

STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEE
* **Dr. Asha Thoke**

* I/c Principal at Ashoka College of Education, Nashik

Abstract:

Mental health and well-being at the workplace have become critical concerns in the Indian organizational context due to rapid economic growth, globalization, technological advancements, and changing work patterns. Indian employees face unique stressors such as long working hours, job insecurity, work–family conflict, performance pressure, informal employment, and socio-cultural expectations. This conceptual paper aims to examine the concept of mental health and well-being at the workplace with special reference to India, identify key workplace and socio-cultural determinants influencing employee mental health, and analyze the role of Indian organizations and policy frameworks in promoting psychological well-being. Based on an extensive review of national and international literature, the study highlights the need for culturally sensitive, inclusive, and preventive workplace mental health strategies in India.

Keywords: Workplace mental health, employee well-being, Indian organizations, occupational stress, psychosocial work environment

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction:

India's workforce is undergoing significant transformation due to liberalization, privatization, globalization, and digitalization. While these changes have created employment opportunities, they have also intensified work pressure, competition, and psychological stress among employees. Long working hours, contractual employment, lack of job security, and performance-driven organizational cultures have contributed to rising mental health concerns in Indian workplaces (Ramaswami et al., 2017).

Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout are increasingly reported among employees in sectors like information technology, education, healthcare, banking, and manufacturing. According to the World Health Organization (2022), depression and anxiety cost the global economy billions in lost productivity, with developing countries like India facing a disproportionate burden due to limited workplace mental health infrastructure.

Concept of Mental Health and Well-Being at the Workplace:

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their abilities, cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to society (WHO, 2014). In the Indian workplace context, mental health is influenced not only by organizational factors but also by socio-cultural norms, family responsibilities, economic conditions, and societal expectations.

Workplace well-being in India includes:

- Emotional well-being (stress management, emotional balance)
- Psychological well-being (self-esteem, autonomy, purpose)
- Social well-being (interpersonal relationships, inclusion, respect)

Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being is particularly relevant in understanding Indian

employees' need for meaning, social connectedness, and personal growth within organizational settings.

Theoretical Background:

The study of workplace mental health and well-being is grounded in psychological and organizational theories that explain how work conditions influence employees' mental functioning and behavior. In the Indian organizational context, these theories help explain the growing prevalence of stress, anxiety, and burnout among employees.

The **Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model** (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) provides a foundational framework for understanding workplace stress. The model proposes that high job demands such as workload, time pressure, and emotional demands, when not balanced with adequate job resources like autonomy, social support, and feedback, lead to stress and burnout. In India, long working hours, performance pressure, and limited organizational support often create an imbalance between demands and resources, adversely affecting employee well-being.

Burnout theory (Maslach & Leiter, 2016) further explains the impact of chronic workplace stress through emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. Indian employees in sectors such as IT, healthcare, education, and banking are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to sustained performance demands and limited recovery opportunities.

The concept of **psychological well-being**, as proposed by Ryff (1989), emphasizes positive functioning through dimensions such as autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, and positive relationships. This framework is especially relevant in the Indian context, where work is closely linked to identity, social status, and family responsibilities.

Work–family balance theory (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011) highlights how imbalance between professional and personal roles contributes to stress and emotional

strain. In India, strong family obligations and gendered social expectations intensify work–family conflict, significantly influencing employees' mental health.

The theory of **psychological safety** (Edmondson, 2018) underscores the importance of supportive organizational cultures where employees feel safe to express concerns without fear of negative consequences. Hierarchical and authoritarian work cultures common in Indian organizations may limit such openness, increasing mental health risks.

Additionally, **emotional intelligence theory** (Goleman, 1998) emphasizes the role of emotional regulation, empathy, and self-awareness in managing workplace stress. Emotional intelligence is particularly significant in Indian workplaces that value interpersonal harmony and collectivist norms.

Finally, the **biopsychosocial model of mental health** (WHO, 2014) provides an integrative perspective, recognizing that workplace mental health is shaped by individual, organizational, socio-cultural, and policy-level factors. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for understanding and promoting mental health and well-being in Indian workplaces.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the present conceptual paper are:

1. To examine the concept of mental health and well-being at the workplace in the Indian context.
2. To identify workplace and socio-cultural factors affecting employees' mental health in India.
3. To analyze the impact of workplace mental well-being on individual and organizational outcomes in India.
4. To explore the role of Indian organizations and policies in promoting workplace mental health.
5. To suggest culturally relevant strategies for enhancing mental health and well-being at Indian workplaces.

Indian Workplace Factors Affecting Mental Health and Well-Being:

Workload, Long Working Hours, and Performance Pressure:

In India, extended working hours and high performance expectations are common, particularly in private sector organizations and multinational companies. Employees often experience role overload and work intensification, leading to stress and burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Work–Life Balance and Family Responsibilities:

Indian employees often juggle professional responsibilities with strong family and social obligations. Lack of flexible work arrangements and gendered expectations, especially for women employees, contribute to work–family conflict and psychological strain (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Job Insecurity and Informal Employment:

A large proportion of India’s workforce is engaged in informal or contractual employment, characterized by low job security, inadequate benefits, and uncertain career progression. Job insecurity has been found to be a significant predictor of anxiety and stress among Indian workers (Sverke et al., 2002).

Organizational Culture and Leadership Practices:

Hierarchical structures, authoritarian leadership styles, and limited employee participation in decision-making are prevalent in many Indian organizations. Such environments may discourage open communication about mental health concerns, increasing stigma and emotional distress (Edmondson, 2018).

Social Stigma and Mental Health Awareness:

Despite growing awareness, mental health issues in India continue to be stigmatized. Employees often hesitate to seek help due to fear of discrimination, job loss, or negative performance evaluations, which worsens mental health outcomes (OECD, 2012).

Impact of Workplace Mental Health on Indian Organizations:

Poor mental health among employees in India leads to reduced productivity, absenteeism, presenteeism, high turnover, and decreased organizational commitment. Studies indicate that stress-related disorders significantly affect efficiency in sectors such as IT, education, and healthcare (Henderson et al., 2011).

Conversely, organizations that support employee well-being report improved engagement, job satisfaction, creativity, and organizational loyalty. Investment in workplace mental health is increasingly viewed as essential for sustainable organizational development in India.

Role of Indian Organizations and Policy Frameworks:

Indian organizations play a crucial role in promoting mental health by creating supportive and inclusive work environments. Initiatives may include:

- Implementation of employee assistance programs (EAPs)
- Mental health awareness and stress management programs
- Training managers in empathetic leadership and mental health literacy
- Promoting work–life balance through flexible work policies

At the policy level, frameworks such as the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 emphasize the right to mental healthcare and non-discrimination, indirectly influencing workplace mental health practices in India. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model provides a useful framework for Indian organizations to balance job demands with adequate resources such as social support, autonomy, and recognition (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Remedies and Strategies to Improve Mental Health and Well-Being at the Workplace:

Improving mental health and well-being at the workplace requires a multi-level and preventive approach involving individuals, organizations, and policy frameworks. In the Indian context, remedies must be culturally sensitive, inclusive, and accessible to employees across formal and informal sectors.

Individual-Level Strategies:

At the individual level, employees can adopt psychological and behavioral techniques to enhance resilience and emotional well-being.

a) Stress Management Techniques

Practices such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness meditation, and yoga have been found effective in reducing workplace stress and anxiety. In India, traditional practices like Yoga and Pranayama are culturally accepted and cost-effective methods for improving mental health (WHO, 2022).

b) Emotional Regulation and Self-Awareness

Developing emotional intelligence helps employees recognize and manage emotions effectively, leading to improved interpersonal relationships and reduced emotional exhaustion (Goleman, 1998).

c) Work–Life Balance Practices

Time management, setting realistic work goals, and boundary management between work and personal life contribute significantly to psychological well-being.

d) Help-Seeking Behavior

Encouraging employees to seek professional counseling or psychological support without fear of stigma is crucial for early intervention and mental health promotion.

Organizational-Level Interventions:

Organizations play a central role in shaping workplace mental health through policies, leadership practices, and supportive environments.

a) Creating a Supportive Work Environment

Organizations should foster open communication, mutual respect, and psychological safety, enabling employees to express concerns without fear of judgment or discrimination (Edmondson, 2018).

b) Mental Health Awareness and Training Programs

Regular workshops on stress management, emotional well-being, and mental health literacy can reduce stigma and improve employees' coping skills.

c) Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Providing access to counseling services, helplines, and mental health professionals helps employees address work-related and personal issues confidentially.

d) Flexible Work Policies

Flexible working hours, work-from-home options, and leave policies support work–life balance, particularly for women employees and caregivers in the Indian context.

e) Supportive and Empathetic Leadership

Training managers in empathetic leadership, active listening, and mental health sensitivity enables early identification of stress and promotes a culture of care

Organizational Wellness Programs

Comprehensive wellness programs that integrate physical, mental, and social well-being are effective in improving overall employee health.

- Yoga and meditation sessions at the workplace
- Physical activity and fitness initiatives
- Peer support groups and mentoring systems
- Recreational and team-building activities

Such programs enhance employee engagement, morale, and organizational commitment (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

Policy-Level and Institutional Measures in India:

- a) Implementation of Mental Health Policies- Organizations should align workplace practices with national legislations such as the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, which emphasizes the right to mental healthcare and non-discrimination.
- b) Integration of Mental Health in HR Policies- Mental health should be integrated into human resource policies, performance management systems, and occupational health frameworks.
- c) Public–Private Partnerships- Collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and corporate organizations can expand access to mental health resources and awareness programs, especially in small and medium enterprises.

Promoting a Culture of Mental Well-Being:

Creating a mentally healthy workplace culture requires sustained efforts to:

- Reduce stigma associated with mental illness
- Normalize conversations about mental health
- Encourage peer support and inclusivity
- Recognize and reward healthy work practices

A culture that prioritizes well-being enhances employee trust, loyalty, and long-term organizational sustainability.

Conclusion:

Promoting mental health and well-being at the workplace requires comprehensive, preventive, and multi-dimensional strategies. In the Indian context, combining traditional practices such as yoga with modern organizational interventions offers a culturally relevant and effective approach. Organizations must move beyond short-term solutions and adopt sustainable mental health policies and practices. Ensuring mentally healthy workplaces is essential not

only for employee welfare but also for organizational excellence and national development.

References:

1. Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). *The Job Demands–Resources model: State of the art. Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328.
2. Danna, K., & Griffin, R. W. (1999). *Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of the literature. Journal of Management*, 25(3), 357–384.
3. Edmondson, A. (2018). *The Fearless Organization. Harvard Business School Press.*
4. Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence. Bantam Books.*
5. Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2011). *Work–family balance: A review and extension of the literature. Journal of Management*, 37(1), 10–35.
6. Henderson, M., Harvey, S. B., Øverland, S., Mykletun, A., & Hotopf, M. (2011). *Work and common psychiatric disorders. Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 104(5), 198–207.
7. Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). *Understanding the burnout experience. World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111.
8. OECD. (2012). *Sick on the job? Myths and realities about mental health and work. OECD Publishing.*
9. Ramaswami, A., Carter, N. M., & Dreher, G. F. (2017). *Gender, mentoring, and career success in India. Human Resource Management*, 56(2), 211–227.
10. Ryff, C. D. (1989). *Happiness is everything, or is it? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081.
11. World Health Organization. (2014). *Mental health: A state of well-being. WHO.*
12. World Health Organization. (2022). *Mental health at work. WHO.*

Cite This Article:

Dr. Thoke A. (2026). *Study of Mental Health and Well-Being of employee. In Aarhat Multidisciplinary International Education Research Journal: Vol. XV (Number II, pp. 61–65)*