitutional changes in the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act,¹ the legal and administrative structure of the Union territory has significantly changed. The recruitment rules were revised, the requirement of Domicile Certificates was introduced, and the posts were reorganised. Besides, following up on these changes, a serious concern was raised that a large number of government posts are still vacant and are declared frozen. The delay in employment opportunities for educated youth led to a severe rise in the unemployment ratio. Under Article 309 of the Constitution of India,² the government has the full authority to frame recruitment rules for public services, but these services are now governed by central service regulations and specific UT notifications. The prolonged vacancies have raised constitutional questions, such as Equal Opportunity under Article 16 (1) of the Constitution.³ The issue of frozen posts is not only an administrative inconvenience, but it has both social and economic consequences. In a region where public employment is the major source of livelihood, these delays in recruitment led to unemployment, frustration and public distrust of institutions. This issue lies in the constitutional law, administrative law and social justice. A balanced recruitment policy must have transparency, timely appointments and value the constitutional principles for smooth and effective governance.

A small amendment may open thousands of doors, while a single notification can freeze the dreams of candidates who are waiting for years to get employment. Thus, recruitment rules are not only just procedures; they are the framework that shapes the career, expectations and the future of an entire generation.

HISTORY OF RECRUITMENT RULES

The lifelong history of recruitment rules in India has developed gradually from the British colonial period, when the government jobs were mainly governed by executive authorities, and recruitments were based on administrative convenience rather than equality. The selection

¹ Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, Act No 34 of 2019

² Constitution of India 1950, art 309

³ Constitution of India 1950, art 16 (1)

procedures lacked transparency, and public employment directly depended on administrative discretion.⁴ The establishment of the Indian Civil Service initiated and structured the recruitment, but the opportunities remained limited and highly selective.⁵ Thereafter Independence in 1947, India adopted a constitutional framework which regulates fairness in public employment. The Constitution of India, 1950, laid the foundation of modern recruitment rules by guaranteeing Equality before law under Article 14,⁶ Equality of Opportunity under Article 16 (1),⁷ and empowered the state to frame service rules under Article 309.⁸ These fundamental provisions transferred recruitment rules from executive discretion to a legally regulated process. Now, recruitment rules were based on clear qualifications, transparent procedures, and merit – based selection through the Public Service Commission.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the recruitment policy was initiated under the erstwhile special constitutional status under Article 370, which allowed the former State to maintain its own service laws and recruitment framework. The Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission and later on the Service Selection Board were established to govern the appointments and ensure procedural fairness.⁹ Also, the separate rules were framed for different departments to manage the appointments, promotions and eligibility conditions. A major transformation occurred when the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act was enacted, which recognised the State into Two Union territories in 2019.¹⁰ Today, recruitment rules represent a combination of constitutional principles, statutory laws and administrative policies.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF RECRUITMENT RULES

Constitutional Basis of Recruitment: The legal framework of recruitment in Jammu and Kashmir originates from the Constitution of India. Articles 14 and 16 guarantee equality before the law and equal opportunity in public employment. These provisions require the government to adopt fair and non-discriminatory recruitment procedures. Furthermore, Article 320 provides the role of Public Service Commissions in conducting recruitment examinations and advising the government on appointments.¹¹ Therefore, recruitment rules must comply with

⁴ Prem Nath Bazaz, *The history of Struggle for freedom in Kashmir* (Gulshan Books 1954)

⁵ Bipan Chandra and Others, *India's Struggle for Independence* (Penguin Books 1989)

⁶ Constitution of India, 1950 art 14

⁷ *Ibid* (n 3)

⁸ *Ibid* (n 2)

⁹ Jammu and Kashmir Constitution 1957, art 128

¹⁰ *Ibid* (n 1)

¹¹ Constitution of India 1950, arts 14, 16, 320

constitutional principles of merit, fairness, and transparency. After the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019,¹² the central constitutional provisions became fully applicable to the Union Territory, which reshaped the recruitment system and aligned it with the national administrative framework.

Statutory Framework Governing Recruitment: The primary legislation governing recruitment in Jammu and Kashmir is the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services Decentralisation and Recruitment Act, 2010.¹³ This Act distributes recruitment authority across different administrative levels, such as district, divisional, and Union Territory cadres. The government has clarified that recruitment continues to be conducted strictly under this Act and related service rules, even in recent years. Recruitment agencies have to function only when vacancies are officially referred by departments under this legal framework. Also, the Act ensures decentralised recruitment, structured cadre management, adherence to reservation policies, and legal accountability in appointments.

Recruitment Agencies and Institutional Mechanisms: Two main statutory bodies conduct recruitment:¹⁴

- Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC)
- Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB)

Service recruitment rules specify qualifications, methods of appointment, and promotion procedures. For example, recruitment rules provide that appointments may be made through direct recruitment, promotion, or a combination of both, depending on the post. Departments must refer vacancies annually to these agencies, and ensure systematic hiring and prevent arbitrary appointments.

Role of Executive Orders and Administrative Policies: In practice, Recruitment rules are sometimes issued or modified through executive orders when formal rules are delayed.¹⁵ The Jammu and Kashmir Government has to extend timelines, allowing departments to notify recruitment rules through executive orders temporarily to address administrative gaps.

¹² <<https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A2019-34.pdf>> (Accessed on 26 February 2026)

¹³ <<https://jkgad.nic.in>> (Accessed on 26 February 2026)

¹⁴ <<https://www.legitquest.com/act/jammu-and-kashmir-public-service-commission-subordinate-service-recruitment-rules-2022/C84F>> (Accessed on 26 February 2026)

¹⁵ <<https://kashmirobserver.net/2024/11/28/jk-govt-extends-time-for-recruitment-through-executive-orders/>> (Accessed on 26 February 2026)

Administrative Council decisions can also influence recruitment processes, such as restoring wait-list provisions, speeding up the filling of vacancies and reducing delays. These executive measures operate within statutory limits but must eventually be replaced by formally notified rules.

Despite administrative challenges and delays, the legal framework aims to promote transparency, merit-based selection, and accountability in public employment and strengthening timely rule-making and consistent implementation remains essential for improving trust in recruitment processes and addressing unemployment concerns in the Union Territory.

STATISTICS OF FROZEN POSTS

As of the latest official data, ten thousand posts across government departments are unfilled or vacant, and many are due to recruitment delays, hiring freezes, or slow referral to recruiting agencies like JKSSB and JKPSC. Total Vacancies (Approx) in various departments: 32,474 posts vacant across 37 departments (includes Gazetted, Non-Gazetted, and Multitasking, Staff).¹⁶

1. **Health & Medical Education Department:** 7,851 posts vacant. The highest number of vacancies in the department is in the areas that include doctors, paramedics, and nursing and allied health roles.
2. **Public Works (Roads & Buildings):** 3,759 posts vacant, which include engineers, supervisors, technical & support staff roles.
3. **Animal Husbandry Department:** 2,589 posts vacant, which include veterinary, technical, and field support roles.
4. **Industries & Commerce:** 2,517 posts vacant, which include officers and support staff.
5. **Housing & Urban Development:** 2,420 posts vacant, which include planners, engineers, and admin staff.

¹⁶<<https://www.kashmirindepth.com/2025/03/04/over-32000-govt-posts-vacant-in-jk-cm-omar-abdullah-health-dept-tops-list/>> (Accessed on 21 February, 2026)
<<https://m.economictimes.com/jobs/government-jobs/over-32000-posts-lying-vacant-in-37-jk-govt-departments-cm-abdullah/articleshow/118710184>> (Accessed on 21 February, 2026)

6. **Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare:** 1,340 posts vacant, which include agriculture officers, specialists, and field staff.
7. **Power Department:** 1,305 posts vacant, which includes technical and non-technical workers.
8. **Food & Supplies Department:** 1,131 posts vacant, which include supervisory and administrative roles.
9. **Finance Department:** 1,009 posts vacant, which include auditors, accounts officers, and support staff.
10. **Revenue Department:** 1,004 posts vacant, which include clerical, field officers, & others.
11. **Jal Shakti:** 856 posts vacant, which include technical and non-technical roles.
12. **School Education Department:** 770 non-teaching posts vacant
13. **General Line Teacher (GLT) Posts:** Recruitment for General Line Teacher positions was frozen by the State Administrative Council in 2018 to allow transition and absorption of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rehbar- e - Taleem teachers into regular teaching posts. Approximately 6,576 GLT vacancies were frozen, and no new recruitment occurred for several years.
14. **Lecturer & Teaching - Related Posts:** Besides GLT posts, lecturer positions and other teaching roles remained unfilled due to the long-standing freeze tied to the transition of older contract and SSA teachers. Recently, 594 lecturer posts across multiple disciplines have been referred to the Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) as part of de-freezing efforts.
15. **Non-Teaching and Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) Roles:** As part of the teacher freeze process, associated non-teaching roles and MTS positions in the education department were also left vacant (e.g., 727 non-teaching, 43 MTS posts sent to Finance for concurrence).
16. 17,953 are vacant posts under the direct recruitment quota in various departments.

These vacancies represent that the government jobs are effectively frozen and pending recruitment across multiple key departments in Jammu & Kashmir, spanning health, infrastructure, agriculture, revenue, power, and more. Furthermore, many posts remain unfilled due to administrative delays and policy constraints. In the J&K Forest Development Corporation (JKFDC), recruitment freezes from the last decade have been crunched due to staff shortages. The administration terminated 103 appointees in the Fire & Emergency Services Department after investigations found that their hiring was irregular. This means those jobs are once again vacant and need recruitment.¹⁷

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH SELECTED JURISDICTIONS

The Recruitment rules in Indian Union Territories are different and based on administrative structure, eligibility conditions, and procedural flexibility. In Jammu and Kashmir, recruitment is governed by the Jammu & Kashmir Civil Services Decentralisation¹⁸ and recruitment framework, which is conducted through JKPSB and JKSSB. The Public Service Commission functions under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, which must be consulted on recruitment methods and appointments.¹⁹ Recruitment is followed up by a domicile eligibility certificate, which replaced the earlier permanent resident requirement, and makes access restrictive and procedurally complex, while Delhi adopts a more flexible recruitment structure. Recruitment rules have clear and defined age limits, qualifications, promotion methods, and selection procedures through standardised service rules.²⁰ The bodies like DSSSB conduct regular competitive examinations using digital systems, which improves transparency and predictability in hiring processes.²¹

Moreover, Chandigarh follows a centralised administrative model.²² The recent reforms in Chandigarh aim to create common recruitment rules for similar posts across departments to

¹⁷ < <https://m.greaterkashmir.com/article/govt-blames-20-year-hiring-freeze-for-staff-crunch-in-jkfdc/477591> > (Accessed on 21 February, 2026)

¹⁸ Government of J&K, *Recruitment governed under Civil Services Decentralization Act* <<https://risingkashmir.com/govt-says-no-fresh-recruitment-policy-framed-since-nov-2024/>> (Accessed on 20 February, 2026)

¹⁹ Government of J&K, *Public Service Commission Functions* <<https://jkgad.nic.in/En/PSC.aspx>> (Accessed on 27 February, 2026)

²⁰ Government of NCT Delhi, *Recruitment Rules (Services Department)* <<https://services.delhi.gov.in/services/recruitment-rules>> (Accessed on 20 February, 2026)

²¹ Delhi Administration Subordinate Service Rules, 1967 (model framework applied in UT services) <<https://supremetoday.ai/doc/law/2178~R.6>> (Accessed on 20 February, 2026)

²² Chandigarh Administration, *Common Recruitment Rules Reform* <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/ut-initiates-common-rules-for-similar-posts/articleshow/127809170>> (Accessed on 20 February, 2026)

reduce delays and administrative duplication. This standardisation reflects a simplified and flexible recruitment framework. Also, Puducherry have flexibility through periodic recruitment, which is conducted by its Public Service Commission.²³ Competitive examinations are well-organised based on vacancy requirements with streamlined and fair procedures. The low domicile restrictions allow wider participation.

In conclusion, Jammu and Kashmir prioritise local employment and protection through stricter domicile norms, whereas Delhi, Chandigarh, and Puducherry have much administrative efficiency, standardised procedures, and broader accessibility. These differences show how flexible recruitment frameworks can enhance transparency, efficiency, and employment opportunities within Union Territories.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND LEGAL IMPACT OF RECRUITMENT RULES

The Recruitment rules play an important role in shaping employment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir. These rules determine how government jobs are advertised, who is eligible, and how selections are made. Since government employment is considered the most secure and prestigious career option in Jammu and Kashmir, the recruitment policies directly affect the socio-economic condition and psychological mindset of youth.

Jammu and Kashmir has faced a serious unemployment challenge, especially among educated youth. The official data as of 2025 has shown that more than 3.7 lakh educated young people are registered as unemployed in the Union Territory.²⁴ The unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir has remained higher than the national average, which indicates the limited job opportunities and heavy dependence on public sector employment.²⁵ Government recruitment rules influence this situation in several ways, such as delays in recruitment processes, procedural formalities, and unfilled sanctioned posts that slow down job creation. Even when vacancies exist, departments follow code formalities before referring posts to recruiting

²³ Government of Puducherry, Public Services “Conduct of Common open written competitive examination for recruitment” (Department of personnel and administrative reforms) (Accessed on 20 February, 2026)

²⁴ Sidra Fatima, ‘J&K Registers 3.6 Lakh Educated Jobless Youth’
<<https://foej.in/j-srinagar-district-tops-the-list/>> (Accessed on 23 February, 2026)

²⁵ Tariq Bhat, ‘J&K Govt to Boost Self-Employment Schemes as Unemployment Rate Stands at 6.1%’ *The Week*
<<https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2025/03/20/j-k-govt-to-boost-self-employment-schemes-as-unemployment-rate-stand-at-6-1-per-cent.html>>(Accessed on 23 February, 2026)

agencies like the Public Service Commission and Services Selection Board.²⁶ This legal structure, although designed for fairness, has often resulted in long waiting periods.

Economically, unemployment has reduced household income and increased dependency on families. Many young people spend years preparing for government examinations and paying application fees repeatedly. Reports reveal that recruitment agencies collected nearly ₹48 crore as application fees from unemployed youth within two years, which reflects both high competition and limited opportunities.²⁷ Recruitment rules also have psychological consequences, like in Jammu and Kashmir society; government jobs are associated with stability, respect, and social security because of this cultural preference, delays or cancellations of recruitment processes have created frustration, anxiety, and uncertainty among young people.²⁸ The long-lasting waiting period between notification and appointment leads to loss of motivation and mental stress. Youth begin to feel socially excluded when education does not translate into employment. The pressure increases as age limit criteria and eligibility conditions restrict opportunities over time. Psychologically, unemployment produced feelings of helplessness, reduced self-confidence, and distrust toward institutions. The continuous preparation without results creates what sociologists describe as “Aspirational Frustration,”²⁹ where expectations rise faster than available opportunities. Legally, recruitment rules aim to ensure transparency, merit, and equality under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India, which guarantee equality of opportunity in public employment. After the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, the recruitment procedures were aligned more closely with central administrative laws, introducing standardised selection systems. However, the strict legal compliance sometimes slows recruitment because departments have to verify eligibility, reservation policies, and background checks before appointments. In some cases, irregular appointments have been cancelled after investigations, showing the importance of legal scrutiny but also contributing to employment uncertainty.³⁰

²⁶ *Hindustan Times*, ‘3.7 Lakh Registered Jobless Youth in J&K, Says Minister’

<<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/37-lakh-registered-jobless-youth-in-j-k-says-minister-101742324816697.html>>(Accessed on 23 February, 2026)

²⁷ *The New Indian Express*, ‘J&K Collects Rs 48 Crore from Unemployed Youth as Job Application Fees’

<<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2026/Feb/09/jk-collects-rs-48-crore-from-unemployed-youth-as-job-application-fees-in-two-years>>(Accessed on 23 February, 2026)

²⁸ *Economic Times*, ‘J&K Admin Terminates Services of 103 Fire Department Appointees’

<<https://m.economictimes.com/news/india/jk-admin-terminates-services-of-103-fire-dept-appointees/articleshow/125989589.cms>> (Accessed on 23 February, 2026)

²⁹ Robert K Merton, “Social Structure and Anomie” (1938) 3 (5) *American Sociological Review* 672

³⁰ *Ibid* (n 23)

Thus, recruitment rules have a dual impact. Legally, they promote fairness and transparency. Socio-economically, the delays reduce employment growth. Psychologically, the prolonged unemployment affects youth morale and social stability. So, the effective governance, therefore, requires balancing legal safeguards with faster recruitment mechanisms. Hence, in Jammu and Kashmir, recruitment rules are not merely administrative procedures; they shape economic security, social expectations, and mental well-being of the younger generation. Reforming recruitment timelines, improving transparency, and expanding employment opportunities can reduce unemployment and restore confidence among youth.

LANDMARK CASE LAWS ON RECRUITMENT RULES

Sapna Devi & Anr v Sheetal & Ors (2026):³¹ This case has become an important precedent regarding fairness in recruitment procedures. The dispute arose when recruitment authorities relied on unnotified draft recruitment rules and altered eligibility conditions after the recruitment process had already begun. The petitioners argued that candidates had applied according to the eligibility criteria mentioned in the advertisement. However, during selection, authorities applied new conditions that were never officially notified. The High Court held that such action violates the principles of equality and transparency under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. The Court ruled that recruitment rules must be clear and publicly notified before the process begins. Any change during the selection process is arbitrary and invalid. Consequently, the recruitment was declared legally defective (vitiating).

This judgment is significant because many recruitment disputes in Jammu & Kashmir arise from changing rules in the middle, which creates uncertainty and unemployment among candidates. The Court protected the legitimate expectations of applicants and reinforced administrative accountability.

Altaf Hussain & Anr v Union of India & Ors (2026):³² This case dealt with the arbitrary cancellation of recruitment after the process had reached an advanced stage. The matter concerned the recruitment for Gramin Dak Sevak (GDS) posts, where candidates had already completed most stages of selection. The authorities cancelled the recruitment without providing a strong and rational reason. Some aggrieved candidates approached the High Court claiming that such cancellation destroyed employment opportunities and caused unfair hardship. The

³¹ *Sapna Devi & Anr v Sheetal & Ors* (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh HC, WP (C) No 628/2022 & 1670/2023

³² *Altaf Hussain & Anr v Union of India & Ors* (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh HC, LPA 177/2024

Court observed that although participation in recruitment does not automatically create a right to appointment, the government cannot abandon a nearly completed recruitment process without valid justification. Administrative decisions must be reasonable and non-arbitrary.

The High Court set aside the cancellation order and emphasised that government authorities must act fairly, especially when unemployed candidates invest time and effort in competitive selection processes. This judgment strengthened judicial protection against sudden recruitment cancellations, which often contribute to “frozen jobs” and prolonged unemployment.

Government of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir v Candidates (Restoration of Withdrawn Posts Case) (2025):³³ In this case, the government withdrew several advertised vacancies after the recruitment process had already started and attempted to fill them through other administrative methods. The High Court held that once vacancies are officially advertised and recruitment begins, authorities cannot arbitrarily withdraw posts without lawful reasons. Such withdrawal can harm candidates who rely on public notifications for employment opportunities. The Court declared the withdrawal illegal and directed the restoration of the posts so that recruitment could proceed according to the original notification.

This decision is crucial in addressing the issue of frozen or disappearing vacancies in Jammu & Kashmir. It ensures that the government cannot frustrate recruitment processes after inviting applications from unemployed youth.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND REFORMS NEEDED IN RECRUITMENT RULES

The Recruitment rules regulate how public employment is offered and play a vital role in maintaining administrative efficiency, social justice, and economic stability. In Jammu and Kashmir, recruitment processes have faced delays, legal uncertainty, and institutional challenges, which have contributed to unemployment and public dissatisfaction. Therefore, the comprehensive reforms are necessary for transparency, fairness, and timely employment opportunities. One of the most important reforms is the introduction of a time-bound recruitment process, like Recruitment examinations, declaration of results, and appointment procedures should follow a fixed annual calendar. No more delays in recruitment cycles, which create uncertainty among job aspirants and slow governance by leaving essential posts vacant. Reports indicate that thousands of government posts remain unfilled despite repeated

³³ *Government of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir v Candidates* (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh HC, Order

announcements of recruitment drives. A structured timeline will improve administrative accountability and restore confidence among candidates.

There is a need for automatic filling of vacancies. Government departments should regularly report vacant posts and ensure their immediate referral to recruiting bodies such as the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) and Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB). The failure to refer vacancies promptly can result in the accumulation of posts and inefficiency in public service delivery. Another critical reform is the establishment of **permanent and codified recruitment rules**. The Recruitment policies in Jammu and Kashmir have often been modified through executive orders rather than stable statutory frameworks. The government has repeatedly extended deadlines for finalising recruitment rules through administrative orders, which creates legal ambiguity. Codified rules should be framed under a proper legislative authority that would enhance legal certainty and reduce litigation, and ensuring transparency in the selection process is equally essential. Digital platforms should be used for applications, examinations, the publication of answer keys, and results. Transparent digital systems will reduce allegations of malpractice and strengthen public trust in recruitment institutions. Additionally, the protection against arbitrary examination cancellation must be incorporated into recruitment regulations. Candidates invest significant time and resources in preparation, and cancellations without clear justification create psychological distress and legal disputes.

Regular monitoring mechanisms are also necessary. Annual vacancy audits should be conducted to identify unfilled posts and prevent administrative backlog. Alongside this, age relaxation policies must be introduced for candidates affected by prolonged recruitment delays so that they do not lose eligibility due to systemic inefficiencies. The restoration and proper use of waiting lists is another practical reform, as administration has previously reinstated waiting list provisions to fill vacancies arising from non-joining candidates and to maintain valid waiting lists, which will ensure that public posts are filled quickly without restarting the entire recruitment process. The institutional strengthening is equally important. The Recruitment agencies, such as JKPSC and JKSSB, should require adequate staffing, technological infrastructure, and financial resources to conduct examinations efficiently. A grievance redressal mechanism should also be established to resolve candidate complaints through a fast and independent process, which reduces court litigation.

Furthermore, the reforms must include legal accountability and oversight mechanisms so that authorities remain responsible for delays or procedural irregularities. The Recruitment reforms should also promote coordination with private sector employment and skill development programmes, which reduces excessive dependence on government jobs in a region where public employment remains the primary aspiration. Uniformity is another key requirement. A single recruitment framework across departments would eliminate inconsistencies and confusion. Providing psychological support measures, including career counselling and clear communication of recruitment timelines, would reduce stress among aspirants experiencing prolonged uncertainty. At last, the recruitment rules should undergo periodic policy review every three to five years to adapt to changing socio-economic realities. The continuous evaluation will ensure that the recruitment system will remain efficient, fair, and responsive to unemployment challenges.

The reforms in recruitment rules in Jammu and Kashmir are essential not only for administrative efficiency but also for addressing socio-economic inequality, psychological distress among youth, and legal instability. A transparent, predictable, and legally sound recruitment framework can significantly contribute to employment generation and public trust in governance.

CONCLUSION

This was the story of recruitment rules in Jammu and Kashmir, which is not merely an administrative issue; it is a reflection of governance, justice, and the relationship between the State and its youth. The Recruitment rules were originally designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and equal opportunity in public employment under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. However, prolonged delays, changing eligibility conditions, job freezes, and frequent executive interventions have transformed recruitment from a system of opportunity into a landscape of uncertainty. Legally, recruitment must operate within the framework of the rule of law and constitutional equality. Courts have repeatedly emphasised that public employment cannot be governed by arbitrariness or shifting policies. “The judiciary has held that once a recruitment process begins, the rules of the game cannot be altered midway, as such actions violate principles of natural justice and legitimate expectation.”³⁴ Yet, in Jammu

³⁴ *K Manjusree v State of Andhra Pradesh* (2008) 3 SCC 512 (Supreme Court of India)
<<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1113868/>> (Accessed on 24 February 2026)

and Kashmir, recurring policy changes and administrative delays have often weakened public confidence in institutions responsible for recruitment.

The socio-economic consequences are equally profound. The unemployment does not remain confined to economic deprivation; it reshapes social behaviour, increases psychological stress, and creates a generation which is caught between education and uncertainty when recruitment processes remain stalled for years, merit loses meaning, and faith in legal institutions begins to erode. In such circumstances, recruitment rules cease to be technical regulations, and they become instruments that either stabilise society or silently deepen dissatisfaction. Therefore, reform is not optional but inevitable. The transparent digital recruitment system, statutory recruitment rules instead of temporary executive orders, fixed recruitment calendars, and judicially enforceable timelines are essential to restore credibility. A predictable recruitment framework would not only comply with constitutional mandates but also rebuild trust between citizens and the administration.

Ultimately, the future of Jammu and Kashmir's governance will depend less on new promises and more on how fairly opportunities are distributed. The Recruitment rules stand at the intersection of law, hope, and justice; if implemented with integrity, they can transform unemployment into empowerment; if neglected, they risk turning aspiration into unrest. The real question is not whether recruitment reforms are needed but whether the system will act before silence in examination halls turns into voices demanding accountability beyond the corridors of power.