

## Original Paper

# Analysis of Various Aspects of Moonlighting

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### **Abstract**

*Human resource is considered as the important asset for any organisation. As the economy is growing and expanding itself to be in the global competitive era, attracting and maintaining human resource is a challenge for the business management. As a result of remote work and inflation, some workers have begun moonlighting, working secondary jobs either to make ends meet or to earn a little extra spending money. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of people holding multiple jobs. In addition to their primary job, they have been doing extra work with other employers for extra pay. The focus of the employer must not be banning employees from moonlighting rather than focusing on preventing any conflict of interest. This paper tries to analyse various aspects of moonlighting in detail.*

### **Keywords**

*Moonlighting, Blue Moonlighting, Full Moonlighting, Half Moonlighting, Quarter Moonlighting*

## **1. Introduction**

Human resource is considered the most important asset for any organisation. Due to the various economic changes and unstable employment conditions, employees take up more than one job to supplement their income and to get job stability. This is called moonlighting. It poses challenges and ethical issues for employers as well as employees. As the economy growing and expanding itself to be in the global competitive era, attracting and maintaining human resource is a challenge for the business management.

The most important benefit that an employee receives from a job is the monetary benefit or compensation. Though most of the people manage with a single job, the concept of dual jobbing is becoming increasingly common. It provides the employees with the much needed monetary support and also provides an outlet for creativity and a scope to do much more. However, it does suffer from certain limitations from the point of view of both employees as well as employers.

Moonlighting has many meanings but it is majorly related to doing a job secretly and typically at night. It is also known as act of doing a second job without telling your current employer. The practice of moonlighting refers to working a side job after normal working hours. It is possible to keep more than one-side job simultaneously, such as a full-time job, part-time contract, or freelance work. It is typically referred to as a “day job” when an individual’s primary job is only meant to provide income so that they can pursue a side job of their choice. Moonlighting, or holding a second job in parallel with one’s current job, is a frequent practice that ranges from blue moonlighting to full moonlighting. In India, side jobs are becoming increasingly popular.

It has been observed in recent years, due to some fluctuations in job market due to rapid advancement in technology and requirement of continuous updation of skills has led to lower employee-employer loyalty, rising unemployment risk, and shorter job tenures, individuals are seeking alternative strategies to ensure employment security and a continuous and higher income stream. The above volatility has forced a significant number of workers to develop an energetic strategy of holding multiple jobs or moonlighting to cope. While Swiggy launched a moonlighting policy allowing its employees to work on their passion projects outside of their work (calling it a step towards a “remote-first organization”). Rishad Premji, Wipro’s chairman, called the concept of moonlighting in the tech industry cheating.

To supplement one’s income, a person takes on a side job, or side hustle, or side gig, in addition to their primary job. In addition to addressing financial constraints, multiple jobs can ensure uninterrupted employment spells and provide an opportunity for further career advancement by accumulating occupation-specific expertise, the life style of the generations is also enhanced with more disposable income.

With wage stagnation and low wage growth, income hasn’t kept pace with the cost of living, leaving nearly a third of people to take side jobs who are unable to make ends meet. With low pay and compensation policy in India, people are opting for moonlighting. Moonlighting could make a noticeable difference in employee income and ultimately to the standard of living.

Holding an additional job is has a negative impact on employee health, productivity, work-life balance, and overall wellbeing. As the economy is growing fast, there is a continuous rise in demand for talented workforce as a result focus is on talent acquisition and retaining employees. Increasingly innovative techniques are being developed to motivate employees to work more effectively. Companies and employees who refuse to change will remain in the backyard and face defeat. It is therefore imperative that the organization implement the latest human resource practices. For most of us, one job is enough, but moonlighting is a challenge for both employees as well as HR professionals.

## **2. Objectives of Study**

- i) To understand the concept of moonlighting
- ii) To analyse various categories of moonlighting
- iii) To examine the challenges of moonlighting
- iv) To suggest certain measures for companies to manage challenges of moonlighting

## **3. Research Methodology**

In this article, various types of employee moonlighting will be examined. Data for conducting this study has been compiled from secondary sources from journals, Internet, articles and the books.

## **4. Meaning of Moonlighting**

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, “Moonlighting is the act of working at an extra job, especially without telling your main employer”. Moonlighting is the act of working at an extra job beyond regular working hours, usually without the knowledge of the employer. Since the side job was mostly at night-time or on weekends, it was referred to as moonlighting. The term gained popularity when workers in the US started seeking a second job beyond their regular 9-to-5 work for additional income. Moonlighting has also been given other names like “side employment” or “dual jobbing”.

Moonlight has been taken from the word “Moonlighter” which means one who takes up a second work during the night and works by the moonlight. This was used in 1882 when an organized band that carried out agrarian outrages in Ireland used to commit crimes like murders and thefts at night. Moonlighter in American English meant one who goes serenading during the nights. Moonlighters can be described as workers who feel that consumption pressures and aspirations greatly exceed the economic rewards of their primary jobs. The number of underemployed hours serves as a guide to the expected volume of moonlighting in a particular work setup.

Moonlighting is not a new concept and has existed in all sectors. Some of teachers provide tuition to kids after school in the evenings, Doctors after full time work at hospital may also occasionally do part-time private practice at home, housekeepers may work in several households each day on hourly basis, some employees can also be seen engaging in a variety of extracurricular hobbies like music, singing, acting, theatre, creating content for social media, and other artistic pursuits in addition to their regular jobs nowadays. These are some of the examples of moonlighting that we come across in our life.

Moonlighters, though small in number, have existed since the initiation of work culture in the world as well as India. The primary motivations for it are existing constraints in their main jobs, acquiring a new portfolio of jobs which add to their job characteristics, gaining training on new occupations, to meet financial necessities, and lack of interest in the current employment, among other things.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, which shook the world, changes in employment patterns have become apparent. Flourishing sectors with dynamic work environments suffered jerks and trembled with fewer jobs, high prices and minimal demand. In the wake of the post-pandemic period, a new phenomenon gaining prevalence is dual job-holding or moonlighting.

Sometimes moonlighters work in the same industry for their primary and secondary jobs, and at times they are engaged in different industries due to their job insecurities or considering future prospects of their occupation. The ethical and legal issues of moonlighting are the main topics of discussion.

Moonlighting can be viewed as a persistent as well as a transitory phenomenon. In persistent moonlighting, the second job rarely becomes the primary occupation whereas in case of transitory moonlighting the employee has an intention to shift careers. Once the employee decides to switch the job, he/she stops moonlighting.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the tendency of establishing side businesses or projects became apparent. It provided its staff with the seclusion they required so they could work concurrently on projects for other businesses. Data available through empirical analysis indicates that the shorter the workweek, the more willing the moonlighter is to accept secondary employment in settings which require a rigid or even full-time schedule. Typically, a moonlighter works part time on their secondary job, under a flexible, self-determined schedule.

In business organizations, the concept of “Moonlighting” is getting popular. Employees moonlight because of certain reasons like, gaining experience in new field, pursue some hobby, job satisfaction which may be absent in primary job, ensure job security or monetary purposes. While some companies have taken an accommodative approach by permitting moonlighting under specific circumstances, some others have clamped down on employees found moonlighting by terminating their employment altogether. The new-age moonlighting, spawned by the pandemic, has brought weekdays and official work hours also into play, leading to risks and concerns around data security, confidentiality, and revenue losses. Today firms are divided. Some consider moonlighting unethical, others believe it is the need of the hour

“If companies are able to figure out a way of dealing with conflict of interest, then the conversation around moonlighting will be much easier”, said Avinash Joshi, CEO, NTT India. The salary gap between junior and senior employees’ companies across India is ever increasing. Junior employees are barely getting marginal hike in their monthly salaries after working really hard over the year while senior managers are planning to get their next level of luxuries. Lack of skills, too much competition, limited opportunities and an education loan creates the ultimate desperation.

Various ethical issues are involved with employees who moonlight. It poses challenges for employers as well as employees. Working a second job is nothing new. However, the practice of working two jobs took on a new meaning following the pandemic-induced work-from-home. At a time when companies are facing high attrition and demand for more flexibility from employees, food delivery platforms Swiggy and Zomato have come up with policies that allow dual employment for their employees. In contrast, several companies in the technology sector including Wipro, Infosys and IBM have opposed the idea and dismissed people involved in it.

Drucker once said: “There is nothing as difficult and as expensive, but also nothing as futile, as trying to keep a corpse from stinking”. The desperate efforts by few Indian corporates, to reduce, stop and eradicate moonlighting are as futile as trying to stop a corpse from stinking. It is like sun whom nobody can stop from rising. It is time for Indian corporates to have new vision and devise systems and processes, to embed moonlighting as integral to their being, because moonlighting is a strong tool to make innovation and entrepreneurship thrive.

## 5. Categories of Moonlighting

Moonlighting can take many forms. Footprints of moonlighting can be found in almost all types of occupations. Some visible forms of moonlighting are in Information Technology where one employee can at same time undertake multiple projects as almost everything is in online mode. Its characteristics can be seen in a doctor or a teacher who while working in a public organization, may additionally take up a secondary employment in a private institution for either higher incentives or for maximum utilization of their resources. In such cases, concerns of quality have often come to light but it is not certain that the public sector would always suffer losses due to it.

According to the HRM (Human Resources Management), Moonlighting is mainly divided into following:

**Blue Moonlighting:** It refers to disappointment when an employee has failed in his efforts at moonlighting. It is a situation where employee finds it really difficult to manage both jobs in a day. Blue moonlighting is the term used to denote failed efforts at moonlighting. It’s not easy to manage two jobs in a day for many. This is called blue moonlighting.

It is very common that organisations respond positively to employees’ demands at the time of performance appraisal and as a result increase their salary and wages. Some of the workers are not satisfied with the kind of benefits, and as a result start working part-time for some extra income, without having required skills and as a result they don’t achieve desired outcome. This unsatisfaction is also termed as “blue moonlighting”. Another type of blue moonlighting is, when the employee is not able to find any part time job, his/her efforts go in vain.

**Full Moonlighting:** In full moonlighting employee devotes his entire time to second job or the business and the first job is only for namesake. It is a situation where an employee has two full-time professions in parallel. Employee could be continuing to work in normal job and still build their own business. In certain cases, second occupation may determine status of an employee.

A situation in which employees in certain professions have extra time, or when they believe, their income does not compare to their expectations, or when colleagues with lesser qualifications enjoy a higher status than them. As a result of certain situations, these workers often start up their own ventures and still continue to work their regular jobs. The second occupation, however, determines their financial and social standing is referred to as “full moonlighting” in this scenario.

**Half Moonlighting:** Earning extra, saving for future and leading a luxury life is important for the future of employees. In order to get a sufficiently large additional amount, people spend 50 percent of their available time earning extra income. This is referred to as “half moonlighting”. In this employee spends more than half of the time to the part time job, i.e., employee spends more than 50% of time of their available time to part time job or newly set up business and this also enables them to earn more and lead a comfortable life.

**Quarter Moonlighting:** Quarter moonlighting is when an employee works part-time in a job after his regular job for extra money after his primary job because he is unhappy with his salary. It is not a full-time job. Quarter moonlighting may only help with meeting daily needs or increasing expenses.

When an employee takes up a part time job along with his present job and spends some of his/her time on the second job, it is termed as quarter moonlighting. The employee usually does this to supplement his/her current salary and satisfy the basic needs.

## 6. Recent Status of Moonlighting

Many professionals now have two corporate IDs, two email addresses, and two bosses in WFH mode. The concept has also evolved into a community called “Overwork”, which helps professionals lead a double life. Today’s employees have more free time due to the telecommuting culture, so they can work more.

Moonlighters are good managers. It all depends on time management. Only 20% of professionals are smart enough to do this and can do more. Even so, Moonlight manages multiple projects simultaneously, it offer them a number of benefits such as learning new skills, they will be at par with their competitors around the world, helps them find good jobs and helps them to earn more.

People who want to start their own business are often encouraged to keep up with their day job while starting a new business. As a business, Moonlighting minimizes the risks associated with starting a business from scratch. Startup projects usually don’t pay off financially in the first few months, so working full-time can give your business a shot.

### 6.1 Moonlighting as Side Hustle

Moonlighting has typically meant having a second job outside of work. This more often meant working for a second employer. Doctors, lawyers, actors, musicians, consultants, professors and many other professionals have moonlighted for long. But is now increasingly likely also to encompass an employee’s self-employed side hustle.

Merriam-Webster reports moonlighting or side-hustle entered vocabulary in 1950s, and generally refers to “work performed for income supplementary to one’s primary job”. Modern and emerging usage focuses more specifically on the nature of supplementary work. Be informed, side hustle is not the same

as a part-time job. While a part-time job still entails someone else (employer) calling the shots (including hours worked and what you'll be paid), a side hustle gives employees freedom to decide how much they want to work and earn and from where.

### *6.2 History of Beneficiaries of Moonlighting*

History is full with moonlighters; it is present everywhere and not limited to any particular sector or level. The biggest moonlighting beneficiaries are CEOs and Chairman, they serve as directors on boards of other companies and get paid sitting fee, even as they sack employees for moonlighting.

In the last few years, coronavirus-induced lockdowns have increased the tendency to moonlight among workers in certain industries. Firstly, several employees in the organized workforce faced salary cuts, minimal or no bonuses, reduced work hours/days and loss of other incentives, may have contributed to employees looking to supplement their salary. Secondly, apart from financial insecurity at the time, the work-from-home model facilitated employees to take up another job, without having to significantly impact their full-time job. The gig economy concept has also gained greater legitimacy around that time too.

Employees do moonlighting because they need the money just to pay their everyday living expenses, pay off debts, to buy something special. But surprising some claimed they do it because they enjoy it.

## **7. Reasons and Advantages of Moonlighting from Employee Perspective**

In cases where employee believes that due to mass restructuring, lay off, insufficient pay or some other corporate movement like mergers, acquisitions etc. There is a threat to their salary and other benefits, employee will seek for a secondary source of income to supplement their salary or will make an alternative plan in case they lose their job.

If employee is able to satisfy its employer that roles that they have taken up beside their primary job do not conflict with each other. Also, if they assure time committed for other job does not in any way minimize their performance at both places it is justified from employee perspective to undertake supplementary profession.

In addition to above mentioned reasons there some more advantages that accrue for an employee when it comes to moonlighting-

- a) Moonlighting helps an employee to move from one job to another, thereby providing mobility and hence minimizes their chance of ever being unemployed.
- b) If employees continues to work in same industry they are exposed to many people and hence expands their network base, this benefits both employee and organisation.
- c) The employee is able to perform better due to the improved knowledge, experience and better skill set thereby benefitting the employer.
- d) Due to regular moonlighting employees are better placed economically, as a result there are lower chances of employee turnover.

## 8. Issues of Moonlighting

Moonlighting as an issue has been controversial, and recently, Wipro chairman Rishad Premji said, “There is a lot of chatter about people moonlighting in the tech industry. This is cheating-plain and simple”.

- a) **Moonlighting and ethical issues**-Employers do not approve of this practice often because it can mean that a worker may not give their organisation the time it needs, and not give any extra time to either organisation. Off days and weekends are given to employees for them to rest and improve their efficiency, but if they take up on another job the performance is bound to suffer.
- b) **Moonlighting and legal issues**-In India, private companies usually do not allow holding multiple jobs. Shops and Establishment Acts of various states restrict double employment as well but vary in application especially when it comes to highly-specialised industries.
- c) **Moonlighting and mental health issues**-Post Covid there is a sudden rise in this trend of having a second job because the pandemic led to slashed salaries, and loss of employment and income. To earn extra, employees opt for two jobs A study on long work hours has found that those who work more than 11 hours a day are 2.5 times more likely to develop depression, sleeping issues than those who work regular hours. Having a dual job has some real, negative consequences on our mental health.

## 9. Risk Factors of Companies Associated with Moonlighting

Moonlighting is said to have come to light at the time of COVID, where work from home was prevalent across all sectors and people were struggling to meet ends with both life and job uncertainty around them. The stand of companies is divided when it comes to moonlighting. Some companies are in favour of it and some call it unethical.

Wipro Chairman Rishad Premji is absolutely clear about his take on moonlighting and he said, “There is a lot of chatter about people moonlighting in the tech industry. This is cheating-plain and simple”. Whereas, a former director of Infosys does not consider moonlighting as cheating and believes in that an employee cannot do anything after his working hours get over. MD of Tech Mahindra, stated it was “not rampant”. That his organisation would probably “make a policy” to allow workers to openly pursue multiple jobs at once but after sharing details with company. However, Companies like Swiggy has officially announced its “moonlighting policy” known as “industry first” that allows its employees to work at more than one place under certain conditions. The employees can work outside their official hours or during the weekends to avoid clashing with the productivity or have a conflict with the business interest of Swiggy.

Different companies have different views on this problem. Some of the risk factors that are pointed out by these companies to employees moonlighting are as follows-

- **Conflict of Interest:** Concerns centre on potential conflicts of interest caused by an employee working for a rival company or disclosing private or sensitive information. An employee may have the chance to share trade secrets if they have a second job in a related field.
- **Over worked Employees and Poor Health:** Doubts regarding the job performance of employees if a person overworks himself. If employees are engaged in two jobs, they tend to exhaust themselves. Due to excessive work, they may face several health related problems, due to physical exhaustion and long working hours may lead an employee to forget their duties, which will make them distracted and unproductive.

- **Moonlighting clause:** Some companies have introduced a moonlighting clause that puts a restriction on the “double employment” of an employee. It is not legal binding in some states and there is restriction on double employment under the Factories Act, but it is not applicable to IT companies in some states.
- **Inefficiency:** Due to handling two jobs, the employee may not be able to focus on the present job there by reducing the efficiency of the organisation. It negatively affects the employee’s performance on the first job.
- **Ethical Issues-**The primary issue that businesses have with moonlighting are data and confidentiality breaches as well as productivity loss. If employees start using the information from one employer for the other, it may lead to major problems. Employees need to be aware of the need of safeguarding information that may be useful to a competitor company. Moonlighting poses an ethical dilemma for the employees.
- **Absenteeism:** Employees start taking leave from the primary job for the side gigs.
- **Threat of Competition and Business Secrecy:** When an employee works for another employer or starts his/her own business which is similar to his first job, there is a fear of competition faced by the first employer. In such a situation, there is a conflict of interest. The first employer may also be concerned about the confidentiality of his business secrets.
- **Misuse of employer’s resources:** Also, if employees use the resources, physical as well as intellectual, from the employer for their own business or the other job, it will cause ethical problems. The employer may even consider it stealing. The use of company resources, such as laptops and software, for a side business is also not appreciated by employers.
- An employee is required and expected to **give his entire working time, effort, and energy** to the employer’s interest.
- **Moonlighting at times turns into daylighting:** Second jobs undertaken by employees, may take away the employee’s productivity.

The corporate sector puts forward its split opinions when it comes to moonlighting. There are some tech companies which call moonlighting plainly cheating and breach of contract between employer and employee and consider it as a threat to privacy and confidentiality of company data and the one which hampers ultimately productivity of the company. There is no overarching law which prohibits a person from doing multiple jobs. However, a person with a similar nature of jobs may spark breach of confidentiality issues.

#### 10. Suggestions to Manage Moonlighting Effectively

Employers are getting increasingly concerned about moonlighting by employees. It poses several challenges in front of the management. Taking note of latest developments in corporate world globally, it is time for Indian corporates to also have a different vision and processes to include moonlighting as an integral aspect of work culture. Moonlighting has a potential to invest in innovation and entrepreneurship in big way. It is better if rather than banning moonlighting management has a proactive approach for managing it. Some steps in that direction an organisation can take are-

- **Create proper Policy-**The main concern of employers is that moonlighting should not hamper the performance of their organisation. For this purpose, managers should create proper legislation that addresses the issue of moonlighting in every sector. The moonlighting policy must specify the company rules regarding moonlighting.



- **Avoid Conflict of Interest:** Where there is possibility of potential conflicts of interest, no employee must engage in a second job as it effects primary work performance, abuses company resources, absenteeism, inattentiveness, or exhaustion, as a result employers may discourage their staff from moonlighting.
- **Clauses in Employment Contract:** Employers need to ensure that the employees do not work with or engage in a business which is a direct competitor, as it reduces the risk of losing business secrecy. Employees should carefully review their existing contract with their primary employer to ensure comply with any moonlighting regulations before seeking for side work or launching a business.
- **Permission for Taking Second Job:** Before taking up second job, employees should check their employment contract with their prime employer. The employee must obtain the approval of the employer before engaging in a second job or business. This will benefit both the employer as well as the employee. The employee will be free of the fear of being discovered and the guilt of hiding something and the employer can ensure that the second job does not conflict with or hampers the employee's performance on the present jobs.

If the employee receives approval of management to accept additional employment, but employee's job performance begins to deteriorate, employee may be asked to give up the second job.

- **Revision of Minimum Wages:** the main reason why employees take up second job is insufficient compensation. Employers must ensure that employees receive the minimum compensation which is essential for their basic needs and depending upon performance. If the economic needs of employees are fulfilled in the present job, it will greatly reduce the need of taking up a second job.
- Employers can use tools like **Workforce Analytics tools** to monitor and remain vigilant on where your remote employees are spending their time when they need to be working for you. Speak with them if a couple of them begin devoting more time than you anticipate to their side projects. To identify and mitigate hazards related to moonlighting, such as data leakage and daylighting, many businesses use tools and techniques (engaging in some other job during the recourse of the regular job).
- **Keep the Two Jobs Separate:** It is very important that employee performs in both jobs as per requirement. In no way the second job should interfere in the working of the first job. The employee must not spend the time dedicated for the first job on the other job. Also, the resources of the first job must not be used for fulfilling the obligations of the second job.
- **Employee Option-**Employees should have the option to moonlight unless doing so compromises the effectiveness and integrity of their core job duties.

In view of the fast-changing startup culture, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State for Electronics and IT and Skill Development, promotes moonlighting. He asserted that businesses must now recognise that the young Indian people of today are fully committed to maximizing the worth of their abilities. They seek to profit from his or her abilities. "While working for their company, individuals are expected to be entrepreneurial. The same individuals can use it directly to benefit themselves", he said. However, moonlighting shouldn't be against any contractual duties.

## 11. Conclusion

Moonlighting is here to stay and thus it is crucially important for companies to define clearly what is acceptable and what is not. Appropriate policies must be framed to overcome the effects of moonlighting and maintaining harmonious relationship between employer and employees in an organisation. While businesses like Swiggy have developed a policy allowing employees to moonlight in a capacity that does not present a conflict of interest and has no negative effects on productivity, it may mark a new era in employment. But in India, still there is no clear-cut legislation regarding moonlighting that can be applied to every field of employment. So the idea of moonlighting legal or illegal is widely depends on the employers and their terms of appointment. Moonlighting also helps networking opportunities, to gain new skills necessary, obtain more experience, is fun, and provides social interaction with other people. Moonlighting can be a win-win for employers, employees, society and nation, it is time for top management to embrace it by crafting forward-looking moonlighting policy that encourages moonlighters while addresses issues of disclosure, preapproval, confidentiality, noncompete, conflict, use of company time and resources, productivity and absenteeism.

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