

A Study on Livelihoods and Lifestyles of Unemployed Youths in Imphal - West District, Manipur

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ABSTRACT

The study highlights and examines the challenges faced by unemployed individuals in Imphal West, Manipur, focusing on their daily life experiences and coping mechanisms. It explores whether they rely on intoxicating substances or adopt healthier strategies to deal with their circumstances. The study further investigates their aspirations toward securing government employment, their possession of relevant skills for suitable jobs, and the extent to which they receive governmental assistance or financial support. Moreover, the research seeks to understand whether these individuals experience mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, or emotional instability, and whether unemployment affects their family relationships. It also examines the degree of government aid and community support available to them, as well as their perceptions regarding the fulfillment of their needs. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of unemployed youth resort to intoxicating substances, which adversely impact their physical health, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being. Many also suffer from psychological distress, including anxiety and depression. The study offers several recommendations and strategies to address these issues more effectively, aiming to promote a healthier, more productive, and socially supportive environment within the community.

Keywords

Unemployed People: In this study, unemployed people refers to individuals in Imphal-West district who are of working age (18–35 years), are currently not engaged in any formal or permanent job, and are actively seeking or willing to work but remain without employment.

Livelihoods: Livelihoods in this context mean the means and sources through which unemployed individuals attempt to sustain their living. This includes support from family, reliance on government aid, involvement in informal or part-time work, and alternative coping strategies used to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.

Lifestyles: Lifestyles here refers to the daily living patterns, behaviours, and social practices of unemployed individuals in Imphal-West, including their social interactions, participation in community activities, health practices, use of time, and overall well-being in the absence of stable employment.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is considered one of the most challenges faced by people globally. With the increase in technological advancement, increase economic qualities, increased in educational platforms, thus results in the increase of finances so unfortunately, unemployed people find these as a most challenging part of their life, requires enough amount to buy daily needs, like foods, clothing, shelter, education etc. So because of these inconveniences their lives even lead to the darker path such as they may use alcohols, drugs, smoking to handle this mental sorrow, unstability in their mind. And even there is increased in crime rates because of this unemployment, in order to get enough money they may become ruthless trying to harm others with no emotions, feeling jealous of one another and create crimes and chaos. They may feel isolated and cannot

manage the relationships with the society so results creating an evil eye with one another which can be very dangerous in surviving in the society. It is not only about the unemployed people suffering but also people have financially stable will also suffer creating a vast negative atmosphere in the society. Government has a major responsibility for these and they should provide a heartfelt amount at least to get the daily needs of unemployed people and providing enough jobs that matches their qualities, skills, talents even ideas. So, by identifying the root cause and providing effective solutions, we expect a good and bright future for the people facing challenges. So, understanding unemployment and its causes and results helps in fostering healthy environment in the society. Thus, a study is performed to investigate the “LIVELIHOODS AND LIFESTYLES OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE IN IMPHAL-WEST, MANIPUR”, focusing on how unemployed people are affected, face challenges and cope with the challenges.

Understanding background, its consequences and some keys to minimize problems

Unemployment arises from a complex interplay of factors. Structural unemployment emerges when there is a mismatch between the skills of the workforce and the demands of the market. This can result from technological advancements, shifts in industries, or changes in consumer preferences. Cyclical unemployment, on the other hand, is tied to the natural fluctuations of the economy. During periods of economic downturn, businesses may reduce their workforce, leading to higher unemployment rates. Additionally, frictional unemployment occurs as individuals' transition between jobs or enters the workforce for the first time. The repercussions of unemployment are far-reaching. Economically, it leads to a reduction in household income, diminishing purchasing power and potentially increasing poverty levels. The decline in consumer spending can further exacerbate economic downturns, creating a vicious cycle. Socially, unemployment can erode community cohesion, leading to increased crime rates and social unrest. Individuals may experience a loss of identity and purpose, especially if their self-worth is closely tied to their employment status. Psychologically, the effects are profound. Prolonged unemployment can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. The uncertainty about the future and the challenges of meeting basic needs can take a significant toll on mental health. Families may also bear the brunt, with relationships strained due to financial pressures and emotional stress. Addressing unemployment requires a multifaceted approach. Governments play a pivotal role by implementing policies that stimulate economic growth, such as investing in infrastructure, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and promoting innovation. Education systems must evolve to provide skills that align with market demands, emphasizing vocational training and lifelong learning. Social safety nets, including unemployment benefits and job placement services, can provide temporary relief and support during transitions. Moreover, fostering entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool. Encouraging individuals to start their own businesses not only creates jobs but also drives innovation and economic diversification. By addressing the root causes and implementing comprehensive solutions, societies can mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment and pave the way for a more prosperous and equitable future.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify livelihood strategies of the unemployed youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years.
2. To examine daily routines and lifestyles of the unemployed youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years.
3. To assess psychological impacts and coping mechanisms of the unemployed youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years.
4. To formulate recommendations for the unemployed youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years.

Hypothesis of the study:

- H₀1: Lack of relevant skills contributes to high unemployment among youths in Imphal West.
- H₀2: Educational qualifications do not match the job opportunities available in Imphal West.
- H₀3: Government programs aimed at reducing youth unemployment are not effectively reaching or benefiting the unemployed youths.
- H₀4: Unemployed youths in Imphal West adopt coping strategies such as informal work or migration to other areas.

- H₀5: Long-term unemployment negatively affects the mental health and lifestyle of youths in Imphal West.

Study design

This research follows a descriptive survey method to collect and analyse the data on the study of livelihoods and lifestyles of unemployed youths in Imphal- West, Manipur under Dhanamanjuri University. This descriptive method was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the lifestyles, experiences, challenges faced by the unemployed youths, allows data collection in a structured way, and enables easier analysis of patterns and giving meaningful conclusions.

Population and Sample

Population of Imphal-West, Manipur in 2025 is 6,14,000 peoples and this sample is selected on 50 unemployed youths age 18 to 35 in Imphal- West, Manipur. The population of this study consists of unemployed youths residing in Imphal-West district, Manipur. This age group represents the most active and productive section of society. Many within this group face employment challenges due to limited opportunities. The population includes both male males and females. The population provides a broad base for understanding youth unemployment.

The sampling aims to reflect various social, educational, and gender backgrounds. Each participant was unemployed at the same time of data collection. Data were gathered through interviews and questionnaires. The sample provides primary insights into livelihoods and lifestyle choices.

Tools and Techniques Used

A self- made questionnaire titled “Surviving Joblessness: Insights into Livelihoods and Lifestyles” is used as a primary data collection. The questionnaire comprises 30 questions based on Yes or No type. The questionnaire was distributed to 50 unemployed youths.

Procedure of Data Analysis

The data collected from the self-made questionnaire will be analysed using percentage method for overall data analysis and T-Test for gender-based comparison.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1.Analysis and interpretation based on personal and economic background.

Question	Yes	No	Yes %	No %
Q1. Are you currently unemployed?	50	0	100.0%	0.0%
Q2. Have you been unemployed for more than 6 months?	30	20	60.0%	40.0%
Q3. Are you actively looking for a job?	24	26	48.0%	52.0%
Q4. Do you rely on family members for financial support?	19	31	38.0%	62.0%
Q5. Do you receive any unemployment benefits or government aid?	19	31	38.0%	62.0%
Q6. Have you ever attended any skill development or vocational training?	20	30	40.0%	60.0%

Q7. Do you believe that your educational qualification matches the available jobs in Manipur?	19	31	38.0%	62.0%
Q8. Have you tried searching for a job outside Manipur?	18	32	36.0%	64.0%
Q9. Do you think unemployment has affected your self-confidence?	23	27	46.0%	54.0%
1. Q10. Are you involved in any part-time or informal income-generating activity?	2. 20	3. 30	4. 40.0%	5. 60.0%

1. No. of yes count is (100%) both male and female, which ensures that sample collected on 50 youths are unemployed.
2. A significant portion of youths (60%) yes and (40%) no showing that majority of youths have been staying unemployed for more than 6 months and it also shows the chances of majority of them face many challenges either, physically, mentally and emotionally.
3. The majority of youths (52%) no and (48%) yes, shows that they don't seek for any job and chances are that they may not have enough skills, knowledges required for job selection so thus, they might feel demotivated.
4. The majority of the youths (62%) yes and (38%) no, shows that majority of them don't rely on family members, having high chances of making money by themselves either going for works that use heavy physical efforts which can affect on health.
5. The percentage (62%) no and (31%) no, shows that majority of them do not get any govt. aids and benefits showing the imbalance in the society that requires an eye from the government.
6. The percentage (60%) no and (40%) yes shows that majority of them lacks skills and vocational training requiring some free services to provide skills, knowledges etc.
7. The percentage (38%) yes and (62%) no shows that their educational qualification do not match the available jobs showing chances that negligence in studies during their school or college times or lacking teaching qualities.
8. The percentage (36%) yes and (64%) no shows that majority of them are not looking for jobs outside Manipur having chances of not having enough knowledges and skills, not aware of job news for example job vacancies or they may have problems in finances travelling outside Manipur.
9. The percentage (46%) yes and (54%) no shows that majority of of them do not interfere on their self-esteem and nothing wrong in their self-confidence.
10. The percentage (40%) yes and (60%) no shows that majority of them have no part- time jobs.

Table 2 :Analysis and interpretation based on Lifestyles and living conditions.

Question	Yes	No	Yes %	No %
Q1. Do you live with your parents or family?	30	20	60.0%	40.0%
Q2. Do you find it difficult to afford daily basic needs (food, clothes, etc.)?	17	33	34.0%	66.0%
Q3. Do you own a smartphone or have regular access to the internet?	40	10	80.0%	20.0%
Q4. Do you spend most of your day at home due to unemployment?	38	12	76.0%	24.0%

Q5. Do you think your current lifestyle has become less healthy because of unemployment?	39	11	78.0%	22.0%
Q6. Do you think your current lifestyle has become less healthy because of unemployment?	18	32	64.0%	36.0%
Q7. Do you feel socially isolated or less active due to your employment status?	39	11	78.0%	22.0%
Q8. Do you participate in any community or local events?	12	38	24.0%	76.0%

1. The percentage (60%) yes and (40%) no, shows that majority of youths live with their parents and family.
2. The percentage (34%) yes and (66%) no shows that majority of them don't have any problems on meeting daily needs while some of them find it challenging having chances of mental disturbances.
3. The percentage (80%) yes and (20%) no shows that majority of them possess mobile phones and have internet accessibility while few do not have mobile phones having chances of receiving job news, job vacancies or any opportunities.
4. The percentage (76%) yes and (24%) no shows that majority of them stays at home because of unemployment while few stays out from home which might be because of family relationship problems, to cope with stress by interacting with people, or out for getting money.
5. The percentage (78%) yes and (22%) no shows that majority of them are having negative influences on their lifestyles because of unemployment while few don't.
6. The percentage (64%) yes and (36%) no shows that majority of them are
7. The percentage (78%) yes and (22%) no shows that majority of them are isolated and distanced from social activities while few of them don't.
8. The percentage (24%) yes and (76%) no shows that majority of them don't participate on any social events which might be they may have low self-esteem or depressed while some of them don't.

Table 3 :Analysis and interpretation based on mental health and aspirations.

Question	Yes	No	Yes %	No %
Q1. Do you feel stressed or anxious because you are unemployed?	37	13	74.0%	26.0%
Q2. Have you ever thought about starting your own business or becoming self-employed?	24	26	48.0%	52.0%
Q3. Do you believe that the government is doing enough to support unemployed youths?	16	34	32.0%	68.0%
Q4. Do you feel there are limited job opportunities in your locality?	43	7	86.0%	14.0%
Q5. Have you ever faced discrimination or negative remarks because of being unemployed?	24	26	48.0%	52.0%
Q6. Do you think migration is the only solution to better livelihood	19	31	38.0%	62.0%

opportunities?				
Q7. Would you be willing to relocate for a job if given the chance?	40	10	80.0%	20.0%

1. The percentage (74%) yes and (26%) no shows that majority of them have mental health issues like anxiety, depression which can quite painful and emotional breakdown.
2. The percentage (48%) yes and (52%) no shows that few look for self-employment and business while majority of them don't which may be because of lacking motivation or for some inconveniences of starting a new business.
3. The percentage (32%) yes and (68%) no shows that majority of them accept that govt. provide or support unemployed youths and while few accepts it.
4. The percentage (86%) yes and (14%) no shows that majority of them needs job availability in their localities while some don't need.
5. The percentage (48%) yes and (52%) no shows that majority of them don't face any discriminations from the society while few faced.
6. The percentage (38%) yes and (62%) no shows that few youths believe migration can be better for employment while majority of them don't.
7. The percentage (80%) yes and (20%) no shows that majority of them would shift their location if any job is given to them showing that getting a job is their first priority and while few wouldn't.

Table 4 :Others.

Question	Yes	No	Yes %	No %
Q1. Do youths use drugs, alcohol or any other toxic substances to cope with this problem?	20	30	40.0%	60.0%
Q2. Does unemployment cause divorce or quarrel among the family members?	35	15	70.0%	30.0%
Q3. Are there history of suicide among the family members in the past?	0	50	0%	100.0%
Q4. Do youths face challenges in searching for jobs?	20	30	60.0%	40.0%

1. The percentage (40%) yes and (60%) no shows that majority of them don't use any intoxicating substances but few does which can be injurious to health leading to unwanted consequences.
2. The percentage (70%) yes and (30%) no shows that majority of them faced divorced and unstable in relationships among family members that can create emotional trauma in child in the family.
3. The percentage (0%) yes and (100%) no shows none of these youths faced suicide among their family members.
4. The percentage (60%) yes and (40%) no shows that majority of them face challenges in finding jobs which might be because of financial problems or lack of skills, or lack of motivation.

Table 5 :Analysis and interpretation of gender differences based on facing challenges, experiences and their mental health.

Theme (Table)	Male Yes	Male No	Female Yes	Female No	Male Yes %	Female Yes %	Mean Diff (Yes%)	T-test (p-value)
Personal & Economic (Table 1)	142	158	101	99	47.3%	50.5%	-3.2%	0.62 (ns)
Lifestyle & Living (Table 2)	129	111	93	67	53.8%	58.1%	-4.3%	0.55 (ns)
Mental Health & Aspirations (Table 3)	109	101	76	74	52.0%	50.7%	+1.3%	0.84 (ns)
Others (Table 4)	60	60	44	36	50.0%	55.0%	-5.0%	0.47ns)

Personal & Economic Background (Table 1 → H₀₁, H₀₂)

Both males (47.3% Yes) and females (50.5% Yes) reported similar challenges with lack of relevant skills and education-job mismatch.

Mean difference: -3.2% (females slightly higher).

T-test: p = 0.62 (not significant) → No gender-based difference.

Interpretation: Unemployment caused by lack of skills and mismatch between qualifications and job availability affects both genders equally.

Lifestyle & Living Conditions (Table 2 → H₀₅)

Males (53.8% Yes) and females (58.1% Yes) reported that unemployment negatively affects daily life, health, and social engagement.

Mean difference: -4.3% (females slightly more affected).

T-test: p = 0.55 (not significant).

Interpretation: Long-term unemployment deteriorates lifestyle and living standards similarly for both genders, though females show a marginally higher impact.

Mental Health & Aspirations (Table 3 → H₀₃, H₀₅)

Yes responses are nearly identical (Males 52.0%, Females 50.7%) about stress, anxiety, dissatisfaction with government programs, and willingness to relocate.

Mean difference: +1.3% (males slightly higher).

T-test: $p = 0.84$ (not significant).

Interpretation: Mental health challenges and low confidence due to unemployment are universal, with no gender gap. Government programs are seen as ineffective by both.

Others (Table 4 → H₀₄)

Females (55.0% Yes) reported slightly higher coping struggles (drug use, quarrels, migration pressure, job search challenges) than males (50.0% Yes).

Mean difference: -5.0% (females slightly higher).

T-test: $p = 0.47$ (not significant).

Interpretation: Coping strategies and social consequences of unemployment (conflict, stress, migration) are experienced by both genders, without significant difference.

Graphical Representations on “Yes” And “No” Responses by Males and Females and Comparison of Yes Percentages Between Males And Females Based On Their 4 Themes :

Figure 1: Figure showing “Yes” responses by gender, showing how many males and females answered “Yes” in each theme.



Figure 2 :Figure showing “No” responses by gender, showing how many males and females answered “No” in each theme.

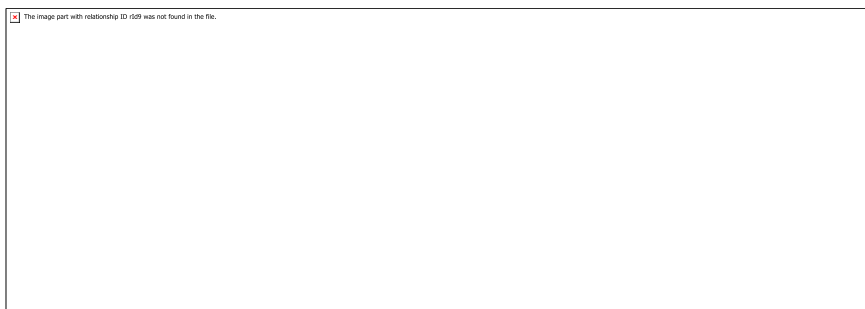
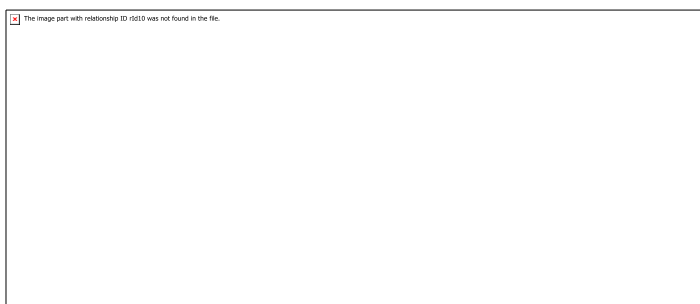


Figure 3 : Figure showing comparison of “Yes” percentages, a line graph comparing the percentage of “Yes” responses between males and females across all themes.



Findings of the Study:

The main findings of the study are listed below:

1. Majority of the unemployed youths lack skills, knowledge and qualification for achieving suitable jobs.
2. Majority of unemployed youths suffers from mental disturbances, emotional breakdowns, anxiety and depressions.
3. Majority of the unemployed youths need government aids and supports.
4. Majority of the unemployed youths suffers from social isolation and lacks the ability to create healthy relationships with the society.
5. Majority of the unemployed youths have conflicts among their family members because of unemployment.
6. Some use intoxicating substances to cope with unemployment.
7. Majority of the unemployed youths lacks support and motivation.
8. Many claim they lack job opportunities in their locality.
9. Some faced discrimination because of unemployment.
10. Many face challenges in pursuing jobs.

Educational Implications:

Counselling and guidance is a major requirement. Jobs even with small salary should be provided that matches their strengths by the govt., this would not only help in their finances but also they would get motivated. Unemployed youths must be treated fairly and equally to make them feel valued and increase their mental well-being so as to make their life path clear. Free services that provides them skills, knowledge should be offered by the govt. Unemployed youths should be given healthy coping mechanisms to reduce them using drugs, alcohol etc. Unemployed youths should be aware of current affairs, news for job vacancies etc.

CONCLUSION

The present study makes us aware of how unemployed youths experience and struggle for unemployment and we can find their coping mechanisms can lead to darker path that can affect our society negatively. They even suffer from mental problems like anxiety and depression because of unemployment so guidance and counselling is largely required. Even committing crimes can happen that can affect not only them but also can affect to the entire society so unemployed requires an eye from the government. If unemployment is lowered than there is a high of chance of maintaining peace and tranquil within a society.

The study highlights the awareness of disturbances in personal and social life of unemployed youths. Unemployment is a big challenge for the youths.

The findings suggest to provide guidance and counselling to the unemployed youths. And Govt. should give support and aids to them. Also they require motivation and empathy from us to clear their path.

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