

Structural Evolution, Employment and Challenges of GIG Workers in India

Rajendra Singh

PhD Research Scholar, Dept. of Psychiatry, IMS BHU

Abstract

During the previous decade, the gig economy in India has emerged as an important component of the labour market and has experienced significant and accelerated structural transformation, driven by digital platforms, expanding internet penetration, and evolving labour market dynamics. Gig work, characterised by short-term and flexible work arrangements and task-based engagements mediated through digital platforms, has become a significant source of livelihood for millions of workers, particularly among youth and semi-skilled workers. This evolution has reshaped employment patterns, creating opportunities for income diversification, autonomy, and inclusive participation in the formal economy. However, Gig workers face persistent challenges, including income insecurity, lack of social protection, limited bargaining power, and ambiguous regulatory protections. This paper examines the structural evolution of Gig work in India, analyses its employment implications, and identifies key challenges faced by workers. Drawing on multidisciplinary research, policy reports, and case studies, the study highlights the dual Gig work has the potential to increase economic participation while exposing workers to economic and social insecurities, workers to vulnerabilities in the absence of adequate policy intervention.

Keywords: Digital labour platforms have facilitated the rapid development of the gig economy, leading to a rise in non-standard employment arrangements, Platform-based work, Flexible work arrangements, Labour market transformation

INTRODUCTION

The Gig economy is a labour system in which individuals engage in short-term, task-based, or contract-based work rather than permanent employment. jobs instead of having one permanent full-time employment. These temporary jobs are referred to as “Gig.” In the past, the word “Gig” was primarily used by musicians to describe live performances, but today it refers to any short-term work.

In the gig economy, companies often prefer to hire independent workers for short-term projects rather than permanent employees. These workers are known as gig workers. They can work for many clients at the same time and choose their own working hours.

Nowadays, it is difficult for young people to find permanent jobs. Unemployment rates remain high, but the Gig economy offers many new job opportunities, especially for youth. As a result, the Gig economy is gaining increasing popularity, particularly in urban areas.

The Gig economy is a global system. It is not limited to one country. However, the way it works can vary by country due to different laws, economic conditions, and cultural values.

This system is useful for both workers and companies. Customers get fast and affordable services, and companies save money by not hiring permanent staff.

According to NITI Aayog, the gig economy encompasses a range of workers outside traditional jobs, whereas the platform economy primarily utilises digital platforms where Each worker's responsibilities are distinctly specified.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, The gig economy describes a labour market in which workers carry out short-term assignments or varied tasks rather than holding permanent positions, with payment made separately for each assignment.

Overall, the gig economy has changed how people work. It gives freedom, flexibility, and new career options, especially for young people. However, it also creates problems like a lack of job security and income stability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Growth and Structural Evolution

Driven by digital platforms, technological progress, and shifting labour market dynamics, the gig economy has expanded across the globe. In India, this growth is evident in platform-based activities such as ride-hailing services, food delivery, and freelance work and online microtasks has grown significantly, offering employment opportunities to a large segment of the workforce (ILO, 2021). While gig work is often promoted for its flexibility and autonomy, scholars argue that it represents a shift towards non-standard and precarious forms of employment characterised by income instability, lack of social protection, and weak labour rights (Kalleberg & Dunn, 2016; Wood et al., 2019).

Recent studies highlight that the structural evolution of Gig work has blurred the boundaries between formal and informal employment, particularly in developing economies like India (Mehrotra & Parida, 2022). Gig workers are typically classified as independent contractors, a status that frequently restricts their access to essential employment benefits, including health insurance, paid leave, and job security (ILO, 2023).

Employment Precarity and Gig Work

Employment precarity is a Major characteristics of gig employment ,associated with uncertainty in income, irregular working hours, algorithmic management, and lack of career progression (Benach et al., 2014; Bajwa et al., 2018). Recent empirical research suggests that gig workers experience higher levels of employment insecurity compared to traditional workers, even when flexibility is perceived as a benefit (Apogee et al., 2020).

In the Indian context, studies have documented that Gig workers face fluctuating earnings, unilateral changes in platform policies, and the absence of collective bargaining mechanisms, which exacerbate precarity (Farmwork India, 2022; Srivastava, 2023). Such conditions often intensify psychological strain and undermine workers' sense of control and stability.

Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health of Gig Workers-

A growing body of literature links precarious employment to adverse mental health consequences, such as heightened stress, anxiety, depression, and diminished overall well-being (Kim et al., 2020; Van Arden et al., 2022). Gig workers, due to constant performance monitoring and income uncertainty, are particularly vulnerable to psychological distress (Wood et al., 2019).

Recent research during and following the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the mental health risks associated with gig work especially in developing countries where social safety nets are weak (Rani & Furrer, 2021). In India, evidence suggests that financial insecurity and long working hours among Gig

workers significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion and poor psychological well-being (Kesar et al., 2021).

Stress, Job Satisfaction, and the JD-R Framework

The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between gig work conditions and worker well-being. It suggests that high job demands—such as workload pressure and time constraints—can negatively affect workers’ well-being, and employment insecurity—can contribute to stress and burnout when sufficient job resources are not available (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Recent research applying the JD-R framework to Gig work shows that excessive job demands combined with limited autonomy and social support increase perceived stress and reduce job satisfaction among platform workers (Schor et al., 2020; Taris et al., 2022). Job satisfaction has been identified as a crucial mediator between work stressors and overall well-being, supporting mediation models similar to the one used in the present study.

Self-Determination Theory and Gig Employment

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasises the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness for psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). While gig work may enhance perceived autonomy, recent studies indicate that algorithmic control and customer rating systems often undermine genuine autonomy and competence, thereby negatively affecting well-being (Mollmann & Zalmanson, 2017; Kellogg et al., 2020).

Empirical studies from recent years suggest that when gig workers’ basic psychological needs are unmet, job satisfaction declines and stress levels increase, leading to poorer mental health outcomes (Howard et al., 2021). This supports the argument that flexibility alone is insufficient to ensure well-being in precarious work arrangements.

Research Gaps and Rationale for the Present Study

Despite the growing literature on Gig work, there remains limited empirical research focusing on the psychological mechanisms linking employment precarity to well-being in the Indian context. Most existing studies emphasise economic conditions or labour regulations, with fewer addressing stress and job satisfaction as mediating variables. Moreover, serial mediation models examining these relationships remain underexplored in developing economies.

The present study addresses these gaps by empirically examining the psychological consequences of employment precarity among gig workers in India, using perceived stress and job satisfaction as mediating variables within the JD-R and Self-Determination Theory frameworks.

Objectives of the Study-

1. To analyse the structural composition and key characteristics of the Gig workforce in India.
2. To identify and classify the diverse employment opportunities generated through digital gig platforms.
3. To assess the role of the gig economy in promoting national economic growth and expanding the labour market.
4. To assess the positive outcomes and challenges encountered by workers involved in gig employment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY -

Driven by digital platforms, technological progress, and shifting labour market dynamics, the gig economy has expanded across the globe. In India, this growth is evident in platform-based activities such as ride-hailing services, food delivery, and freelance work.

Gig Economy

The Gig economy refers to a flexible economic system where work and services are exchanged through digital platforms that connect service providers with customers. Instead of hiring permanent employees, organisations increasingly rely on independent contractors who are engaged for short-term assignments. In this system, work is not fixed to a regular schedule and is carried out according to demand.

The Gig economy also supports digital transformation in supply chains by improving logistics and promoting sustainable business practices. It encourages the use of advanced technologies such as automation, machine learning, and the Internet of Things (IoT), while simultaneously increasing the demand for a skilled workforce. As a result, talent-driven operations are becoming more important in managing modern supply chains.

In India, the employment landscape is undergoing a major transformation driven by the rapid expansion of the gig economy. Gig work has increasingly become a popular avenue for individuals seeking supplementary income, while emerging technologies, including the Internet of Things (IoT), are creating a growing demand for a more skilled workforce. Globally, the gig economy is projected to provide income opportunities for around 1.6 million people. The gig economy refers to a labour market dominated by short-term, project-based, and part-time assignments performed by freelancers and independent contractors rather than permanent employees. In India, sectors such as construction, manufacturing, retail, and transportation are expected to generate substantial gig employment, with its reach further expanding into industries like textiles, banking, and financial services, energy utilities, The expansion of gig work across sectors such as real estate, information technology, education, and personal services reflects the increasing role of the gig economy in shaping modern employment patterns and economic growth.

The Gig Economy: A Historical Overview -

The word “Gig” was first used by jazz musicians in the 1920s to refer to short-term performance engagements.

In 1940, the first temporary employment agency was founded, recruiting typists and other clerical staff for brief assignments.

By the 1990s, nearly 10% of the workforce in the United States was engaged in consultancy roles. As organisations increasingly sought flexible staffing arrangements, the demand for independent contractors, temporary staff, and on-call workers grew substantially. This trend accelerated with the expansion of the digital era in the late 1990s and early 2000s. the gig economy expanded rapidly. The introduction of Craigslist in 1995 and Upwork in 1999 made it easier for independent workers to connect with clients and find job opportunities online.

The 2008 global financial recession further accelerated the growth of gig work, as many companies reduced permanent hiring and workers sought alternative sources of income.

The term “gig economy” was first used in 2009 by Tina Brown, the former editor of *The New Yorker*. Today, the gig economy has emerged as a major global employment model, supported by digital platforms and advanced information technologies.

Gig Worker-

A Gig worker is an individual who earns income through work arrangements that exist outside the traditional employer–employee relationship. Instead of holding a permanent job with a fixed salary, gig workers are hired for short-term, project-based, or task-based assignments. This group includes independent contractors, temporary workers, contract employees, on-call workers, and individuals working through online platforms.

Gig workers may be broadly grouped into two distinct categories.

Best option for academic writing-

1. Platform Workers-

Platform workers are those who obtain work through digital platforms or mobile applications. While this type of work offers flexibility in working hours and location, it is often associated with job insecurity and unstable income.

Common examples of platform-based work include ride-hailing services such as Uber, Ola, and Rapido; food delivery services such as Swiggy, Zomato, and Uber Eats; home service platforms including Urban Company, House joy, and Task Bob and e-commerce marketplaces such as Amazon and Flipkart.

2. Non-Platform Workers-

Gig workers who obtain work through traditional networks rather than digital platforms. In contrast to platform-based workers, they do not depend on digital applications or online intermediaries to secure employment. Instead, they find job opportunities through personal contacts, local markets, or direct client engagement.

Examples of non-platform Gig workers include:

Construction workers, street vendors, and farm labourers

Delivery workers who are not associated with online platforms

Domestic workers, such as maids and cooks

Home-based workers, including those engaged in handicrafts, tailoring, and similar activities

Overall, Gig workers form a diverse workforce that plays a growing role in the modern economy by providing flexible labour solutions across various industries.

Stages Involved in the Operational Process of the Gig Economy

The Gig economy follows a systematic process that enables the delivery of affordable, efficient, and flexible services. This model offers customers a faster and more convenient alternative to traditional business services.

Step Involved in Working Process-

Depending on their schedule and interest, workers may either accept new tasks or take a break before repeating the process.

Stages Involved in the Operational Framework of the Gig Economy-

The functioning of involves a series of essential stages. process of the gig economy. These steps help produce services that are cheaper, more efficient, and more flexible, offering consumers a fast and convenient alternative to traditional business models.

1. Platform Registration-

Workers enrolment on gig economy platforms by submitting necessary personal details and completing identity verification procedures.

2. Task Selection-

Workers browse through available gigs or tasks on the platform. These tasks may include simple activities such as dog walking and furniture assembly, as well as more skilled work like driving, delivery services, and freelance projects.

3. Task Acceptance-

Workers choose and accept tasks based on factors such as their availability, location, skills, and personal in accordance with the platform's policies and guidelines.

4. Task Completion-

Workers complete the allocated assignment according to the instructions provided by the platform or the client. This may involve delivering goods, providing services, or completing a specific project.

5. Payment Processing-

After successful completion of the task, the platform processes the payment. Payments are commonly made through digital payment systems or direct bank transfers.

6. Feedback and Ratings-

Both the worker and the client provide feedback and ratings based on their experience. This system helps maintain quality, accountability, and trust within the platform community.

7. Repeat or Explore New Opportunities-

Based on their availability and interests, workers may choose to repeat similar tasks or explore new job opportunities on the platform.

ANALYSIS ON GIG ECONOMY -

NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, providing strategic and technical guidance on a wide range of governmental policies and development programmes. It offers advisory support to both the central and state governments, as well as Union Territories. Established in 2015 through a Union Cabinet resolution, NITI Aayog replaced the 65-year-old Planning Commission. The institution functions under the leadership of the Prime Minister of India and includes the Chief Ministers of all states, the Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories, and other key policymakers as members of its governing council.

Share GIG Workers Employment by Skill Category –

YEAR	HIGH SKILLED	MEDIUM SKILLED	LOW SKILLED	TOTAL
2011-12	17.9	53.9	28.7	100
2019-20	21.9	46.8	31.3	100
2020-21	22.5	46.1	31.4	100
2024-25	24.7	42.8	32.6	100
2029-30	27.6	38.6	33.8	100

Data Source: NITI Aayog, June 2022.

Note: from 2011 to 2021 are actual data, and from 2024 to 2030 are expected data.

“The image provided displays data regarding the distribution of gig workers’ employment in India across different skill categories with both historical data and future projections. The data, sourced from a June 2022 NITI Aayog report,

Medium Skilled Jobs Decline:

“The share of workers engaged in medium-skilled occupations is expected to decrease steadily from 53.9% in 2011–12 to 38.6% by 2029–30.”

High and Low Skilled Jobs Increase:

The shares of both high-skilled and low-skilled gig work are expected to increase over the period, suggesting a potential polarisation of the gig economy job market.

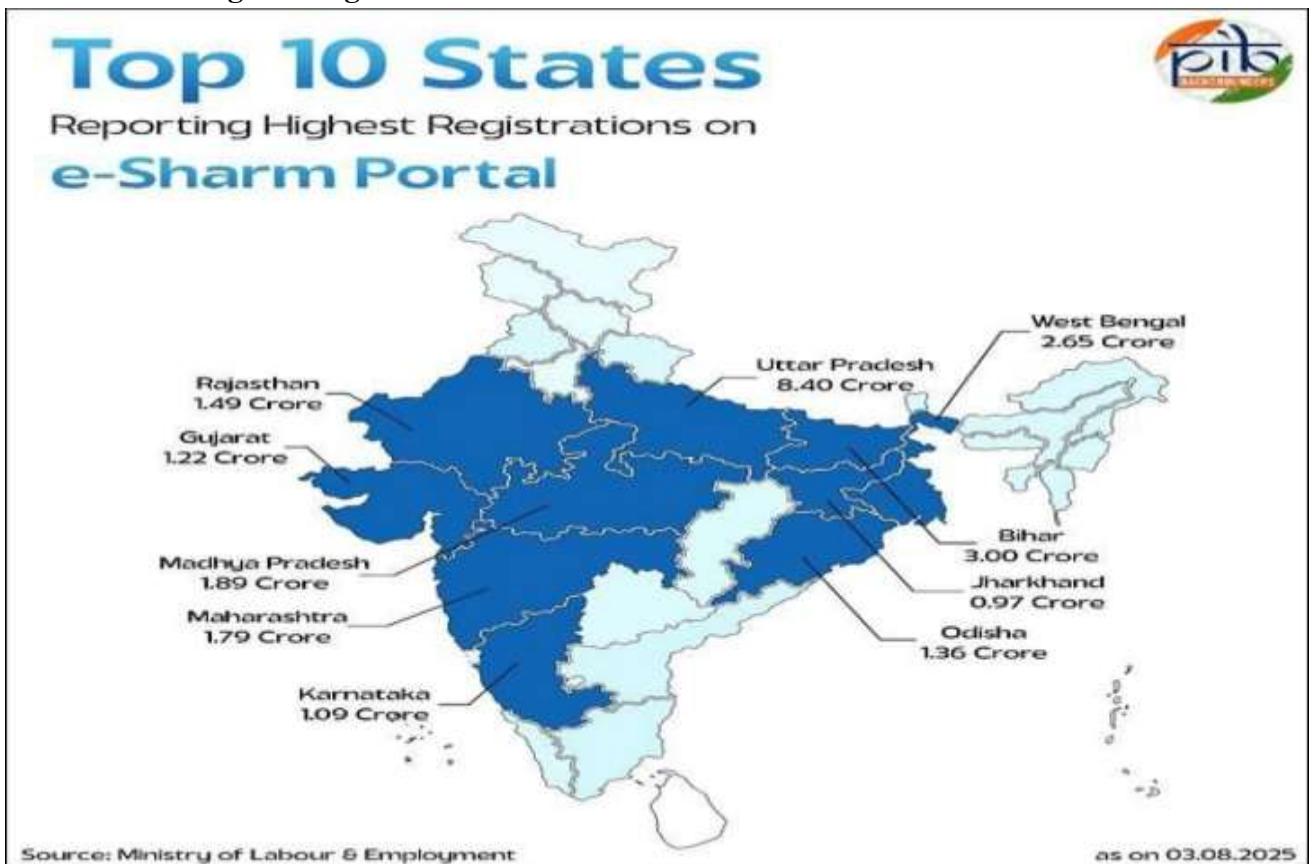
Overall Growth:

India's gig workforce is projected to grow significantly, increasing from 7.7 million in 2020–21 to 23.5 million by 2029–30. To support this expansion, the Ministry of Labour and Employment launched the e-Shram portal, which serves as a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW). The platform covers various categories of workers, including platform workers, migrant labourers, agricultural workers, and others in the unorganised sector. The primary objective of the e-Shram portal is to register and support unorganised workers by providing a Universal Account Number (UAN) based on self-declaration, thereby improving their access to social security schemes and government welfare benefits. As of 3 August 2025, more than 30.98 crore unorganised workers had registered on the platform, including over 3.37 lakh platform and gig workers, highlighting the initiative's extensive reach and significance.

Initiatives to Promote e-Shram Registration.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has implemented several awareness and outreach programmes to increase registration on the e-Shram portal and ensure that more unorganised workers benefit from government support.

States with the Highest Registrations-



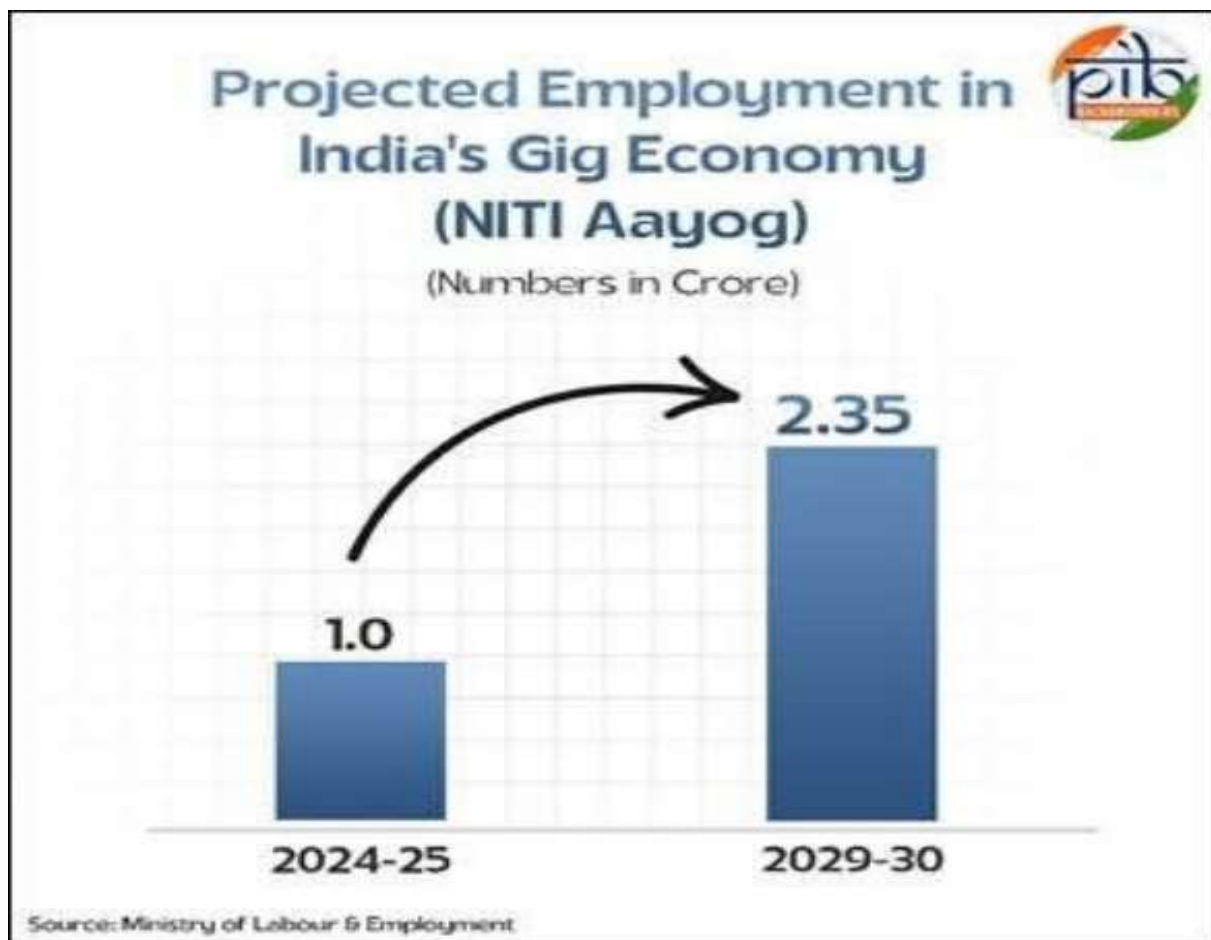
Portal data indicate that Uttar Pradesh leads in registrations with 8.39 crore, followed by Bihar (3.00 crore) and West Bengal (2.64 crore). These figures highlight both the large size of the unorganised workforce in these states and the effectiveness of government initiatives in expanding worker coverage across the country.

India's gig workforce is expanding rapidly, contributing significantly to economic transformation at both domestic and global levels. With a labour force exceeding half a billion people, one of the youngest

populations in the world, rapid urbanisation, and widespread adoption of smartphones and digital technologies, the country is emerging as a major hub for the gig economy. This platform-driven sector is generating new employment opportunities across various fields, including ride-sharing, delivery services, logistics, and professional freelance work. According to NITI Aayog, more than 1 crore people were expected to be employed in the gig sector during 2024–25, and this number is projected to increase to 2.35 crore by 2029–30.

Employment Growth in the Gig Economy in India-

Several factors contribute significantly to the rapid expansion of the Gig workforce in India. These growth drivers have increased the popularity and acceptance of gig employment.



The widespread availability of smartphones and affordable high-speed internet has been a major catalyst for the Gig economy by enhancing coordination and interaction between workers and employers. Digital platforms now serve as essential intermediaries, enabling seamless interaction and job matching. As a result, gig work is transforming conventional employment models and generating a wide range of employment prospects for freelancers nationwide.

India's socio-economic transformations, especially the policies of economic liberalisation, have promoted increased market competition and greater openness. These changes have stimulated the growth of the Gig economy by creating favourable conditions for independent professionals and contract workers. Government initiatives have further strengthened this ecosystem by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and self-employment.

Flexibility remains one of the strongest attractions of gig work for Indian workers. The ability to choose working hours and manage professional commitments alongside personal responsibilities makes Gig employment highly appealing. This autonomy allows individuals to achieve a healthier balance between work and personal life.

Another key factor driving the Gig economy is India's large population of young, educated, and motivated individuals seeking additional income through part-time and freelance work. Their pursuit of financial independence and career growth continues to expand gig opportunities across multiple industries.

Moreover, the rapid growth of India's e-commerce sector has substantially increased demand for delivery, logistics, and support services, thereby contributing to the expansion of gig employment in these areas.

Advantages of the Gig Economy in India-

1. Benefits for Consumers-

The Gig economy significantly improves consumer experience by offering greater choice, convenience, and flexibility in accessing services. Consumers can select services that match their specific needs, preferred timings, and locations. In many cases, these services tend to offer improved quality while remaining cost-effective for consumers. The availability of a wide range of service providers allows consumers to compare options and choose what suits them best, resulting in increased satisfaction and efficiency.

2. Benefits for Businesses-

For businesses, the Gig economy provides substantial cost and resource savings. Companies are not required to offer traditional employee benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, or retirement plans. They also reduce costs associated with office infrastructure, equipment procurement, and workforce training. The gig model enables organisations to hire specialised professionals for specific projects without committing to long-term employment, which is often more economical. Additionally, using remote and international gig workers reduces infrastructure costs and allows access to global talent at competitive rates. Compared to local hiring, international sourcing often proves more cost-effective.

3. Benefits for Workers-

Gig workers enjoy greater freedom and work-life balance by choosing assignments that match their interests, skills, and schedules. This flexibility prevents them from being locked into unsatisfying full-time roles and promotes personal and professional fulfilment. Independent workers have control over their working hours, income expectations, and workload. They can follow traditional work schedules or design their workday according to personal needs. Furthermore, the opportunity for remote work allows gig workers to manage family responsibilities, caregiving duties, and location differences with clients more easily.

Issues and Constraints of Economy -

The Gig economy has profoundly transformed modern business operations, generated new opportunities while also posed several challenges. While it offers benefits such as flexibility, access to diverse talent, and cost efficiency, it raises critical concerns that require careful management. Organisations must acknowledge these limitations to make informed decisions and implement strategies that mitigate potential risks.

Gig workers usually participate in short-term or project-based assignments, which limits the development of long-term commitment between workers and employers. This temporary nature often weakens stable

professional relationships and reduces organisational loyalty. Since Gig workers are not bound by long-term obligations, companies may experience higher turnover, reduced continuity, and challenges in maintaining consistent work quality.

Impact of Gig Work on Work–Life Balance-

The influence of Gig work on workers' lives is substantial, shaping how individuals adapt to new forms of employment. It alters traditional job structures and requires workers to be highly flexible and adaptable in managing both professional and personal responsibilities.

Blurring of Work and Personal Life-

One major effect of Gig work is the weakening of boundaries between professional duties and personal time. Although flexibility is one of the main attractions of gig work, it can make it difficult for workers to maintain a balanced integration of professional and personal life. In the absence of a distinct boundary between work and leisure,

Gig workers may experience long working hours, exhaustion, and burnout. Many find themselves continuously searching for new tasks, replying to clients, and struggling to fully disconnect from work.

Mental Health Effects-

The unpredictable nature of Gig work, along with irregular income and constant job searching, places heavy pressure on workers' mental well-being. The demands of the Gig economy can lead to stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue, and in some cases may contribute to depression. Understanding these mental health challenges is crucial, and workers must adopt practical coping methods to protect their well-being.

Strategies to Achieve Balance –

Achieving a sustainable work–life balance in the gig economy requires effective planning and self-regulation. Gig workers must establish clear professional boundaries, organise structured work schedules, and prioritise their personal well-being. Approaches such as efficient time management, mindfulness practices, and support from peers or mentors can help maintain balance and enhance overall life satisfaction.

Gig Economy's Influence on Globalisation -

The Gig economy plays a significant role in accelerating globalisation by enabling work and business activities to cross national boundaries with ease. Through digital platforms, individuals can now provide services internationally, supporting labour mobility, global cooperation, and market growth. This development promotes the creation of a borderless workforce, strengthening economic integration between countries and encouraging the exchange of skills and talent worldwide.

International Gig platforms such as Uber, Airbnb, and Fiverr operate across multiple nations, offering workers new income opportunities beyond their local markets. These platforms eliminate geographical limitations, allowing people to gain diverse professional experiences and connect with a wider range of clients. By facilitating cross-border transactions, Gig work enables individuals to respond to global demand for their skills, contributing to the formation of an increasingly interconnected global workforce. Gig employment allows workers to enter international markets and build careers without being restricted by location. Freelancers, for instance, can collaborate with clients across the globe, significantly expanding their professional networks and income potential. This global reach is transforming traditional views of employment and reshaping how individuals define their careers and customer base.

However, the globalisation of gig work has increased cultural diversity, bringing both opportunities and challenges. Collaborating with clients from different cultural backgrounds requires flexibility in

communication, work expectations, and professional conduct. While navigating these differences may be challenging, it also fosters personal growth and enhances professional skills, enabling gig workers to become more versatile and globally competitive.

Regulatory Framework for Gig Workers in India-

2017: Judicial Recognition of Gig Workers-

In 2017, the Delhi Commerce Driver Union, representing approximately 1.5 lakh drivers in Delhi, approached the High Court for official recognition through a petition of drivers as employees rather than independent contractors. The Court instructed both the central and state governments to clarify their position on the classification of gig workers. Subsequently, the matter was transferred to an employment tribunal, where it continues to remain under consideration. This case marked an important step toward legal acknowledgement of gig workers' employment status.

Between 2019 and 2020, the Government of India introduced significant reforms through the Code on Social Security, 2020. This legislation formally recognised gig and platform workers as a distinct category, separate from the traditional employer–employee framework. Earlier in 2019, Parliament had proposed a social security framework that included provisions for gig and platform workers in order to extend welfare benefits to this emerging workforce.

The Code on Social Security, 2020 consolidated nine existing labour laws, including the Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, and the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, with the objective of expanding social protection to informal and gig workers.

The Code on Social Security, 2020-

The Social Security Code, 2020 (SS Code, 2020) consolidates and streamlines nine central labour laws related to social security into a single comprehensive framework. Its main objective is to provide universal social security coverage for all workers, including those in the unorganised sector and, for the first time, gig and platform workers who were previously outside formal protection systems.

Key Provisions of the Code-

1. Merger of Existing Labour Laws

The Code on Social Security, 2020 repeals and consolidates the following nine existing labour laws into a single unified legislation:

- Employees' Compensation Act, 1923
- Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948
- Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952
- Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959
- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
- Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972
- Cine Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1981
- Building and Other Construction Workers' Cess Act, 1996
- Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008

2. Expanded Scope of Coverage-

The Code significantly expands the scope of social security coverage by including workers from both the organised and unorganised sectors, self-employed individuals, and, for the first time, gig and platform workers.

3. Social Security Schemes-

Under the Code, both the Central and State Governments are authorised to formulate and implement social security schemes. These schemes include provident fund and pension benefits; Employees' State Insurance, which provides healthcare, disability, and accident coverage; gratuity and maternity benefits; as well as additional welfare measures such as life insurance, old-age protection, and childcare (crèche) facilities.

4. Unorganised & Platform Worker Provisions -

The Code formally acknowledges gig and platform workers, including app-based service providers, as a distinct category of workers. This recognition enables the government to extend welfare schemes and social protection measures to this growing segment of the workforce.

Under the new code, gig workers are entitled to essential benefits such as minimum wages, maternity benefits, provident fund coverage, and insurance schemes administered by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. In addition, the government enacted four comprehensive labour codes aimed at safeguarding the rights and social protection for unorganised workers.

The Code on Wages, 2019, applies to workers across both organised and unorganised sectors, setting uniform standards for wage regulation and timely payment, thereby enhancing labour protections for all workers, including those in gig and platform-based employment.

Suggestions

Self-employed individuals involved in regional and rural food businesses, including street vendors and local cuisine producers, should be connected with digital platforms to help them reach larger markets in urban areas and nearby towns.

The government should strengthen legal and policy support for gig workers by introducing protective measures that enhance job security and promote long-term career development. Access to formal financial support can be improved by developing specialised credit facilities and financial products for platform workers and aspiring entrepreneurs interested in launching their proprietary platforms. Digital platforms may collaborate with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the National Skill Development Corporation to enhance skill development and upskilling among the workforce and capacity building initiatives, encourage innovation and promote micro-entrepreneurship among gig workers. Organisations should develop supportive work environments and human resource systems that facilitate effective engagement with independent professionals.

Women's participation in the gig economy should be actively promoted by ensuring equal access to gig platforms and opportunities, regardless of gender.

Conclusion

India's gig and platform economy is reshaping the labour market by creating new employment opportunities while also presenting unique challenges related to social security and worker welfare. Through initiatives such as the Code on Social Security, 2020 and the e-Shram portal, the government is making significant efforts to recognise, protect, and empower gig and platform workers. By facilitating registration, providing health and accident insurance coverage, and improving access to welfare benefits, these initiatives aim to integrate platform workers into the broader social protection framework. As the sector continues to expand, sustained policy support, increased awareness, and forward-looking

interventions will be essential to ensure that gig workers can work with dignity, security, and fair opportunities.

In summary, the gig economy in India is playing a transformative role in redefining employment patterns in the digital age. Driven by technological progress and a growing preference for flexibility and independence, gig work has created new avenues for individuals to utilise and develop their skills on adaptable terms. This economic model delivers cost-effective, efficient, and customised services, offering consumers convenient alternatives to traditional business operations.

Despite these advantages, several challenges continue to affect the sector, including irregular income, limited access to social security benefits, and ongoing regulatory concerns. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure that the gig economy remains inclusive, secure, and sustainable in the long term. Furthermore, gig employment has expanded opportunities for women by enabling fair earnings, greater financial independence, and improved quality of life.

As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, the nature of work is expected to undergo further transformation, with the gig economy playing an increasingly central role in shaping future employment structures.

Reference

1. Dr Bhagya Rathna R (2023). *Gig Economy and Women's Empowerment – Indian Scenario*. **International Journal of Novel Research and Development**, Volume 8, Issue 4, ISSN: 2456-4184, pp. 440–445.
2. Dr Bindiya Gupta (2022). *The Past, Present, and Future of the Gig Economy*. **The British Journal of Administrative Management**, Volume 58, Issue 3, ISSN: 1746-1278, pp. 4–11.
3. Dr Pushpa Suryavanshi (2022). *India's Booming Gig Economy*. **UGC Care Group 1 Listed Journal**, Volume 12, Issue 11, ISSN: 2278-4632, pp. 143–150.
4. Pakiza Samad (2022). *Gig Economy: Past, Present and Future in India*. **Sekhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies**, Volume 7, Issue 1, ISSN (Print): 2456-3757, E-ISSN: 2582-6840, pp. 36–41.
5. Palli Kara Viswanathan (2022). *Managing the Gig Worker Economy in Supply Chain*. **BSSS Journal of Commerce**, Volume 14, Issue 1, ISSN (Print): 0975-2528, E-ISSN: 2582-4651, pp. 53–59.
6. Sakshi Sardana (2022). *A Conceptual Study on Women Workers in the Gig Economy in India*. **International Journal of Commerce and Management**, Volume 16, ISSN (Print): 0973-5976, E-ISSN: 2456-4575, pp. 81–89.
7. Dr Shama Yasmeen (2022). *The Gig Economy and Its Impact on Future Working*. **International Journal of Engineering Technology and Management Sciences**, Volume 6, Issue 6, ISSN: 2581-4621, pp. 353–359.
8. Dr T. R. Kalai Lakshmi (2022). *A Study on the Challenges Faced by Gig Economy Workers in the Indian Facility Management Industry with Special Reference to Chennai City*. **International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts**, Volume 10, Issue 8, ISSN: 2320-2882, pp. 834–839.
9. Dr. M. Santeetlah Reddy (2022). *Challenges and Opportunities in the Development of the Gig Economy in India*. **International Journal for Research Trends and Innovation**, Volume 7, Issue 12, ISSN: 2456-3315, pp. 455–459.
10. Ms Soumya Vasavi (2021). *Gig Economy in the Era of Increasing Integration and Uncertainties*. **Annual Research Journal of Symbiosis Centre for Management Studies**, Volume 9, ISSN: 2348-

0661, pp. 1–6.

11. Ahaan Bhandari (2021). *Gig Economy: Female Workforce Participation*. **IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance**, Volume 12, Issue 5, ISSN (Print): 2321-5925, E-ISSN: 2321-5933, pp. 46–51.
12. Dr Rohit Bansal (2020). *The Emergence of Gig Economy in India: A Paradigm Shift*. **Parishad Journal**, Volume 9, Issue 11, ISSN: 2347-6648, pp. 487–498.
13. Bhanu Mati Doshi (2020). *A Theoretical Integration of Gig Economy: Advancing Opportunities, Challenges and Growth*. **International Journal of Management**, Volume 11, Issue 12, ISSN (Print): 0976-6502, ISSN (Online): 0976-6510, pp. 3013–3019.
14. Dr. Vijeta Banwari (2018). *Gig Economy: Challenges and Opportunities in India*. **Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research**, Volume 5, Issue 11, ISSN: 2349-5162, pp. 413–420.
15. Mr Anil Kumar Mahra (2015). *A Study on the Gig Economy and Redefining Employment in Bhopal District*. **Global Journal of Engineering, Science and Social Science Studies**, Volume 1, Issue 11, ISSN: 2394-3084, pp. 43–54.