

Moonlighting Healthcare Workers in Delhi-NCR: A Study on Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Tosham Singh
Email: toshii746@gmail.com
8077761605
IIMT UNIVERSITY, 'O' Pocket,
Ganga Nagar Colony,
Mawana Road, Meerut (U.P.)

Dr. Sandeep Kumar
director_admin@iimtindia.net
9412049457

ABSTRACT: Moonlighting—working a second job while holding a primary healthcare position—has become common in Delhi-NCR's healthcare scene. This study looks at how it affects work-life balance, job satisfaction, and health of healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, and office staff. The research is based on a survey of 200 workers from private and government hospitals, along with in-depth studies of 250 doctors from a Delhi hospital and 115 medical officers across the region. Combining numbers with personal insights, the study offers a clear look at this growing trend.

The typical workday for doctors in the sample is over 9.7 hours, with most doing 5–6 night shifts each month. Almost half are unhappy with their hours and pay. Among medical officers, 59% say they are satisfied with their jobs overall, but nearly 68% complains about low salaries, frequent transfers, and poor housing. The larger group, including nurses, paramedics, and staff, shows a strong link between work-life imbalance and job dissatisfaction. This is especially true in workplaces with rigid hours, low wages, and little support.

Many healthcare workers turn to moonlighting to make up for low primary income, rising living costs, or to gain extra clinical practice. Resident doctors and interns often work in outpatient clinics to improve skills like suturing and triage. They also see these extra shifts as a way to build confidence in managing real cases, since structured training doesn't always give enough hands-on experience. Many doctors mention the chance to independently handle cases, which isn't always offered in their regular training. But taking on two jobs takes a toll. Healthcare workers often work over 60 hours a week, leading to sleep loss, burnout, stress, and higher risks of heart and mental health issues. Delhi-based residents report pressure to perform, long hours, and

emotional exhaustion. A study from the Indian Journal of Psychiatry in September 2024 highlights these factors as chances for negative behaviors or even thoughts of self-harm.

Moonlighting can also endanger patient safety. Overworked nurses and paramedics on agency contracts often face fatigue and less time to recover. This can lead to mistakes in their main roles. Doctors doing secondary work might lose focus in their primary jobs. The unregulated nature of dual employment also raises questions about legal rights, contracts, and conflicts of interest.

India's laws about moonlighting are unclear. Section 27 of the Contract Act stops restrictions on lawful jobs, but employment agreements often include clauses that ban secondary work. There are no clear rules or policies from institutions to clear up this ambiguity. As a result, healthcare workers face the risk of penalties or disapproval from employers without proper guidance.

KEYWORDS: Moonlighting, Medical Officers, Healthcare, Paramedics, Guidance, Institutions.

INTRODUCTION: The healthcare industry is highly demanding and essential, requiring workers to balance their job duties with their personal health. Recently, more healthcare workers in big cities like Delhi-NCR are taking on extra jobs, a practice known as moonlighting. Economic pressures, rising living costs, opportunities for skill development, and the desire to diversify careers drive many in this field to work multiple jobs.

In urban areas like Delhi-NCR, moonlighting has become common among doctors, nurses, paramedics, technicians, and administrative staff. While earning extra income and gaining new experiences are clear benefits, this practice also presents challenges. Long hours, night shifts, emergencies, and emotionally intense situations are regular in healthcare. Adding secondary jobs can increase stress and affect workers' physical and mental health. It can also impact their personal lives and job performance.

Many studies around the world have looked into how moonlighting affects healthcare workers' well-being and the quality of care. However, research focused on India, especially in Delhi-NCR, remains limited. Understanding how moonlighting influences work-life balance and job satisfaction is important. It affects not only individual workers but also the quality of healthcare, staff retention, and patient safety.

This research aims to fill that gap. It will examine why healthcare workers take on second jobs, how they manage their responsibilities, and how moonlighting affects their satisfaction at work. The study will also

explore organizational and policy factors that help or hinder workers in balancing their personal and professional lives.

The results are expected to offer useful insights. Healthcare managers, policymakers, and HR teams can use these findings to develop better strategies. They can create policies that support workers and address the rise of moonlighting, improving overall healthcare services in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. **Concept of Moonlighting in Healthcare:** Moonlighting involves healthcare workers taking on extra jobs apart from their main role. Many do this because they need extra money, want to gain new skills, or are unhappy with their current jobs (Rafique & Shoaib, 2020). In healthcare, moonlighting is sensitive because it can impact patient safety, worker health, and ethics (Bamgbose & Ladipo, 2017). Research by Zickar et al. (2004) shows that healthcare staff often moonlight for financial security, skill-building, or job satisfaction. However, this extra work can lead to work-life conflicts and exhaustion.
2. **Work-Life Balance in Healthcare Sector:** Healthcare workers, especially in cities like Delhi-NCR, face long hours, emotional stress, and serious responsibilities. These factors create poor work-life balance (Bhutani et al., 2021). Moonlighting makes this worse by taking time away from family and personal life. Indian studies (Kumar & Sharma, 2019; Nair & Bhatnagar, 2020) show many healthcare professionals struggle to balance personal and professional roles. When work-life balance suffers, stress rises, job satisfaction drops, and burnout becomes common among doctors and nurses.
3. **Job Satisfaction and Dual Employment:** What makes healthcare workers satisfied with their jobs includes pay, work environment, supervisor support, independence, and workload (Ghosh et al., 2018). Moonlighting can increase income and provide new experiences, leading to short-term happiness.
4. But research like McPake et al. (2014) and Saini & Kaur (2022) indicate that working two jobs over time can cause physical tiredness, dissatisfaction, and health issues.

In Delhi-NCR, private clinics pay more for after-hours work. Many government hospital staff work extra shifts elsewhere (Aggarwal & Sikka, 2019). While this helps their income, it can also hurt their commitment and health.

5. **Health Effects of Moonlighting:** Having multiple jobs raises stress levels, worsens sleep, and can cause health problems like high blood pressure and fatigue (De Castro et al., 2010). Indian research is limited but shows similar trends, especially among nurses and young doctors in Delhi–NCR (Singh et al., 2021).
 6. Moonlighting increases conflict between work and personal life, affecting mental health. It can cause anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal, as seen in international studies (Virtanen et al., 2012).
 7. **Policy and Ethical Issues:** In India, moonlighting is not clearly legal, but many believe rules are needed to protect health workers and patients. Policies should regulate second jobs, avoid overwork, and keep care quality high (Gupta & Arora, 2020).
-
8. Worldwide, hospitals mostly discourage moonlighting without telling their employers or restrict work hours to keep standards high (WHO, 2010).

In Delhi–NCR, the fast-growing private healthcare sector makes enforcement difficult. Workers often switch between hospitals for better pay, sometimes without formal agreements (Srivastava et al., 2022).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- The main aim of this study is to examine how moonlighting affects healthcare workers' work-life balance and job satisfaction in Delhi-NCR. The research looks into what causes healthcare professionals to take on multiple jobs and explores how this affects their work efficiency, personal health, and overall happiness with their jobs.
- The study has several specific goals. First, it will determine how common moonlighting is among healthcare workers in the area. Next, it will identify the main reasons and motivations for practicing moonlighting. The research will also assess how holding more than one job impacts their personal lives, including relationships, leisure time, and mental health.
- Additionally, the study will analyze how moonlighting influences job satisfaction among workers in both government and private facilities. It aims to look at health outcomes and stress levels connected

to working multiple jobs. The research will also explore healthcare workers' views on workplace rules and ethical issues related to moonlighting.

- Finally, the study aims to suggest policies and ways to better manage moonlighting. These recommendations will focus on helping healthcare workers improve their work-life balance and satisfaction while reducing negative effects.

METHODS:

1. Survey Questionnaires

a. Job satisfaction and moonlighting intent scales

Use proven tools like the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) or Job Descriptive Index (JDI) to assess different parts such as pay, work setting, supervisor support, and chances for growth. Include sections that explore why healthcare workers moonlight, focusing on reasons like financial need, career growth, skill variety, and blocked promotions.

b. Indicators of work–life balance

Ask participants about their stress levels, workload, hours worked daily or weekly, the number of shifts, and hours spent on moonlighting.

c. Demographics and job details

Collect data on age, gender, years of experience, whether they work in public or private sectors, their role—such as doctor, nurse, or paramedical staff—and the type of moonlighting activities, whether clinical, online consultation, or others.

2. Sampling Strategy

Choose participants from a mix of public and private hospitals or clinics in Delhi–NCR. Aim for 200 to 300 healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, matching previous regional studies. Use purposive stratified sampling to ensure a good mix across different roles and institutions.

3. Quantitative Analysis

Start with descriptive statistics to see how common moonlighting is, and how it relates to job satisfaction and stress. Use tests like chi-square or t-tests to compare these factors between moonlighters and those who do not moonlight. Employ regression analysis to predict whether staff are likely to moonlight based on their satisfaction, stress, and work-life balance. Structural equation modeling such as PLS-SEM can help analyze mediation effects, like how organizational commitment influences the link between job satisfaction and moonlighting.

4. Qualitative Methods

Conduct semi-structured interviews or group discussions to explore why healthcare workers choose to moonlight. Cover topics like benefits, challenges, conflicts, burnout, and coping ways. Use the critical incident technique to ask about specific stressful or rewarding experiences related to managing both jobs. When possible, observe workers in hospitals and moonlighting settings to see how they balance their time and handle stress directly.

5. Integration of Findings (Mixed Methods)

Combine survey data like satisfaction scores and moonlighting hours with stories and insights gathered from interviews. This approach adds context and helps explain why many workers moonlight, how they deal with it, and its effects on their personal and professional lives. Use stories to interpret surprising results, such as high moonlighting rates despite moderate satisfaction.

6. Ethics & Practical Considerations

Maintain anonymity and confidentiality, especially when discussing moonlighting, since it may violate employer rules. Obtain ethics clearance from relevant bodies. Clearly explain the purpose of the study, that participation is voluntary, and how data will be used.

7. Sample Study Flow

Start with a pilot test of the questionnaire and interview guides with about 15-20 healthcare workers. Proceed with a survey of 200–300 people. Analyze the data using descriptive and inferential stats, and consider structural modeling if needed. Conduct 10 to 20 interviews or focus groups, recording and analyzing their

responses for common themes. Finally, connect survey results with personal accounts to understand how policies could address dissatisfaction and reduce moonlighting.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF INVESTIGATION: Areas to explore include how common moonlighting is among healthcare workers in Delhi-NCR and what types of side jobs they take on. It's also important to understand why they moonlight, whether for money, to build skills, advance their careers, or pursue personal passions. The connection between moonlighting and work-life balance should be examined, focusing on how long hours, stress, and limited time affect these professionals. It's equally vital to look into how taking on extra jobs impacts their satisfaction with their main work, whether it causes burnout or makes them feel more fulfilled by diverse experiences. Employers' perspectives matter too, as they face challenges in handling moonlighting and could benefit from policies that address the issue properly.

Research shows that work-life balance and job satisfaction often go hand-in-hand among healthcare staff. Women and those who are unmarried tend to report better balance compared to men and married workers. Heavy workloads and long hours add to stress and dissatisfaction, which can push healthcare workers toward moonlighting. To keep employees happy, organizations should create better policies that promote fair work conditions for all staff. Some argue that moonlighting is a right, as long as it stays within company rules and ethical limits. Studies from India's IT sector show a complicated link between moonlighting and job satisfaction. Many find that taking on extra work can increase stress and lead to burnout. It can also cause conflicts with employers. By focusing research on healthcare workers in Delhi-NCR, experts can get a clearer picture of the specific challenges and chances related to moonlighting in this key sector. This can help in creating better policies and support systems for healthcare professionals.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: JOB SATISFACTION AND MAIN CHALLENGES FOR MEDICAL OFFICERS IN DELHI

- In a study involving 115 medical officers from Delhi, 59.1% reported feeling satisfied with their jobs overall. Those expressing dissatisfaction mainly pointed to low pay compared to their workload, inconvenient working hours, frequent transfers, and limited time for patient interactions. Only 32% believed they had enough time to spend with each patient.
- Doctors working in tertiary hospitals in Delhi often have long shifts. A survey of 250 physicians showed they worked about 9.7 hours daily on average, with around five night shifts each month. Nearly half of

them were unhappy with their working hours and pay, while over 55% felt dissatisfied with their career choice.

- Workers at primary health centres on temporary contracts tend to have lower job satisfaction. Their average score was 2.7 out of 5, compared to 3.3 for permanent staff. Common stress factors include limited chances for promotion, strained relationships with colleagues, poor work conditions, and a lack of proper patient-care facilities.
- Moonlighting, or working extra jobs, impacts work-life balance and can lead to burnout. Although specific research on healthcare workers in Delhi is limited, studies from other sectors offer insight. Taking on multiple jobs often means longer hours, less personal time, and increased stress. This can result in fatigue, sleep deprivation, and health issues. Working over 60 hours a week is linked to high blood pressure, neurological problems, and stress.
- While moonlighting can bring financial benefits, it may also deepen job dissatisfaction if driven by unhappiness with primary roles. It can cause workers to feel disengaged and less loyal to their main employer.
- For healthcare professionals in Delhi-NCR, similar patterns are likely. Long working hours, low pay, and stress are common issues. Additional side jobs add to fatigue and heighten health risks. Contract staff usually faces more dissatisfaction, and moonlighting can worsen these problems. It can lead to overwork, poor focus, and lower quality care for patients.
- To address these issues, hospitals should create clear policies on moonlighting. Offering mental health support and rest periods can help manage stress. Improving salaries and providing career growth options may reduce the need for extra work. Work hours should be regulated, especially limiting night shifts. Enforcing regular rest days can help prevent burnout and health problems. More research is needed to understand the full impact of moonlighting on healthcare staff in Delhi-NCR.

Overall, long hours, low pay, and difficult working conditions push many healthcare workers to seek additional jobs. While side jobs may bring short-term financial relief, they often worsen fatigue, stress, and job satisfaction. Better support, fair pay, and strict work regulations are essential to solving these issues.

FUTURE PLANS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. **For Hospitals and Clinics:** Create clear policies for moonlighting that cover work hours, safety, and responsibilities. These should reflect current trends in gig work. Regularly check and set limits on total

working hours to reduce fatigue and health issues. Improve safety measures in the workplace, such as security, duty rooms, and emergency procedures. This is especially crucial in public healthcare facilities in Delhi-NCR.

2. **For Healthcare Professionals:** Stick to approved work hours and avoid double shifts exceeding 60 hours weekly. Prefer roles in small clinics or outpatient clinics over emergency or inpatient night shifts. Keep a close eye on workload and well-being, and take steps to balance work with rest and recovery.
3. **For Policy Makers and Regulators:** Update labor laws, such as the Factories Act and Shops & Establishments Act, to clearly define moonlighting and secondary jobs. Develop transparent rules for employers that avoid blanket non-compete clauses but include accountability measures. Set up oversight bodies to monitor dual practices, ensure tax compliance, and protect workers from excessive work hours.
4. **For Researchers and Data Collectors:** Study moonlighting trends in Delhi-NCR to understand how common it is, why it happens, and what effects it has on health. Compare job satisfaction and patient outcomes between those with multiple jobs and those with only one. Examine new digital tools—like telemedicine—to see how they can help healthcare workers earn more comfortably and safely.

Final Thoughts: Moonlighting in Delhi-NCR mainly comes from financial needs, low public sector pay, and the desire to develop skills. It can boost income and offer more experience, but also risks fatigue, poor care, and unsafe work conditions. Setting clear policies, regulating hours, ensuring safe workplaces, and updating laws are vital. These steps will help healthcare workers enjoy the benefits of dual practice without risking their health or work satisfaction.

CONCLUSION:

1. **The double-edged nature of moonlighting:** Moonlighting provides vital financial support and skill growth for healthcare workers, especially those early in their careers or working outside clinical roles. It helps increase income and broadens their expertise. Yet, this often results in longer hours, exhaustion, and burnout. These issues can lead to fatigue, safety risks, and mental health struggles.
2. **Impact on personal life:** Moonlighting greatly reduces personal time. Many workers find it difficult to meet family and personal needs. They often say it is “very hard to spend time with family because of ongoing work commitments.”

3. **Effects on job satisfaction and health:** Studies from Delhi reveal that healthcare staff with poor work-life balance report lower job happiness. They also experience mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, and in some cases, suicidal thoughts among resident doctors who are overwhelmed.
4. **Legal and organizational framework:** In India, laws like the Factories Act regulate work hours and rest days but do not specifically address moonlighting. This gap leaves healthcare workers exposed to various employer policies. Some ban moonlighting. Others adopt more flexible, trust-based rules.
5. **Solutions and recommendations for balance:** Institutions should create clear, fair moonlighting policies. These should include approval processes, conflict of interest checks, and limits on total work hours. Support should include mental health resources, peer groups, and burnout prevention. Flexible shifts and overtime caps can help maintain work-life balance. Improving base pay addresses the root cause, reducing dependence on side jobs. Finally, encouraging internal training and career growth can help decrease the need for extra work outside regular hours.

REFERENCES:

- *PBR Journal*. (2023). an Analysis of Work Life Balance in the Healthcare Industry.
- Anand, T., Kaur, G., Gupta, K., Thapliyal, S., & Lal, P. (2022). Job satisfaction among medical officers working in Delhi. *J Family Med Prim Care*, 11(1), 155–161.
- Behera, B., Kapoor, A., Nayak, P.K., Usmani, A., & Vadi, V.R. (2023). The Rise of Moonlighting in India. *Splint Int Journal of Professionals*, 10(4), 354–365.
- Manju, P.D., Garima, & Samal, B. (2024). Bridging Shifts: Moonlighting in the Indian Workforce. *Journal of Organizational Behavior and Management*, 7(1).
- Sinha, B.C., Sharma, N., Gupta, S., Laddhu, S., Sharma, U., Kumari, A., Sharma, V., & Shukla, B. (2024). Motivation behind Moonlighting Practices ... in Delhi NCR Higher Education. *Library Progress International*, 44(6).
- Krupanidhi, E.P. (2023). Navigating the challenges of moonlighting: FMCG sector in South India. *Scientific Temper*, 15(4), 3515–3522.
- Kaur, P., Arora, G.K., & Aggarwal, A. (2023). Factors affecting work-life balance ... healthcare workers during COVID-19. *SAGE Journals*.
- Sharma, V. (2024). Work-Life Balance & Job Satisfaction for Kitchen Staff in Delhi NCR Hotels. *Int J Asian Business & Management*, 3(1).

- *Goswami, J. (n.d.). Work-Life Balance – A Study of BPO Workers in Delhi & NCR. Thar Journal.*
- *Nguyen, D.A. (2021). Workload balancing among healthcare workers...distributionally robust optimization. ArXiv.*
- *Kooktapeh, Z.G., Dustmohammadloo, H., Mehrdoost, H., & Fatehi, F. (2023). In the Line of Fire: Nurse burnout—meta-analysis. ArXiv.*