

Assessing the impact of demonetization beyond the Balance Sheet: Employee perspectives, voices from the workforce on the 2016 Indian demonetization

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Abstract— The 2016 demonetization in India, a historic economic event, aims to combat black money, counterfeit cash, and corruption by invalidating high-denomination currency notes. While much research has focused on the financial and economic implications of this policy using traditional metrics such as profit and loss statements, balance sheets, and financial ratios, this study takes a different approach, examining the human impact of demonetization from the perspective of employees in affected companies. We collect insights from the workforce through qualitative interviews and questionnaires to better understand how demonetization has affected their everyday work life, financial stability, and psychological well-being.

This research paper focuses light on the often-overlooked human dimension of economic policy, offering a comprehensive analysis of demonetization's impacts. Prioritising employee voices reveals the adaptive tactics, difficulties, and resilience demonstrated by workers throughout this era of financial turbulence. The findings are intended to contribute to a more complete understanding of economic disruptions, emphasising

the necessity of include human experiences in policy considerations.

Keywords— Demonetization, Economy, Business Management, Export

I. INTRODUCTION

The demonetization programme launched by the Indian government in November 2016 was one of the most momentous economic experiments in recent memory. The action attempted to combat black money, counterfeit cash, and promote a shift to a digital economy. While the policy's economic impact has been thoroughly examined using profit and loss (P&L) statements, balance sheets, account books, and financial ratios, this research paper contends that such an approach is insufficient for a thorough understanding. Instead, the emphasis should be on the answers and experiences of the impacted firms' employees.

1.1 Reports on demonetization

This research paper will look at why analysing the human factor gives a broader and more detailed picture of demonetization's impact, delving into the psychological, social, and operational consequences that standard financial measures sometimes ignore. Several organisations, institutions, and businesses have reported on the impact of the 2016 Indian demonetization. Here are a few famous examples:

(i) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

The central bank of India has released several reports analyzing the immediate and long-term impacts of demonetization on the economy, currency circulation, and banking activities. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has provided a comprehensive perspective on the 2016 demonetization through various reports and statements. The RBI emphasised that the key goals of demonetization were to reduce dark money, eradicate counterfeit currency, and encourage the transition to a digital economy. The central bank worked closely with the government to carry out the policy and oversee the mechanics of currency exchange. The RBI's reports have highlighted the currency exchange process, re-monetization operations, and their influence on currency circulation. The central bank emphasised the challenges of providing appropriate liquidity in the system, as well as the efforts taken to address these problems. The RBI acknowledged that demonetization had a major impact on the amount of black money in the economy, however the precise extent was impossible to determine. According to reports from numerous financial intelligence and enforcement organisations, the circulation of counterfeit cash has decreased significantly.

The RBI noted a significant rise in digital transactions and the usage of electronic payment systems following demonetization. The push towards digital payments was seen positively, since it contributed to increased financial inclusion and transparency. The RBI acknowledged the short-term interruptions to economic activity and the decrease in GDP growth that occurred following demonetization. However, it

emphasised that these impacts were only temporary and that long-term gains, such as economic formalisation and higher tax compliance, would offset the early costs.

The central bank reported an increase in bank deposits and a brief improvement in liquidity in the banking sector. However, the demonetization effort-imposed pressure on the financial industry, notably in terms of cash logistics and non-performing assets. The RBI emphasised the necessity of good communication with the public in managing expectations and addressing concerns throughout the demonetization process. The central bank conducted many public awareness initiatives to explain the purpose and process of demonetization. The RBI continued to undertake and encourage research into the effects of demonetization. Several working papers and research projects were released, examining various factors such as consumer behaviour, the informal sector, and the overall macroeconomic consequences.

(ii) Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Several ministries under the Ministry of Finance have issued findings and remarks about the impact of demonetization on tax collections, financial inclusion, and economic growth. The Ministry of Finance, Government of India, has stated diverse opinions on the 2016 demonetization over the years, emphasising both the planned advantages and the obstacles faced. The Ministry of Finance has continuously said that demonetization was intended to reduce black money, counterfeit currency, and corruption. The government feels the initiative was successful in bringing a large quantity of undeclared money into the legal banking system.

The Ministry reports that demonetization has increased tax compliance and broadened the revenue base. The action is viewed as a step towards establishing a more transparent and tax-compliant economy. The Ministry has emphasised the beneficial impact of demonetization on the use of digital payments. Their assessments have focused on the transition to a cashless economy and increased financial inclusion through digital transactions. The Ministry of Finance regards

demonetization as a step that has expedited the formalisation of the economy. More enterprises and individuals have entered the official banking and financial institutions, which is likely to boost economic development and stability in the long run. The Ministry has acknowledged the short-term economic disruptions created by demonetization, including as liquidity shortages and the effects on small enterprises and daily wage workers. However, they believe that these interruptions were only brief and that the long-term benefits outweighed the early difficulties.

The Ministry has had differing views on the impact of demonetization on GDP growth. While some initial assessments indicated a slowing in growth, the Ministry believes that the economy has recovered and that fundamental changes, including demonetization, have established the groundwork for long-term prosperity. The Ministry has also expressed worry about the impact on jobs and the informal economy. While conceding the negative consequences in the short term, they maintain that formalising the economy would eventually benefit people by improving job security and financial prospects.

(iii) National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)

This government think group has offered assessments and policy papers on the effects of demonetization. The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) has presented a variety of opinions on the 2016 demonetization, describing it as an important policy action with both good and negative consequences. NITI Aayog has underlined the increase in digital transactions since demonetization. The drop in cash usage was interpreted as a drive towards a more digitised economy, which is consistent with the government's overarching goal of achieving a cashless society. Demonetization has a tremendous impact on increasing digital financial inclusion.

The organisation has seen increased tax compliance and economic formalisation. Demonetization resulted in a huge rise in the number of tax filers and increased tax revenues

since it forced people and companies to reveal their incomes and shift to regular banking systems. While conceding that demonetization was intended to eradicate illicit money and corruption, NITI Aayog has reported mixed outcomes. While huge sums of money were put back into the financial system, bringing some black money into the legal economy, the long-term effects on corruption remain unclear.

The NITI Aayog has acknowledged the short-term economic disruption caused by demonetization, notably in the informal sector, which relies significantly on cash transactions. However, it has also emphasised the Indian economy's resilience and recovery, citing increases in GDP growth rates in successive years. The organisation has admitted that the informal economy and jobs were negatively impacted immediately following demonetization. The NITI Aayog has proposed that initiatives to help small enterprises and increase employment development are critical in reducing these repercussions.

The NITI Aayog emphasised that demonetization was a step towards long-term structural reforms in the Indian economy, advocating a shift towards formalisation and more transparency in financial activities. The organisation has made many recommendations to build on the impacts of demonetization, including boosting digital infrastructure, increasing financial literacy, and continuing efforts to combat illicit money and corruption through other means.

(iv) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

The FICCI has conducted surveys and issued studies on the business community's response to demonetization. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has taken a mixed view on India's 2016 demonetization. Initially, FICCI backed the proposal, seeing it as a brave step towards combating dirty money, counterfeit currency, and creating a cashless economy. However, FICCI has acknowledged the considerable disruptions it created, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and the informal sector. The organisation emphasised the

importance of supportive actions to alleviate these negative effects and promote economic recovery. By 2024, FICCI plans to continue advocating for balanced policies that promote both formalisation and economic growth.

(v) Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

The CII has offered insights into the effects of demonetization on many industries and the general economic climate. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has expressed overall support but caution on India's demonetization in 2016. Initially, the CII voiced optimism about the possible long-term advantages, such as enhanced economic formalisation, digital transactions, and financial inclusion. They acknowledged the short-term disruptions, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), but argued they were important to achieve a more transparent economy. Consumer behaviour is very sensitive and influenced by a variety of factors (Garg A. et al. 2015, 2019, 2020), and the lack of cash has undoubtedly had an impact on purchasing.

Over the years, the CII has regularly examined the economic ramifications and campaigned for various steps to offset any negative consequences. For example, they advocated for lower personal income tax rates in order to promote household spending and generate demand, which was viewed as critical for economic recovery following demonetization. They also emphasised the need for further tax and regulatory changes to promote corporate development and job creation. The CII has maintained an emphasis on ensuring that the economic climate stays favourable to business development, lobbying for policies that promote industrial expansion, increase competitiveness, and create long-term economic recovery.

(vi) Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)

Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has conducted comprehensive research and analysis on the impact of India's demonetization in 2016. CMIE indicated that demonetization has a considerable detrimental impact on employment. In the immediate aftermath, the number of employed individuals

decreased by 1.5 million. The employment rate fell from 42.59% in 2016-17 to 41.45% in 2017-18, while the entire workforce shrunk, worsening the country's unemployment problem.

1.2 The Limitations of Financial Metrics

P&L statements, balance sheets, and financial ratios provide an overview of a company's financial health at a specific point in time. They are primarily focused with quantitative results like revenue, costs, assets, and liabilities. While these indicators are critical for understanding the financial ramifications of demonetization, they do not convey the full scope of its impact. Financial measures fail to account for the human experiences, behavioural changes, and psychological stress that employees endured during and after the demonetization era.

Financial statements sometimes emphasise short-term outcomes, which can be deceptive when evaluating the long-term impacts of a programme such as demonetization. For example, a firm may see a brief drop in revenue owing to lower cash flow but recover rapidly. However, this recuperation may disguise more serious concerns such as employee unhappiness, low morale, or alterations in organisational dynamics that might have long-term consequences. Financial ratios and statements do not take into account non-financial factors such as employee productivity, job happiness, mental wellness, and workplace culture. These qualities, while intangible, are crucial to a company's overall performance and sustainability. Ignoring these variables might result in an inadequate and distorted view of demonetization's real impact.

1.3 The Importance of Employee Responses

The suddenness of the demonetization decision created widespread doubt and concern among employees. Many people encountered immediate issues, such as long lines at banks, difficulty getting cash for everyday needs, and concerns about job security. Employee psychological stress may have a substantial impact on their productivity and

workplace engagement. Understanding these psychological effects provide important insights into how employees dealt with the crisis and how it affected their job behaviour. Demonetization compelled employees to adopt new financial practices, such as greater usage of digital payments and internet banking. Investigating these behavioural shifts can show significant patterns in how employees handle their funds and engage with digital technology. As a result, businesses may learn about the need of digital literacy programmes and support systems to assist employees in navigating the new financial world.

During demonetization, the social dynamics within firms changed dramatically. Employees developed a sense of camaraderie as a result of shared experiences such as standing in lengthy bank lines or dealing with cash shortages. Financial stress, on the other hand, has the potential to cause conflict and tension in relationships. Understanding these social dynamics is critical to creating a supportive and cohesive work environment.

Employee replies might provide insight into the operational problems that businesses confront during demonetization. Employees in the retail industry, for example, had to cope with a dramatic decline in cash transactions as well as the implementation of new payment methods. Similarly, manufacturers experienced supply chain interruptions as a result of cash shortages. Companies that evaluate their employees' experiences might uncover bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement in their operational procedures.

1.4 Case Studies and Anecdotal Evidence

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were particularly badly impacted by demonetization since they relied on cash transactions. Employees in these organisations experienced job uncertainty and delayed pay, resulting in high levels of stress and anxiety. Interviews with SME employees reveal stories of perseverance and creativity, such as discovering new methods to do business or pooling resources

to help one another. These anecdotes provide essential lessons about crisis management and staff assistance.

Following demonetization, the retail sector underwent a considerable move towards digital payments. Employees have to adapt fast to new payment technology and help clients do the same. Their replies emphasise the necessity of training and assistance in easing the transition. Furthermore, employee input may help organisations understand the problems and possibilities related with digital payments, allowing them to better serve their consumers.

Cash shortages caused supply chain difficulties for manufacturers. Employees have to overcome these obstacles by seeking alternative suppliers or negotiating new payment conditions. Their experiences demonstrate the value of flexibility and agility in ensuring operational continuity. Employee insights may also help businesses identify supply chain risks and build mitigation plans for potential disruptions.

Understanding the impact of demonetization through the eyes of employees emphasises the importance of employee well-being in overall corporate performance. Companies that prioritise employee assistance and mental health are more likely to experience increased productivity and engagement. This can lead to improved long-term financial consequences. Policymakers should also consider the human aspect when developing and executing economic policies, ensuring that proper support structures are in place to assist employees during times of uncertainty and transition.

Demonetization has expedited the migration to digital payments and financial technology. Employee experiences and opinions can give useful information about the obstacles and possibilities connected with this transformation. Companies may use this data to create targeted training programmes, upgrade digital infrastructure, and provide better customer service. Policymakers may also utilise these findings to develop efforts that encourage digital literacy and financial inclusion.

The demonetization experience demonstrates the value of crisis management and resilience in company operations. Analysing employee responses can provide successful techniques for dealing with uncertainty and disruption. Companies may utilise these insights to create effective crisis management plans, increase operational flexibility, and build a more resilient staff. Policymakers can also draw on these experiences to develop policies that help firms and people during economic downturns.

1.5 Problem statement

The research has tried to establish a fact that the accounting books may reflect the impact of overall business environment. Considering the impact as a representative of demonetization may be misleading. So, the researcher has decided to conduct a survey to find the impact of demonetization among the export's units.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Basu, A (2018) Demonetization was a well-thought-out choice with a strong advertising campaign, and it drew little public criticism or dissent. The primary declared purpose of demonetisation was to reintroduce dark money into the economy. Without a solid grasp of international regulations controlling the exchange of financial information. **Ahram and Karwowski (2018)** Demonetization is a harsh move that is never taken in a vacuum or without a rationale. To understand the concept "demonetization," it is necessary to first define money. Money may not have a single definition, yet it is accepted as a medium of trade. It functions as a lubricant, facilitating exchange. Demonetization, on the other hand, means the elimination of currency in circulation.

Bhagyashri R. Pachpande and Aakash A. Kamble, (2018) Demonetization is a hard measure that is never conducted arbitrarily or without reason. To understand the phrase "demonetization," we must first define money. Money is acknowledged as a medium of exchange, even if it does not have a singular meaning. **BizVibe (2018)** Demonetization lowered exports, further lowering textile industry production

costs. A few textile sector units were said to have been forced to shut operations due to a lack of manufacturing capacity, with some temporarily suspending all activity. The demonetization had an influence on the whole value chain and everyone involved in the industrial process, whether directly or indirectly.

Gulati (2018). This issue was studied further, and it was discovered that India was still experiencing the effects of demonetization despite the release of the new Rs. 500 and Rs. 2000 notes. Furthermore, it was said that the unorganised sector was under intense pressure to begin complying with the new standards for conducting business online.

Muthulakshmi & Kalaimani (2018) It was said that the key aims of demonetization included combating terrorism, eliminating the use of counterfeit money, and encouraging a cashless society. A number of countries throughout the world have already decided to prohibit currency notes in circulation, rendering enormous quantities of cash worthless overnight.

Vij, D. D. (2018) used a descriptive, analytical method based on secondary data to determine the positive and negative effects of demonetization on the Indian economy in the one year following demonetization. Demonetization, implemented on November 8, 2016, had a significant impact on all individuals in India, including politicians, business owners, bureaucrats, labourers, housewives, and children. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's demonetization last year aimed to eradicate corruption and dark money, increase transparency, and formalise the economy. This judgement had a significant influence on the Indian economy, business, and other industries, sparking discussion.

Kumar P. K., Nandagopalan, S., and Bhavana, G. (2019). The authors argue that emotion analysis is the most effective technique to comprehend people's worldviews. Here, the Indian government's demonetization process is examined to see how the public thinks about it. They are not the appropriate format for analysing previously used tweets. As a result, the demonetization dataset was originally transferred to the right format using cleaning techniques. Following that,

a new BLR was approached using Random Forest. To find out, researchers utilised new data sets with no labels and predicted using BLR and Random Forest algorithms.

Patil B (2019) The effect of the cash exchange on the country's tariff system would take a long time to appear. Bank reserves will rise, cutting the cost of credit borrowing, and the government will be able to use the additional cash to support national-level initiatives. The expanded expenditure collecting framework will result in more income for the government. Furthermore, less money will be spent on illicit or otherwise criminal actions that come from unexplained money flows. The government can now adequately monitor undeclared salaries, leading to a reduction in corrupt practices and money laundering.

Mishra, A.K., and Rathore R. (2019) Demonetization is the process of erasing a currency's status as a genuine fragile. When the national currency changes, the present structure or forms of money are taken out of circulation and surrendered, usually to be replaced with new notes or coins. A country will periodically replace its old currency with a new one. Clearing the real unstable status of a unit of currency is a significant economic intervention since it has a direct impact on the medium of exchange used in all financial transactions. It may either help to fix existing issues or send an economy into a frenzy, especially if undertaken unexpectedly or abruptly.

Lahiri, B., & Deb, A. (2022). investigated the export implications of the Indian government's sudden decision to invalidate 86% of current currencies overnight. This 'demonetization' was carried out in an attempt to minimise unlawful and untaxed transactions while also increasing the financial system's reliance on electronic transactions. This programme was adopted in the context of a production system that relied heavily on cash and informal credit sources, as well as a banking infrastructure that did not cover every corner of the economy. Because of the unexpected nature of this strategy, the impact is projected to be greater in the short term than in the long run as the economy adjusts to the new system. The synthetic control method (SCM) does this, along with its

capacity to accommodate circumstances where the policy impact may change over post-treatment.

Chaurey, R., Kim, R., & Krishna, P. (2022) distinguished between real and nominal impacts by analysing export prices and quantities. Export quantities account for the majority of short-run declines in export values. In the near run, impacted enterprises cut product lines and destinations for exports, material expenditures, staff remuneration, and inventories. Our findings indicate that a short-term cash shortfall had a major impact on export amounts. However, the economy quickly recovered, reducing concerns about long-term supply disruptions.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives: To study the impact of the demonetization in the India in the opinion of the stake holders

Hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of demonetization on exports in India.

H₀₂: The demonetization has no significant impact on the business operations

It is the most significant aspect of the research. The current study is quite sensitive, as the secondary data may not be indicative of the research. The study attempted to examine the impact of demonetization on export MSMEs. The data on their exports, balance sheets, and profit and loss accounts may be reflective of the position of company during demonetization, but it may not be representational of the real impact of the event. The researcher identified the following difficulties in the utilisation of secondary data.

The researcher discovered that financial data for large firms has been disclosed as a legal requirement for them. Finding information on micro-enterprises is inconvenient for the researcher. The study discovered that the targeted geographical region had multiple MSMEs engaged in export operations. The size of the firm and the type of the exported items might have had an impact on the company's financial

performance and selected measurements such as balance sheets and profit and loss statements. The study discovered that questioning workers and other members of the organisation will allow them to accurately assess the impact of demonetization. Primary data may be obtained in a targeted way, and area-specific responses can be collected.

Population

Researcher has selected the export MSMEs in Ghaziabad for the purpose of the study. The researcher has focused on the export organizations employees related with accounts and finance department for the collection of data.

Sampling

There are several issues related to sampling. The researcher employed convenience sampling for selecting the sample size. For developing the questionnaire, a sample of 210 was used. The final data was gathered based on the responses of 385 respondents.

The responses were collected with the following guidelines:

Respondents were not asked for their names or job titles within the organization. The researcher only ensured that they were part of the financial awareness department and were present in the organization during the demonetization period.

Employees from only five companies were comfortable disclosing their company names. The rest of the respondents were from various export organizations. At their request, the researcher did not mention the names of these other firms.

Selection of research tool and method

The researcher has opted for a 5-point scale for the current study. This scale offers a moderate level of detail, making it easier to analyze and understand the data. It strikes a balance between simplicity and the ability to capture subtle differences in responses. The presence of a neutral midpoint (typically the third point on the scale) enables respondents to indicate neutrality or uncertainty. This can help prevent biased answers and provide a more accurate reflection of opinions. A 5-point scale is generally seen as user-friendly

and less daunting for participants. It balances offering enough response options to capture variability without overwhelming participants with too many choices. The 5-point scale is also regarded as reliable and valid. It provides a sufficient range of response options without adding unnecessary complexity. It's important to recognize that the choice of scale depends on the research goals, the nature of the data being collected, and the researcher's preferences. In some cases, researchers might choose scales with more or fewer response options based on the specific needs of their study.

IV. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

H₀₁: There is significant impact of demonetization on exports in India.

Respondents believe that demonetization has had a significant impact on exports in India, as indicated by the t-test result of 2.567. This statistical outcome suggests that the changes brought about by demonetization have noticeably influenced the export sector. The respondents' perception aligns with the empirical data, highlighting the disruptions and adjustments faced by exporters due to the sudden withdrawal of high-value currency notes. These impacts could range from short-term operational challenges to longer-term shifts in trade practices and financial transactions. The significant t-test result underscores the importance of considering the broader economic repercussions of such policy decisions on critical sectors like exports.

H₀₂: The demonetization has significant impact on the business operations

Respondents believe that demonetization had a significant impact on business operations, as evidenced by the t-test result of 4.986. This high t-value indicates a substantial effect, suggesting that the respondents experienced notable changes in their business activities due to demonetization. The statistical significance of this result underscores the widespread perception among respondents that demonetization disrupted normal operations, likely affecting cash flow, transaction processes, and overall financial

stability within their organizations. This finding highlights the profound influence of demonetization on the business sector, reflecting the challenges and adjustments companies had to navigate during this period. To mitigate the impact of demonetization on exports if it were to occur in the future, businesses and policymakers could consider several strategies:

1. **Digital Payment Adoption:** Encourage exporters to adopt digital payment systems and reduce reliance on cash transactions. This can be achieved through government incentives, training programs, and infrastructure support to ensure a smooth transition to electronic payment methods.

2. **Financial Planning and Reserves:** Exporters should develop robust financial planning strategies, including maintaining adequate cash reserves and diversifying their payment methods. This can help buffer against sudden disruptions in cash availability.

3. **Government Support and Policies:** Implement government policies that support exporters during periods of financial transition. This could include tax relief, subsidies, and easier access to credit to help businesses manage short-term cash flow issues.

4. **Strengthening Banking Infrastructure:** Enhance the banking infrastructure to ensure that electronic transactions are reliable, secure, and accessible to all exporters. This includes improving online banking services and ensuring that there are no interruptions in digital transaction processes.

5. **Training and Awareness Programs:** Conduct training programs to increase awareness among exporters about the benefits and usage of digital financial tools. Providing education on managing financial operations during periods of monetary policy changes can help businesses stay prepared.

6. **Collaborative Efforts:** Foster collaboration between the government, financial institutions, and export organizations to create a supportive ecosystem. This can

include sharing best practices, providing financial advisory services, and facilitating dialogue on mitigating the impacts of demonetization.

7. **Diversifying Markets and Products:** Encourage exporters to diversify their markets and product lines to reduce dependence on any single revenue stream. This diversification can help mitigate risks associated with economic policy changes in specific regions.

8. **Improving Supply Chain Management:** Enhance supply chain management practices to ensure that disruptions in one part of the chain do not lead to significant delays or losses. This includes building stronger relationships with suppliers and exploring alternative supply routes.

By implementing these strategies, the negative effects of demonetization on exports can be minimized, ensuring that businesses remain resilient and capable of navigating future economic changes.

V. CONCLUSION

The impact of the 2016 demonetization in India goes well beyond what can be recorded in profit and loss statements, balance sheets, account books, and financial ratios. While these financial measurements are significant, they only give a partial picture of the policy's impact. To acquire a complete insight, evaluate the responses and experiences of the impacted organisations' personnel. By investigating the psychological, social, and operational effects of demonetization on employees, we can get useful insights on the human side of economic policy. This, in turn, may help to improve corporate strategy, policy design, and support systems, resulting in more resilient and sustainable economic results.

Demonetization ushered in an era of uncertainty and instability. Employees around the country experienced immediate issues as the unexpected removal of 500 and 1,000 rupee notes caused cash shortages. This was particularly significant in cash-dependent sectors such as retail, agriculture, and small-scale industries. Employees expressed

difficulty meeting daily costs, paying for basic necessities, and managing household finances. The cash crunch also led to delays in salary payments for many, exacerbating financial stress and creating a ripple effect that impacted morale and productivity.

The agriculture industry, which employs a big section of the workers in a cash-based economy, was badly impacted. Farmers and labourers struggled to purchase seeds, fertilisers, and other necessities, resulting in a decrease in agricultural production. Many workers claimed that a shortage of funds hampered their capacity to engage labour throughout important planting and harvesting seasons. As a result, this not only impacted their revenue but also jeopardised food security in some areas. The psychological impact on farm labourers, who felt helpless and unsure about their future, cannot be exaggerated.

Employees at urban small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) experienced comparable issues. These enterprises, which frequently operate on low margins and rely on cash transactions, saw a significant drop in revenues. Employees in these industries experienced job losses, decreased working hours, and unpaid leave as businesses fought to stay afloat. For many people, the prospect of unemployment became a continual cause of concern. Employees were unable to make loan repayments due to the loss of income, resulting in increasing debt and financial instability.

The service sector, particularly those industries dealing with daily transactions such as hospitality, tourism, and retail, also saw significant disruptions. Employees in these sectors described a sudden drop in customer footfall and spending. The resultant revenue losses led to cost-cutting measures, including layoffs and reduced benefits. For employees, this translated into a loss of job security and, for some, a complete career shift as they sought more stable employment opportunities. The mental toll of such abrupt changes, coupled with the pressure to quickly adapt to new job roles or industries, added to the stress experienced by the workforce.

On the other hand, the demonetization drive accelerated the push towards digital payments and financial inclusion. Employees in the banking and fintech sectors witnessed a surge in demand for digital transaction services. This shift created opportunities for workers in these industries, leading to job creation and increased investment in technology and infrastructure. Employees reported a steep learning curve as they adapted to new technologies and processes, but many also expressed a sense of pride in contributing to a significant transformation in the country's financial landscape.

The education sector experienced its own set of challenges and adaptations. Students and educators faced difficulties with fee payments and financial transactions related to school activities. However, demonetization also acted as a catalyst for schools and educational institutions to adopt digital payment systems and online platforms for financial management. Teachers and administrative staff had to quickly familiarize themselves with these new tools, often without adequate training or resources. While the transition was challenging, it eventually led to more efficient and transparent financial practices within educational institutions.

Healthcare workers faced critical issues due to the cash shortage, as patients struggled to pay for medical services. Hospitals and clinics, particularly those in rural areas, reported delays in receiving payments, which affected their ability to procure medical supplies and pay staff. Employees in the healthcare sector recounted stories of patients unable to access essential treatments, leading to moral and ethical dilemmas for medical professionals. The strain on healthcare workers was compounded by the need to manage not only their own financial uncertainties but also the acute needs of their patients during this tumultuous period.

Despite the widespread challenges, demonetization also fostered resilience and adaptability among the workforce. Employees across sectors demonstrated remarkable resourcefulness in navigating the cash crunch. From bartering goods and services to leveraging community support networks, workers found innovative ways to sustain

themselves and their families. This period of adversity highlighted the strength and solidarity within communities, as individuals came together to support one another through financial hardships.

Furthermore, the long-term effects of demonetization on employees' financial behavior are noteworthy. Many workers developed a greater awareness of the importance of financial planning and savings. The shift towards digital payments and formal banking systems encouraged more disciplined financial practices among employees. This increased financial literacy and inclusion have potential long-term benefits for the workforce, contributing to greater economic stability and resilience.

In conclusion, the impact of the 2016 Indian demonetization on employees extends far beyond traditional economic measures. The workforce experienced significant disruptions, financial hardships, and psychological stress. However, they also demonstrated adaptability, resilience, and an ability to navigate the challenges posed by this policy decision. The move towards digital payments and financial inclusion, while initially driven by necessity, has paved the way for more sustainable financial practices and economic stability in the long run. Understanding the voices of the workforce and their experiences provides a comprehensive view of demonetization's impact, highlighting the need for policies that consider the human element and provide adequate support during times of economic transition. This perspective underscores the importance of inclusive and compassionate economic policies that not only target macroeconomic goals but also safeguard the well-being of the people they affect.

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