



Mental Health at Workplace and Economic Productivity

For Prelims: [Economic Survey 2025](#), [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [Annual Survey of Industries \(ASI\)](#)

For Mains: Impact of informal Work on Mental Health, Impacts of Poor Mental Health, Steps Taken by the Government, steps that can be taken to Improve Mental Health

[Source: ET](#)

Why in News?

The [Economic Survey 2025](#) highlighted the significant impact of workplace culture, working hours, and lifestyle on mental health and worker productivity.

- It stressed the urgent need for improved **workplace** conditions and healthier lifestyles to boost employee well-being, which in turn, can enhance economic growth.

What are the Key Factors Affecting Mental Health?

- Workplace Culture:** A positive workplace culture boosts mental well-being. The survey finds that employees with **good relationships with managers and colleagues report 33% higher mental well-being** scores.
 - A sense of purpose at work further enhances well-being.
- Workload Management:** Excessive workloads negatively impact mental health. Employees with manageable workloads report **27% greater mental well-being** than those overwhelmed by work.
 - Long working hours (55-60 per week) increase stress and anxiety.
- Impact of Remote Work:** While remote work offers flexibility, fully remote employees report **17% lower mental well-being** scores than those in-office or in hybrid models.
 - Social interaction at work is crucial for mental health.
- Lifestyle Choices and Mental Well-being:**
 - Dietary Choices:** Individuals who avoid **ultra-processed and packaged foods** report better mental well-being.
 - Physical Activity:** **Lack of exercise is linked to higher stress levels** and lower productivity.
 - Social Media Usage:** Excessive social media consumption is correlated with **declining mental health**.
 - Family Ties:** Strong family relationships contribute significantly to better mental well-being.

Increase in Self-Employed Workers as per Economic Survey 2024-25

- Rise in Self-Employment:** The proportion of self-employed workers increased from **52.2% (2017-18) to 58.4% (2023-24)**.

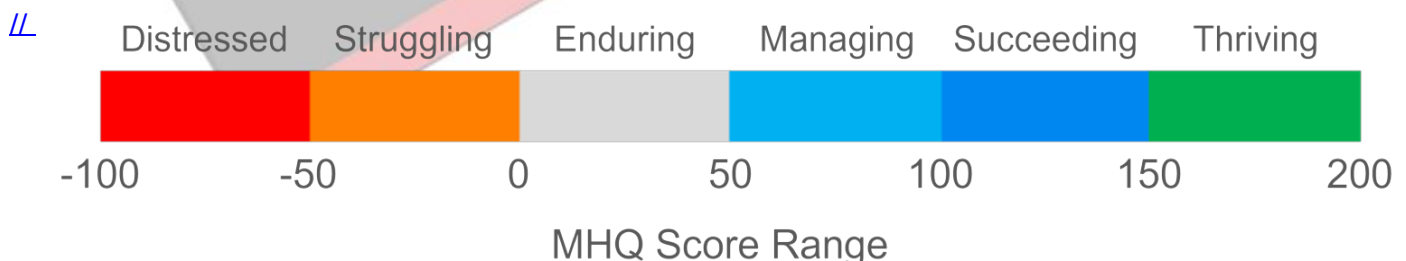
- **Sectoral Trends:** Agriculture remains dominant in employment, rising from **44.1% to 46.1%** during the same period.
- **Decline in Regular Jobs:** The share of salaried employment fell from **22.8% in 2017-18 to 21.7%** in 2023-24.
 - **Casual employment** also declined from **24.9% to 19.8%**, indicating a shift toward structured self-employment.
- **Unemployment Reduction:** The unemployment rate (15+ age group) declined from **6% (2017-18) to 3.2% (2023-24)**.
- **Formal Sector Growth:** Net additions to **EPFO subscriptions more than doubled**, rising from **61 lakh (2018-19) to 1.31 crore (2023-24)**, with **61%** of new payroll additions from youth (<29 years).

What are the Key Implications of Poor Mental Health on the Economy?

- **Lost Productivity:** Mental health disorders such as **depression and anxiety** contribute to **reduced work efficiency**, absenteeism, and presenteeism (working while unwell).
 - As per **WHO**, globally, depression and anxiety lead to a loss of **12 billion work days annually**, amounting to an economic cost of nearly **USD 1 trillion**.
 - In India, this translates to a loss of approximately **Rs 7,000 per affected worker per day**.
- **Absenteeism and Turnover:** Mental health conditions can result in **higher rates of sick days**, early departures, and increased job turnover, further disrupting workflow and **incurring costs associated with recruitment and training replacements**.
 - **Economic Survey 2024-25** noted that individuals with poor mental well-being lose about **15 working days per month**, compared to **2-3 days for healthier individuals**.
- **Increased Healthcare Expenditure:** Poor mental health leads to **higher healthcare costs** due to **frequent medical visits**, hospitalizations, and long-term treatment, increasing the burden on public health infrastructure, diverting resources from other critical areas.
- **Decline in Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Poor mental health **hampers creativity, risk-taking, and decision-making, slowing technological and business advancements**, especially in high-performance sectors facing stress and burnout.

Mental Health Quotient (MHQ)

- MHQ is a **standardized measure assessing mental well-being** and cognitive functioning.
- The **evaluation** is based on **self-reported responses to a standardized questionnaire**, assessing mental well-being across key domains like **emotional resilience, cognitive function, social well-being, and risk factors**.
- The **MHQ score** ranges from **-100 to +200**, assessing overall mental well-being. Higher scores indicate better mental health



What are Suggestions Provided by Economic Survey 2024-25?

- **Workplace Reforms:** Foster a **supportive work culture** by improving interpersonal relationships, reducing workplace stress, and promoting a sense of purpose.
 - Implement **work-hour regulations** to prevent burnout and enhance productivity.
- **Flexible Work Models:** Encourage **hybrid work policies** to balance flexibility and social interaction, mitigating the negative effects of full remote work.
- **Health and Lifestyle Interventions:** Employers and the government should promote **healthy eating, physical activity,** and digital detox to improve mental well-being.
- **Awareness and Mental Health Programs:** Implement large-scale **mental health awareness initiatives, counseling services, and employee assistance programs** to support workplace well-being.
- **Policy and Legislative Measures:** Strengthen **occupational health policies** by integrating mental health considerations into labor laws, ensuring workplaces adopt mental health-friendly practices.

Conclusion

The **Economic Survey 2024-25** highlights mental well-being as a national priority. A healthy workforce is key to productivity, resilience, and economic growth. Prioritizing workplace mental health through supportive policies will strengthen India's path to becoming a global economic powerhouse.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care. Discuss.(2020)

Q. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (2018)

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