

A STUDY OF JOB INSECURITY IN THE FILM INDUSTRY AMONG FREELANCE ACTORS IN MUMBAI WITH REFERENCE TO MENTAL HEALTH, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

Mumbai, the city of dreams, is home to India's fast-paced film industry, where many young actors dream of making it big. But behind the glamour, freelance work often means no fixed income, uncertain schedules, and constant pressure. This study looks at actors aged 20–30 who work per project or per day basis, and how this unstable work life affects their mental health, emotions and personal relationships, and family life. Using the DASS-21 scale, it examines and tracks links to stress, anxiety, and depression.

Keywords: job insecurity, freelancers, film industry, Mumbai, mental health, emotional wellbeing, family wellbeing, anxiety, depression, and self-confidence, financial instability, personal relationships, emotional disconnect, family tension

INTRODUCTION

Historical evolution of Indian Film Industry

The Indian film industry, deeply tied to the nation's socio-cultural evolution, began with the Lumière brothers' screening in 1896. Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) marked the birth of Indian cinema. The first talkie, *Alam Ara* (1931), revolutionised filmmaking, followed by regional cinema like *Ayodhecha Raja* (1932). The 1950s-60s were cinema's golden era, while the 1970s popularised masala films. The 1990s saw new stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan emerge who reshaped Bollywood's reach. Post-2008, Indian cinema gained global recognition, with OTT platforms reshaping viewership post-2020. Films like *RRR* (2022) achieved international acclaim, reflecting Indian cinema's dynamic growth through bold storytelling, technological innovation, and global collaborations.

Film Industry and Mumbai

The Indian film industry, the world's second-largest, produces around 1,500 films annually, with Mumbai as its epicentre. Known as the "City of Dreams," Mumbai is synonymous with Bollywood and attracts countless aspirants seeking success in cinema. Its role as India's film capital stems from historical, cultural, and economic factors, dating back to colonial times when it evolved into a creative hub.

Mumbai's diverse population inspires varied storytelling, while its financial status supports large-scale productions. However, intense competition, financial instability, and uncertain career paths pose challenges, making Mumbai both a land of opportunities and struggles for aspiring artists.

Job Insecurity in the Film Industry

The Indian film industry is inherently volatile, with project-based employment creating job insecurity for both aspiring and seasoned professionals. Careers are marked by fluctuating activity, with success often dependent on a single film's performance, changing audience preferences, and market trends. Behind-the-scenes workers face financial instability, lack of formal contracts, and inconsistent incomes. Fierce competition, reliance on networking over merit, and the pressures of maintaining a public persona via social media add to the challenges. Freelancers lack benefits like health insurance, while limited union support exacerbates risks. This instability impacts financial security, mental health, and personal well-being across the industry.

Job Insecurity and Mental Health

Job insecurity is a pervasive challenge in the film industry due to project-based employment and unstable career trajectories, leading to prolonged stress and financial instability. Professionals face immense pressure to excel, cope with rejections, and navigate industry politics, affecting emotional resilience. Anxiety is common, fuelled by unpredictable job opportunities, the need to stay relevant, and social media scrutiny. This vulnerability often impacts mental well-being. Depression, driven by rejection, financial struggles, and isolation, is a major concern, with stigma hindering access to support. Addressing these issues requires greater awareness of industry pressures and the promotion of sustainable mental health support systems.

Job insecurity and emotional well-being

Job insecurity in the film industry deeply impacts emotional well-being, with constant rejections, project cancellations, and the fear of being forgotten eroding self-esteem. The pressure to succeed and fear of failure create a stressful cycle, leaving little time to emotionally recover. The blurring of personal and professional lives, compounded by the need to maintain a positive public persona, adds to emotional strain. Social media exacerbates feelings of isolation, as many professionals struggle to express vulnerability. To support emotional wellbeing, it is crucial to raise awareness and foster a culture of support within the industry.

Job insecurity and family well-being

Job insecurity in the film industry not only affects professionals but also their families. The uncertainty of income, irregular schedules, and frequent travel create emotional and financial instability at home. Many conservative families, sceptical of the film industry's glamour, struggle to accept unconventional career paths, leading to misunderstandings and emotional distance. The pressure to balance work and family life often results in neglect, straining relationships. Additionally, societal stigma surrounding the industry exacerbates conflicts, as family members face criticism for their association. The intersection of job insecurity and familial stress makes family well-being in the film industry particularly challenging.

DASS – 21

The DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale) is a widely used tool to assess mental health, particularly depression, anxiety, and stress. In the context of the Indian film industry, where job insecurity is prevalent, the DASS-21 is crucial for understanding the mental health challenges faced by professionals. The unpredictability of work, competition, and public scrutiny often lead to anxiety and depression, impacting both personal well-being and professional performance. The DASS-21 provides a structured approach to identify these issues, enabling timely interventions and raising awareness about the need for mental health support and sustainable solutions in the industry.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

To understand the emotional and psychological effects of job insecurity in Mumbai's freelance film community.

To evaluate how irregular work affects personal relationships and family life.

To bring attention to the unstructured, unpredictable nature of employment in the Indian film industry. To provide data-driven insights using DASS-21 on depression, anxiety, and stress levels.

To recommend actionable solutions for stakeholders and policymakers.

RESEARCH GAP

While several studies examine freelance work in general, there is limited research focusing specifically on freelance actors in the Indian film industry. Mental health, emotional strain, and family implications are often underexplored in this context. This study bridges that gap using psychological measurement tools like DASS-21.

AIM

The aim of the research study is to understand the prevalence of job insecurity among freelancers (actors) in the film industry of age group 20-30 residing in the city of Mumbai and examine its effects on the mental health, personal relationships and family well-being.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the impact of job insecurity among actors on their mental health with reference to stress, anxiety and depression.
2. To evaluate the effects of job insecurity among actors on their emotional well-being affecting personal relationships.
3. To evaluate the effects of job insecurity among actors on their family well-being.

HYPOTHESIS**Hypothesis 1**

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Job insecurity has no significant effect on actors' mental health (depression, anxiety, and stress).

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Job insecurity among actors has a significant effect on their mental health (depression, anxiety, and stress).

Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Job insecurity among actors has no significant impact on emotional well-being affecting personal relationships.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_2): Job insecurity among actors significantly impacts emotional well-being affecting personal relationships.

Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Job insecurity among actors has no significant impact on family well-being. Alternative Hypothesis (H_3): Job insecurity among actors has a significant impact on family well-being.

LIMITATIONS

Time Limitation

Study is concluded in a short time span.

Sample Size & Generalisability

The study is limited to 100 participants in the age group of 20-30, which may not fully represent all freelance actors in Mumbai.

Geographic Scope

The study is restricted to Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, and Palghar, limiting applicability to other cities.

Industry-Specific Factors

Results may not apply to freelancers in other creative industries.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Indian Film Industry – Market Size

The Indian film industry, second only to Hollywood, is a global entertainment powerhouse, contributing significantly to employment and economic growth (Zacharias & Parekh, n.d.). It received industry status in 2001, covering Bollywood and regional cinemas like Marathi, Kannada, Punjabi, and Malayalam.

By 2025, the industry is projected to generate US\$5.01 billion, reaching US\$6.05 billion by 2029, with an audience base of 653.2 million (Statista, 2024). India ranks second in global cinema revenue, expected to reach US\$23.52 billion by 2025, driven by technological advancements and evolving storytelling (Statista, 2024; Arora, 2021). Mumbai remains the hub, producing 1,000–2,000 films annually.

Freelancing in India

India's economy, projected to be the third largest globally by 2030, is shifting toward freelance-driven employment (Moritz & Krishan, n.d.). The Indian freelancing sector, with 15 million professionals, is expected to be worth \$50 billion by 2032, forming 50% of the workforce by 2025 (Jain & Live Mint, 2024; Daniel & Obillia, 2024).

Freelancers work in arts, journalism, education, business consulting, and medicine, aligning with Germany's tax definition of independent professionals (Akhmetshin et al., 2018). A 2021 report estimated that 64% of freelancers are aged 24-38, with major hubs in Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai (NITI Aayog, 2022). The India Freelance Platforms Market, valued at USD 187.5 million in 2023, is projected to grow at a CAGR of 22.5%, reaching USD 775.6 million by 2030 (India Freelance Platforms Market Size & Outlook, 2024-2030, n.d.).

60% of freelancers are under 30, with 23% earning over Rs. 40 lakhs annually (Daniel & Obillia, 2024). Indian freelancers earn \$22 per hour, higher than \$19 in Asia (Pandey, 2023).

Rising Demand and Competition Among Freelancers

Freelancing is highly competitive, with 69% of Indian freelancers reporting increased competition by 2025, surpassing the global average of 59% (Pandey, 2023).

Despite growth, freelancers struggle with irregular payments, tax complexities (GST and income tax), branding issues, and lack of efficient digital payment solutions, increasing financial instability (Daniel & Obillia, 2024).

Job Insecurity and Well-being

Job insecurity, defined as fear of job loss or worsening work conditions, leads to stress, anxiety, and economic instability (Van Vuuren, 1990; De Witte, 2005). It is classified into:

- Quantitative job insecurity – fear of losing employment entirely, causing financial distress.
- Qualitative job insecurity – fear of deteriorating job conditions, such as lower wages or reduced career opportunities (Hellgren et al., 1999).

Studies confirm job insecurity is a subjective experience, shaped by career instability and economic fluctuations (Sverke et al., 2006). It correlates with chronic stress, depression, and low job satisfaction (Ashford et al., 1989; Boya et al., 2008), along with emotional exhaustion, sleep disorders, and decreased motivation (Mattiasson et al., 1990; Mohr, 2000).

Among affected employees, 97% report clinical anxiety, and 86% suffer from depression (Nella et al., 2015). Workplace engagement and productivity also decline, as insecure employees avoid career investments and withdraw from responsibilities (Barling & Kelloway, 1996; Hartley et al., 1991). Freelancers and part-time workers face higher insecurity than permanent employees, though severity varies by profession (Still, 1983; Näswall & De Witte, 2003).

The impact extends to family life, disrupting financial stability, emotional well-being, and relationships (Hanappi & Lipps, 2019; Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). Finnish research shows job stress affects family dynamics, increasing household tension and emotional distance (Mauno & University of Jyväskylä, 1999). Long-term insecurity links to high blood pressure, cardiovascular risks, and chronic fatigue (Mattiasson et al., 1990; Menéndez-Espina et al., 2019).

Studies suggest social support (partners, family, and external networks) helps mitigate negative effects (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll, 2001).

Indian Film Industry and Job Insecurity

Mumbai's film industry relies on temporary, project-based work, creating widespread job insecurity (Ganti, 2012). In 2017, over 5 million workers were employed in film-related jobs, rising to 6 million by 2019 (Gupta & Mohapatra, 2022; Arora, 2021). However, employment dropped from 7.41 lakh to 2.56 lakh by 2020 (Deloitte, 2020).

75% of stunt artists live below the poverty line, with only 5% achieving financial security (Gupta & Mohapatra, 2022). The 2008 Bollywood strike exposed low wages, long hours, and lack of contracts, yet systemic issues persist (BBC, 2008).

Global Perspective

Job insecurity is a global issue in creative industries, causing financial instability and mental health challenges (Rowland, 2009). A UK study found only 1,200 of 15,000 film freelancers secured jobs, forcing 22% to work outside the industry (J Mackie, 2015).

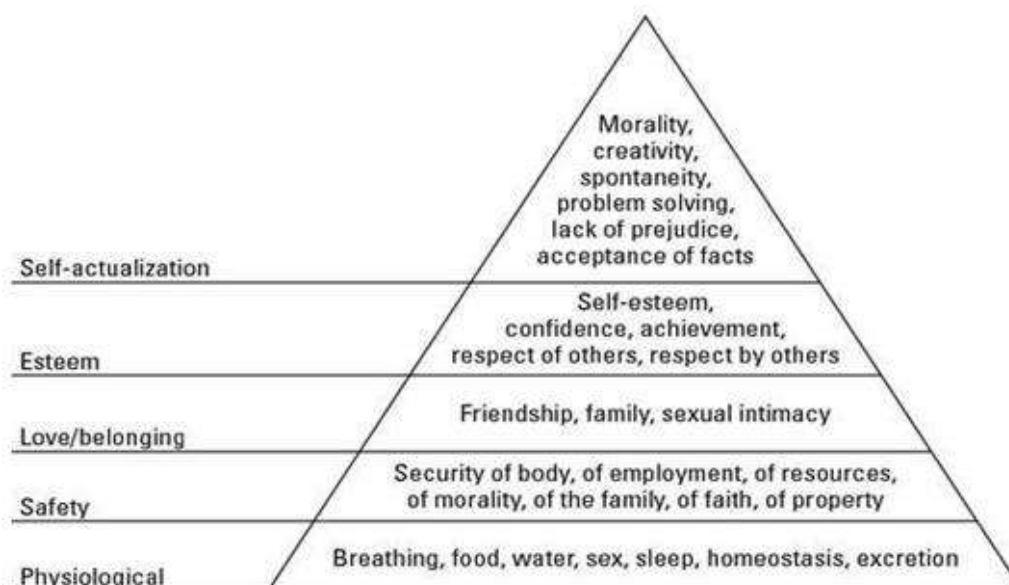
Similarly, in the UK music industry, 68.5% of musicians reported depression, and 71% experienced anxiety due to economic instability (Gross et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic worsened freelancer distress, causing depression and anxiety rates to quadruple in the US (Czeisler et al., 2020; Ettman et al., 2020).

DASS-21

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale - 21 (DASS-21) is a widely used tool for assessing psychological distress, measuring depression, anxiety, and stress levels (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995; Antony et al., 1998). Research confirms its validity across different populations, including Portuguese adults and Australian actors (Laranjeira et al., 2023; Szabo et al., 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains how job insecurity disrupts psychological well-being. The levels are physiological needs (food, clothing), safety needs (job security), love and belonging (friendship, relationships), esteem (self-respect, recognition) and self-actualisation (achieving one's full potential). According to Maslow, basic needs like food and safety must be met before a person can focus on higher-level needs like self-esteem and personal growth (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Stable employment provides financial security, social support, and career growth, but persistent uncertainty blocks self-actualization, increasing stress (Jalil et al., 2023; McLeod, 2024).



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample Selection

The study focused on freelance or project-based actors aged between 20 to 30 years, living in Mumbai or the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) for at least one year. Participants were chosen using a combination of convenience sampling (selecting individuals who were easily accessible) and snowball sampling (participants recommending others from similar backgrounds). This approach was used to reach a wider network of actors who fit the study criteria.

Sample Size and Justification

A total of 100 participants were included in the study. This sample size was chosen to allow for meaningful statistical analysis while keeping the research practical and manageable. It provides enough data to identify general trends and relationships between job insecurity and mental health outcomes among young actors in Mumbai.

Tools Used

The main tool used for this study was a structured online questionnaire that included the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale – 21 items). This is a widely accepted and reliable psychological assessment used to measure the emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Procedure

Data was collected through online forms circulated among the target group. Participants filled out the questionnaire anonymously to ensure honesty and privacy. The responses were then analysed using both descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics. A one-sample chi-square test was applied to explore the relationship between job insecurity and mental health variables measured by the DASS-21 scale.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic Summary

The study surveyed 100 freelance actors aged 20–30, living in Mumbai and the surrounding MMR region, to understand the impact of job insecurity on their mental health and overall well-being.

Gender Distribution

65% of respondents were male, and 35% were female, indicating more male participation, which may reflect broader gender trends in the industry.

Educational Background

A large portion of actors were graduates (56%), followed by postgraduates (26%), and undergraduates (18%). This highlights that many aspiring actors today are well-educated.

Employment Status

Only 20% reported being regularly employed in acting. 50% were occasionally employed, and 30% were currently unemployed but actively looking, showing the unstable nature of work in the field.

Secondary Income

40% of actors had a secondary source of income, while 29% earned from side jobs occasionally. 31% depended solely on acting, indicating a financial risk for many.

Financial Dependents

53% had one or more family members they financially supported, adding pressure to maintain some form of steady income.

Perceived Job Security

The average job security score was 3.09 out of 5, suggesting that most actors feel moderately secure. Still, 30% felt insecure about their future in acting, while only 33% reported feeling secure. The wide range of responses highlights how perceptions of job security vary widely among individuals.

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Job insecurity has no significant effect on actors' mental health (depression, anxiety, and stress).

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Job insecurity among actors has a significant effect on their mental health (depression, anxiety, and stress).

Statements	Chi-square Value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Significance (p-value)
Depression	25.220	2	<0.001
Anxiety	85.940	2	<0.001
Stress	44.800	4	<0.001

Interpretation:

The one-sample chi-square results clearly show that the actual mental health responses do not follow a normal or expected pattern. Instead, they reflect significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety, and stress. Since, all values are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), all the mental health variables are accepted thus rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepting the alternative hypothesis (H_1).

Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Job insecurity has no significant impact on emotional well-being affecting personal relationships.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_2): Job insecurity among actors significantly impacts emotional well-being affecting personal relationships.

Statements	Chi-square Value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Significance (p-value)
Stress from your acting career often affects your ability to communicate with friends.	24.800	4	0.000
You avoid spending time with friends because of work-related worries.	15.500	4	0.004
You often feel guilty for prioritising your acting career over your personal relationships.	16.700	4	0.002
Uncertainty about your acting career has led to arguments or misunderstandings with your friends.	20.700	4	0.000
Your personal relationships are negatively affected by your focus on finding acting work.	20.000	4	0.000

Interpretation:

The one-sample chi-square results clearly show that the actual responses related to emotional well-being and personal relationships do not follow a normal or expected pattern. Instead, they reflect significantly higher levels of communication breakdowns, emotional withdrawal, guilt, and relational tension among freelance actors. Since all p-values are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), each variable under emotional well-being is accepted, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepting the alternative hypothesis (H_1). This confirms that job insecurity has a significant negative impact on emotional well-being and personal relationships.

Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Job insecurity among actors has no significant impact on family well-being. Alternative

Hypothesis (H_3): Job insecurity among actors has a significant impact on family well-being.

Statements	Chi-square Value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Significance (p-value)
Your family has supported your decision to have a career as an actor.	77.600	4	0.000
Financial insecurities in your acting career often cause tension within your family.	24.300	4	0.000
You feel pressure from your family to switch to a more stable career.	9.100	4	0.059
You often feel like you are not meeting your family's expectations because of your acting career.	17.100	4	0.002
Job insecurity in acting has strained your ability to provide emotional or financial support to your family	21.600	4	0.000

Interpretation:

The results clearly show that job insecurity is affecting the family lives and overall well-being of freelance actors. The answers from participants were not evenly spread—they leaned heavily towards experiences like family tension, unmet expectations, and struggles with emotional or financial support. Since most of the results were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), we can say with confidence that these effects are real and not just due to chance. So, the original idea (that job insecurity has no effect) is rejected, and we accept that job insecurity is having a serious impact on the family well-being of freelance actors.

OBSERVATIONS

The findings of this study reveal the pervasive impact of job insecurity on actors in the Mumbai-based film industry, influencing their mental health, personal relationships, and family dynamics. The results indicate a high level of job insecurity, with only 20% of respondents being regularly employed in acting projects, while 50% are occasionally employed, and 30% are unemployed but actively looking for work. This reflects the highly unstable nature of employment in the industry, consistent with previous literature that highlights the precarious conditions of freelancers in creative industries (Ganti, 2012; Gupta & Mohapatra, 2022).

Impact on Mental Health

The irregular employment pattern in Mumbai's film industry, combined with the uncertainty of securing future roles, contributes to heightened psychological distress. A majority of respondents reported experiencing severe or extremely severe levels of these mental health conditions, confirming a significant relationship between job insecurity and mental health outcomes. The Chi-square test results (p-values) for depression, anxiety, and stress are all below 0.05, confirming statistical significance which validate and are aligned with previous studies that establish job insecurity as a major stressor leading to poor psychological outcomes (Ashford et al., 1989; De Witte, 1999). The mean job security score of this study is 3.09 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating moderate job security with considerable variation among actors. This aligns with previous findings that uncertainty in employment leads to increased anxiety and stress (Sverke et al., 2006; Llosa et al., 2018). The literature further suggests that the perception of a potential threat to job stability plays a crucial role in influencing mental health (Van Vuuren, 1990).

Impact on Personal Relationships

The results also highlight the impact of job insecurity on actors' emotional well-being and social relationships. More than 60% of respondents have reported that career stress affected their ability to communicate with friends, leading to avoidance of social interactions. The statistical significance of these findings supports prior research, which indicates that unstable work conditions often result in isolation, reduced social engagement, and emotional exhaustion (Rowland, 2009; Mackie, 2015). Additionally, actors frequently reported feelings of guilt for prioritising their careers over personal relationships. This supports findings from studies on precarious employment in the creative industry, which indicate that the pressure to secure roles often leads to work-life conflicts (Gross et al., 2018). The competitive nature of the film industry adds another layer of stress, reinforcing feelings of inadequacy and affecting interpersonal relationships.

Impact on Family Well-being

The study demonstrates how job insecurity affects family well-being. Financial instability emerged as a significant source of tension within family dynamics, with many respondents acknowledging that their uncertain career path strained their ability to provide financial and emotional support. 53% of actors have reported supporting dependents while struggling to maintain financial security, 44% of actors feel they are not meeting family expectations, and 46% reported an inability to provide adequate emotional or financial support. These findings are consistent with research on job insecurity, which highlights its spillover effects on family life (Mauno & University of Jyväskylä, 1999; Hanappi & Lipps, 2019). Despite financial struggles, a majority of 53% actors reported feeling supported by their families, suggesting that emotional support acts as a buffer against career uncertainty. However, a substantial portion of respondents expressed concerns about failing to meet family expectations, reinforcing the psychological burden of job insecurity. These results align with previous studies showing that job insecurity negatively impacts family well-being and self-esteem (Jahoda, 1982; Hobfoll, 2001).

The study highlights how job insecurity affects actors in Mumbai's film industry across all levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). At the physiological level, financial instability is evident, with 50% of actors occasionally employed and 30% unemployed, forcing many to rely on secondary income. The safety need is compromised, as high job uncertainty contributes to extremely severe levels of depression (57%), anxiety (77%), and stress (39%). Social belonging is affected, with career stress straining friendships and family relationships. At the esteem level, actors experience low self-worth due to unstable careers, despite high education levels (56% graduates, 26% postgraduates). Finally, self-actualisation is hindered, as actors struggle to achieve creative fulfilment due to career uncertainty.

The study confirms that job insecurity among actors in Mumbai's film industry is a significant concern, with profound effects on mental health, emotional well-being, and family life. The findings validate previous literature on the precarious nature of freelance work, reinforcing the need for systemic support mechanisms. The psychological burden of job insecurity, combined with financial unpredictability, affects not only the actors but also their social and familial relationships, and addressing these challenges requires industry reforms, financial security measures, and mental health support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the severe implications of job insecurity, the study suggests several interventions:

1. Mental Health Support

Industry-specific counselling services should be made accessible to actors to help them cope with career-related stress. Awareness campaigns about the mental health challenges of freelancing should be implemented.

2. Financial Stability Measures

Actors should be encouraged to diversify their income sources, reducing reliance on acting alone. Financial planning workshops and industry-backed savings schemes could help mitigate financial uncertainty.

3. Industry Reforms

Labour regulations should be strengthened to ensure fair wages and timely payments for freelance actors. Contractual protections should be improved to reduce exploitation and promote job stability.

4. Social Support Networks

Actors should be encouraged to engage in peer-support groups to share experiences and coping strategies. Building stronger community support within the industry could help mitigate feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the far reaching consequences of job insecurity in the Mumbai-based film industry, particularly among freelance actors. The findings confirm that employment instability significantly impacts mental health, personal relationships, and family well-being reinforcing previous literature on the precarious nature of freelancing in creative industries (Ganti, 2012; Sverke et al., 2006).

The results indicate that job insecurity is a key determinant of poor mental health among actors, with a majority experiencing moderate to extremely severe levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. The unpredictability of work opportunities and financial instability contribute to chronic stress, which aligns with research highlighting the psychological consequences of job uncertainty (Mohr, 2000; Menéndez-Espina et al., 2019). The study also supports the use of psychological frameworks such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which suggests that

job stability is a fundamental requirement for overall well-being (Maslow, 1943) and it is evident that uncertainty in employment disrupts all levels of well-being, from basic survival to self-actualisation.

Job insecurity not only affects individual mental health but also impacts actors' social interactions and emotional stability. The study found significant evidence that career-related stress leads to social withdrawal, guilt, and strained relationships with friends and partners. These findings correspond with literature on the gig economy, which emphasizes the emotional exhaustion and isolation experienced by freelancers (Mackie, 2015; Gross et al., 2018).

The research further highlights the spillover effect of job insecurity on family life. Many actors reported financial insecurity as a major source of family tension, with a significant proportion feeling pressure to switch to more stable careers. However, family support played a mitigating role, providing emotional resilience despite economic challenges. This reflects the findings of previous studies, which emphasize the importance of strong social and familial support in coping with job insecurity (Hanappi & Lipps, 2019).

This study underscores the urgent need for structural reforms and mental health interventions to support freelance actors navigating Mumbai's film industry. While job insecurity is an inherent challenge in the creative sector, strategic measures can alleviate its impact on well-being and career sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires industry reforms, financial planning support, and mental health interventions to promote stability and well-being in the profession.

Future research should explore long-term coping mechanisms, policy interventions, and the role of digital platforms in shaping employment opportunities for actors. A broad study across all the stakeholders of the industry such as producers, directors, writers, cinematographers, etc will also help to understand the issues of the industry as a whole. By addressing these systemic challenges, the industry can foster a healthier work environment, ensuring the sustainability of careers in acting while safeguarding mental and emotional and family well-being.

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