

Why self-care should be seen as a productivity enabler

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In the corridors of Indian workplaces, fatigue has quietly crept into everyday professional vocabulary. Lunches turn into hurried bites and evening calls stretch well into the night. Tiredness is worn as a silent badge of commitment. But too often, it comes at the cost of health.

The Workforce Health Index (Loop, 2025) highlights a sustained rise in burnout symptoms, chronic fatigue and stress-related health indicators among working professionals. According to a recent report by CII, about 62% of Indian employees experience burnout - three times more than the global average of 20%. The LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index found that 55% of Indian employees felt stressed at work – among the highest globally. Half a decade after the pandemic, India's workforce continues to operate on depleted physical and mental reserves.

The fatigue and burnout many feel today is not just about professional demands but the growing nutrient gap as well. Meals are rushed or replaced with snacks that offer little nutrition. The Supradyn Fatigue Survey revealed that 81% of respondents experience energy dips through the day, while 90% of doctors and nutritionists believe the average Indian diet meets only about 70% of daily nutritional needs. Micronutrient deficiencies, especially iron, vitamin B12, vitamin D and calcium, directly affect stamina, focus and mood, in turn impacting productivity and overall health.

Fatigue and burnout are no longer lifestyle concerns alone. A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that employee burnout has a measurable economic impact. In the US, researchers estimated that burnout leads to more than \$5 million in annual costs for a 1,000-person company, due to lost workdays, lower productivity, and health-related issues.

Over time, chronic fatigue stops being a sign of hard work. It slows innovation, creativity and decision-making, gradually draining energy and motivation across the workforce.

It is time we stop mentioning stress and fatigue with pride. India's demographic dividend depends on 'health-span' as much as lifespan. A country like ours, with a young and economically productive population, will continue to be at an advantage if we are healthy, resilient and focused. As we continue to invest heavily in upskilling, equal emphasis must be placed on the biological capacity that sustains performance, such as nutrition, rest, recovery and preventive health.

Self-care plays an important role in improving productivity. Balanced diet, complemented by nutritional supplements, adequate hydration and sleep are not privileges. They are enablers of sustained performance. These simple interventions make the difference between merely functioning and truly performing. From Japan to Australia and Singapore, several countries have recognised this link between self-care and economic productivity, demonstrating how preventive health strategies can translate into better workforce outcomes and long-term economic growth.

Addressing India's silent burnout requires both cultural and structural shift. Nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies must be viewed as public health priorities that directly influence workforce productivity and national growth. This requires collective action from:

- Policymakers investing in equitable access and education
- Health care systems emphasising on self-care and
- Industry innovating to make preventive health solutions more accessible

When people feel well, they work well. And when a nation invests in the everyday health of its people, it builds a stronger economy. The path to sustainable productivity begins with something simple yet powerful — taking care of ourselves.

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