



# 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)**.

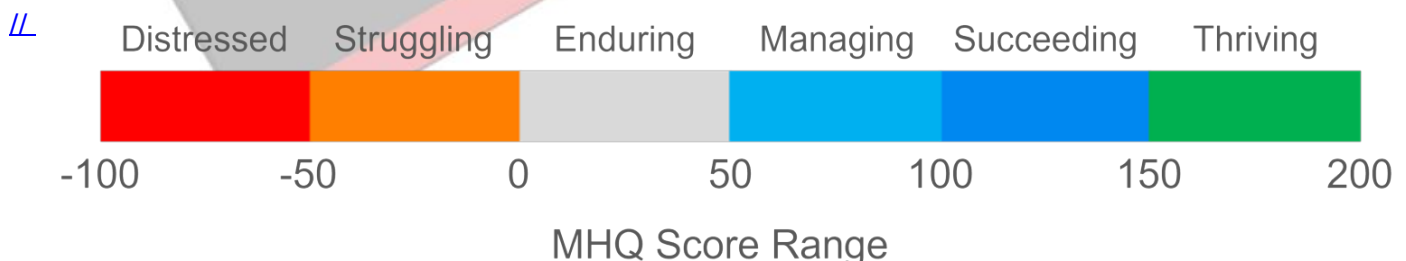
- **Sectoral Trends:** Agriculture remains dominant in employment, rising from **44.1% to 46.1%** during the same period.
- **Decline in Regular Jobs:** The share of salaried employment fell from **22.8% in 2017-18 to 21.7%** in 2023-24.
  - **Casual employment** also declined from **24.9% to 19.8%**, 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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