A Study on Innovative Policy Approaches to Optimize Teacher Moonlighting and Retention

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Abstract: Teacher moonlighting, a practice of engaging in a secondary job alongside primary teaching responsibilities, has gained momentum due to rapid technological advancements and the expansion of the gig economy. Technology, especially in the post-COVID era, has transformed work spheres, blurring the boundaries between primary and secondary employment. Moonlighting today is no longer an exception but has become a necessity driven by financial needs, skill diversification, or career advancement. As educators wade through dual employment work structures, organisations face challenges in managing and retaining talent. This paper proposes human centric approaches to manage moonlighting while enhancing teacher retention, engagement and commitment. The study emphasises that moonlighting should be viewed as a catalyst for skill diversification, career growth and educational excellence. It focuses on innovative strategies such as flexible work hours, sufficient rewards , performance recognition, development opportunities, clear guidelines, institutional credit for upskilling etc that can create a balance between educator's aspirations and organisation's objectives . The study concludes that management of moonlighting calls for a forward-looking approach that aligns both- organizational sustainability and teacher empowerment.

Keywords: Moonlighting, Post-COVID Work, Employee Retention, Workforce Management, HR Innovation, Gig Economy, Dual Employment, Teachers etc.

INTRODUCTION

Moonlighting has become a trend across professions especially post pandemic . The Education Sector , in specific, has experienced the rise in the number of teachers who are engaged in secondary jobs alongside their primary employment . There can be many forms of moonlighting for teachers such as Online tuition, Private Tuitions, Freelancing, Content creation etc . Conventionally, moonlighting was viewed as a cushion to meet financial emergencies but in the modern era, it has evolved into a strategy to overcome monotony, a way to learn varied skills , a pursuit to fulfill entrepreneurship spirit and many more

Teacher retention, on the other hand, is an ability of the educational institutions to uphold qualified teachers overtime . Poor ability to retain the talent within the institution leads to high turnover, increased recruitment cost and compromised quality of education. Moonlighting and retention are closely related : while supportive and regulated moonlighting leads to increased loyalty and commitment among teachers, strict and rigid policies may increase rate of attrition.

Therefore, managing dual employment through human centric policies requires a deeper understanding that moonlighting is not a threat but a catalyst to satisfy the aspirations of teachers to grow   personally and professionally while enhancing institutional resilience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE -

1. **Hosain et. al. , (2024)** aims to investigate the impact of a secondary job on the primary /regular job . They found that an enjoyable and pleasant day on a part time job enhances next day work performance on primary job & vice-versa . Engaging in dual employment actually reduces financial stress and hence increases productivity. They argue that employees who engage in dual jobs can spill the positive feelings gained at one job onto the another job . They added that moonlighting can give relief to employees from monotonous work .

2. **Bhore et.al. , (2024)** explains that it is very essential for an organization to attract, satisfy and retain their intellectual assets i.e. human resource . Author explained that especially Gen Z , who are more money driven, like to explore the world , attracted towards luxurious properties, are more likely to moonlight in order to earn money to explore the world around them. They want to earn more money and follow their passion and creativity. There are many organizations who have started supporting secondary employment, such as Swiggy, Tech Mahindra etc. Management has to come up with policies that are equally beneficial to the employer and the employee. In today's digital era , Talent management is essential and it can be done by giving employees autonomy and

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opportunity to grow.

3. **Kaur and Dulloo , (2024)** gave insights into how moonlighting has evolved over years. They are of the view that moonlighting leads to deterioration and fatigue. They pointed out that technological advancement and COVID-19 has given birth to the new horizons of moonlighting. The definition of moonlighting has evolved over time -
   - working on two jobs in different shifts
   - Working on secondary job, even for few days or weeks
   - Working on additional job without salary
   - Self-employment, apart from primary job

4. **Simon Lo , (2023)** mentioned in her study that the decision to engage in a secondary job depends upon whether the first job is time constrained or not. Workers , if offered high compensation, can accept even jobs with unattractive hours. She is of the view that factors such as age, gender, education, et cetera, play a significant role in determining leisure value. For instance, females, parents, old aged employees , value leisure more than others.

5. **Simon Lo , (2023)** stated that the quality of the new job can be known only after working on it. Hence it is difficult for the employees to make an informed decision about acceptance or rejection of the new job offer . Author has regarded jobs as experience goods and job tenure as an indicator of the job quality. Workers will quit the job if the realized quality is less than the expected quality. She mentioned that new jobs will last longer only if workers will take the new assignment after proper screening. In contrast to the experience goods, the author calls jobs as inspection goods, if sufficient screening can be done to ensure the quality of the job .

6. **Kanellopoulos et.al. , (2023)** distinguished moonlighters as low intensity and high intensity . Where low intensity moonlight takes less additional jobs, than the high intensity moonlighters . They mentioned that motives of low intensity moonlighters are financial support, safety etc , whereas experience upskilling are the motives behind high intensity moonlighters .

7. **Khera and Kumar , (2023) h**ave talked about the work culture in an organization and how it impacts an individual's decision to moonlight. Managers should give sufficient autonomy opportunities for up-skilling career development so as to ensure talent management in the organization.

8. **Lele et.al. , (2023)** were of the view that during COVID-19 phase, many people lost their jobs faced salary, cuts, and financial insecurity . In order to safeguard themselves from such a situation in future, people started the practice of dual job holding. It definitely has provided financial assistance but has paused many problems too such as improper health, poor work, life, balance, stress, et cetera. They highlighted the fact that 29% of the employees are moonlighting

without its knowledge to their employers. Moonlighting is also done in order to choose an alternative career path, people nowadays work on an alternative alternative as part time before quitting the current employment in order to be sure about it.

9. **Mapita et.al. , (2023) f**ound that while most of the workers gain new skills and occupational mobility by engaging in secondary jobs, few of them find it difficult to strike a balance between personal and professional life . They insist that workers should be offered reasonable compensation so as to lessen their desire to engage in dual jobs. Also, organizations should lay down clear and transparent policies for moonlighting so as to avoid conflict of interest between primary and secondary jobs. Authors have made use of the Relative Deprivation Theory, Aspiration Theory, The Work- Leisure Choice Theory to understand motives behind moonlighting .

10. **Behera et.al. , (2023)** mentioned that there is surgeon moonlighting all over the world due to several reasons, such as low pay at primary job, inflation, option of work from home, lack of appreciation, entrepreneurial intention, passion, skill upgradation etc . Improve skills and can be beneficial for the primary employer, but there is risk of conflict of interest, poor job, productivity, leakage of confidential information etc . These problems can put an organization at greater risk. Therefore, it calls for a transparent and clear policy for moonlighting . The police regulating more lighting should cover all the aspects important for the efficient working of the organization. It must state clearly what is and what is not allowed.

11. **Khera and Kumar, (2023)** have investigated various pecuniary and non-pecuniary factors that affect workers intention to moonlight or indulge in dual jobs. They are of the view that working on multiple projects may deteriorate organizational performance and workers well-being. They added that moonlighting can however add to financial benefits, learning, career, growth, personal development, and efficient time utilization .Authors wrote that pandemic has reduced the employment rate, but enhanced inflation in the economy where most of the people faced many of them even lost their jobs which has given birth to financial insecurity. COVID-19 had created fear in the minds of people and so they became very cautious and started saving a major portion of their income. They mentioned that lower income from primary jobs is also the major reason for opting dual practice. .

12. **George and George ,(2022)** explained that flexible work hours and work from home has extended horizons of moonlighting. A rise can specially be reached in IT sector moonlighting supplements, employees income. It is very much essential so as to fulfill first two level needs, namely, physiological and safety needs of

Maslow's Need Hierarchy . An employee can also explore a new career option by taking up a secondary job simultaneously . Moonlighting requires good management skills , not everyone can indulge in multiple jobs. Only 20% of the professionals are efficient enough to moonlight.

13. **Jaggarwal, (2022)** mentioned in his paper that the terrific hazards of COVID-19 has impacted psychological and financial health of people , making it mandatory to moonlight to ensure survival and safety . He added that moonlighting is a dependent variable , various pecuniary and non-pecuniary factors are independent variables and one of the crucial factors is COVID-19, which acted as a moderating variable.

14. **Dickey et.al., (2022)** explained that practice and extent of moonlighting varies with the variation in phases of business trade cycle and points out that during boom periods, the employment opportunities increase and hence the rise in moonlighting practice can be seen . Similarly, during recession, employment opportunities are not easily available and hence the practice of moonlighting decreases.Authors brought it to our notice that moonlighting is beneficial for a developing country as it increases standard of living, reduces wage differentials, promotes education and health.

15. **Arora and Shukla, (2022)** wrote that while some people engage in your work for additional income, others do it to pursue their passion. They mentioned that the number of people engaging in secondary jobs has increased during the pandemic. They mentioned that people have different views about more lighting while some regard it as cheating, others regard it to be an essential, especially for low paid jobs. They state that technological advancements and work from home has expanded the scope of more lighting. They suggested that financial security should be offered to workers in order to reduce moonlighting attempts.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK-

1. MASLOW'S NEED HIERARCHY :
This theory was proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. He explained that human needs can be arranged in a hierarchical structure , starting from the basic needs to higher order needs. According to him, human needs can be depicted in a five-tier pyramid model. He has identified five levels of needs as follows -

Fig 1- Need Hierarchy
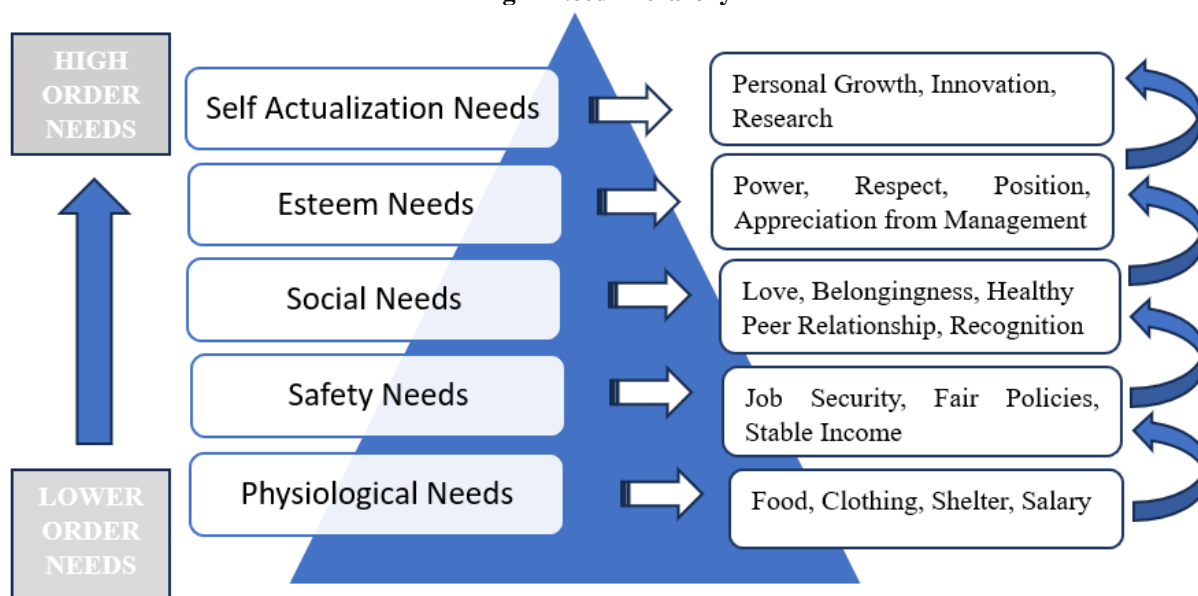
The diagram shows that an individual will go on to high order needs only after fulfillment of lower level needs. Once a need is satisfied, it no longer serves as a motivator.

Moonlighting and Need Hierarchy :
When the theory is applied to moonlighting, it suggests that motive and type of moonlighting evolves as a teacher climbs Maslow's Pyramid.
- In early career stages , generally between 0-5 years, the key motivation for moonlighting is Financial Necessity and Independence . This stage covers Physiological and Safety Needs. When basic necessities of a teacher are not fulfilled due to insufficient salary, they may take up secondary jobs such as tuition, freelancing etc. Similarly if educational

institutions fail to provide a safe working environment, job security, teachers feel vulnerable and they opt for additional employment as a backup for financial emergencies.

- As a teacher establishes in their profession, the mid-career stage, they often engage in personal relationships. This gives rise to the need for Job Safety and Stability. Example - Raising Children, Paying Home Loans. This stage therefore covers third order needs i.e. Social Needs. Teachers start seeking belongingness in secondary employment when they feel disconnected and isolated at their primary employment .
- Teachers in their Late-Career Stage, often after 15 years in the profession, generally engage in secondary occupation for personal satisfaction and sense of achievement. They opt for Guest Lectureship, Public Speaking, Consultancy as a moonlighting opportunity. If a teacher feels that their institutions do not provide sufficient career growth opportunities , they are tempted to engage in secondary employment in order to seek self worth and respect .

2. SELF-DETERMINED THEORY -

SDT is a theory of Human Motivation and Personality developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985, it explains how various intrinsic and extrinsic factors control human behaviour . This theory was. It puts forward that people have three basic psychological needs, namely-

- Autonomy- The freedom to govern and make one's own decisions without external control.
- Competence- The desire to feel capable , effective and able to excel challenges.
- Relatedness- The fundamental need to feel a sense of connection and belonging to others.

Fig 2- Three Psychological Needs
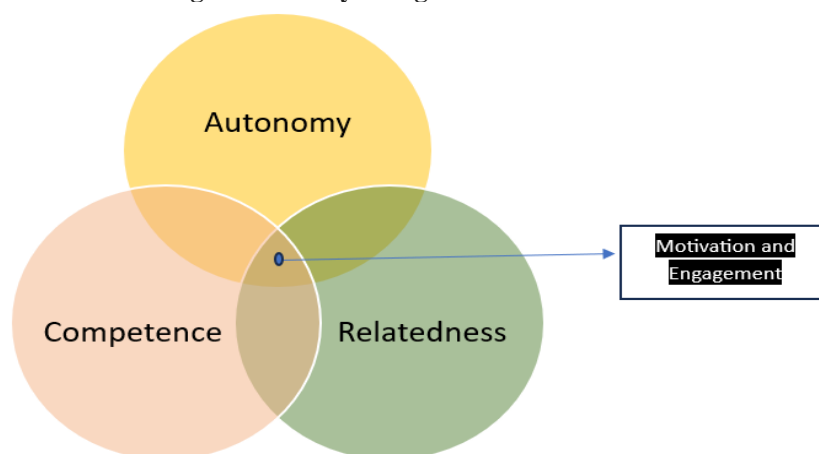
It is a psychological framework that explains how people can become self determined when their needs are taken care of

Connection Between SDT and Moonlighting among Teachers -

- If the autonomy needs of teachers are met by educational institutions through flexible work schedules, participative management , decision making , their urge to moonlight reduces. They feel connected, responsible and committed.
- When teachers feel that their growth is limited, there is no room for their creativity,learning and skill development, they may take up additional jobs to enhance their professional competence. Therefore policies like mentoring, performance appraisal are very significant for retaining talent in the organisation.
- Social needs, sense of belongingness and relatedness is perceived when there is a culture of team work, collaborative participation, open communication and mutual support. When teachers feel valued and connected to their peers and seniors, they feel emotionally invested in the organisation. In absence of collaborative culture, teachers feel isolated and seek belongingness in secondary employment.

Fig 3- Impact of Need Satisfaction on Motivation Type
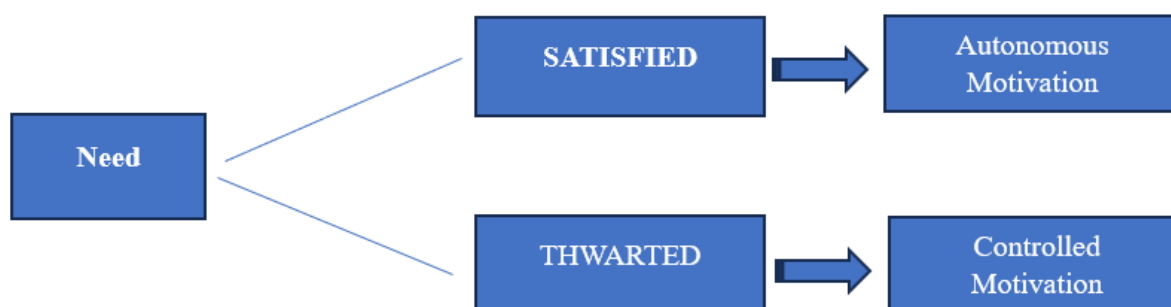
SDT , describes a spectrum of motivation, known as the Motivation continuum which ranges from amotivation (Complete absence of motivation) to intrinsic motivation (self determined form of motivation).

It explains that extrinsic motivation or motivation from others such as therapists, mentors, supervisors etc is important but it is more important that people must find the reason behind their desired goals within themselves because ultimately people are responsible for their own choices, actions and sense of purpose .

By integrating Self-Determination Theory, educational institutions can manage moonlighting and talent retention by framing human-centric policies that fulfill the need of autonomy,competence and relatedness. Moonlighting intentions put light on the fact that intrinsic needs of teachers are not met.

3. SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY :
This theory was proposed by George C. Homans in 1958 and was further developed by Peter Blau in 1964. It states that human relationships are created on reciprocal exchanges - when a person provides something of value to another person, it obligates the recipient to reciprocate . It is a psychological and sociological framework that explains how human behaviour is guided by a social exchange of costs and benefits where every individual seeks to maximise personal benefits while minimising costs.

SET fits perfectly to explain the relationship between teachers and educational institutions . It suggests that teachers and institutions engage in a professional exchange where one provides salary, growth opportunities and other offers performance, creativity and commitment .

When institutions provide support through fair policies, flexibility and career opportunities, teachers reciprocate with greater loyalty and commitment and vice-versa.

Fig 4- Exchange between Educational Institution and Teachers
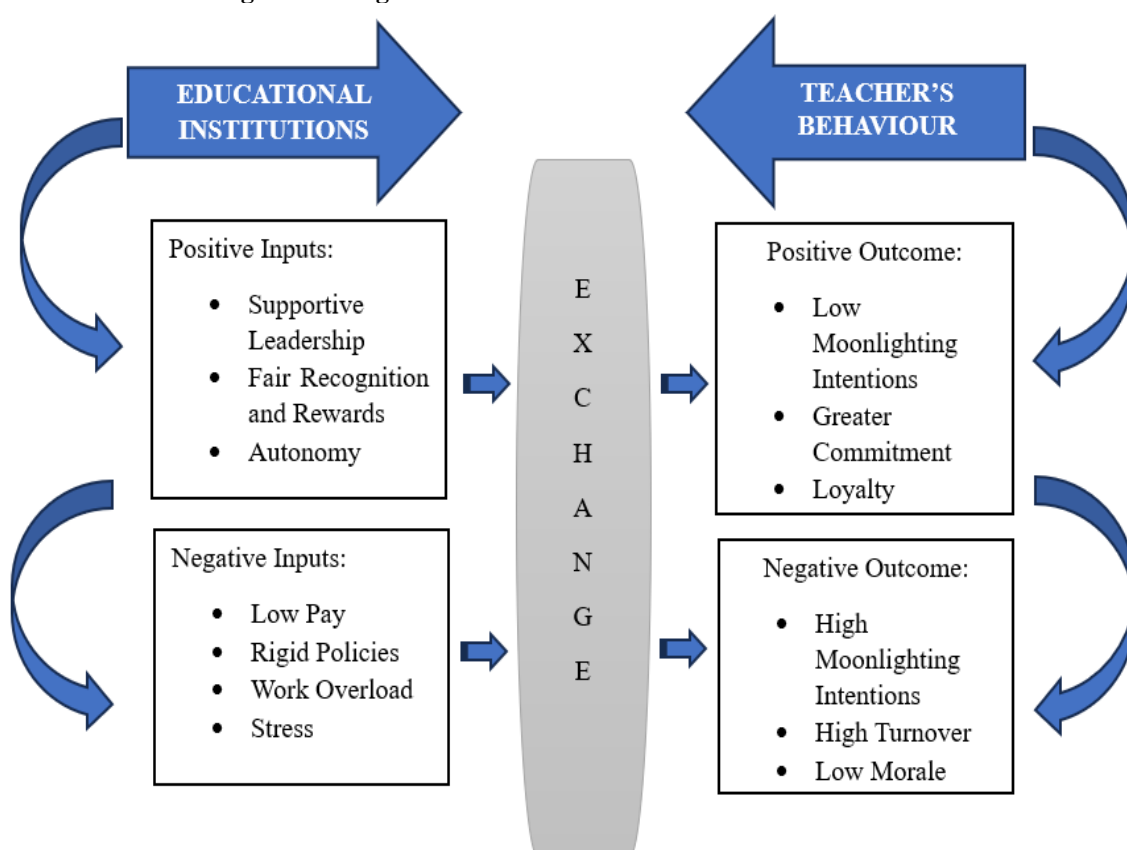
This diagram shows the exchange relationship between educational institutions and teachers' behaviour. The left side of the diagram depicts what an organization offers or fails to offer. It is divided into positive and negative inputs. Positive inputs such as encouragement from management, acknowledgement of good performance, incentives etc fosters a sense of respect and satisfaction among teachers and ultimately results in talent retention . Whereas negative inputs such as low pay , rigid policies , outdated rules , excessive workload , stress etc creates dissatisfaction among teachers and strain relationship between teachers and management. If exchange feels fair , teachers reciprocate with dedicated performance and commitment. Whereas if the

exchange feels imbalanced , the moonlighting intentions of teachers rises.

Fig 5 - Costs and Benefits of Social Exchange
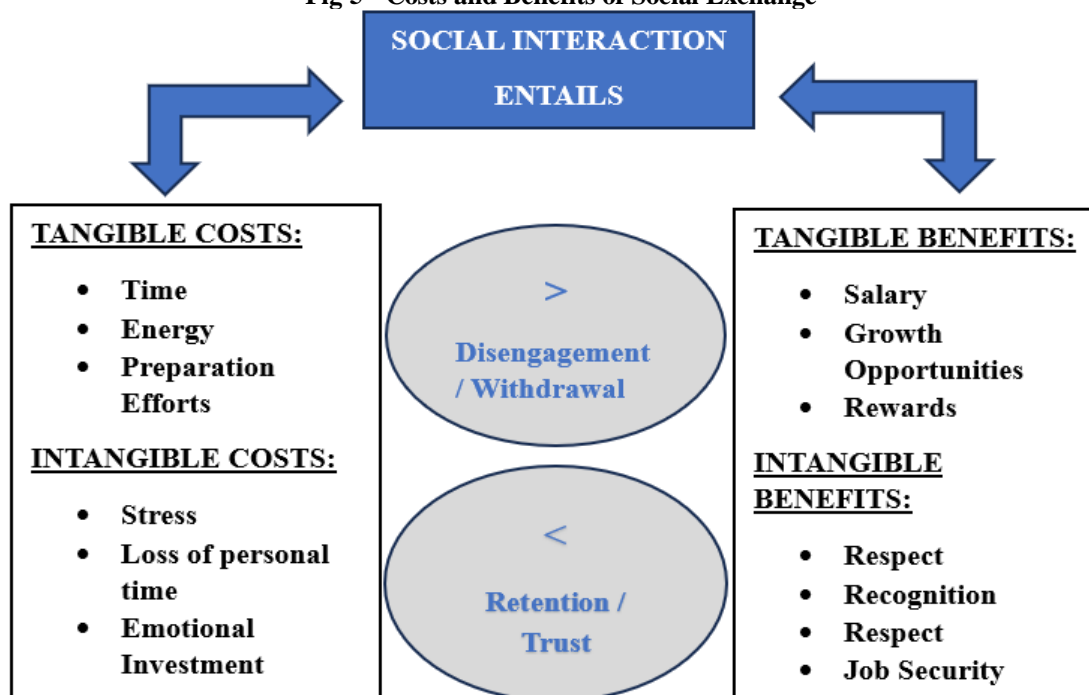
The above diagram explains that every interaction has two outcomes - Costs and Benefits . The behaviour of a teacher depends on whether benefits outweigh costs or costs outweigh benefits.

- When Cost > Benefit , teachers feel undervalued and start seeking new employment opportunities which results in increased employee turnover , low morale , poor performance .
- When Benefit > Cost , teachers feel valued which fuels their job satisfaction and ultimately results in higher performance , talent retention , achieved targets , low propensity to moonlight.

4. HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY-

The theory was given by Gary Becker. He explains that Education, Training and Health are the three forms of investment that will yield returns over time.He views skills and knowledge as a form of capital that can be stored like any other physical capital. For Educational Institutions, teachers are the form of capital that yields return over-time, therefore, their retention is significant in order to reduce turnover and enhance quality education .

- Encouraging ethical moonlighting, autonomy, flexible work schedules, Recognition , career growth opportunities etc can lead to greater job satisfaction and commitment.
- Rigid policies, lack of institutional support, no participation in decision making etc can lead to dissatisfaction among teachers and they may exit the system immediately.

INNOVATIVE POLICY APPROACHES FOR TEACHER MOONLIGHTING AND RETENTION

1. **Transparent and Regulated Moonlighting Framework -** Instead of rigid denial to engaging in secondary jobs, institutions should make and communicate clear and transparent guidelines to regulate and monitor the moonlighting behaviour. There should be a clear definition of what is allowed and what is not, the approval process etc. This will assist teachers to opt for jobs with no conflict of interest. A transparent framework for moonlighting can provide strategic advantage to both- teachers and the educational institutions.Teachers will benefit financially and institutions can make use of newly gained expertise and skills. In the absence of such policies, teachers may take up side jobs secretly

which could lead to compromised commitment and quality education.
Example- Allowing teachers to teach on educational platforms, take up research based assignments, content creation etc.

2. **Partnership with Edtech Platforms** - Institutions should promote collaboration with other institutions and Ed Tech companies like Byjus, Unacademy, Udemy, Coursera etc . It can open up new work opportunities for teachers. These partnerships not only assists teachers in gaining financial independence but also helps in upskilling and learning varied skills. It gives teachers exposure to new age teaching methodology. It addresses one of the major issues- Career Stagnation by providing a chance to attend and create certified courses. It also provides them with a sense of autonomy and empowerment. This further contributes to

organisational commitment, loyalty and engagement.

3. **Performance Linked Incentives -** Reward for good performance always motivates teachers to do even better in future. The idea is simple- when teachers feel that their hard work is recognised and appreciated, they fuel their entire energy to perform better and attain the standards. Incentives can be both monetary(such as bonus, increment etc)and non-monetary(such as autonomy, recognition, opportunities to grow). When teachers feel that the performance appraisal system is unfair and performance is not recognised and awarded, they seek other employment opportunities to gain extra income and proper recognition for their efforts.

4. **Opportunities for Growth & Upskilling -** There are four type of resources in any organisation namely, Physical Resource, Human Resource, Technical Resource and Financial Resource. Out of all the four resources, human resource is the most significant resource because it is the one that converts plans into action , ideas into reality, and adds value to the organisation . Upskilling means learning new skills and upgrading the existing skill set. It is not only advantageous for teachers but equally important for institutions as it helps in providing excellence and fostering quality education. Continuous learning and developing is crucial in today's knowledge economy.

   Example- A teacher might engage in a secondary job of content creation to explore career opportunities outside the organization however if the institution offers these opportunities internally, the intention to moonlight vanishes.

5. **Gender-Inclusive Policies -** In a profession like teaching, where a large proportion of the workforce is female, presence of gender inclusive policies becomes vital and essential. Gender of all types should feel equally valued, supported and respected. Especially women, should be provided with a safe work culture such as flexible work arrangements, anti-harassment policies, maternity leave etc . As Social exchange theory explains if an employee is treated fairly and equally, they will revert with better performance and loyalty.

6. **Flexible Work Schedules -** It allows teachers to control when, how and where to perform the duties. Institutions should give reasonable freedom to teachers to manage their workload so that they can balance their personal and professional life. When institutions are rigid for their policies, teachers feel strained and exploited and hence start seeking secondary jobs. Example- Hybrid Classrooms(mix of online and offline teaching)

7. **OCTAPACE Culture -** An optimum climate is essential for facilitating Human Resource Development. This acronym is developed by T.V Rao and Udai Pareek. It represents 8 values needed for a healthy organisational culture.

It stands for -

O- Openness : Organisations should encourage free communication and sharing of ideas among teachers and management. It reduces secrecy and ensures transparency.

C- Confrontation: It is an ability of organisations to face challenges. Institutions should resolve conflicts related to moonlighting and lay fair policies which are beneficial for both teachers and the management instead of just putting a ban on it.

T- Trust : There should be a culture where teachers trust that institution will support their growth and institution believes that teachers are committed and act responsibly.

A-Authenticity: It is indicated by the extent to which people do what they say or people say what they mean. It encourages teachers to express their true needs such as personal development, side jobs etc.

P-Proactivity : It means acting in advance of the future. Moonlighting is here to stay, so a proactive approach towards it will help institutions achieve their objectives and retain talent.

A-Autonomy : It is the power to make decisions. Teachers should be given an adequate degree of autonomy to make decisions related to their work. The teachers who feel controlled are more likely to leave the organisation.

C-Collaboration: It encourages teamwork and mutual respect. It helps in developing a collaborative culture and reduces competition.

E-Experimentation : Teachers should be allowed to take innovative measures that can improve their personal and institutional performance.

8. **Participative Decision Making -** It means involvement of teachers in the process of decision making related to the institution such as work, policies, overall functioning etc. It shifts the approach from authoritative to collaborative decision. When a decision is made by teachers, they are bound to follow it with more commitment. Institutions should motivate teachers to share their ideas, opinions, suggestions before a final decision is taken. It creates a sense of belongingness, ownership with the institution. This democratic style of management reduces frustration among teachers and their desire to look for satisfaction elsewhere.

   Example- Teachers should be part of the Faculty Policy Committee. Decisions regarding incentives, performance, secondary jobs etc should be taken collectively. It will assist in aligning personal and professional goals.

CONCLUSION-

One can witness the revolutionary change in Education in the post pandemic era where traditional classrooms have transformed into digital screens. This has not only changed the teaching methodologies but has altered teaching dynamics , giving rise to new professional opportunities. Teachers today are not limited to

four walls of their institutions rather have the entire world to their access. They have new opportunities to grow and learn. Institutions should not view moonlighting as a barrier rather it is a catalyst for professional growth and institutional resilience. Innovative policy approaches such as participative decision making, OCTAPACE Culture, performance linked incentives etc can help - retain talent, nurture motivation and build a sustainable learning environment.

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